

IF

UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, COMPUTING & LAW

'Reengineering Corporation Street'

**An Empirical Study of Business Process
Reengineering (BPR) in Two Local Authorities**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for Doctor of Philosophy to the
Derbyshire Business School, University of
Derby**

Volume 1

John Chamberlin

October 2008

Abstract

This study was focused on Business Reengineering (Hammer, 1990; Hammer & Champy, 1993); aka Business Process Reengineering (BPR). The main aim of the study was to test the authors' (2001) claims that BPR was 'alive and well,' and that 'in fact' it had been 'one of the success stories of business history,' but in this case within the context of local government organisations (LGOs) within the UK public sector.

Throughout the final decades of the 20th Century, and continuing to date, there has been a relentless pace of change within the public sector during which managers have been under constant pressure to improve performance within their organisations (McAdam & Mitchell, 1998; Zeppou and Sotirakou, 2003). This pressure was increased in 2004 with the publication of Sir Peter Gershon's 'Spending Review 2004: Efficiency Review – Releasing Resources for the Frontline: Independent Review of Public Sector Efficiency.' By 2007/08 Gershon was looking for 'auditable and transparent efficiency gains of over £20 billion,' and 'a gross reduction of over 84,000 posts' across the military, civil service and administration. Councils across the UK have responded to these demands in differing ways, but some chose to adopt 'reengineering' as part of their range of change management strategies. This study has focused on two such LGOs over that 4-year period.

The study commenced by reviewing the literature surrounding reengineering – or BPR, as it has become more widely known – including as appropriate other approaches to quality and change management. Focusing also on critical 'success' and 'failure' factors (CSF & CFF; Al-Mashari & Zairi, 1999), two key issues emerged that were relevant to BPR's potential for success in such organisations; the concepts of 'Organizational Readiness' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995), and that of 'degrees' of BPR, or 'Project Radicalness' (Kettinger et al., 1997).

A qualitative research approach was adopted, with 28, semi-structured, in-depth interviews held with 29 participants from the two co-operating LGOs. 'Purposive sampling' (Saunders, et al., 2000) was employed with participants selected from those organisations' BPR training cohorts and those involved more directly at junior, middle and senior management levels. Access was also granted to meetings and organisational documentation. Impact analysis was undertaken with group and individual interviews as necessary.

The study's contribution to knowledge is firstly in the combination of the two concepts mentioned above, to create a more comprehensive 'self-diagnostic' mechanism by which UK LGOs might assess and increase their 'readiness' to undertake change of this nature, and/or modify the 'ambition' level of their change projects prior to embarking upon them, thereby greatly improving their likelihood of success. The research therefore has important findings in the areas of diagnosis, planning, implementation and performance measurement, and will be of significant interest to academics and practitioners engaged in understanding or implementing change within the services sector generally and public sector and LGOs in particular.

Secondly, the research will also be of wider public interest revealing substantive issues for the future effective management and use of public finances. Whilst some change has been noted, real change does not appear to have yet been achieved, particularly at more senior and organisation-wide levels, and a more concerted and serious approach is necessary based on this new, composite, self-diagnostic process.

There are indications that some of the change agencies themselves may be guilty of adding to further waste creation, and the evidence of low levels of 'understanding' of the true meaning and portents of 'reengineering' draws into serious question the oft-stated '70%' failure rate of BPR.

Contents

List of Appendices	vii
List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	xii
List of Abbreviations	xiv
Acknowledgements	xvi
Part One: Introduction, Research Proposal, Researcher Background	1
Chapter 1: Introduction to Thesis	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Research Proposal	2
1.3 Researcher Background	3
Part Two: Literature Review	5
Chapter 2: Introduction; background, origins and definitions of BPR	5
2.1 Background to Business Process Reengineering	6
2.2 What is a 'Process'?	11
2.3 Terminology	13
2.4 BPR becomes established	18
Chapter 3: BPR to Date	25
3.1 The Development of BPR in the Early 1990s	25
3.2 Strategic Drift	33
3.3 BPR in the mid-1990s	40
3.3.1 'Tipping Point' and BPR	40
3.3.2 The 'Law of the Few'	42
3.3.3 'Stickiness' and 'Context'	45
3.3.4 A Spectral Issue	47
3.3.5 Subways, Police and Process Change	49
3.3.6 Context, Culture, and Organisational 'Readiness'	50
3.3.7 Culture and Behavioural Change	53

3.3.8	Peer Group Influence	55
3.3.9	Adoption Rates	55
3.4	Bridging the Chasm ' <i>a/ways</i> starts at the top'.	57
3.5	Chances of Success – 'Organisational Readiness'	58
3.6	BPR in the 21 st Century	62
3.6.1	'Success Factors'	71
3.7	Summary	75
Chapter 4: Key Themes emerging from the Literature		78
4.1	The concept of BPR – its 'Understanding' and its Implementation	79
4.2	'Degrees' of BPR and Project 'Radicalness'	90
4.2.1	'Degrees' of BPR	93
4.2.2	Project 'Radicalness'	98
4.3	Organisational 'Readiness' – Critical Success and Failure Factors	103
4.4	Change Management	119
4.5	Organisational 'Culture'	133
4.6	Reengineering Leadership & Communication	144
4.7	Public Sector Context	149
4.8	Public Sector Summary and Overall Research Focus	170
Part Three: Research Methodology		175
Chapter 5: Methodology		175
5.1	Introduction & Context	175
5.1.1	Pre-understanding	176
5.2	Objectives	178
5.3	Philosophy	180
5.3.1	Epistemology	180
5.3.2	Ontology	183
5.4	Approaches	186
5.5	Research Strategy	194
5.5.1	Case Studies	201
5.6	Choice of Method	206
5.7	Time Horizon	207

5.8	Research Access	208
5.9	Data Collection	208
5.9.1	Stage 1 – Discovery/Exploratory	210
5.9.2	Stage 2 – Projects	212
5.9.3	Stage 3 – Impact Review	215
5.10	Data Analysis/Interpretation	215
5.11	Stage 4 – Member Checking	220
5.12	Data Presentation	221
5.13	Assuring the Quality of the Research Process	221
5.13.1	Reliability	221
5.13.2	Validity	221
5.13.3	Bias	222
5.13.4	'Goodness': Value and Logic	223
5.13.5	Ethics	223
5.13.6	Testing	224
5.14	Summary	224
Part Four: Analysis & Findings		226
Chapter 6: Analysis and Findings		226
6.1	Context: Overviews of CityC and CountyC	226
6.1.1	CityC Overview	226
6.1.2	CountyC Overview	227
6.2	Stage 1 – Discovery/Exploratory	229
6.2.1	CountyC	229
6.2.2	CityC	232
6.2.3	London Borough Council	236
6.2.4	Summary	236
6.3	Stage 2 – Projects – Analysis & Findings	236
6.4	Analysis Process Review Meeting	238
6.5	Analysis 1: BPR/SRD	239
6.5.1	BPR – Understanding (Definitions), and its Implementation	239
6.5.1.1	Summary	252
6.5.2	BPR – 'Organisational Readiness', and 'Degrees' of BPR	253
6.5.2.1	Summary	265

6.5.3	'Degrees' of BPR	265
6.5.3.1	Summary	270
6.6	Analysis 2: Case for Action/Drivers	271
6.6.1	Drivers for CountyC	273
6.6.1.1	Costs/Savings	273
6.6.1.2	Competition	274
6.6.1.3	eGovernment	274
6.6.1.4	Contact Centre-driven	275
6.6.1.5	Efficiencies/Gershon	278
6.6.1.6	Failing Processes	279
6.6.1.7	Top-down	279
6.6.1.8	Solution-driven	282
6.6.1.9	Legislation/New ways of working (i.e. partnerships)	283
6.6.2	Drivers for CityC	283
6.6.2.1	Failing Processes	284
6.6.2.2	Competition/Customer Service Improvements	285
6.6.2.3	eGovernment	285
6.6.2.4	Contact Centre-driven	287
6.6.2.5	Costs/Savings	288
6.6.2.6	Efficiencies/Gershon	289
6.6.2.7	Top-down – Solution-driven	290
6.6.3	Summary	292
6.7	Analysis 3: Leadership	295
6.7.1	CountyC	295
6.7.2	Summary	299
6.7.3	CityC	300
6.7.4	City Homes	307
6.7.5	Summary	309
6.8	Analysis 4: Change & Change Management	311
	Analysis 5: Context & Culture	311
6.8.1	Resistance to Change – Attitudes & Behaviours & Culture	312
6.8.1.1	CountyC	312
	Culture vs Change	317
6.8.1.2	CityC	322

	Resistance to Change – Attitudes & Behaviours & Culture	322
	Change Management Issues	324
6.8.2	Summary of Findings	335
Chapter 7: Stage 3 – Impact Analysis		338
7.1	Introduction	338
7.2	CountyC	340
7.2.1	Degree of 'Radicalness'	344
7.2.2	Later Planned Projects	345
7.2.3	Individual Projects (Main Group)	346
7.2.4	Summary	357
7.3	CityC	358
7.3.1	Project Radicalness	364
7.3.2	Summary	368
Chapter 8: Stage 4 – 'Member Check'		369
8.1	Testing	369
8.1.1	'Understanding' of BPR?	370
8.1.2	'Organisational Readiness'?	370
8.1.3	'Case for Action/Drivers'?	371
Part Five: Conclusions & Recommendations		373
Chapter 9: Conclusions & Recommendations		373
9.1	Introduction	373
9.2	Status of BPR – the Evidence	376
9.3	Strategic Linking of Project Choice	381
9.4	Diagnostic Models and Measures – 'Radicalness' & 'Readiness'	384
9.4.1	'Organisational Readiness'	385
9.4.2	Project Radicalness	390
9.5	Policy & Practice	393
9.5.1	National Level	393
9.5.2	Local Level	394
9.6	'Readiness <i>and</i> Radicalness'	395

9.6.1	Initial Models	397
9.6.2	Basic Models	399
9.6.3	A Combined Self-Diagnostic Instrument	402
9.6.4	'Expert' Perceptions & Model Usage	403
9.7	Further Research	408
References		412
Appendices		

List of Appendices

<u>Appendix No:</u>	<u>Appendix Title:</u>	<u>Page No:</u>
1	Researcher Background	I
2	Al-Mashari & Zairi's (1999) Success and Failure Factors	IV
3	Al-Mashari & Zairi's (2000: 26) 'Table 1'	V
4	Table 3.5: Range of BPR 'Instructions'/ 'Methodologies'	VI
5	'Tools & Techniques' of Generic PSP	VII
6	John Seddon & BPR	IX
7	Benchmarking Questionnaire – CountyC	XXVI
8	Semi-structured Interview Guide – City C	XXXII
9	Semi-structured Interview Guide – County C	XXXIV
10	Marshall and Rossman's (1995: 146-148) '20 standards for judging qualitative study reports.'	XXXVI
11	Hammer & Stanton's (1995a) 'Self Diagnostic'/ 'Readiness' Questionnaire	XLIX
12	Examples of 'Theme' cards	LVII
13	Photographs of theme groupings (Dec. 2007)	LVIII
14	BPR Definitions Table – CityC	LXI
15	BPR Definitions Table – CountyC	LXIII
16	BPR Definition Key Words Table – CityC	LXVI
17	BPR Definition Key Words Table – CountyC	LXIX
18	Example of CountyC's Call Centre's 'Value-add'	LXXI
19	CityC's 'Change Management Strategy'	LXXIV
20	Focus Group Preparatory Questionnaire – CountyC	XCV
21	Group Responses to Questionnaire	XCVI
22	PRPW Outputs – CountyC	CIII
23	CityC's 'Service Access Review' (2004) – extracts only	CV
24	'Member Check' notes – CityC	CVIII
25	'Member Check' notes – CountyC	CXII
26	'Living Within Our Means', speech by David Cameron, Leader of the Opposition, 19 th May 2008-10-26	CXVII

Cont'd

27	Kettinger, et al., (1997) 'Project Radicalness Planning Worksheet' (PRPW)	CXXV
28	'Improving Your Scores', Hammer & Stanton (1995)	CXXVI
29	Further 3-dimensional development models, based on Hayes (2007)	CXXXII

List of Figures

<u>Figure No:</u>	<u>Figure Description:</u>	<u>Page No:</u>
Literature Review		
2.0	Literature Review Flow Diagram	6
2.1	Process Model	12
2.2	Kolb & BPR Experiences	18
3.0	Transformation	26
3.1	SIPOC (ITO) diagram	27
3.2	Customer Supplier Relationship	32
3.3	The Risk of Strategic Drift	33
3.4	Hammer's process improvement model	35
3.5	The 'life story of a process'	36
3.6	The 'Tipping Point' of BPR	42
3.7	The 'AIDA' model	43
3.8	The 'Quality Spectrum'	47
3.9	BPR's 'Tipping Point'	48
3.10	Lewin's Force Field Analysis	52
3.11	'Before' and 'After' Symbols?	53
3.12	Diffusion of Hybrid Seed Corn in Greene County, Iowa	56
3.13	BPR 'Adoption Spectrum'	57
4.1	Generic Problem-Solving Process	83
4.2	Generic BPR Model	84
4.3	Homogeneous BPR/TQM-PSP/Redesign Process?	87
4.4	Levels of Process	97
4.5	Alternative Approaches to BPR	98
4.6	Project Radicalness Planning Worksheet (PRPW)	99
4.7	BPR vs Continuous Improvement (CI)	101
4.8	Critical Success/Failure Factors (CSF/CFF) for Benchmarking Projects	111
4.9	'Five blind men and an elephant'	114
4.10	Lewin's basic 'Change' model	120

4.11	Cultural Web	127
4.12	Nordstrom's Organization Chart	130
4.13	Joynson & Forrester's 'Inverted Pyramid'	133
4.14	Greasley's (2004) 'Impact (external perspective) marking guide'	155
4.15	Greasley's (2004) 'Innovation (internal perspective) marking guide'	156
4.16	A model for service quality	159
4.17	Seddon's model for 'Check'	166
Methodology		
5.1	Saunders, et al's (2000) 'research onion'	175
5.2	Alternative Philosophical Paradigm Names	181
5.3	Schein's (2004) 'Levels of Culture'	189
5.4	Kolb's Learning Cycle	190
5.5	Typology of participant observer researcher roles	193
5.6	The 'action research spiral'	198
5.7	Kolb's Learning Cycle (adapted)	198
5.8	The action learning process	199
Analysis & Findings		
6.1	CityC's 2008 Council election results	333
7.1	Impact Analysis Distillation Chart (CountyC)	341
7.2	PRPW example for CityC	365
Conclusions & Recommendations		
9.1	'Readiness plus Radicalness'	397
9.2	CountyC Scores	398
9.3	Basic Model	399
9.4	Readiness & Radicalness, a 'cubist approach'	400
9.5	Combined Self-diagnostic Instrument	402

9.6	CityC's current state of 'Readiness'	404
9.7	CountyC's current state of 'Readiness'	405
9.8	Example of a Balanced Scorecard	407
9.9	The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Model	408

List of Tables

<u>Table No:</u>	<u>Table Description:</u>	<u>Page No:</u>
Literature Review		
3.1	BPR's 'Tipping Point'	41
3.2	'Organisational Readiness' Comparisons	62
3.3	Al-Mashari & Zairi's (1999) Success and Failure Factors	72
3.3a	Breakdown of categories 2 & 3	72
3.4	Similarities in CSFs	74
3.5	Table 3.5: Range of BPR 'Instructions'/ 'Methodologies'	81
4.1	'Generic' PSP model and 'Generic BPR model'	83
4.2	Generic PSP and 'Stage-Activity' Framework	86
4.3	'Salient Characteristics of Public Organizations and their Implications for BPR'	140
Methodology		
5.1	Key features of positivist and phenomenological paradigms	181
5.2	Choosing the Appropriate Methodology	187
5.3	Typology of Research Purposes	200
5.4	Summarised Methodology	225
Analysis & Findings		
6.1	Hammer & Stanton's (1995a) 'Self-Assessment Diagnostic', Section Totals for CityC, City Homes & CountyC	256
6.2	'Organizational Readiness' Questionnaire – Combined	258
6.3	CityC's 2006 Council election results	333

7.1	Later 'Project Radicalness' ratings	346
7.2	Project 5 'Objectives'	350
7.3	Q2; What were the actual outcomes of the project?	352
7.4	Q3; What were the tangible benefits? (&) Where would evidence to support this be seen?	353
7.5	CityC's 'Radicalness' Score	367
Conclusions & Recommendations		
9.1	Suggested 'Radicalness' descriptors	392
9.2	'Banding' the Scores	406

List of Abbreviations

BCL – Faculty of Business, Computing and Law

BPI – Business process Improvement

BPM – Business Process Management

BPR – Business Process Reengineering; Business Process Redesign;

BR – Business Reengineering

BSE – Business Systems Engineering

BT – British Telecommunications plc

CAA – Comprehensive Area Assessment

CFF – Critical Failure Factors

CI – Continuous Improvement

CMT – Change Management Team

CPA – Comprehensive Performance Assessment

CRM – Customer Relationship Management (sometimes known as Relationship Marketing and Database Marketing)

CSF – Critical Success Factors

DBS – Derbyshire Business School

DREC – Denial, Resistance, Exploration, Commitment

EFQM – European Foundation Quality Model

GOYA – A management technique meaning get out of your chair and walk...

H&S – Hammer & Stanton (1995a)

HoS – Head of Service

HSRS – Hammer & Stanton's (1995a) Recommended Minimum Scores

IT – Information Technology

ITO – Inputs, Transformation, Outputs

JIT – Just-In-Time

LGO – Local Government Organisations

LJU – Line-Jack Unit

MBWA – Managing By Wandering Around

MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology

PDCA – Plan, Do, Check*, Act (* Sometimes seen as 'Study'.)

PRPW – Project Radicalness Planning Worksheet

PSO – Public Sector Organisation

QFD – Quality Function Deployment
SIPOC – Suppliers, Inputs, Processes, Outputs, Customers
SMT – Senior Management Team
SPC – Statistical Process Control
SRD – Service Redesign
SRT – Service Redesign Training
SSM – Soft Systems Methodology
TPS – Toyota Production System
TQM – Total Quality Management
UK – United Kingdom
UoD – University of Derby

Participant-Specific Abbreviations:

The confidentiality agreed between UoD and the two participating LGOs meant that only minimal contextual details would be shown to indicate the particular respondents. All participating individuals were coded alphabetically, and then given a minimum notional grading and/or role code. These are shown as follows:

CMT	Change Manager/ member of the Change Management Team
HoS	Head of Service
LM1-2	Line Manager at level 1 or 2 (NB 'LMs1-2' when interviewed in pairs)
Non-Mgr	Non-Manager grade (only one participant)
SMT	Senior Management Team (inc. Chief Officer level)

For example:

- 'HD/HoS/CMT' within the text indicates the coded identity of an individual participant, who in this case was at Head of Service level in the Change Management Team of the LGO.
- 'GJ/LM1-2' indicates an individual who was a line manager at First- or Second-Line.

Acknowledgements

The opportunity for this research was presented in 2004 by the Derbyshire Business School (DBS), University of Derby (UoD), when it offered a funded PhD to study in areas of 'Best Practice' in Quality Management. The impetus for my application came from a friend and colleague, Dr Barbara Dexter, who saw something in me that I didn't and suggested I apply.

I wish to thank Barbara, specifically, and DBS generally, for their commitment in terms of funding, advice and support over the past three-and-a-half years.

My Director of Studies for this same period has been UoD Reader, Dr David Longbottom, and I wish to extend my sincere thanks to David for his patience, advice, understanding and encouragement.

As a supervision team, David and Barbara complemented each other superbly, providing that balance of friendship, intellectual guidance, and challenge, just when they were needed. I could not have asked for better support.

My thanks also go to other colleagues within UoD, but specifically to Gino Franco and Joe Marshall for their friendly guidance and 'expert' contributions.

I will be forever grateful to the people at the two participating organisations who granted me the facility to carry out the research, allowed me to attend meetings, and gave me access to relevant documentation. To those whom I interviewed – sometimes on a number of occasions – my sincere thanks for their patience and co-operation.

Finally, I could not even have considered this without the love and support of my wife, Janet, whose encouragement and humour when I needed it, and immense tolerance over the last four years, has kept me going. Thank you.

Part One: Introduction, Research Proposal, Researcher Background

Chapter 1: Introduction to Thesis

1.1: Introduction

This chapter forms the first section of Part One and its purpose is to present an overview of the thesis, which is concerned with the implementation of Business Process Reengineering (BPR) in two Local Government Organisations (LGOs).

The thesis is structured into four main parts:

- Part One – Introduction
- Part Two – Literature Review
- Part Three – Methodology & Analysis
- Part Four – Conclusions

This first part will deal with the background to the research itself, including brief personal details of the researcher, to enable the reader to understand the context against which this qualitative research study has been conducted.

Second, the Literature Review deals primarily with BPR since its inception, almost two decades ago, its growth and diffusion through that final decade of the 20th Century, and beyond. The review also looks at relevant aspects of Change Management, Public Sector context and culture, and Critical Success and Failure Factors (CSF & CFF), along with more emergent issues surrounding 'Organizational Readiness', Leadership, the concept of 'Degrees' of BPR, and links to systems thinking.

Part Three deals with Methodology and Analysis, and Part Four with Conclusions.

1.2: Research Proposal

Background:

The background to this study is the continued and increasing requirement for reform and improvements across the UK public sector, and in particular within local government:

'But too often residents have perceived and experienced local government as impenetrable, uninformative, unresponsive and patronizing. They have been passed from pillar to post – 'not my responsibility, sorry, you could try...' – and have felt helpless, angry and fobbed off. They wonder who is responsible for what, and what their Council Tax is paying for' (Gaster & Squires, 2003: 117).

With 'reengineering' one of the approaches adopted by some local authorities in their drive for improvement, the purpose of this study was to test Hammer and Champy's (2001: 2) assertion that reengineering is 'alive and well,' and that it had, in fact, been 'one of the success stories of business history,' but in the context of its employment in these local government change programmes.

The primary research objectives therefore were to:

- identify and critically evaluate empirical research evidence on BPR, with particular emphasis on practice in the public sector;
- investigate the adoption of BPR within the range of change management practices in two selected local authorities;
- make recommendations for policy makers and practitioners regarding the adoption of BPR as a change management technique within the public sector;
- contribute to knowledge and understanding of BPR implementation within the public sector.

The proposal for this study emerged from a combination of events, but primarily from this University's involvement with two local government organisations* (LGOs) who had embarked, or were embarking, upon a series of strategic change initiatives. Other factors were the publication of Sir Peter Gershon's 'Spending Review 2004: Efficiency Review – Releasing Resources for the Frontline: Independent Review of Public Sector Efficiency,' and the opportunity within the University of Derby's Faculty of Business, Computing

and Law, to present a full-time research proposal. Additionally, both LGOs had stated their intentions to adopt 'reengineering' (although one chose to call it something else) as part of their change management strategies, and early enquiries elicited the facility to engage with them in this study, whilst they implemented these aims.

Existing teaching partnerships with both LGOs provided additional, valuable and contextual 'preunderstanding' (Gummesson, 2000) on which to found the research. A 'generally (but not exclusively) inductive' case study approach (Hartley, 1994: 211) allowed the 'opportunity to explore issues in depth' (ibid) on a primarily cross-sectional basis. These 'in depth' interviews were augmented by observation at meetings, access to organisational documentation and, later, impact analysis interviews to validate findings.

Emergent concepts – 'organisational readiness' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995) and 'project radicalness' (Kettinger, et al., 1997) – were investigated with a range of interviewees in both organisations, and developed in combination to provide a contribution to knowledge through additional guidance to policy-makers and practitioners engaged in understanding or implementing potentially radical change within the services sector generally, and the public sector and LGOs in particular.

* Overviews of both LGOs are given in section 6.1 (pp. 226-229).

1.3: Researcher Background

I was on BT (formerly the GPO and Post Office Telecommunications) for 34 years from 1962 until I took early voluntary retirement in 1996. In 1997 I commenced a full-time MBA at the University of Derby (gaining a Distinction, and the 'Master's Level Prize for Outstanding Performance'), after which I was taken on as a 'sessional' lecturer. Since then I have taught locally and abroad (Switzerland, Israel), with over the later years an increasing focus on Post-graduate Leadership and Change programmes (including Business Process Reengineering and Service Redesign) – within large public sector

organisations – more recently embracing also the concepts of 'Lean', and systems thinking. During my latter years on BT I was directly involved in a number of 'reengineering' experiences, giving me valuable 'preunderstanding' (ibid) to underpin this study. For a full background see Appendix 1.

Part Two: Literature Review

Chapter 2: Introduction; background, origins and definitions of BPR

Working 'smarter not harder'?
(Skinner, 1986)

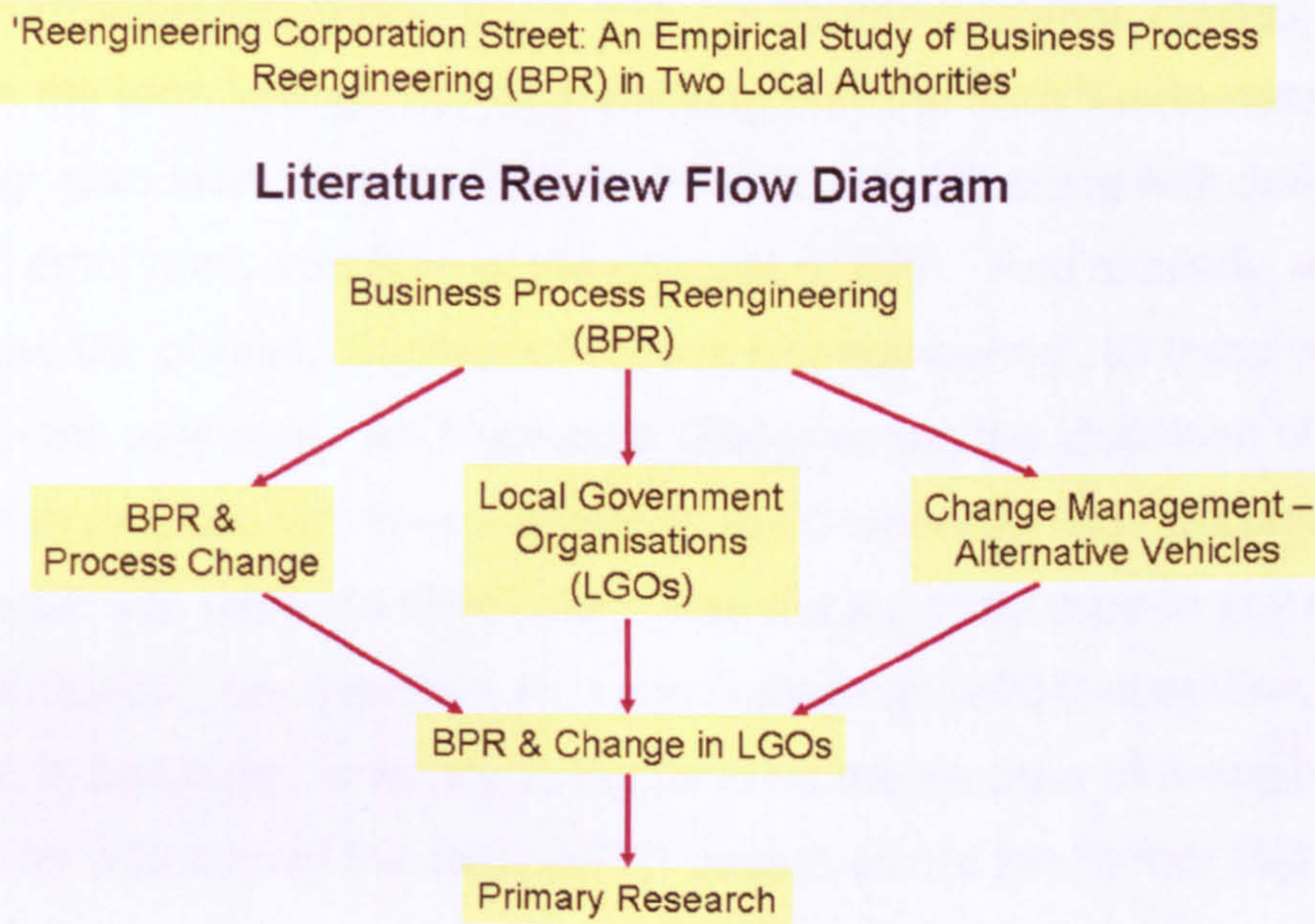
This review of the literature will consider the position to date on BPR, its use within the context of the UK Public Sector alongside other alternative vehicles for Change Management, and emerging from this also will be the issues of Leadership and Organisational Culture.

It would not be possible to review all of the available literature on BPR in the time available, but enough must be considered so that this 'report from the archives', with its inevitable 'selecting, pruning, editing, commenting, interpreting, delivering (of) judgements', is sufficiently 'scholarly' to provide an adequate foundation – 'a comprehensive search of relevant published material' (Phillips & Pugh, 1994: 36) – on which to proceed to build a new investigation. As Jackson (1996: 587) said, 'As academic researchers, we have to make a concerted effort to reach practitioners and compellingly engage them with rhetorical critiques that are informed by all that is good about the academic tradition'. We have to make a difference. This *comprehensive search* will therefore begin with BPR – its background and origins, history, context and track record – as part of a basic overall structure (overleaf, Fig. 2.0), with the intention of leading the researcher towards any gaps in current knowledge in order to clarify the ultimate focus of this research.

What it may not do is cover every aspect of BPR – for example, whether or not it is truly 'innovative' (Grint, 1994: 183), riddled with 'masculine idealism' (Case, 1995), simply 'rhetoric' (Jackson, 1996), or 'violent rhetoric' (Grint and Case, 1998), a 'panacea' or 'managerial obsession' (Gill and Whittle, 1993), or whether Michael Hammer really was 'reengineering's John the Baptist'

(Stewart and Davis, 1993) – but instead it will accept BPR as a change-management technique, evinced by the continued abundance of writing on the topic to date.

Fig. 2.0: Literature Review Flow Diagram



2.1 Background to Business Process Reengineering

The history of BPR could be approached like the history of the human race: one could commence with the appearance of the first humanoid form capable of walking upright, or start right back at the 'beginning' 13.7 billion years ago as Bryson (2004: 29) did in 'A Short History of Nearly Everything', but that's a lot of ground to cover. As Bryson says – perhaps even epistemologically – 'It's not so much about what we know, as about how we know what we know,' and the 'what we know' about BPR has to start somewhere. So this review will choose the *walking humanoid* point, the 'Lucy' (Johanson & Edey, 1982) of BPR, as the first step into the literature, whilst acknowledging also that the background and origins will of necessity take the story at least some way back into its pre-erectus period.

The first recorded use of the term 'reengineer' in the context of 'business' (as opposed to pure engineering) appears to have been in 1990, and the at least

initial suggestion is that this was in Michael Hammer's seminal article, 'Reengineering Work: Don't Automate, Obliterate', in the Harvard Business Review (July-August). In the sentence, 'We should "reengineer" our businesses: use the power of modern information technology to radically redesign our business processes in order to achieve dramatic improvement in their performance' (Hammer, 1990: 104; his double-quotation marks), he not only uses the term 'reengineer', but, missing only the term 'fundamental rethinking', also articulates the details of his (1993: 32; along with James Champy) embryonic definition of the concept of BPR. And similarly, whilst he doesn't use the phrase, 'Business Process Reengineering', all three words are present in the sentence. As MacIntosh (2003) notes, the 'definition of re-engineering proposed in *Re-engineering* the Corporation* has become largely synonymous with the term BPR (which was not explicitly used in any of the seminal articles)'. For example, Kim and Ramkaran (2004) state that, 'Hammer, in particular, is widely recognized as the inventor of reengineering, and the one who coined the term, BPR'; except where the former might be true, the latter is not.

Ballé (1995) also cites Hammer and Champy (1993) as 'the consultants who coined the expression 'business re-engineering' (p. 27), and in his 'Acknowledgements' also made the link between 'systems thinking' and 'business process re-engineering' with:

'As I was working on practical applications of the Systems Thinking framework*, I came across Michael Hammer and James Champy's *Re-engineering** the Corporation: a Manifesto for Business Revolution* which, in a way, established the programme for business process re-engineering. The concepts they exposed enabled me to draw a link between the general dynamic structures I had previously been studying, and the very pragmatic workplace improvement techniques I was using in practical applications' (Ballé, 1995: 9).

(* Ballé, 1994)

(** NB Hammer and Champy used the non-hyphenated 'Reengineering' in their original title.)

This does not mean that nothing prior to then will be considered. The opposite applies: the concepts of 'processes', 'systems thinking', and the uses

of information technology towards business improvement, will have to be considered as the underpinning foundations on which the first courses of BPR's structural brickwork were laid. In fact Mingers (2000: 738), in a paper acknowledging Peter Checkland's work in developing 'soft systems methodology' (SSM), comments:

'This recognized that systems ideas were helpful for *structuring* messy situations rather than *solving* problems, constructing notional systems rather than simply redesigning what already existed, and recognizing that information needs followed from properly designed organizational activities, thus predating BPR by some 20 years.'

It was some years later, in Thomas Davenport's cautionary reflection on where some of it had gone wrong – 'The Fad That Forgot People' – that he referred to the 'primal soup' from which 'reengineering' had 'emerged' (Davenport, 1995: 70), recalling, 'It was the late 1980s and reengineering was in the air.' In his and James Short's key article, 'The New Industrial Engineering: Information Technology and Business Process Redesign' (1990), he did not, however, specifically use the term 'reengineering' in the *business* context, preferring to use 'redesign' instead.

Published in the 'Summer*** 1990' issue of the (then) Sloan Management Review (renamed MIT Sloan Management Review in 2001), Davenport and Short talked of 'business process redesign', and this was almost coincident with the publication of Michael Hammer's seminal article, 'Reengineering Work: Don't Automate, Obliterate', appearing in the 'July-August' issue of the Harvard Business Review (Hammer, 1990: 104). Arguably this Sloan/MIT article provided the first opportunity for the abbreviation 'BPR' to be applied, as indeed it was (p.11), although the phrase *business process redesign* was then subsumed alongside *information technology* into Davenport and Short's preferred term, 'New Industrial Engineering' (NIE?).

(*** Confirmed as 'June 1990' by Davenport in his 1993 text, p. ix.)

The need for businesses to realign their focus on to 'processes' emerged from the realisation that the contemporary focus on Information Technology (IT) had not 'yielded the dramatic improvement companies need[ed]' (Hammer, 1990: 104) and that, in his words, it was 'time to stop paving the cow paths.' In his apparent frustration at the failure of what he perceived as the 'usual methods for boosting performance,' Hammer was encouraging managers to 'release the power of computers by challenging centuries-old notions about work,' and that instead 'of embedding outdated processes in silicon and software, we should obliterate them and start over.' His concern that companies were tending to 'use technology to mechanize old ways of doing business' was simultaneously echoed by Davenport and Short's assertion that the 'organizations that *have* used IT to redesign boundary-crossing, customer-driven processes [had] benefited enormously.'

This audit-trail back to MIT and the apparent (at the time) non-delivery of IT-based efficiencies is reinforced by Greasley (1999), with:

'In fact the thinking behind 'business process re-engineering' goes back to the late 1970s when a research programme at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology looked at investment by the US and Europe in technology. It was discovered from this research that despite the billions of dollars spent on technology during the 1970s there had been only a one percent increase in productivity. Further research then showed that instead of breaking down the barriers between business functions and specialisms, information technology departments were reinforcing them, making them higher and damage proof (Towers, 1994).'

And there are still examples of other, modernising organisations falling foul of an over-reliance on technological solutions:

'According to rival retailers, Sainsbury and the army of management consultants that were involved in the modernisation of its supply chain have quite simply over-automated the process' (Richard Fletcher; 'Sainsbury's Basket Case', *The Sunday Times, Business Focus*, October 17th, 2004, p. 5).

Early in the 1990s the first BPR books by those original authors followed, and became equally seminal texts; 'Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto

for Business Revolution', by Michael Hammer and James Champy, and 'Process Innovation: Reengineering Work through Information Technology' by Thomas Davenport, both published in 1993.

It is also interesting to note, however, that a third, perhaps equally seminal text therefore, appeared earlier, in 1991; 'Business Process Improvement: The Breakthrough Strategy for Total Quality, Productivity and Competitiveness', by H. James Harrington. Harrington opens with the express belief that 'there was one major breakthrough in the 1980s,' and that it wasn't statistical process control (SPC), employee involvement, just-in-time (JIT), total quality management (TQM), quality function (or 'policy') deployment (QFD), benchmarking, poor-quality cost (Crosby, 1980, 1986), Taguchi methods or the Malcolm Baldrige Award(s), etc., but that it was 'the realization by management that business and manufacturing processes, not the people, are the key to error-free performance' (Harrington, 1991: vii). This almost suggests that the claim (largely emanating from the TQM movement) 'Our People are our Greatest Asset' (Sic.; Peters & Waterman, 1982: 238) should be rewritten to say, 'Our Processes are our Greatest Asset'. Whilst this was unlikely to be the intention, Harrington's statement will warrant further reflection later in a fuller discussion on the people issues, and impacts on them, of BPR.

At the same time as Hammer's original 'reengineering' article, another text by Womack, Jones and Roos (1990; 'The Machine that Changed the World') was delineating Toyota's new production system and the 'Rise of Lean Production' (but see also Krafcik, 1988, who first articulated the term) as a systems approach to automobile manufacture.

Given their (Hammer, Davenport & Short, Harrington) calendric proximity of publication, Harrington's possible (if not resolute) avoidance of the term 'reengineering', in favour of the milder 'improvement', in his 1991 text is possibly surprising, given Davenport's (albeit later) comment that by 'the late 1980s', ... 'reengineering was in the air' (1995: 71).

2.2 What is a 'Process'?

It was W. Edwards Deming who said, 'If you can't describe what you are doing as a process, you don't know what you are doing.' And, if one is permitted to substitute the word 'system', he also made the point, 'People work in the system. Management create the system.' Deming himself (1986: 315) used this similitude when stating – re. the 'confusion between common causes and special causes':

'I should estimate that in my experience most troubles and most possibilities for improvement add up to proportions something like this: 94% belong to the system (responsibility of management) and 6% special' (also cited in; Harrington, 1991: vii).

The word process – 'the fourth key word in our definition' – was highlighted by Hammer and Champy (1993: 35) as also 'the most important in our definition...', and that, 'it is also the one that gives most corporate managers the greatest difficulty,' so perhaps it would be best here to provide its definition, or, definitions.

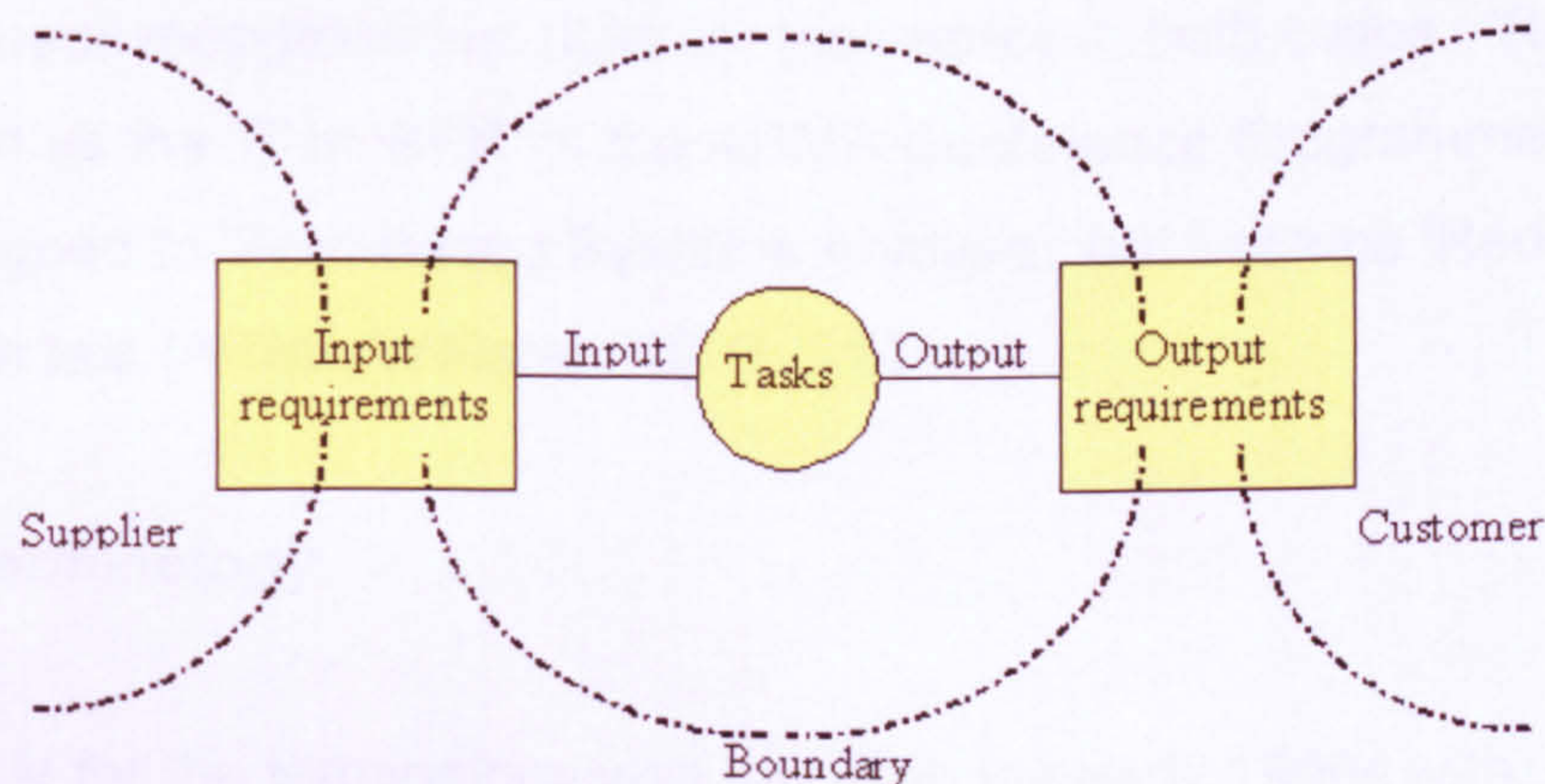
Whilst Hammer did not define 'process' in his 1990 article, Hammer and Champy (ibid) defined 'a business process' as a 'collection of activities that takes one or more kinds of input and creates an output that is of value to the customer.' Davenport and Short (1990: 12) defined it as 'a set of logically related tasks performed to achieve a defined business outcome.'

Interestingly also, earlier that same year, but continents apart, in the February issue of TQM Magazine (1990, pp. 21-23) Boehling and Joksch defined process as 'a group of logically related tasks (decisions and activities) that, when performed, utilize the resources of the business to produce definite results,' suggesting that these two Brussels- and Stuttgart-based (respectively) consultants were thinking along similar lines to the previous two pairs of authors, although considerably earlier, if the dates are anything to go by. In their TQM Magazine article, 'Strategies for 1992 and Beyond,' they promote the view that since 'all work is viewed as a process and the quality

focus of *business process management* is continuous improvement' ... 'the concept of Cross-Functional Cooperation is required to achieve continuous improvement of process effectiveness, efficiency and adaptability' (this author's italics).

More simply, Albitz and Baldrige (1991: 351) suggested that 'business processes' – 'often called horizontal processes, cross-functional processes or white collar processes' – were 'better known as 'the way things move through the company'.' But Albitz (1989) had defined it earlier as, 'every task performed in a work activity needed to assure that the work activity yields a product or service that conforms to requirements.' Her 'process model' is shown below (ibid):

Fig. 2.1: Process Model



Albitz (ibid) separates a 'process' from a 'series of tasks', because a process has a 'measurable input and output, it has customers and suppliers, it has added value, and is repeatable.'

Davenport later (1993: 5) defined a process as 'simply a structured, measured set of activities designed to produce a specified output for a particular customer or market,' and reinforced this with, 'A process is thus a specific ordering of work activities across time and place, with a beginning, an end, and clearly identified inputs and outputs: a structure for action.'

Harrington (1991: 9) had already nailed this quite firmly to the mast with the very similar, and therefore perhaps prescient (as far as the published texts were concerned) process definition; 'Any activity or group of activities that takes an input, adds value to it, and provides an output to an internal or external customer,' adding that processes, 'use an organization's resources to provide definitive results.'

The four key words that appear to emerge from these early process definitions are; *activities*, *input*, *output* and *customer*, and a fifth might be *value*, or the notion of *added-value*.

The other non-*reengineering* 'R-words' that need capturing from that time are: 'Reinvent', as Hammer and Champy used it in their 1993 text when they state, 'In this book we demonstrate how existing corporations *can* reinvent themselves', continuing, 'We call the techniques they can use to accomplish this *business reengineering*' (ibid: 2), their italics in both cases. 'Redefinition' appeared as the 'R' in 'BPR' in the ARMA Conference Programme of October 1992, aligned to 'Zero-Based Systems Analysis,' but became 'Redesign' again within the text (ARMA/Williams, 1992: 5/6).

2.3 Terminology

This tussle for the terminology was fought in the early 1990s with, initially, Davenport & Short's 'Business Process Redesign' (June 1990); 'Reengineering' appearing by itself in Hammer's July/August 1990 article; Boehling & Joksch's 'Business Process Management' (BPM; 1990); Harrington's 'BPI' (Business Process Improvement) in 1991; Parnaby's (1991) 'Manufacturing/[Engineering] Business Redesign' (M[E]BR?); Davenport's reductive 'Process Innovation' (PI; 1993); 'Business Reengineering' (BR?) in Hammer & Champy's (1993) text; Heygate's (1993) 'Core Process Redesign' (CPR); and Watson's (1994) 'Business Systems Engineering' (BSE). Watson (ibid: 3), though, was one of those to capture in print the term 'Business Process Reengineering (BPR)', creating that precise link, whilst citing (ibid: 5) Hammer and Champy's (1993: 32) definition of 'reengineering', when in fact

those two seminal authors never actually brought those three words together in that text, nor used the 'BPR' abbreviation. Very clearly they stated: 'We call the techniques they can use to accomplish this *business reengineering*,...' (p. 2), and, 'We called it *business reengineering*' (p. 5), their italics.

Watson's usage of BPR, however, is not the one sought, as his clear intention was to challenge and move away from it in favour of his own 'Business Systems Engineering'.

Obolensky's (1994) text presents a minor semantic conundrum with its main title of 'Practical Business Re-engineering' (PBR?), and his definition that it is; 'what an organisation undertakes to change its internal processes and controls from a traditional vertical, functional hierarchy to a horizontal, cross-functional, team-based, flat structure which focuses on the process of delighting customers' (1994: 15). This *definition* includes the words 'processes' and 'process', but later in his text he makes an apparently clear distinction between his title and the term 'BPR' within the sentence commencing, 'One of the failings of some Business Re-engineering programmes, especially those focused on business process re-engineering (BPR), ...' (1994: 114), seemingly suggesting that his own 'business re-engineering' is a 'non-process-based' activity? This inconsistency is made worse by 'BPR' never appearing once in his six-page index, with 're-engineering' warranting only four mentions, but never in its own right, with the main focus of the index being a section titled 'business engineering', the first reference in which (p. 15) starts with the title, 'WHAT IS BUSINESS RE-ENGINEERING?'.

Watson (1994) does, however, cite another previous usage of the phrase 'Business Process Reengineering' when in his Bibliography (p. 277) he references a 1993 text (as 'a collection of articles on Business Process Reengineering from 1990 until the middle of 1993') by the 'Institute of Industrial Engineers' (Industrial Engineering and Management Press), which might possibly be the first specific usage, the front cover's full title being, 'BPR – Business Process Reengineering – Current Issues and Applications.'

Tantalisingly prescient, perhaps, and part of the above 'collection', was Knorr's (1991) article, 'Business Process Redesign: Key to Competitiveness,' where whilst never actually using the abbreviation 'BPR' or the specific term 'Business Process Reengineering,' does use the phrases, 'reengineering of business processes,' 'process reengineering,' 'reengineering business processes' and 'reengineering processes.'

Given the much wider, international, and now very different agricultural usage of the abbreviation, it is perhaps fortuitous that Watson's 'BSE' did not catch on.

Other early followers of the genre assisted the semantic evolution with (again) 'Business Process Redesign' (Knorr, 1991: 48) – 'BPR', but not at that time 'Reengineering' – and 'process simplification' (Sirvanci & Durmaz, 1994: 2).

In their 1992 'review' (presumably pre-publication?*) of Davenport's 'recent book', Craig and Yetton comment that:

'Terms for the activity proliferate – business process redesign, core process redesign, re-engineering, the new industrial engineering and horizontal structures. This diversity is echoed in the variety of descriptions of business process redesign offered by different authors' (1992: 285).

(* NB According to the text, this book was first published in '1993', but in 'The Fad That Forgot People', 1995 [p. 71] Thomas Davenport states quite clearly that "'Process Innovation," my reengineering book, came out in November 1992.' Even here, just two or three years on, Davenport himself appears to have reverted to 'Reengineering', as he commences with, 'Reengineering didn't start out...', and continues to use this term predominantly throughout the article.)

Ballé (1995: 11) steps in to bring a touch of reality with:

'Beyond the hype, BPR is fundamentally about redesigning processes.'

Yet, none of these writers were the *inventors* of BPR (although Watson, 1994, might have been one of the first to coin it specifically in his own individual publication, even then he was not writing as an advocate). No-one *invented* it. More, they discovered it. As we have seen, in its various species – part of the 'quality' genus – BPR had evolved; it was *out there* roaming in the jungle that was corporate America, as evinced within Sasaki and Hutchins (1984):

'In other words, what Japanese manufacturers have achieved so far is *process* innovation rather than product innovation,' (p. v, their emphasis);

and:

'The 1960s was the era of the miraculous growth of the Japanese economy and, therefore, of the successive introduction of new machines and equipment which brought about "process innovation"' (p. 115).

But there was further evidence elsewhere, although much earlier, when Brenner (2000) talked of one company owner who 'lectured on quality with the zeal and regularity of a Sunday preacher':

'He left the managing to others and spent his time tinkering with new products, new manufacturing techniques, new ways to improve quality and efficiency. Those who worked for him described him as a dictator. But he was much more than that. He was an explorer, a conqueror. He wanted everything made cheaper and faster than the competition. To do that, he brought the wisdom of outside industries into his business. He studied the production of steel to learn how to conduct a product through his plant without touching it. He studied the manufacture of cement to better understand how to mix his own ingredients. He borrowed DuPont's planning system and patterned his management structure after T. G. Rose's Higher Control in Management, a British book that emphasizes flat, simple organization. He routinely rebuilt the standard [product] manufacturing equipment, making it less wasteful and easier to operate. And he was never satisfied' (Brenner, 2000: 67/68).

And, with prescient shades of Toyota's TPS today, there was also worker empowerment and the 'authority' to 'stop the line':

'He also installed a complicated system of checks and balances to ensure the quality of his [product]. All workers on the factory floor were authorized to halt production if they noticed something wrong, and they were berated by [name] if they didn't do just that' (ibid: 68).

The product? Candy, chocolate.

The name? Forrest.

The company? Mars.

And the year? 1934.

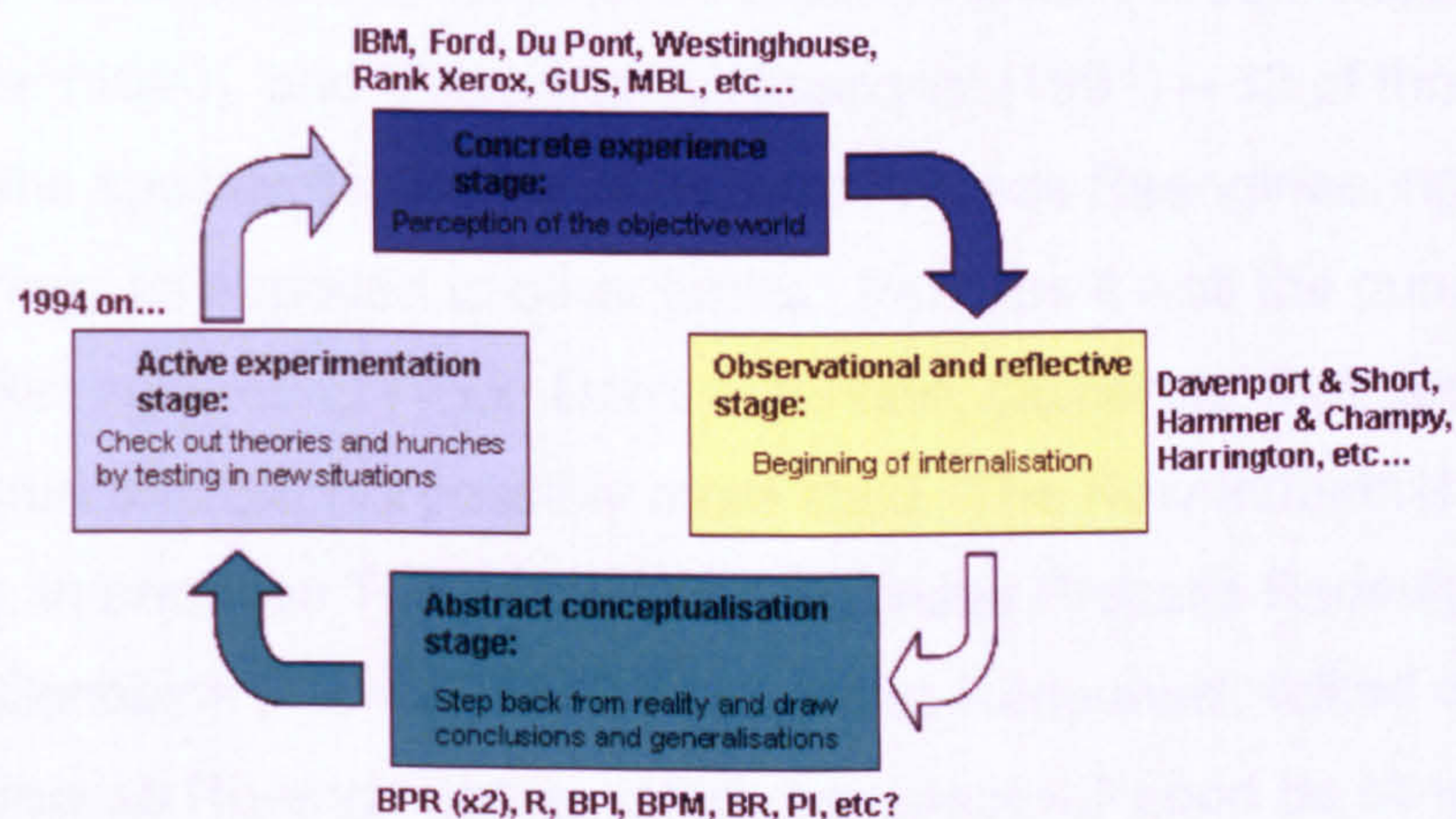
Without the words being used, this also was process innovation, continuous improvement, process redesign, re-invention, and BPR; allied with worker empowerment, committed leadership and a 'zeal' (ibid: 66) for quality. In Peters' (1988) words, this was 'A Passion for Excellence'. Brenner continues, giving some up-to-date perspective to these practices:

'Today, business gurus loudly espouse the merits of such practices. Total Quality Management, Worker Empowerment and Total Responsibility – these are modern business buzzwords. But what they really mean is, be like Forrest Mars – give workers a sense of ownership in the final product; rewards employees for their performance; encourage workers to make decisions for themselves; focus on quality, quality, quality. Such popular new products as General Motors's Saturn have been built on these so-called innovative ideas' (ibid).

In succeeding decades this approach was being fed, nurtured and accommodated in places like IBM ('process management'), Ford (cited by Hammer, and Davenport & Short, 1990), Du Pont, Westinghouse, Baxter Healthcare Corporation, Rank Xerox UK, GUS Home Shopping, Silicon Graphics, Mutual Benefit Life, and Hewlett-Packard (ibid), when these almost pith-helmeted scientists from Ernst and Young (Harrington was their International Quality Adviser), MIT/Sloan School of Management and Hammer & Co. spotted it there, lurking amongst other, known species of improvement techniques. Except, this creature appeared more aggressive (Grint & Case, 1998). And in an apparently, yet quintessentially Kolb-like way (see Fig. 2.2, overleaf), these *concrete* industrial *experiences*, once observed, were taken

back to the laboratories, their Ivy-League 'Beagles', and *reflected* upon, dissected and identified, until it was clear, or at least clearer, what, exactly, was happening, and then *conceptualized*, before being described in detail to an improvement-hungry commercial and industrial world (Hammer, 1990; Davenport & Short, 1990; Harrington, 1991), where the 'active experimentation' could proceed:

Fig. 2.2: Kolb & BPR Experiences



Adapted from Kolb, D., (1984), cited in Mullins, L. J., (2002) *Management and Organisational Behaviour*, 6th edition, London, FT/Prentice Hall, p. 369, Fig. 10.4

Based on these discoveries, the rest of corporate America, and elsewhere, were then free to plan their *experiments*, and test out this new, *radical* species of improvement technique, in anticipation of their own *dramatic* results. There then began far more *concrete experiences*, followed by yet more *observations* and *reflections*, not all of them positive.

2.4 BPR becomes established

One, quick, sample search of 'BPR' literature for '1990', '1991' and '1992' produced seven new results. '1993' delivered 28, but '1994' immediately exposed more than 100. This, then, appeared to be the period of shakedown for BPR's identification – how *it* really became to be known. Rather like the battle for supremacy of VHS over Betamax and U-Matic (see; Cusumano, et al., 1991), 'Business Process Reengineering' became the corporate

household name – the VHS of BPR – leaving 'Process Redesign', 'Process Innovation' and 'Process Improvement' floundering in its conceptualised wake. And as Albitz (2006; cited also again below) says of 'reengineering', 'Thanks to Hammer we have a name for it now.'

Although, in reality, those 'thanks' might more appropriately be owing to Georgia's Institute of Industrial Engineers for their 'collection of articles'? From a sample of 36 of those 1994 articles that used the term BPR in this context – i.e., as opposed to 'Business Property Relief' (1988), 'Bureau of Public Roads' (1990), and 'Black Public Relations' (1991) – 32 of those (89%) used either the specific descriptor, 'Business Process Reengineering,' or 'Reengineering,' as opposed to other forms. Perhaps it was the punchiness of Hammer's 'Reengineering Work: Don't Automate, Obliterate' that appealed, over Davenport and Short's possibly more staid, 'The New Industrial Engineering: Information Technology and Business Process Redesign.' Either way, Scribbins (1994: 7), in 'The Logistics Response', talked of 'Business Process Re-engineering, which I suspect will soon be simply BPR...'

A victory of marketing over substance? Microsoft over Apple (with 'windows' technology, and the 'mouse')? In Ries and Trout's (1994) terms, it was 'The Law of Leadership' ('It's better to be first than it is to be better.') combined with 'The Law of Focus' ('The most powerful concept in marketing is owning a word in the prospect's mind.') – and Hammer was *first* with, and now *owned*, the *word* 'reengineering.' No matter, the species was established, and BPR, in the form of 'Business Process Reengineering', was there to stay. However, even though above I stated that 'No-one *invented* it,' Champy later laid claim to that ownership of 'Reengineering' for himself and Hammer with the statement, 'I was one of the two people who introduced the concept' (Champy, 1995: 1), although I have discovered a counter to that.

An e-mail dated 19 January 2006 from Lisa Albitz states (edited extracts):

'Hammer is the one who made business re-engineering famous but I, too had a hand in that transformation. In 1989 I published a paper with the Juran Institute as part of their annual IMPRO conference called State of the Art Processes in Administration. This paper talked about the significance in organizational contribution of improving administrative processes that affect each and every employee in the company – the mail service, the copy center and the telephone services. The paper discussed not only the savings within the process itself but attempted to extrapolate the savings generated throughout the company by these types of improvements. My paper was voted the best paper of the conference and the smart people at the Juran Institute including Dr. Juran himself, asked that I be a part of their new service offering: Business Process Improvement. I went with them to several conferences describing the potential "gains" by using the concept and the Juran Institute sold the training materials and classroom time...

'I do know of a specific reference to Process Management before '91 – but I don't remember all of the contents – Gabriel Pall published a book called Process Management ['Quality Process Management', actually. JC]. He had worked at IBM and when he left he wrote this book that was my primer! I believe it was published about 1986 or so [1987, JC]...

'As I mentioned, the terms have become inter-changeable over time so the exact TITLE will be difficult to pinpoint, I suggest you follow the concept – how it evolved over time could be of interest, too. My personal opinion is that Process Management in manufacturing gave birth to Business Process Management[*] so that it had a name as it applied to administrative or business processes. Process Management which I was taught included both process fixes and significant improvement due to significant process changes. Someone capitalized on the latter and began to call that re-engineering – I suspect an industrial engineer saw the opportunity – I can't recall right now who did that but it might have been used by Hammer first when he focused on the organization and since it's such a catchy word, it got applied to processes as well – I was using the term re-engineering and referring to processes in 1990 for sure...

'Re-engineering which was applied to the whole organization by Hammer in his Re-Engineering the Organization, that might be the first use. My consulting team had been doing the same kind of work before the Hammer book was published but we just called it Change Management and Organizational Sponsorship because we felt that focusing on process was truly a cultural change. Thanks to Hammer we have a name for it now.'

* Albitz may well be correct, for in Pall's (1987) book he specifically uses this term when discussing the 'consolidation stage' of a business improvement effort, commencing with 'the "business process management kickoff" meeting' (p. 248).

Intentionally, or consciously, or not, Pall provides strong links between the work of (e.g.) Crosby (1986), Hammer (1990), Hammer and Champy (1993), and Seddon (2003).

For example, Crosby talks of 'Prevention' as no. 2, the 'System', in his (1986: 64) 'Four Absolutes of Quality', and Pall (1987: 48) states that '*process improvement*' is 'part of prevention – the management of intent.' He defines 'prevention' as 'dealing with a situation beforehand: hindering or averting the occurrence of something through *planned* countermeasures.' And he goes on, 'In the context of quality management, it means ensuring the intended outcome, that is, conformance to requirements' – which, verbatim, is Crosby's 1st 'Absolute', his 'Definition' (of Quality Management), 'Conformance to Requirements.' Further, under 'Process Effectiveness', Pall argues that, 'Of the three basic characteristics of an independent process, effectiveness is the most critical because it, above all, ensures conformance to requirements' (p. 151).

Where Pall (p. 174) states that, 'At the process level, the process owner is responsible for this quality assessment', he is aligned with Hammer and Champy's (1993: 108) 'the process owner's job is to make it happen in the small, at the individual process level.'

And when Pall states; 'Process capability prediction is part of process design, which in turn is part of the management of intent – so are actions on the process, whose objective is process capability improvement, which, in turn, results in continuing quality improvement' (p. 80), he is preaching from the same sheet as Seddon's (2003: 71), 'Only capability measures should be used for managing. The discussion should focus on what can be predicted and what scope there is for improvement, which means working on understanding the nature and causes of variation.'

Similarly, I suggest, it is not a huge stretch to interpret Pall's 'Process improvement by means of:

- 1) definition of user requirements and specifications;
- 2) analysis of process quality measurements; and
- 3) corrective action on the process (process capability improvement and other preventive measures)' (p. 164);

...as the same as what Seddon (ibid: 49) calls, 'Purpose, Measures, Method.'

Finally, under the heading of 'Process Theory,' Pall, as have others, refers to von Bertalanffy (1968) when acknowledging that 'General system theory classifies living organisms as *open systems*; by extension, any process that includes humans must also be classified as an open system – inherently capable of improvement and adaptation' (p. 158).

In 'The Fad That Forgot People' (1995: 71), Thomas Davenport describes his version of that voyage of discovery through the 'late 1980s in Boston,' when 'reengineering was in the air.' He describes how it was Hammer who 'was arguing that technologists needed to try harder to change basic work processes,' and that the 'concept' of reengineering 'brought together three components, none of which was new, but none of which had previously been connected':

'It began with technology: the real value of computing was not simply in doing work more efficiently, but in changing how work was done as well. To that was added the notion of "business processes," borrowed from the then-hot quality movement. The last piece of the puzzle was the idea of a clean-sheet-of-paper change program, an appealing prospect to large industrial companies seeking to escape the straightjacket of the past. Big companies with big problems were eager for Big Change' (Davenport, 1995: 71).

The terminology of that final sentence is interesting to compare with Hammer's more current 'Deep Change: How Operational Innovation Can

Transform Your Company' (2004); and his phrase, '... the invention and deployment of new ways of doing work,' is redolent of Seddon's (2003) 'a better way to make the work work' (although Seddon claims that BPR is just a 'fad', when the two authors really do not actually seem that far apart), but more of that later.

The 1980s connection is also provided by Hayes and Wheelwright (1984; cited in Greasley, 1999: 274/275), who 'outline how manufacturing companies were the first to pursue breakthrough business improvements in the 1980s. Towards the end of the 1980s the idea of re-designing or re-engineering business processes gained popularity.' Greasley does not, however, evince any reference to the specific terminology, pre-1990, simply saying, 'Business process re-engineering became popular largely as a result of articles by Hammer (1990) and Davenport and Short (1990).'

The success stories of those early, pioneering organisations, where this technique was first discovered, are well documented and cited; now part of (at least America's) corporate history. Yet it has not all been success. BPR has its protagonists, its advocates, its evangelists, but it also has its detractors, its critics, and its abusers – even its obituaries: in 'Death to Cuts', Peltu (1996) claimed 'BPR is dead,' yet clearly that is not the case.

The rhetoric has abounded, and in fact that in itself was criticised by Grint and Case (1998) in 'The Violent Rhetoric of Re-engineering: Management Consultancy on the Offensive.' The key 'concern' of this paper was the exposure of BPR as a 'particularly bellicose product' (of US management consultancy), and 'the resurgence of explicit masculine aggression in managerial discourse.' However, just as Hammer and Seddon might not be as far apart as they (or at least Seddon) would have us believe, Grint and Case's arguments do not always stand up to scrutiny either. For example, they cite Hammer and Stanton's (1995: xvi) 'metaphor' for their book being a 'Swiss Army Knife', claiming it to be a 'provocative analogy which in this context looks remarkably like general Kiggell's threat of the bayonet charge and is evoked,' and, they contend, 'with similar intent' (Grint and Case: 572).

Yet a closer read of Hammer and Stanton's text reveals their analogy simply to mean, 'a number of tools that share a housing' – hardly 'violent rhetoric', unless one considers the average DIY toolbox to be some sort of domestic arsenal of WMD?

Far from being 'dead', in their 'updated and revised' edition of 'Reengineering the Corporation' Hammer and Champy claim that reengineering 'is not gone; it is alive and well,' and that it is 'misleading' to say that reengineering is 'back', because the 'truth is, it never went away' (2001: 2). And they continue that, 'Reengineering is, in fact, one of the success stories of business history' (ibid), and it is this assertion, really – perhaps one should say, 'fundamentally'? – that is at the core of this piece of research: *is* BPR truly 'alive and well'? *Is* that the case in the UK public sector LGOs? And, more specifically, *does* that 'success story', or *do* such 'stories', obtain within the recent experiences of the two local authorities being considered?

Before that, however, we must consider where BPR has been since that period of discovery a decade-and-a-half-ago, what other successes – or not – might there have been along the way, what other vehicles for change are in the field of choice, and what are the current drivers of that change within the public sector in the UK?

Chapter 3 BPR to Date

3.1 The Development of BPR in the Early 1990s

'Although the definition and benefits of BPR are clear, that does not mean the way to achieve those benefits is obvious' (Manganelli & Klein, 1994: 20).

If it was Harrington's (1991) express belief that the 'one major breakthrough in the 1980s' was 'the realization by management that business and manufacturing processes, not the people, [were] the key to error-free performance' (Harrington, 1991: vii), and Deming (1986) who pointed out that 'over 90 percent of the possibilities for quality improvement belonged to the system or process' (Tennant & Wu, 2005*), then that is perhaps the best place to start a more comprehensive analysis of systems- and process-thinking and BPR. Davenport (1995: 71) also pegged the emergence of reengineering at this time, by his assertion – as previously stated – that it 'was in the late 1980s in Boston and reengineering was in the air', so initially we will need to look back to that decade.

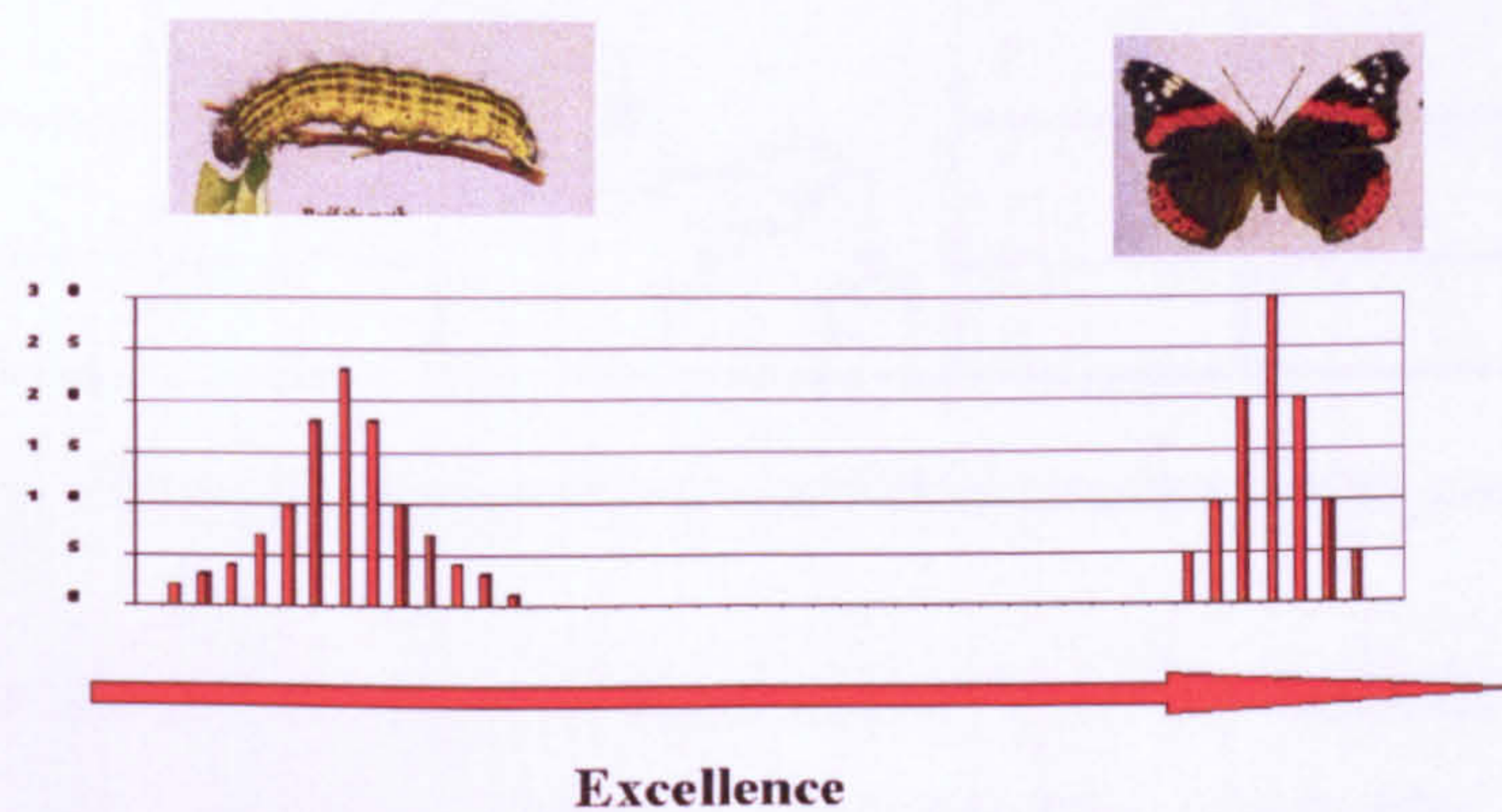
(* Deming actually said '94%'; Deming, 1986: 315.)

Further contemporary (mid-1980s) support can be found in Skinner's (1986) article, 'The productivity paradox', where he asserts that 'Resolutely chipping away at waste and inefficiency – the heart of most productivity programs – is not enough to restore competitive health,' yet this 'chipping away' could easily be seen as analogous to *kaizen*, the 'continuous improvement' ethos of contemporaneous TQM programmes. He was not, however, arguing against TQM, but rather that 'Productivity is the wrong tree to bark up,' illustrating this with what he describes as the "'40 40 20" rule' where, 'Another (i.e. the middle) 40% comes from major changes in equipment and process technology,' and that, 'Far more powerful are changes in manufacturing structure and technology.' Processes, perhaps?

One can almost sense the emergence of a 'radical' new approach trying to escape from the chrysalis of incremental improvement methods, in line with Goss et al's (1993) metaphor of transformational change requiring a different animal – a 'butterfly', not an incrementally 'better caterpillar' (Fig. 3.0, below):

Fig. 3.0: Transformation

Transformation *(There is none in between)*



Source: <http://www.harehall.co.uk/croc.html>

The synonymy of 'systems' and 'processes' – 'process: a systematic series of actions directed to some end' (Webster's, 1989) – in earlier biological contexts can be seen within von Bertalanffy's (1951: 341) article, 'General System Theory: A New Approach to the Unity of Science – 5. Conclusion', with:

'The same is true of the statements with which systems theory is concerned. It is not self-evident that organizations are governed by dynamical laws of interaction. On the contrary, the opposite view was accepted for centuries, namely that the organism is a machine, and that the processes within it are governed by one-way causality';

and,

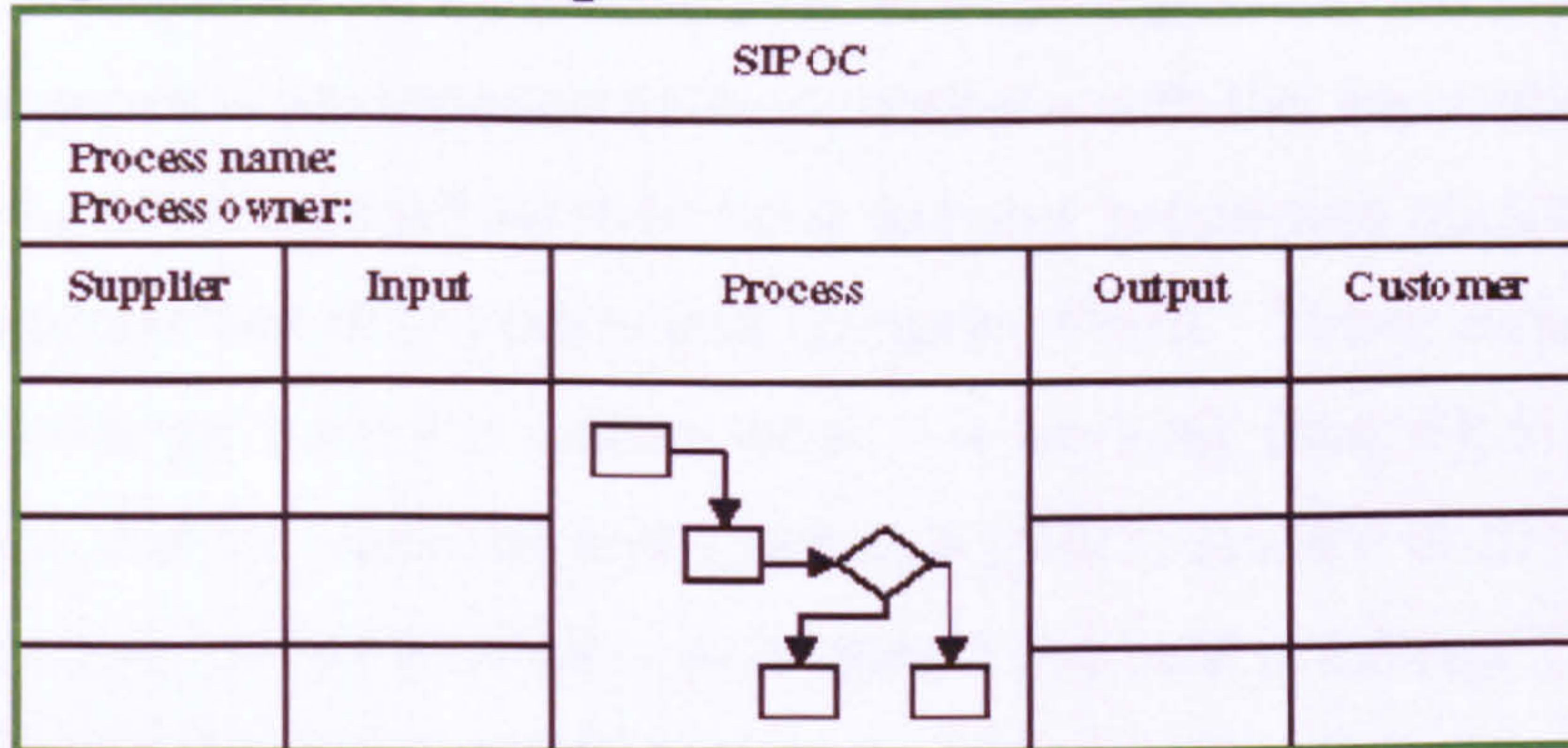
'The central point of system theory is the dynamic view, trying to explain phenomena of order in terms of the interaction of processes,...'.

Is this 'one-way causality' similar to Albitz's (1989: 2) 'Process Model', or the 'SIPOC' diagram – see example overleaf – showing the 'one-way', end-to-end

process from supplier through to customer (sometimes known as the 'Input-Transformation-Output' [ITO] model)?

Fig. 3.1: SIPOC (ITO) diagram

Figure 1: SIPOC Diagram



Source: http://www.powerandsystems.com/EN/resources/articles_associates/lilla.html

That the systems approach arose at least in part from the work of biologists is evinced also by Miller and Rice (1967, cited in Mullins, 2002: 69), who 'likened the commercial and industrial organisation to the biological organism.'

In Watson's (1994) text, *'Business Systems Engineering: Managing Breakthrough Changes for Productivity and Profit'*, he defines a system as: 'a grouping of parts that operate together for a common purpose,' which – especially if we were to add the words 'value' and 'customer' – would be near enough to those earlier definitions of 'process.'

In the 1986 reprint of Rosemary Stewart's 1970 text, *'The Reality of Organizations,'* this concept of linked interactions is reinforced with:

'The value of looking at an organization from the systems approach is that it changes one's viewpoint from the description and analysis of its component parts to that of their interrelationships. Such an approach emphasizes that one should not try and deal with problems in isolation but should be aware of their interactions' (Stewart, 1986: 20)

And this linkage is further 'emphasized' with:

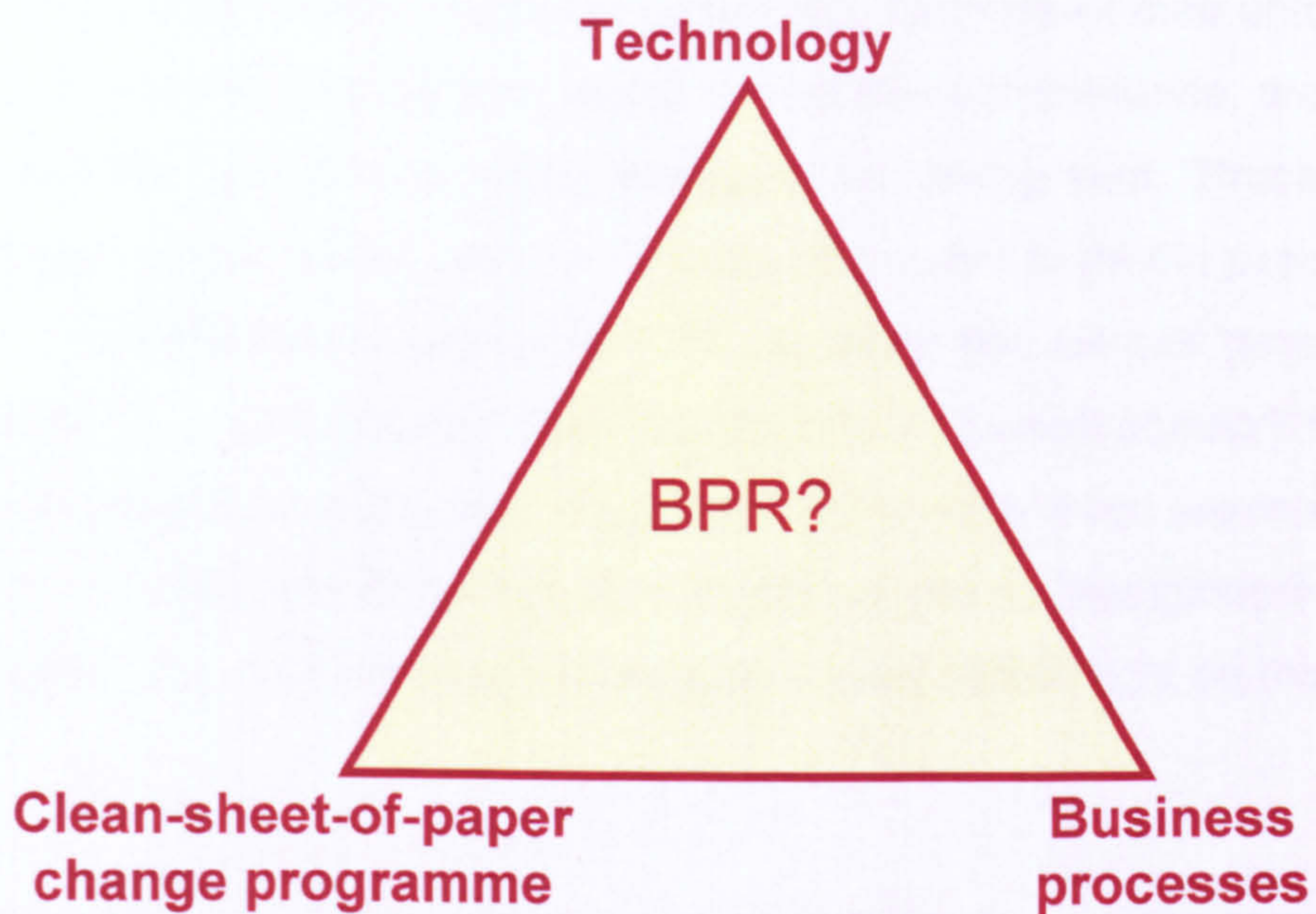
'... if we think, as we should, of the organization as being made up of interlocking and interacting parts, then the link will be clearer' (ibid).

O'Connor and McDermott (1997: 2) concur with their definition of a system as 'an entity that maintains its existence and functions as a whole through the interaction of its parts.' They also appear to offer support to the principle of BPR's emergence – as opposed to its invention – with the implication that for systems to function as a whole they have to have 'properties above and beyond the properties of the parts that comprise them.' These *emergent properties* "emerge" from the system when it is working' (ibid: 6); in the same way, perhaps that for Hammer and Champy's (1993) *system* of BPR to 'work' properly – to *function as a whole* – all of their 'nine best practices' (Hammer, 1990; Hammer & Champy, 1993) have to be enacted?

The other inter-linking aspect of BPR's evolution at this time was advances in technology, but the realization that 'the real value of computing was not simply in doing work more efficiently, but in changing how work was done as well' (Davenport, 1995: 71), whilst Hammer himself had apparently also been 'arguing that technologists needed to try harder to change basic work processes' (ibid).

Davenport talks of the 'three components' of the 'puzzle' being technology, business processes and the 'idea of a clean-sheet-of-paper change program' coming together to create the concept of 'reengineering', even though none of the companies they were researching at the time used that term.

Nonetheless the words 'Hammer', 'industry' and '(re)engineering' do suggest a *hard* and emerging tripartite structure, a sort of 'iron triangle,' within which the early protagonists could frame their conceptualizations (overleaf):



Skinner's (1986) view that chasing productivity was the 'wrong approach' and that simply applying technology to existing processes – what Hammer (1990) four years later was to refer to as 'paving the cow paths' – was supported by Krafcik's (1988) example of where 'GM had spent billions to learn that high technology does not necessarily mean high performance,' and what Gulden and Reck (1992: 11) meant when they said, 'most automation efforts have only further cemented the steps in place,' or the 'cow paths'?

Citing the alternative – 'best exemplified by Toyota' – Krafcik advocates the belief that 'quality should be achieved within the process, not within a rectification area.' Even though this is the right-first-time approach of TQM, the new emphasis on 'process' is telling, and it also links with Skinner's concerns regarding productivity with:

'That there is a strong correlation between quality and productivity should not come as a surprise. The quality gurus of industry – Juran, Deming, Crosby, and others – have all espoused the "Quality Is Free" doctrine, the view that productivity tends to increase with improved quality because of reduced rework efforts, more attention to process controls, less inspection requirements, and the like' (Krafcik, 1988: 47).

Crosby (1986) defined the cost of (poor) quality as 'the price of non-conformance,' and Albitz (1991: 354) linked this to the context of business

process improvement with, 'Business processes, because of their unfocused evolution, contain enormous amounts of cost of non-conformance, around and above 50%!' Albitz cites 'many managers' as having 'said, "Process management makes sense, and now I know why I want to do the process review!"' – and this was in December 1991, so when she talks of 'process engineering' as a 'tool' that had been 'available to it ['manufacturing'] in the past,' we could infer that the term also really had already been around for a while, even if unarticulated as that, specifically, or just as 'reengineering'? Albitz (2006) – as we have seen earlier also – shed further light on this point with:

'Gabriel Pall published a book called Process Management. ... I believe it was published about 1986 or so' [the 'or so' was almost correct because it was 1987, see Ref's; 'Pall, 1987'], adding, 'Someone capitalized on (that) later and began to call that re-engineering – I suspect an industrial engineer saw the opportunity – I can't recall right now who did that but it might have been used by Hammer first ... I was using the term re-engineering and referring to processes in 1990 for sure...'; and that Hammer's book, 'might be the first use' (Albitz; 19/01/06).

The possibility of Hammer's potential claim to the 'first use' of the word 'reengineering' in this business/process context is supported by his own website (<http://www.hammerandco.com/about.asp>), where it states, 'Dr. Michael Hammer has changed forever how businesses do business. He is the originator of reengineering and the process enterprise...'

Note: In Hammer and Stanton's (1995) book, 'The Reengineering Revolution', they state quite clearly that, 'We never claimed to have *invented* reengineering' (their emphasis), and add, 'At the most, we *discovered* reengineering' (p. 177).

In the same year as Skinner's article and Crosby's second book, Kane (1986) also published his article on 'IBM's Quality Focus on the Business Process' – subtitled, 'A management approach to assure that major cross-functional processes remain competitive' – in which he identified IBM's need to re-evaluate its early approach to quality activities because of the 'realization that

the company's environment was changing faster than its processes could adapt' (Kane, 1986: 24). This may have been the articulation that Albitz had in mind, with Kane's early comment, 'The process management approach stemmed from IBM's early work in quality activities' (ibid).

Kane also underpinned those earlier 'process' definitions with his initial description of, 'By "business process", we mean the closely related decisions and activities required to manage and administer the resources of the business' (ibid: 25), and subsequently defining a process 'as "a group of logically related tasks (decisions and activities) that, when performed, utilize the resources of the business to produce definitive results' (ibid: 26). However, neither of these made any reference to the 'customer', so these early definitions appeared to be more inward-looking, until 'customer' appeared to have been first included in the definition by Harrington (1991: 9), followed in 1993 by Hammer and Champy, and Davenport.

Yet again, though, whilst 'process' was becoming the issue, incrementalism still obtained – 'Continuous quality improvement is the objective rather than single-event problem solving; the steady improvement of the efficiency of every process should be the end result' (Kane, 1986: 27) – a view somewhat reiterated almost twenty years later by Ricardo Semler's comment that:

'... a system should learn from its mistakes. Process is paramount to knowledge, and mistakes are powerful catalysts for the process.'

(Semler, 2003*: 76)

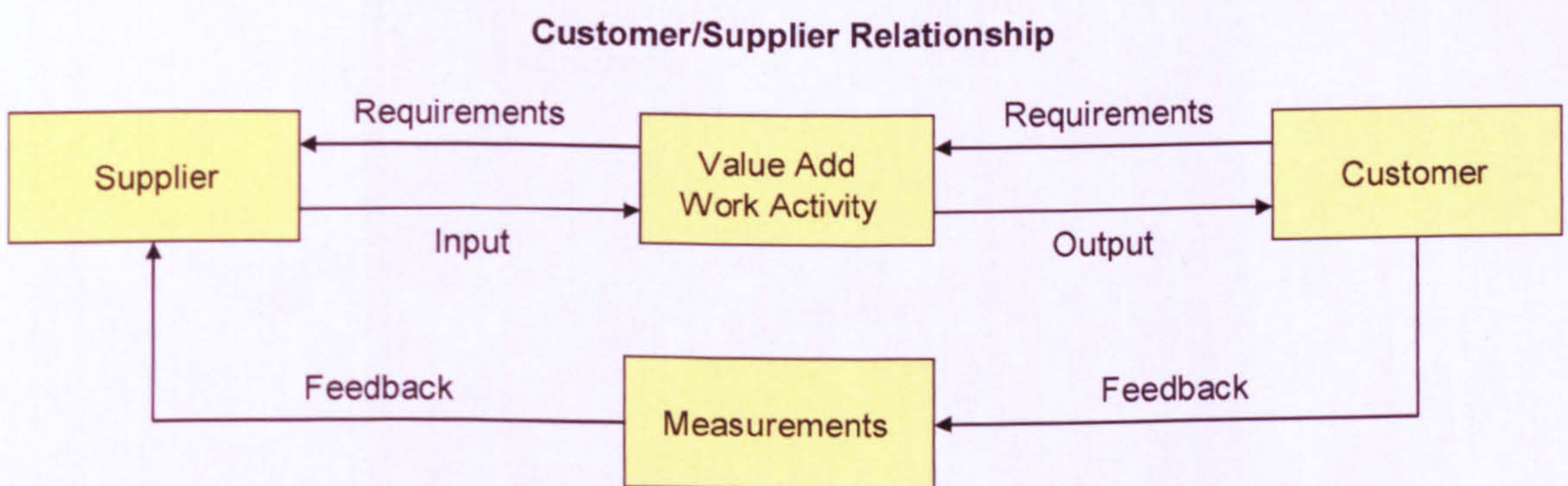
[* Note: One version of this second book by Semler – not to the one referenced – has the sub-title, 'Changing the Way Work Works', which in the point it's making is very similar to Hammer & Champy's (1993, 31; 2001: 34) 'a better way of doing work', and Seddon's (2003) sub-title, 'A Better Way to Make the Work Work'.]

One paragraph in Kane's article possibly exemplified the emerging need for a more 'radical' approach over the continuously incremental philosophy of TQM:

'In addition, it is essential that those who best understand the detail and have the best contact with the customer and the customer's environment continue to feed back changes to requirements and modifications to procedures. This is usually initiated at higher levels. In this way processes can be kept vital and competitive' (Kane, 1986: 29/30).

This 'feedback' is shown in his 'Customer/Supplier Relationship' model (below; p. 30, Fig. 6), which is not dissimilar from the Process/SIPOC/ITO models used earlier, except for showing the 'measurements' (at the process/'value-add' stage) and feedback loops:

Fig. 3.2: Customer Supplier Relationship



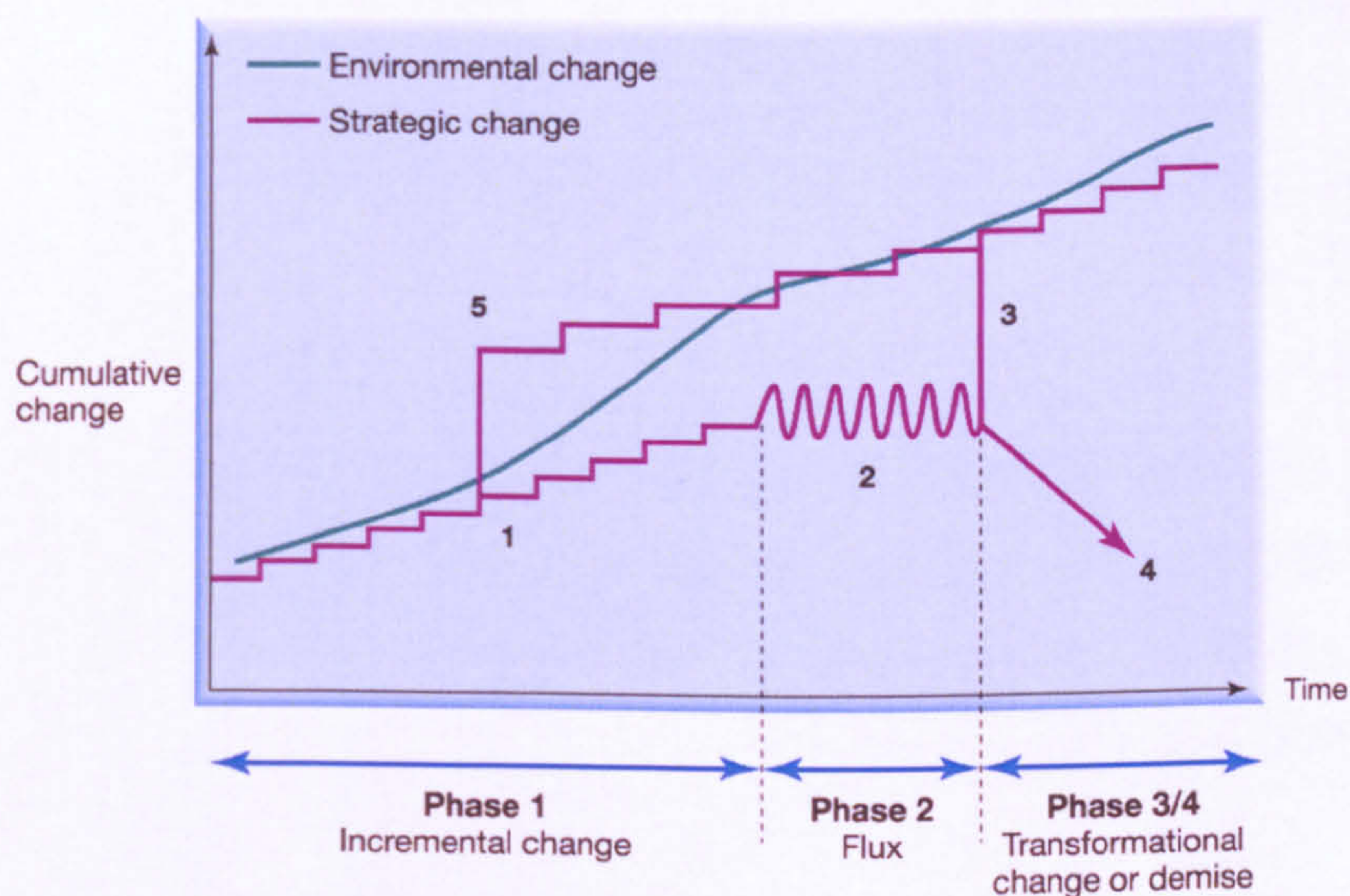
Source: Kane, E. J., (1986) 'IBM's Quality Focus on the Business Process: A management approach to assure that major cross-functional processes remain competitive', *Quality Progress*, April, p. 30, Fig. 6

Except, however, this *continuousness* did not really happen throughout the wider TQM world, because if (e.g.) processes *had* been 'kept vital', more transformational change might not have been necessary, because as Kane himself (1986: 33) states, 'Processes do not naturally stay lean and competitive.'

3.2 Strategic Drift

Evidence for this might be found more in the strategic management texts and those on operations and quality management. For example, the mere presence of the 'Strategic Drift' model, below, in Johnson, et al. (2005: 27, Exhibit 1.4) and their claim that 'strategies progressively fail to address the strategic position of the organization and performance deteriorates,' suggests that 'continuous quality improvement' (Kane, 1986) might not have been happening – possibly due to what Thompson (1997: 83) called 'introversion and inertia in a changing environment.'

Fig. 3.3: The Risk of Strategic Drift:



Source: Johnson, G., Scholes, K. & Whittingham, R., (2005) *Exploring Corporate Strategy: Text & Cases*, Harlow, FT/Prentice Hall, p. 27, Exhibit 1.4

What Kane (1986: 32) cites, below, as the 'lessons to be learned in improving critical business processes' are not at all dissimilar from the points made later by, for example, Hammer & Champy (1993), Champy (1995), and Hammer and Stanton (1995), the primary BPR gurus, when identifying the critical success factors:

- Management commitment is essential.

- Success is long-term.
- A disciplined methodology is needed.
- Experimentation is beneficial.
- Error-free measurements at the task level must be employed.
- Focus must be on improving the process itself.

That this 'management commitment' is crucial for (e.g.) TQM was reinforced by De Cieri (et al., 1991: 60) when commenting that:

'Deming and the others have pointed out that both the support and active drive are required of senior management as leaders and practitioners of TQM, because the traditional system conflicts with the new and substantial inertias need to be overcome.'

This need for 'commitment' was emphasized in one of the 'difficulties' which must be overcome in implementation, in that, 'for any level in the organisation, if the immediate superior does not understand TQM or does not appear to apply the principles of TQM in his/her work, then adoption will be difficult for any individual employee' (ibid: 63/64); and this issue of *understanding* will feature more fully later. TQM or BPR, the 'leadership' issue of buy-in and application appears therefore to be paramount – 'Reengineering leaders must encourage people to pursue stretch goals and to think out of the box; to this end, leadership must reward creative thinking and be willing to consider any new idea' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995: 25).

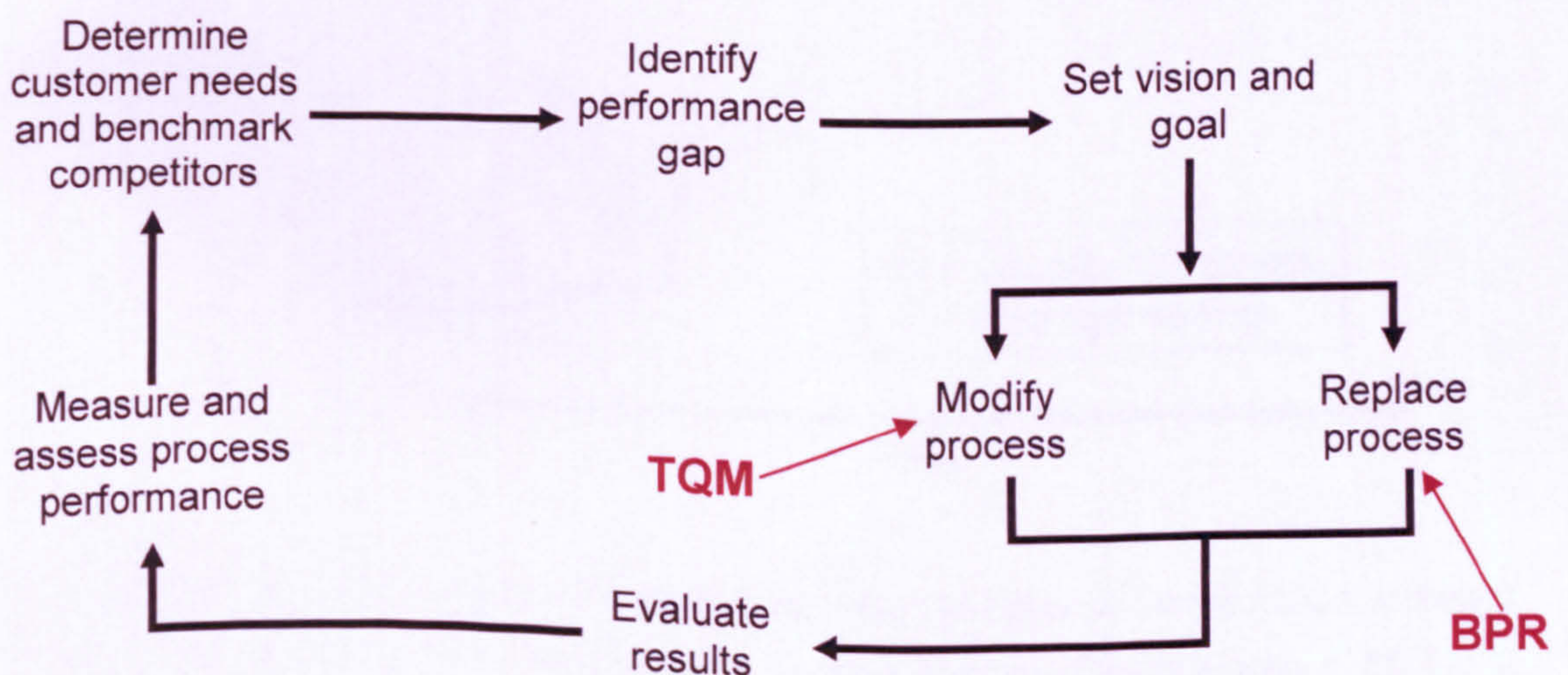
Kane's second point – Success is long-term – hints at the next problem, that of timescale, when most 'senior management' careers are rarely 'long-term' in many organizations. Albitz (2006) also hints perhaps at this urgency issue with, 'as you know, we Americans need something new each month,' so when Deming (1986: 153) suggested that it takes 'ten years' to effectively implement TQM, he was possibly sowing the seeds for its own failure when more rapid solutions were required, or at least hoped for, by those senior managers carrying corporate responsibility for rapid improvements? And in terms of BPR specifically, Hammer and Stanton again bring this speed issue clearly to the fore with:

'You must reengineer quickly. If you can't show some tangible results within a year, you will lose the support and momentum necessary to make the effort successful. ... Stay focused and narrow the scope if necessary in order to get results fast' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995: 30).

This was somewhat at odds, though, with Davis' (1993: 51; citing Larry Skinner of Texas Instruments) claim that 'Reengineering projects often take a year or more in the formulation phase and another 12 to 24 months to implement'?

Hammer (1998) illustrated this 'ongoing and endless cycle of process improvement that is conducted by the process owner' – pointing out for the 'cognoscenti of the quality movement' that the model is 'clearly derived from Shewhart and Deming's Plan/Do/Check/Act cycle' (Hammer, 1998: 80) – and his model (Fig. 1; below) has been adapted to show, even more 'clearly', the differentiation between TQM-type incremental change ('Modify process'), and BPR-type radical change ('Replace process'):

Fig. 3.4: Hammer's process improvement model

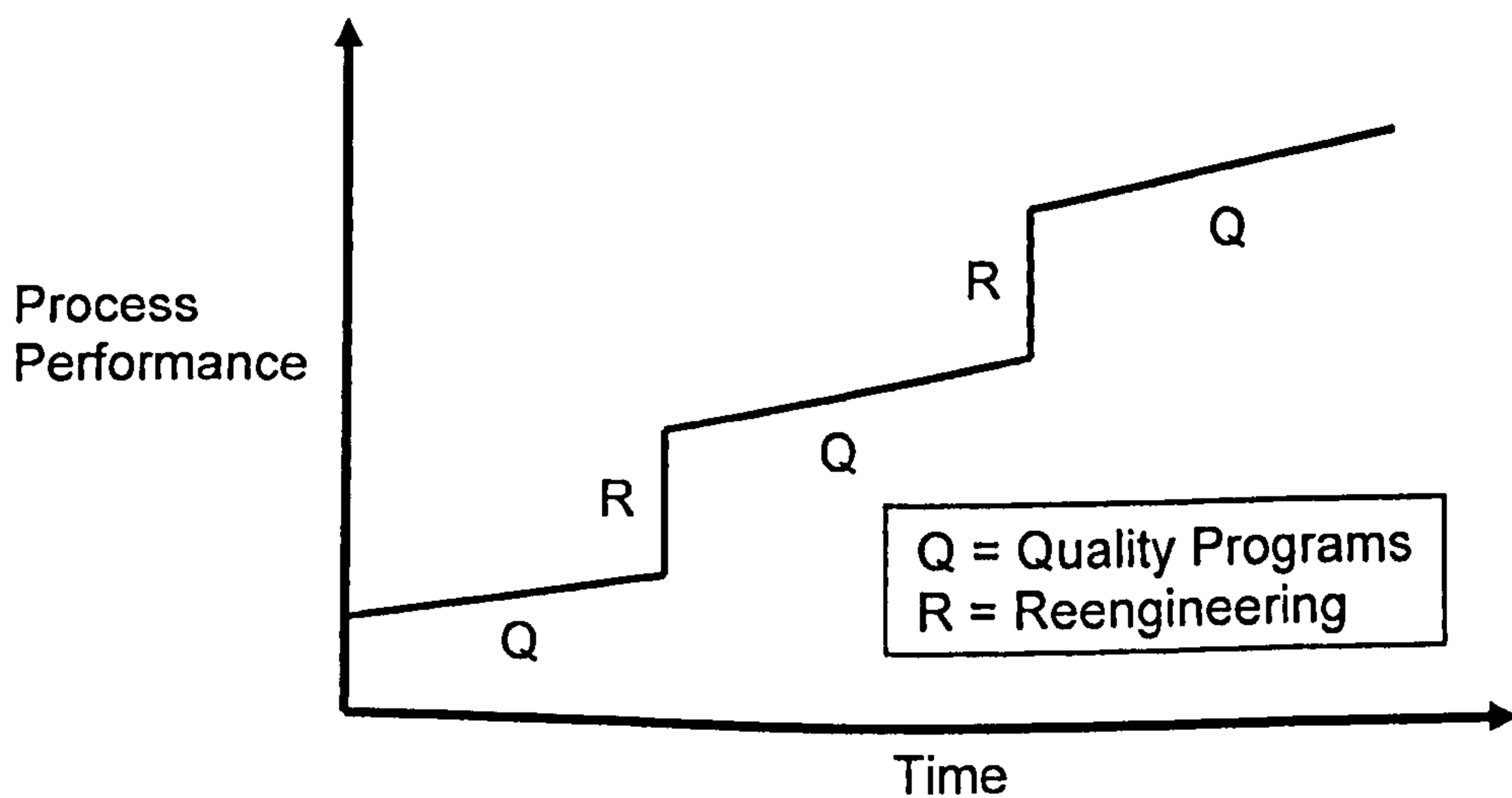


Hammer, M., (1998) *Beyond Reengineering: How the Process-Centred Organization is Changing Our Work and Our Lives*, London, HarperCollins Business, p. 81, Fig. 1; adapted, Chamberlin, 2005

He emphasizes the fundamentally continuous nature of processual scanning with, 'In the process-centred organization, this program of process improvement is not a secondary and peripheral activity. It is the essence of management,' and this aligns clearly with Seddon's (2002: 52) assertion that 'quality is *the work*, not extra work' (his italics).

That both TQM and BPR can sit together within the same organization was confirmed by Hammer and Champy (1993: 49), and again in 2001 (ibid: 239) with, 'Reengineering and TQM are neither identical nor in conflict; they are complementary,' but Hammer (1998: 83) also 'illustrates how TQM and reengineering fit together over time in the life story of a process' with his Fig. 2 (below), which harks back to the 'Stage 3/4 Transformational change or demise' situation in the 'Risk of Strategic Drift' model shown previously – 'First the process is enhanced until its useful lifetime is over, at which point it is reengineered' (Hammer, 1998: 83):

Fig. 3.5: The 'life story of a process'



Hammer, M., (1998) *Beyond Reengineering: How the Process-Centred Organization is Changing Our Work and Our Lives*, London, HarperCollins Business, p. 83, Fig. 2

The 'sitting together' metaphor was more eloquently employed by Hammer (1998: 82) when he described reengineering and TQM as 'merely different pews in the church of process improvement.' Different 'pews' perhaps, but at

opposite ends, and on opposite sides of the church's centre aisle. And in the US, where there are more 'churches' than anywhere else – 'more vigorously competing sects and congregations than any other nation' (Peters, 2003: 42) – Tom Peters (2003: 40), citing Nicholas Negroponte of MIT Media Labs, describes 'incrementalism (as) innovation's worst enemy', hardly suggestive of a culture of mutual tolerance.

This is where Hammer (1998: 82/83) makes a more oblique reference to the shift of culture organisations must embrace and maintain in order for the concept not just to succeed, but survive:

'Note this means that reengineering is not a once-in-a-lifetime endeavor. As we have already observed, the reengineering revolution has two major themes: The first is concerned with aligning organizations around their processes, while the second focuses on replacing existing process designs with superior ones. The first of these is in fact a one-time shift in an organization's philosophy and self-perspective, but the latter must be a never-ending struggle. As business circumstances change in major ways, so must process designs.'

This was surprisingly less robust than Hammer and Champy's (2001:228) warning that organizations must not allow 'existing corporate cultures and management attitudes to prevent reengineering from getting started,' in their 'catalog of the most common errors that lead companies to fail at reengineering' (ibid: 222).

Seddon (1992/2002: 134/135) emphasizes more firmly this requirement for an attitudinal ground-shift, and whence it must come, with:

'There is no change without leadership. Leadership towards quality and service improvement will be largely ineffective if it is not based on a wholly different way of thinking... The initiative must come from management, and if they are to succeed in this endeavour they must first cast aside traditional thinking about their role and take responsibility as motivators and leaders of a team all working to the same goal.'

If managers would not take on this 'responsibility', or occasionally they even 'opposed' the improvement initiative, Sid Joynson labeled these the 'villains':

'...some of the middle managers who could not or would not adapt to the new way, and who 'nobbled' his teams whenever they had a chance. "When we find them," he said, "these are the bastards we have to crush"' (Joynson & Forrester, 1995: 8/9).

Watson (1994) disagrees with Hammer on two other key points: the first being that, whereas Hammer focused on 'the power of modern information technology to radically redesign our business processes in order to achieve dramatic improvements in their performance' (1990: 104) – what Watson (p. 5) describes as reengineering being 'developed from the perspective of the chief information officer,' in other words, IT-led – he believes that his own approach considers 'all potential methods' for process problem resolution, e.g. 'design of the process, training or capability of the people, structure or design of the data and information, or the enabling systems technology' (p.6). Whether this difference warrants a full book is possibly debatable, because all Hammer and Champy (1993: 44; 2001: 47) say is, 'We say that in reengineering, information technology acts as an *essential enabler*' (their italics), and their use of the indefinite article is possibly consistent with Watson's 'alternative process solutions'?

In fact Hammer (cited in Moad, 1993: 24) answers this point quite specifically when questioned:

- Q. What is the role of IS when it comes to reengineering the enterprise?
- A. Reengineering must be a business- and executive-driven enterprise. Even though technology plays a central role, it's not a technology enterprise. If it's viewed as a technology enterprise it will fail.
- Q. But can't reengineering be driven by a technologist?
- A. It cannot be driven by a technologist. It can only be driven by an executive officer. The most common driver is the chief operating officer. The CIO does not have enough leverage in the organization to make reengineering happen.

Davis (1993: 54) possibly reinforces this with evidence from John Deere, '...Deere has learned that 50 percent of the cost-saving opportunities are usually in product and process design, ... and 20 percent in automating manufacturing and adding new computer technology.'

Watson's second 'difference' is over 'the perceived value of benchmarking,' where his own, overtly positive view of benchmarking is of it being 'another business practice that leads "reengineers" toward implementing strategic change initiatives in key business processes' (p.6), claiming that 'Hammer takes a divergent view' [in that] 'benchmarking restricts the framework of the reengineering team by limiting it to its own industry' (ibid). Again, however, this can be challenged, because whereas Hammer and Champy (1993: 132; 2001: 137) *do* state that, 'The problem with benchmarking is it can restrict the reengineering team's thinking to the framework of what is already being done in its company's own industry,' [and that] 'By aspiring only to be as good as the best in its industry, the team sets a cap on its own ambitions,' they then go on with, 'If a team is going to benchmark, it should benchmark from the best in the world, not the best in its industry.' In fact, rather than criticizing benchmarking, they specifically state that, 'Before concluding we should comment on another tool that is available to reengineering teams, namely benchmarking' (ibid).

Watson's claim, therefore, that 'Hammer's [is a] narrow perspective of benchmarking' and that it would not 'permit what Xerox calls "creative imitation"', is perhaps a little uncharitable, given that his criticism of Hammer was his being 'limited to competitive studies,' when Watson himself is a 'competitor' of Hammer and Champy, in that, in the same year as their first book appeared, Watson also published his own text, unsurprisingly entitled *Strategic Benchmarking*, following it a year later with *Business Systems Engineering*.

That benchmarking, per se, was an intrinsic part of reengineering at that time is confirmed by Davis in his report on 'The first conference featuring presentations by line managers implementing reengineering,' held in Orlando, Florida, January 1993, where in the example of how 'Marrion Merrel Dow

[MMD] Reengineers with a Customer Focus,' he states, 'The company has begun to benchmark its process performance in these areas against process leaders' (1993: 53).

3.3 BPR in the mid-1990s

'Beyond the hype, BPR is fundamentally about redesigning processes' (Ballé, 1995).

3.3.1 'Tipping Point' and BPR

Before progressing to focus on the more recent BPR literature, it is worth briefly visiting the concept of the 'Tipping Point'. First articulated by Morton Grodzins (1958) and then expanded and built on by Thomas Schelling in 1972, the tipping point is a sociological term that refers to that dramatic moment when something unique becomes common. It was subsequently popularised by Malcolm Gladwell's (2000) book, 'The Tipping Point: How little things can make a big difference,' since the publication of which, (the) 'Tipping Point' has become a common cliché (evinced by the simple example of its use four times in a ten-minute interview on climate change, on BBC Radio 4's Today Programme, at 08.10 on Monday, 30th January, 2006). Primarily it is an examination of the social epidemics that surround us, or, from the world of epidemiology, 'the name given to that moment in an epidemic when a virus reaches critical mass' (<http://www.Gladwell.Com/TippingPoint/index.html>).

In the 'social' world of business improvement it could be suggested that the 'tipping point' for BPR was between the early- and middle-1990s. The table, below, based on a brief examination of one relevant academic database, shows how from 1994 onwards there was a sharp rise in articles referring in some way to 'BPR', whereas prior to that there were few or none*.

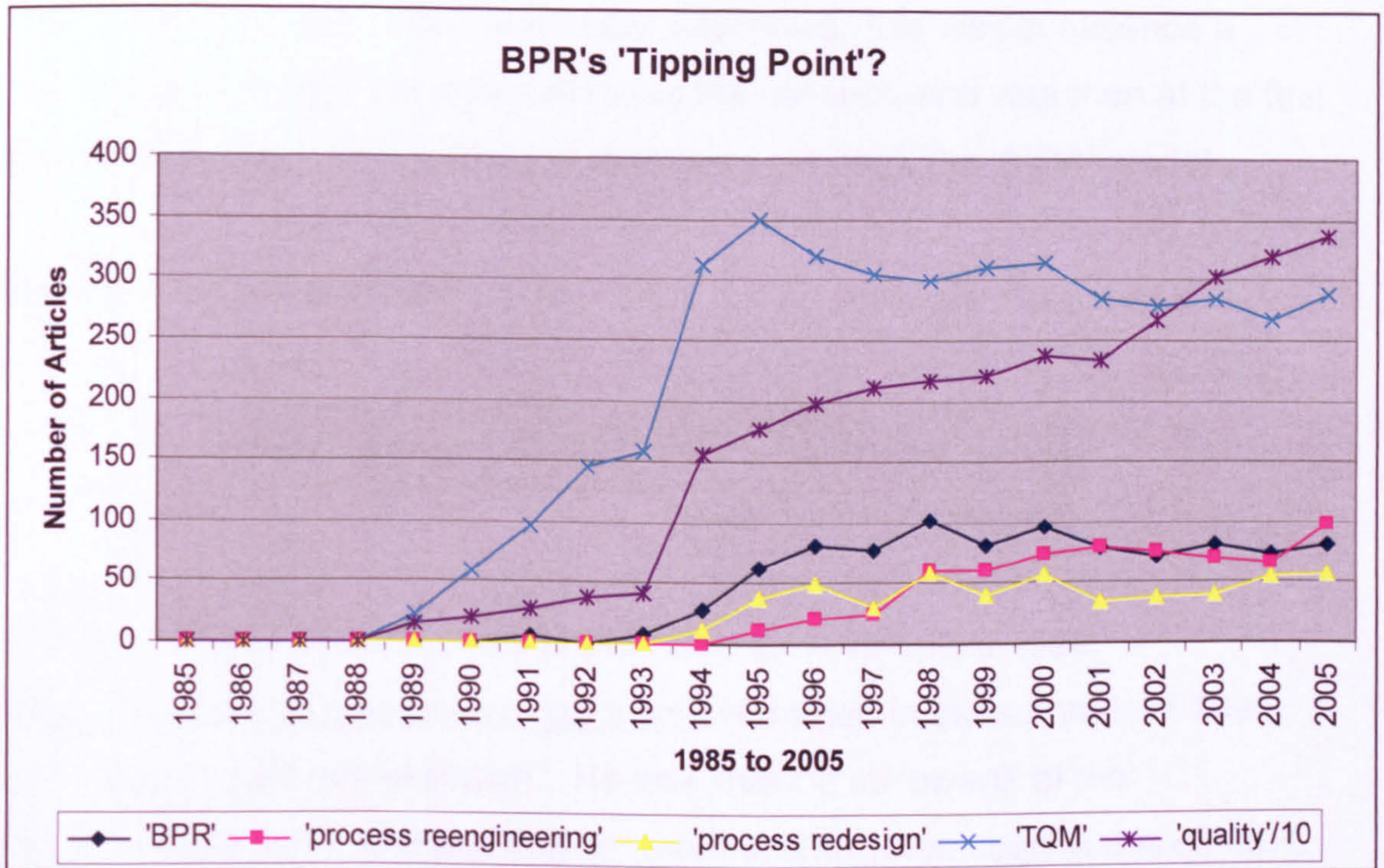
Table 3.1: BPR's 'Tipping Point'

Year	'BPR'	'Process Reengineering'	'Process Redesign'	'TQM'	'Quality'
1985	0	0	0	0	2
1986	0	0	0	0	1
1987	0	0	0	0	4
1988	0	0	0	0	1
1989	0	0	0	23	148
1990	0	0	0	58	198
1991	5	0	0	96	290
1992	0	0	0	144	371
1993	8	0	0	157	414
1994	28	0	11	312	1,568
1995	62	11	37	350	1,767
1996	81	21	49	320	1,972
1997	77	25	30	304	2,109
1998	101	60	58	299	2,156
1999	80	61	40	310	2,192
2000	96	74	56	313	2,361
2001	79	78	34	283	2,331
2002	71	76	38	277	2,662
2003	80	70	40	284	3,017
2004	74	65	54	267	3,197
2005	81	98	56	288	3,367

(* Searches elsewhere will produce other articles in the early 1990s – e.g. EBSCO Host: Gulden and Reck; ARMA [conference program]; Spencer; Carroll; DeJarnett; Short and Venkatraman; all in 1992 – but show similar results.)

The same theme is observed for the terms 'process reengineering' and 'process redesign.' There was of course the issue that this specific database could possibly have only started archiving BPR-related journal articles during the early '90s, so the 'test' terms of 'TQM' and 'quality' were also used, and the similarly sharp rise in numbers of those articles also appeared, but happened some six years earlier.

Fig. 3.6: The 'Tipping Point' of BPR



(** The 'quality' series, above, has been divided by '10' because it is the 'shape' that is relevant, but it is also important to note the actual numbers of articles shown in the right-hand column of Table 3.1.)

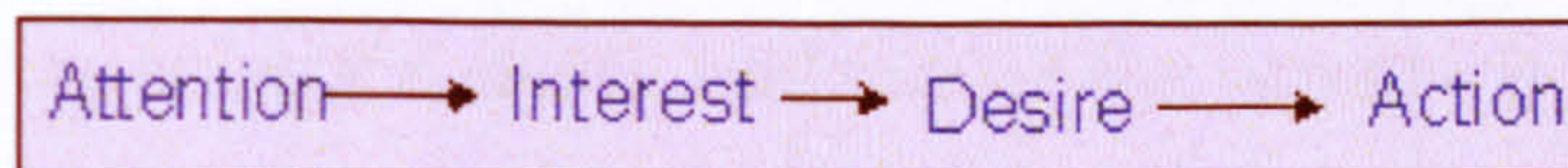
Whilst in itself not conclusive, this does suggest at least the consideration of a possible relationship between the writings of the early protagonists – Davenport and Short (June, 1990), Hammer (July, 1990), Harrington (1991), Hammer and Champy (1993), Watson (1994) – and the subsequent rise in interest of the BPR phenomenon.

3.3.2 The 'Law of The Few'

Gladwell (2000: 33) talks of the 'Law of the Few,' those people who are 'critical to social epidemics,' and this approach is extremely redolent of Al Ries and Jack Trout's (1994) book, 'The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing,' where, specifically, 'Law 5: The Law of Focus' states that the 'the most powerful concept in marketing is owning a word in the prospect's mind' (also mentioned earlier).

Clearly, for example, when Michael Hammer wrote his seminal article 'Reengineering Work: Don't Automate, Obliterate,' this was in essence a 'marketing' exercise. He was *marketing* the concept, and was then at the first stage of that basic and ubiquitous marketing concept, the 'AIDA' model:

Fig. 3.7: The 'AIDA' model



Source: www.learnmarketing.net

With the primary 'A' sometimes shown also as 'Awareness' (see: http://www.ftmastering.com/mmo/mmo02_3.htm), Hammer, in the summer of 1990, was trying to gain our 'attention.' He was making us 'aware' of this 'reengineering' term, and possibly for the first time when used in this context. His initial aim would have been to secure our 'interest', but ultimately – as with any academic author promoting a new concept – to move us through 'desire' and on to 'action'. Hammer wanted people in the worlds of business and organisation management to actually *use* reengineering to 'radically' improve their businesses. And whilst he wasn't the first to write on this new discovery – Davenport and Short beat him by one month – he did a better job of marketing it. He had the 'stickiness factor' (Gladwell, 2000: 89-132) that the others didn't. One reason for this might simply have been his choice of title. It carried a definite punch – a challenge, a command, even, to the readers – compared to Davenport and Short's more staid, 'The New Industrial Engineering: Information Technology and Business Process Redesign', where the 'BPR-ish' element was relegated to the tail-end of a long, dry and perceptively 'technical' title.

In Ries and Trout terms, almost immediately, Hammer had laid claim to 'the word' in the prospects' minds – our minds. From that moment forward, Hammer (later with James Champy) *owned* 'reengineering'.

The redolence continues here with the way that Apple™ first marketed 'Windows'™ technology (or a 'graphic-based user interface' as it was initially known, first demonstrated by Xerox back in 1975) and its associated 'mouse', but MicroSoft™ did the better marketing job and so became the world leaders, relegating Apple to second-place at best (see also below, the 'Law of Duality').

Ries and Trout's 'Law 6: The Law of Exclusivity,' says that 'Two companies cannot own the same word in the prospect's mind.' And so Davenport and Short, possibly by being too clever, had missed the opportunity, thereby proving Ries and Trout's 'Law 8', the 'Law of Duality: in the long run, every market becomes a two-horse race.' Davenport and Short were the second 'horse', and some evidence for this is in the relative sales of their initial 'core' texts: Hammer and Champy's 'Reengineering the Corporation: a manifesto for business revolution' has sold 'over 2 million copies'¹, whereas Thomas Davenport's '*Process Innovation: Reengineering work through Information Technology*', sold only 'about 120,000'².

This also ties in with Ries and Trout's 'Law 1: The Law of Leadership' which affirms the importance of being number one in a category – BPR. But this issue of 'number one' does not necessarily refer to the inventor, but to whosoever can gain that position of leadership, possibly through better marketing. As Albitz (2006) says, 'Hammer is the one who made business re-engineering famous...', adding, albeit modestly, 'but I, too, had a hand in that transformation.' In 'tipping point' terms, Gladwell in his 'Law of the Few' talks of 'Connectors, Mavens, and Salesmen' (ibid: 34), and whichever one (or more) of these descriptions Hammer and Champy might fit, the combination of Hammer's article and their joint 1993 text appears to have created the 'stickiness factor' that BPR – in the form of 'business process reengineering' – needed. As can be seen from the earlier table, by 1998 there were, on that database alone, '101' search responses to the term BPR; having risen from '8' in 1993, through '28' in 1994.

¹ <http://www.hammerandco.com/publications-corporation.asp>

² e-mail from Thomas Davenport, 06 Feb., 2006

3.3.3 'Stickiness' and 'Context'

The 'sticky' metaphor can relate also to the longer-term success stories, or otherwise, or the BPR concept. Blanchard's (1989) 'sticktoitiveness' was used to emphasise the tenacity, determination, resolution, drive, etc., required to see anything through to completion, or as Kane (1986) said, 'Success is long-term.' Yet as we have seen from Albitz (2006) with, 'Americans need something new each month,' this longer-term-ness might be the rarest of commodities, which might also indicate some prescience in Hammer and Stanton's (1995: 30) comment, 'You must reengineer quickly', otherwise your 'management' might be looking elsewhere? Spencer (1992) also reinforced this need for 'stickiness' with:

'If BPR fails it is unlikely to be for technical reasons, since most of its components are already proven. In my view the main issue that will determine its success or otherwise is the extent of management's preparedness to *stick* with it through the political and economic pressures to which all businesses are subjected' (this author's italics).

And, ultimately, it is likely to be this management 'sticktoitiveness' that enables any business or organisation to move the 'prospect' from 'A' and 'I' (Attention and Interest) through the 'D' of 'Desire' (to do something), to the final 'A' ('Action); *actually doing* something. As Gladwell (2000: 139) says, 'ideas have to be memorable and move us to action.'

The third issue within this 'tipping point' scenario is that of context, or what Gladwell (ibid) calls, 'The Power of Context' – 'Epidemics are sensitive to the conditions and circumstances of the times and places in which they occur.'

The 'conditions and circumstances of the times' relevant to the possible 'epidemic' of BPR were perhaps those articulated by Skinner (1986) and Koenig (1993) when they talked of the 'productivity paradox', or the failure of the massive investments in IT to deliver the commensurate performance improvements. So with Deming (1986: 153) already having suggested that it would take 'ten years' to effectively implement TQM, and the potential solution

of IT having failed to deliver on its promise, the *context* was ripe for a new initiative.

However, as we have seen already, this is not an 'either/or' scenario. As Gulden and Reck (1992: 11) point out, 'organizations need both reengineering and quality improvement to stay competitive,' and in this context 'reengineering' infers quick and radical, whilst 'quality improvement' implies TQM, or steady and incremental. They continue; 'Corporations must make:

- Continual improvement in a wide range of individual jobs, departments, functions, processes, and subprocesses through quality initiatives.
- Periodic breakthrough in a few key business process(es) spanning functional or departmental lines by reengineering these processes.'

And this could be the crux of the context that 'tipped' BPR into the frame at that time in the mid-90s: IT hadn't (or had barely) delivered at all; TQM either hadn't delivered yet, or hadn't delivered enough even if it had; and there was both a sense that there was *something else*, and a hunger for it. BPR was therefore a prime candidate to whet these appetites, and Gulden and Reck hint at this context issue, further suggesting there was a possible readiness, now, amongst the practitioners:

'Because quality programs raise awareness about process improvement, however, they are increasingly setting the stage for the radical process redesign that is reengineering. Furthermore, quality techniques can help an organization hold and build on the gains it has made by reengineering a process. They are therefore not mutually exclusive or competing phenomena.'

BPR + PDC*A

(*or S: in 'Plan-Do-Check-Act', 'Check' is sometimes shown as 'Study'; Deming, 1986: 88; acknowledged there as 'The Shewhart cycle' – Shewhart, W. A., (1939) 'Statistical Method from the Viewpoint of Quality Control', Graduate School, Department of Agriculture, Washington, p. 45; Dover, 1986)

What Hammer and Champy (2001: 154) call their 'case for action' is repeated by Gulden and Reck (ibid: 12); 'The case for action. If quality improvement techniques are the recommended daily dosage for a chronic condition, reengineering is strong medicine that should be used only for an acute condition' – suggesting context.

But 'context' and 'tipping point' might also have some resonance with individual organisations, because the *context* has to be right, and the 'case' strong enough, to 'tip' the organisation from TQM, or *kaizen*-based improvement, and into the need for BPR. Gulden and Reck (ibid) again; 'The case has to be compelling enough to get the organization moving, and management must keep its resolve in the face of resistance to radically new ways of operating' – 'sticktoitiveness'!

3.3.4 A Spectral Issue

And as stated earlier, this is not an 'either/or' decision, it is a spectral issue, with, possibly, a range of emphases between the extremes of TQM in the 'violet', 'incremental', end, and BPR at the 'red' and 'radical' other, dependent upon the context:

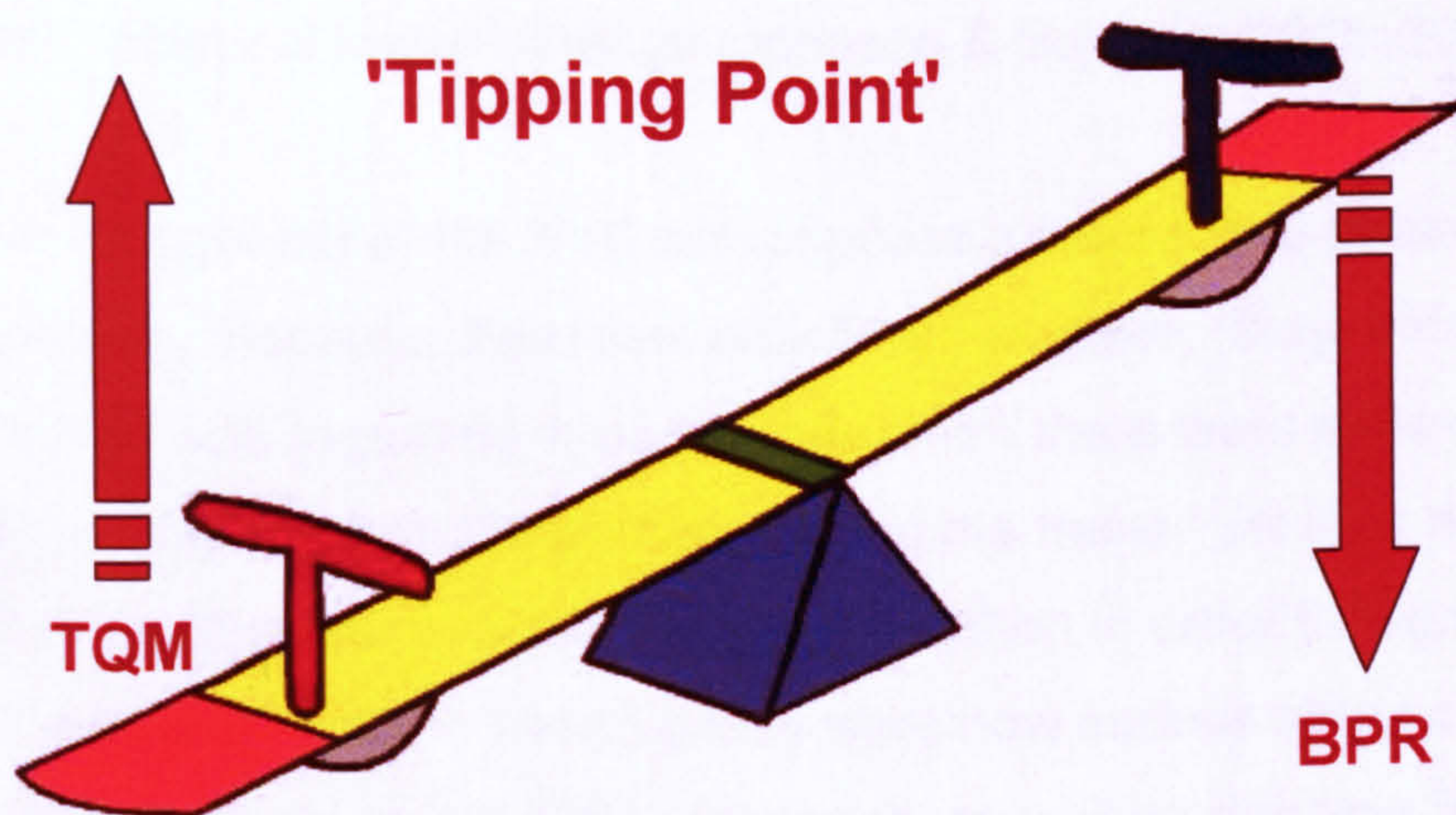
Fig. 3.8: The 'Quality Spectrum'



This spectral range could be from the most minor change to the inflection in a receptionist's voice, in order to incrementally (and *continuously*, in *kaizen*

terms) improve further a customer's perception of an organisation when contacted – at what Carlzon (1989: 3) called those 'moments of truth' – through to the most radical redesign of a cross-functional, company-wide, customer-related end-to-end process, in BPR terms. But at some stage in that whole decision-making process, the choice of what is contextually appropriate will 'tip', from 'incremental' to 'radical', and a fundamental rethinking will then have to take place, leading to that radical redesign.

Fig. 3.9: BPR's 'Tipping Point'



The fact that TQM and BPR are 'complementary' (Hammer & Champy, 2001: 239) does not, however, mean that this spectral range is a smooth transition between the two extremes. The fact that they are 'neither identical nor in conflict' (ibid) means that, at some stage, that choice will have to be made, and Gladwell's (2000: 133-168) case study of the 'Rise and Fall of New York City Crime' provides an unintentional but superb example of that 'tipping' to a BPR-type alternative 'process', when he describes how the 'graffiti' and 'fare-beaters' issues were tackled.

3.3.5 Subways, Police and Process Change

In citing David Gunn, the new subway director who was brought in to 'oversee a multibillion-dollar rebuilding of the subway system' – "The graffiti was symbolic of the collapse of the system", and, "...you had to win the battle against graffiti" – Gladwell is emphasising the 'context' of New York City (NYC) and its high crime levels at the time. It is perhaps also interesting to note that the contextual environment of the (or any) city could be likened to the cultural environment of a company (or other organisation), where 'symbols' (Gunn's word) are very much a part of 'culture', and therefore of the cultural web within contextual change (Johnson & Scholes, 2005: 301).

The *culture* (or context) of the NYC transit police towards 'fare-beaters' at the time, meant that, 'Because there was only \$1.25 at stake, (they) didn't feel it was worth their time to pursue it, particularly when there were more serious crimes happening down on the platform and in the trains,' yet their new head, William Bratton, decided to tackle this issue head-on in order to 'signal, as publicly as possible, that the transit police were now serious about cracking down on fare-beaters' – a 'symbolic' approach, as well as a radical departure from NYC transit police's previously-held thinking. As Seddon (2007a) says, it's a 'thinking thing'.

One of the problems in the past had been their *process* at the time of arrest – because the arrest itself, 'the trip to the station house, the filling out of necessary forms, and the waiting for those forms to be processed took an entire day' – so Bratton 'retrofitted a city bus and turned it into a rolling station house, with its own fax machines, phones, holding pen, and fingerprinting facilities. Soon the turnaround time on an arrest was down to an hour.' This was fairly clearly a case of 'moving the mountain to Mohammed,' but more importantly it was a case of quintessential BPR. Bratton had 'fundamentally rethought the process'; he then 'radically redesigned' it; and by doing that produced 'dramatic improvements.' The measured improvement in process outcome terms was notionally 8:1 at minimum, but the perceived improvement will have been 24:1, because, prior to his *redesign*, the officers' *perceptions*

were that if you started the 'process' at 08.00 today, you wouldn't be starting the next one until 08.00 tomorrow. True or not, that's what they thought (it took a day), so that's why they didn't do it.

And this was still pre-1990, so, technically, no-one had yet heard of 'business process reengineering.' Not only was BPR still evolving – '*out there, roaming in the jungle that was corporate America*' – it was also clearly lurking, like an urban fox, scavenging amongst the skyscrapers and subways of downtown Manhattan.

Whilst this was not the UK, it was definitely 'public sector', it was definitely BPR, and it was definitely happening. Bratton had 'reengineered' a 'process' in order to tackle the fare-beaters, whereas his battle against graffiti took from 1984 to 1990; a clear case of continuous – if not also relentless – improvement.

The other, perhaps unintended but nonetheless quality-related result of Bratton's work – turning 'the transit police into an organization focused on the smallest infractions, on the details of life underground' (*graffiti and fare-beaters*; Gladwell: 145) – although it was yet to be articulated as such some years later by Rudolph Giuliani – was to introduce the concept of 'Zero Tolerance' (ZT), which in Crosby's (1980: 145) terms equates to 'Zero Defects', or 'ZD'.

3.3.6 Context, Culture and Organisational 'Readiness'

Gladwell goes on to talk about 'Fundamental Attribution Error' (FAE) when 'interpreting other people's behaviour' and 'character' (ibid: 160/163), and that character is 'like a bundle of habits and tendencies and interests, loosely bound together and dependent, at certain times, on circumstances and context.' Again, it takes no great leap of thinking to liken this 'character' of a person to the *culture* of an organisation, and what this is really suggesting is that it is this culture (or context), the underpinning 'environment', that is likely, if not to predicate, then to at least influence behaviour.

If that is the case, then there are definite shades of Herzberg's (1968³) Motivation-Hygiene Theory with its comparison of 'Satisfiers and Dissatisfiers' as those 'loosely bound circumstances', and then of MacGregor's (1960) 'X' and 'Y' theories, where (loosely) the way we view people predicates the way we treat them, and the way we *treat* them brings about just that behaviour.

Gladwell's point appears to be that, rather than viewing the 'person' as having a criminal 'personality' at the root of the backwards audit-trail from their behaviour (Theory X?), it was more useful and constructive to consider the 'context' in which those criminal acts were taking place – the underpinning environment, the 'satisfiers' and (or) 'dissatisfiers' (Herzberg?) – as the background to the potential 'tipping point' for the rise (or fall) in the crime rates. So by tackling that 'context' in the subway and NYC – and removing the 'broken windows' (Wilson & Kelling, 1982); the graffiti (slowly; TQM?) and fare-beaters (quickly; BPR?) – Bratton (and subsequently Giuliani) 'tipped' the NYC crime rate back in the opposite direction.

They *treated* people differently – by radically changing the 'context' of the subway system, they showed the offenders that their previous behaviour was totally unacceptable and would no longer be tolerated – bringing about a reduction in criminal behaviour.

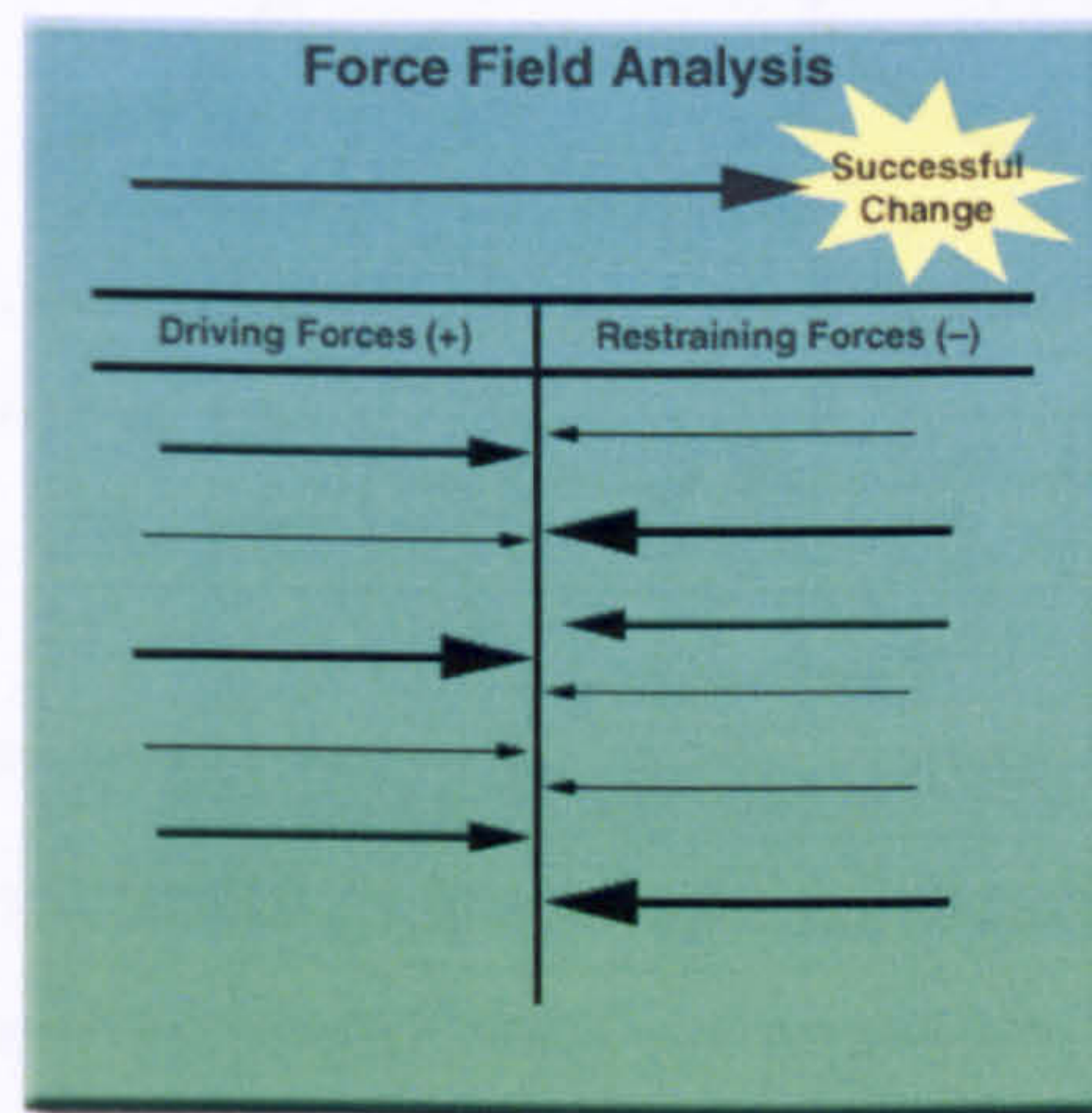
There might be a possible suggestion here, therefore, that before taking up any judgmental position on anyone's behaviour within the range of McGregor's X-Y spectrum, it could be helpful, first, to consider the underlying 'environment' within which those behaviours are taking place; the 'context' (in NYC terms), or the organisational 'culture'?

Johnson and Scholes (2001: 300-316) discuss this issue of organisational culture and its potential for being 'mapped' in the context of their 'cultural web', in order to 'provide and understanding of the barriers to change.' However,

³ First published in Herzberg, F., et al., (1959) *The Motivation to Work*, New York, John Wiley & Sons.

perhaps 'barriers', or 'restraining forces', although widely used in work on change management ('Field Force Analysis'; Lewin, 1951), are the wrong words? Would an assessment of an organisation's 'readiness to change' be more appropriate than 'resistance'?

Fig. 3.10: Lewin's Force Field Analysis

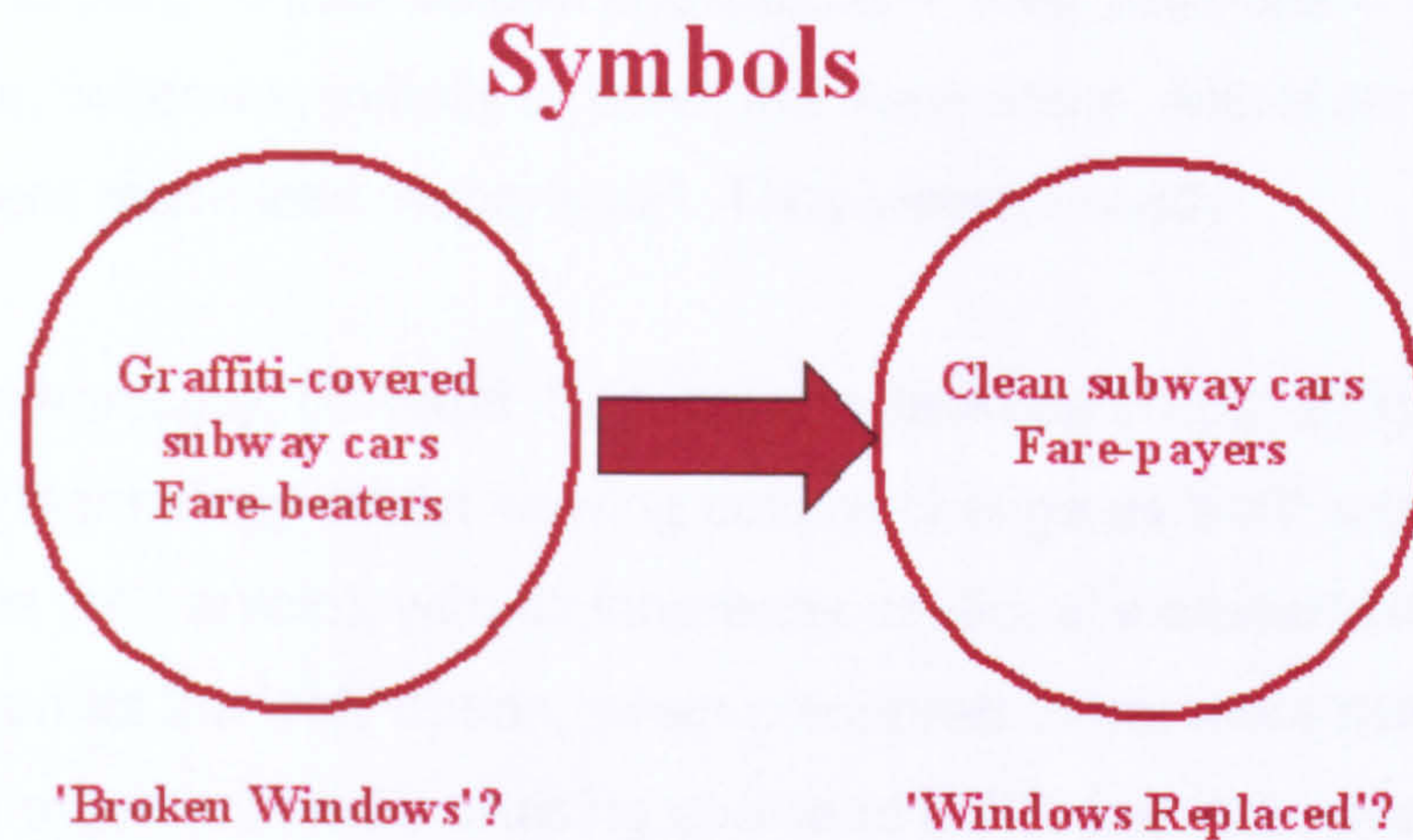


Source: <http://www.pacepilot.com/images/forcefield1.jpg>

Johnson & Scholes (2001: 301) say that 'culture is often explained as that which is taken for granted in a society or organisation' – the 'context', in Gladwell's terms – and also as 'the 'way we do things around here'.'

'Web-mapping' can then be used as a tool to conceive 'of what the culture would need to look like if a different strategy were being followed' (ibid: 311). One example of this could be the circle (just one of the seven in their 'web') showing 'symbols' relating to a current and then a future, more desirable 'culture', where, using Bratton's examples, the changed 'context' was envisioned in order to promote the action required to 'tip' the change in behaviours – i.e. the crime rate – downwards (overleaf):

Fig. 3.11: 'Before' and 'After' Symbols?



That this 'organisational readiness' (By, 2007; Jones, et al., 2005) might be a key issue could well be a factor in the empirical research to follow, but it has been clear for some time that (and how) an organisation's 'culture' affects its success, or otherwise, in the management, or leadership, of change. But this might also raise the question, is the 'leadership' a result of the *context*? or the 'context' a result of the *leadership*?

3.3.7 Culture and Behavioural Change

Although, I believe, inconsistent with some of his later work, John Seddon (with Stephanie Jackson; 1990: 213), confirms the significance of this problem in the article, 'TQM and Culture Change,' opening with the statement that, 'the two greatest difficulties in introducing TQM were achieving cultural change and changing management behaviour.' They then add that, 'If we accept the view that culture is essentially the way people behave in an organisation, then these two are actually a single difficulty – that of achieving lasting change in the behaviour of **everyone** in the organisation' (their emboldening).

They claim that this 'difficulty (was) not for the lack of recognition of the importance of culture to quality,' and cite 'experts' such as Philip Crosby – and how he described 'fighting the unreceptive culture of his organisation' –

and W. Edwards Deming who, they imply, had it easier with the Japanese because, 'in part, ... their values and culture – their passions – were compatible,' whereas, initially at least, the 'Americans, with a very different culture, were much less responsive.' They weren't 'ready'.

Somewhat ironically, perhaps, Seddon and Jackson (1990: 213) see quality as a 'hard technology' whilst viewing culture change as 'soft', whereas 'quality' (or TQM, in their article), with its inherently cautious, incremental steps, could well be seen as the 'soft' option, when compared to the more risky and potentially organisationally bruising choice of BPR; and in emphasising the 'difficulties' associated with cultural change, their point clearly is that it is 'hard' to achieve.

Seddon himself, in an earlier article entitled 'A Passion for Quality' (1989: 153), states that 'Total Quality Management demands a clear focus on the customer and total commitment throughout the organisation,' adding, 'Achieving this state of TQM requires nothing less than a 'culture change' for most organisations.' And whilst admitting to a number of 'generalisations' in some of his analysis, he still asserts that 'in virtually every study of quality programmes we find the TQM initiative up against the traditional culture of the organisation – and overcome by it more often than not.' If *soft* TQM struggles, what chance the *harder* BPR?

All this, however, hints at the potential for differences in this 'organisational readiness', and how those might influence the 'tipping point' into the choice of a more 'radical', but possibly more risky, BPR-based approach to change, over the incrementally gentler and inherently less risky TQM- or kaizen-based approaches? Clearly, sometime between 1984 and 1990, New York City 'tipped', and became 'ready' for this more radical and risky 'ZT' approach.

In considering Public Sector Organisations (PSO) in the UK, therefore, one possible area on which to focus might be to seek to identify a range of indicators – contextual? behavioural? – that might suggest a state of 'readiness', at which point the organisation (e.g. a Council?) might be *ready* to

'tip' towards a more radical, BPR-type, approach to change? If this were the case, it might also be possible therefore to provide a means by which to 'rate' any local authority against those criteria, in order to inform their change-management decision-making processes.

3.3.8 Peer Group Influence

Another key and possibly therefore relevant aspect from Gladwell's research might be the contextual, or 'readiness', effects of peer-group influence. He cites Judith Harris's (1998) book *The Nurture Assumption*, where she argues that the 'environmental influence that helps children [in this case] become who they are – that shapes their character and personality – is their peer group.' And Gladwell, in his *Conclusion*, reaffirms that we 'are actually powerfully influenced by our surroundings, our immediate context, and the personalities of those around us.' Seemingly in support of Gladwell's 'context' and Harris's 'peer group' arguments, Seddon (1989: 155) says; 'It is difficult, then, for people to change culturally-determined behaviour unless the environment changes to support the new behaviour – and the behaviour of others around them also changes.' And as Seddon (again) and Jackson (1990: 213) said at the beginning of their article, these 'others' – one of the 'two greatest difficulties' – are 'management'!

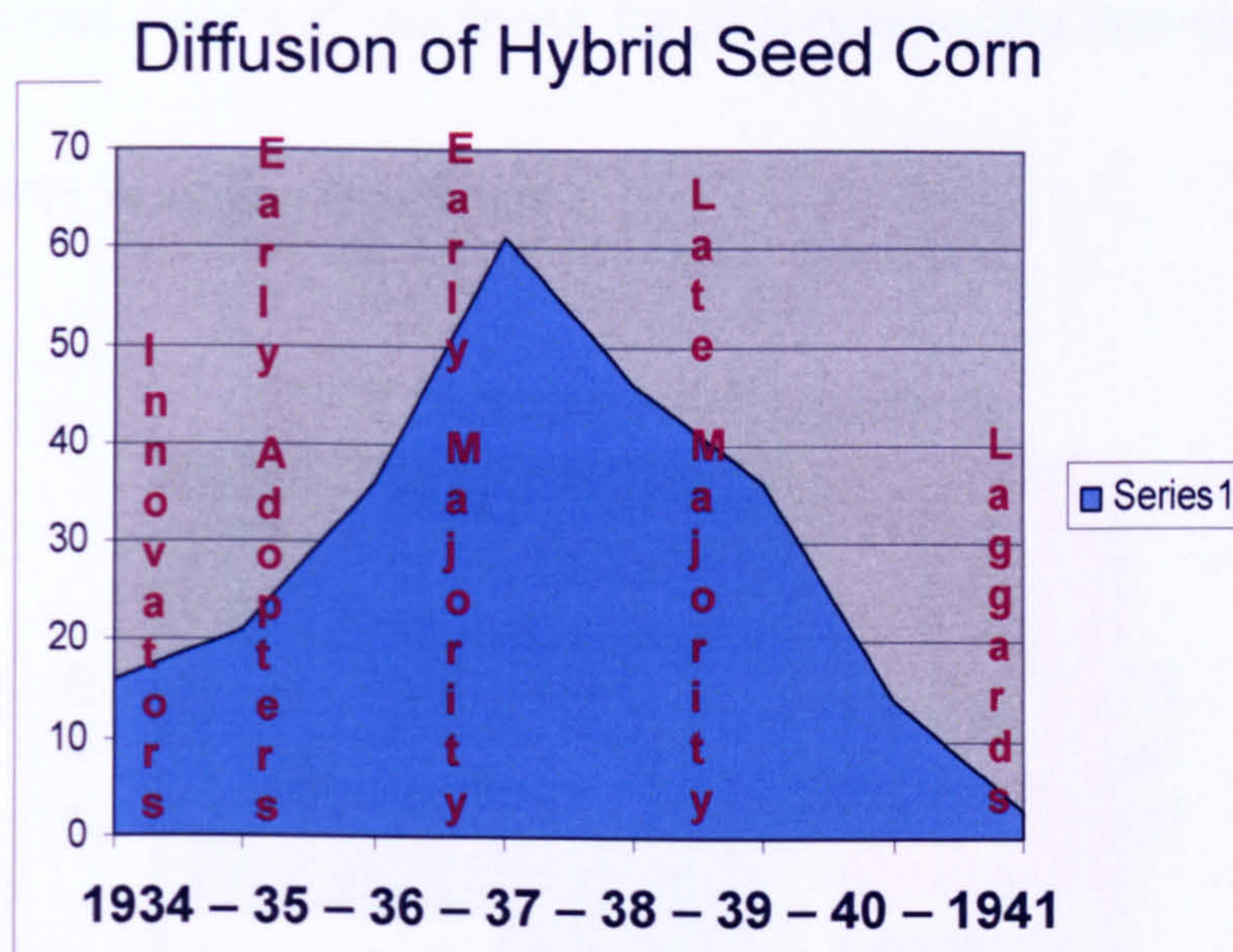
3.3.9 Adoption Rates

A further factor brought out by Gladwell (2000: 196-199), possibly also affecting this 'readiness', was the *rate* of 'tipping' – or 'adoption' – exemplified in the case of the Ryan and Gross (1943) diffusion study of the 'spread of hybrid seed corn' in Greene County, Iowa, in the 1930s, which used the 'language of diffusion research' to show the stages of adoption of the new seed corn (as seen in Fig. 3.12, overleaf).

This 'adoption process' concept is widely used in marketing (e.g. Dibb, et al., 2001: 459-463; Kotler, et al., 2002: 222-225), but again, perhaps it is possible that it could also be adapted to consider the range of characteristics that

might enable the identification of a Council's 'state of readiness' for the adoption of a more radical change technique?

Fig. 3.12: Diffusion of Hybrid Seed Corn in Greene County, Iowa



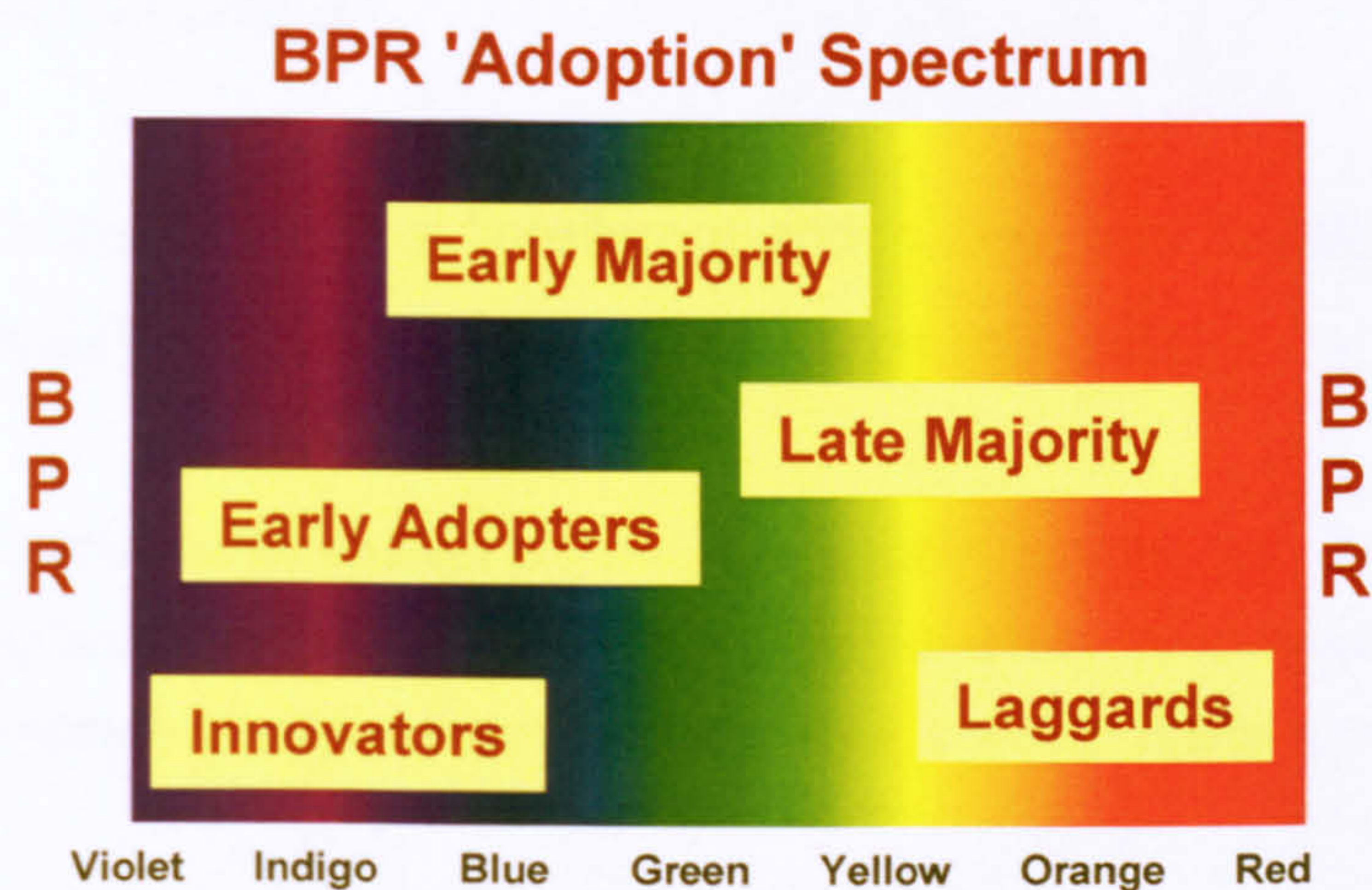
Gladwell made the important point that innovations 'don't just slide effortlessly from one group to the next' (because) 'There is a yawning chasm between them' – the 'chasm of unreadiness', perhaps? – a 'chasm' between 'small and cautious steps' (Hammer, 1990: 105) and an 'all-or-nothing proposition with an uncertain result'? A chasm of context, and behaviours.

Perhaps, if the BPR approach to change within PSOs in the UK is ever to become positively 'contagious', in Gladwell's terms, then some way needs to be found to more reliably enable (e.g.) a Council to gauge its chances of success, were it to choose to adopt the more radical approach to change that BPR offers. Similarly, should a PSO/Council find itself at some crisis point and being forced to consider more radical change, it might be better placed to understand why.

The chasm of unreadiness will need to be bridged, so that the readiness to attempt such an approach is not the sole prerogative of the 'Innovators' amongst PSOs, but the Early Adopters need to be brought into play, laying

the new 'cow path' (with apologies to Hammer) of radically redesigned and simplified processes for the Early and Late Majorities to follow? And possibly, as with Lessem and Baruch's (1999) 'Spectral Management Type Inventory (SMTI)', there might also be an equivalent 'spectral inventory' for the range of PSOs at various stages of 'readiness' for BPR-type radical change?

Fig. 3.13: BPR 'Adoption Spectrum'



3.4 Bridging the Chasm 'always starts at the top'.

Linking Gladwell (2000) back to the early 1990s and the 'Tipping Point' of BPR into the publicly accepted change-management arena, it could be posited that Hammer (subsequently with Champy) was the 'Paul Revere' (ibid: 30) of BPR, whilst Davenport (initially with Short) was the 'William Dawes' (ibid: 33). Hammer and Champy were the 'Connectors', the 'Mavens' and the 'Salesmen', rolled into one, and the resultant 'Stickiness' of BPR is possibly evident in its residual (albeit not universal) popularity a decade-and-a-half later. The importance of the 'Power of Context' – especially in the *context* of UK PSOs – might present the key to bridging this 'chasm of unreadiness', if the means to change the 'culture' (whether supported or predicated by management 'behaviour') can be found; or as Gladwell (2000: 257) states: 'The theory of Tipping Points requires, however, that we reframe the way we think about the world.' In the *context* of UK PSOs, but LGOs in particular, and

the Chief Executives and their management teams, their 'world' is their Council, and it is therefore most likely to be *their* 'behaviours', first, that have to 'tip'.

Gladwell concludes: 'What must underlie successful epidemics, in the end, is a bedrock belief that change is possible, that people can radically transform their behaviour or beliefs in the face of the right kind of impetus,' and, 'In the end, Tipping Points are a reaffirmation of the potential for change and the power of intelligent action.'

Perhaps the 'impetus' for that 'intelligent action' lies, and remains, with LGO Chief Executives? As Eccles (1994: 42) states (his italics):

'The fruitful impetus for change is thus likely to come from the top. Indeed, there are consultants and experienced managers who say that they have *never* seen major strategic impetus start from the middle or bottom; it *always* starts at the top.'

3.5 Chances of Success – 'Organisational Readiness'

Hammer and Stanton (1995: 86-88) provide the necessary 'organisational readiness' template here, with their 'The Self-Assessment Diagnostic,' covering the three areas of 'Reengineering Leadership,' 'Organizational Readiness' and 'Style of Implementation,' in their chapter, 'Are You Ready For Reengineering?' The second of these three *diagnostics* poses the following nine 'readiness' questions (ibid: 87, original numbering retained):

7. The organization as a whole recognises the need for reengineering and fundamental change.

Score: _____

8. The organization understands the nature of reengineering, including the fact that it results in multidimensional change that impacts

processes, jobs, organizational structure, management responsibilities, etc.

Score: _____

9. The organization believes that the reengineering leader and the senior management team are truly committed to reengineering, and that this commitment will be long-lasting.

Score: _____

10. The organization has none of the complacency and arrogance that often follow a sustained period of success.

Score: _____

11. The organization is free of the scepticism, mistrust, and ambivalence that often follow a program of downsizing or restructuring.

Score: _____

12. The organization has the financial and human resources needed to implement reengineering.

Score: _____

13. Key staff organizations – human resources, finance, and information systems – are positive about the prospect of reengineering and capable of innovative response to its demands.

Score: _____

14. The organization's experience with total quality management (TQM) has created an environment that is receptive to reengineering.

Score: _____

15. The organization places a high value on serving customers and has a solid understanding of customer needs.

Score: _____

Whilst the above is simply the 'Organizational Readiness' extract, the preceding and succeeding questions are equally important for the overall self-assessment, but the 'readiness' aspect is the contextual focus here. Hammer and Stanton state that you 'should ask yourself how true each statement is of your organization,' and that the 'only right answer is the truth.' Their scoring system is an answer scale that runs from 1 to 5, 'with 1 representing strong disagreement (i.e. the statement is not at all true of your organization) and 5 representing strong agreement (i.e. the statement is very true of your organization).' They (ibid: 89/90) give 'minimum scores' for each statement, each section, and the diagnostic as a whole, but emphasise also that the 'minimum recommended section score is larger than the sum of the statement scores,' and that this is because 'mere adequacy in each category is not enough to guarantee success; overall strength is what is needed.'

With minimum 'section scores' as follows:

'Reengineering Leadership' – 24 out of a possible 30;

'Organizational Readiness' – 28 out of a possible 45;

'Style of Implementation' – 18 out of a possible 25;

...the bar for the 'tipping point' seems to be set quite high. But as they emphasise also, 'We never said it would be easy. The entrance requirements for reengineering are stiff' (ibid: 90). This further suggests, therefore, that the leap to cross the 'chasm of unreadiness' requires a signal commitment from those 'at the top,' the launch platform being the contextual shifts provided by the contemporary external drivers (e.g. Gershon?). Hammer and Stanton provide guidance in this respect (ibid: 90-99) with a section on 'Improving Your Scores,' but to repeat a point made earlier, in the *context* of UK PSO/LGO, the Chief Executives and their management teams, their 'world' is their Council, and it is therefore most likely to be *their* 'behaviours', first, that will have to 'tip'.

Whilst primarily focusing on 'Lean' improvement techniques, it is nonetheless somewhat surprising that Radnor et al. (2006) make no mention of Hammer and Stanton's (1995a) work on 'Organizational Readiness' in their paper for the Scottish Government – published on 'The Scottish Government' website – on 'Evaluation of the Lean Approach to Business Management and its Use in the Public Sector', when Chapter 7 of the paper is specifically entitled, 'Organisational Readiness for Improvement' and claims to outline 'a number of organisational factors that affect the ability of an organisation to implement an effective improvement programme'. The paper does not confine itself to 'lean', as its references include papers on (e.g.) TQM and Benchmarking, so that would imply they also, and perhaps BPR/SRD too, would qualify as 'effective improvement programme(s)'. For comparison, therefore, Radnor et al's albeit more succinct 'factors' are rearranged overleaf alongside Hammer and Stanton's nine statements from section 2 of their 'Self-Diagnostic', on 'Organisational Readiness' (Table 3.2, overleaf):

Table 3.2: 'Organisational Readiness' Comparisons

	Hammer & Stanton (1995a)	Radnor, et al. (2006)*	
7	The organisation as a whole recognises the need for reengineering and fundamental change.	Acceptance of the need to change	1
8	The organisation understands the nature of reengineering, including the fact that it results in multidimensional change that impacts processes, jobs, organisational structure, management responsibilities, etc.	Lack of process-based view	6
9	The organisation believes that the reengineering leader and the senior management team are truly committed to reengineering, and that this commitment will be long-lasting.	Unsupportive culture**	4
10	The organisation has none of the complacency and arrogance that often follow a sustained period of success.	Unsupportive culture**	4
11	The organisation is free of the scepticism, mistrust, and ambivalence that often follow a program of downsizing or restructuring.	Unsupportive culture**	4
12	The organisation has the financial and human resources needed to implement reengineering.	Capacity for improvement	2
13	Key staff organisations – human resources, finance, and information systems – are positive about the prospect of reengineering and capable of innovative response to its demands.	Team working	3
14	The organisation's experience with total quality management (TQM) has created an environment that is receptive to reengineering.	Lack of improvement data	7
15	The organisation places a high value on serving customers and has a solid understanding of customer needs.	Lack of customer focus	5

* Order re-arranged to most suitable 'fit' alongside Hammer & Stanton's view.

** Seen as similar.

3.6 BPR in the 21st Century

Since BPR 'tipped' – if we accept that premise – more than a decade ago, the level of writing on the subject has remained fairly consistent. It will, therefore, be most relevant to this review to consider some of the more recent arguments, especially when they present empirical evidence of success, or otherwise, in the public sector in the UK (where available), and especially LGOs, two of which are the specific focus of this research.

For example, a recent study of the 'determinants for hospital BPR success' in the US (Caccia-Bava, et al., 2005) suggested that few 'organizations had reaped the benefits they expected,' with an estimate that 'one quarter of 300

reengineering projects were not meeting their goals,' and speculation that the 'figure might be closer to 70 percent' for the industry at large. This 'figure' (and others similar) has been cited elsewhere – e.g. 'Our unscientific estimate is that as many as 50 to 70 percent of the organizations that undertake a reengineering effort do not achieve the dramatic results they intended' (Hammer & Champy, 1993: 200; 2001: 221); '70 per cent failure rate amongst UK firms' (Zairi & Sinclair, 1995); and, '80% of BPR efforts fail' (Seddon, 2003: 159) – and so Caccia-Bava, et al. (2005) reasonably pose the question, 'With so many problems why are organizations still trying to implement BPR projects?'

One of the key possibilities here is the issue of organisations' – or perhaps, the leaders and people within them – inadequate 'understanding' of BPR, and the concept of 'organisational readiness' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995a), to which we will return again later.

Whilst concluding that 'many hospitals have derived substantial benefits from BPR,' but also that, 'many have not,' Caccia-Bava, et al. (2005) also hint at this concept by suggesting that 'BPR project managers have ignored some of the ('important') literature prescriptions for increasing the likelihood of success' in their projects; for example (ibid):

- 'commitment to continuous improvement;
- viewing technology not as a solution in itself but as an enabler to implement required business changes;
- performing a thorough process analysis to identify and eliminate process activities which add no value; and,
- carefully planning for project details before implementation.'

Thus the 'many', that may have 'derived substantial benefits', might again reflect the point that BPR is itself only one approach on the spectrum of organisational change, and that 'failure' rates of, say, 50-80 percent, still indicate potential successes for the reciprocal 20-50 percent, which to some

might be quite acceptable, especially *if* those benefits truly are 'substantial'. (NB This also reiterates the view that BPR can comfortably sit alongside other 'approaches'.)

Tennant and Wu (2005) also quote the '70 per cent' figure – citing in their case Hammer and Champy (1993, again) and Cafasso (1993*) – when claiming that the 'main barriers to successful implementation [in 'UK-based companies'] were reported as tactical short-term solution-driven approaches.' However, their assertion that because '71 per cent' of the companies surveyed expected an 'implementation time frame of less than two years,' also suggested that BPR was 'being applied as a tactical tool to address short-term business imperatives, rather than to achieve strategic objectives,' and seems to take little if any account of Hammer and Champy's (2001: 118) point that 'implementation of the first field pilot site ... usually takes a year,' which in turn reinforces Hammer and Stanton's (1995: 30) *Moral*: 'You must reengineer quickly.' However, why should a 'time frame of less than two years' not be a 'strategic objective'? The fact that 'strategy' is about long-(or longer-)term thinking does not, surely, obviate the possibility of a more 'radical' component within its execution. For example, Hill and Collins (1998) found that 'in 38 (80.9 percent) of the 47 relevant cases (including two companies with past experience) BPR was identified as an important part of future strategy.' Indeed, within the 21-page 'Change Management Strategy' (2005) document of one of my two facilitating organisations, 'BPR' is mentioned no fewer than 12 times.

(* NB Whilst the Cafasso article is currently unavailable, it is not impossible that this ubiquitous '70%' could derive almost exclusively from Hammer and Champy, 1993.)

Tennant and Wu (2005) also commented on the 'important' role of IT in terms of 'solution implementation', reinforcing the 'enabling' role previously mentioned. They highlight this importance in their list of 'Implementation Difficulties' with [a] company having an 'IT infrastructure unable to support BPR,' which agrees with Hammer's (1990) original point of not simply 'automating' what exists – 'paving the cow paths' – but redesigning (or

reengineering) first, *then* applying IT to the redesigned process(es). Redesign the system, then *pull* the IT (Seddon, 2007a).

A possible example (cited also earlier) of the alternative was highlighted by Richard Fletcher in his article, 'Sainsbury's BASKET CASE' (Fletcher, 2004), with:

'According to rival retailers, Sainsbury and the army of management consultants that were involved in the modernisation of its supply chain have quite simply over-automated the process.'

Sid Joynson had earlier put it more succinctly:

'I've lost count of the number of times I've seen good money being poured into new technology before companies have cracked the question of how best the production flows should be organized' (Joynson & Forrester, 1995: 9).

The 'BPR *then* IT' point, it could be suggested, has parallels with the 'BPR or TQM?' debate, with, in both cases, BPR needing to come first. The reasons for choosing a BPR-type strategy are likely to be different from those for choosing TQM (or kaizen), because BPR is more likely to be embarked upon when, situationally and strategically, continuous improvement (CI) is found not to be enough. In fact, IT alone had been found not to be enough, in Koenig's (1993) 'Business Process Redesign and the Productivity Paradox' – but the very 'quick and dirty' nature of BPR interventions almost predicates the adoption of a TQM-style approach to continuous improvement, or kaizen, for the immediate follow-up – continuously refining the newly redesigned processes? The word 'intervention' (Ongaro, 2004; Hayes, 2007) itself implies the level of one-off 'urgency' emphasised by Seddon (2003: 30) when 'eradicating the causes of customers' problems,' whereas 'continuous' alternatively implies thereafter maintaining the gains, whilst improving 'continuously' upon them.

Another of Tennant and Wu's 'difficulties' was 'understanding the needs of employees rather than focusing on downsizing.' They make the point earlier

that the companies were not *walking their talk*, in that whilst they might have 'reported a high level of recognition of the people issues,' it was in fact 'questionable whether this represents actual practice.' In making this point, however, they also repeat their suggestion that BPR is 'often seen as a tactical tool for addressing short-term business problems ... rather than the strategic issues of [e.g.]... empowerment of people.' Once again this throws up the apparent disconnection between the initial (i.e. shorter-term) application of BPR, as part of a longer-term overall strategy, followed by a long-term commitment to continuous improvement, when BPR is possibly seen by some in this 'tactical' rather than strategic context. So, 'reengineer quickly', first, followed by, 'small and cautious steps' (Hammer, 1990: 105)? Champy (1996: 21) was not afraid to grasp this controversial nettle and admit to some overlap whilst aiming to avoid the confusion:

'For some period, downsizing and outsourcing will be byproducts of reengineering, no doubt about it, but they are not by any means the thing itself, nor one of its purposes.'

He is merely reemphasizing Peter Drucker's 'bluntly' put point made earlier, 'Every organization has to prepare for the abandonment of everything it does' (1995: 11). He clarifies again that it is *not* 'jobs' that 'we must be prepared to abandon,' but the 'whole ideology, a whole way of thinking about power' and the 'self-serving bureaucracy' of management itself (ibid: 21).

If BPR and TQM are truly 'complementary' (Hammer and Champy, 1993: 49; 2001: 239) and not 'mutually exclusive or competing phenomena' (Gulden & Reck, 1992), then if also, as Tennant and Wu (2005) suggest, the 'main triggers' for the initial application of BPR were 'competitive pressures, cost reduction, and the management of acquisitions,' the need for early (and possibly therefore 'radical') improvement, or turnaround, might be self-evident, with 'small and cautious steps' (Hammer, 1990: 105) being inappropriate at that juncture.

The issue of 'empowerment' can – in fact possibly must – sit comfortably within the 'short-term', as part also of a longer-term cultural change strategy,

because once an organization commits to the 'empowerment of [its] people,' the process that enables it would be concurrent with, and therefore an inherent part of the 'complexity' (Jeal, 2005) of other cultural change issues. Phipps (2001: 646), in a section headed, 'Listening to the Voice of the Process,' also comments on this *cultural* nature of the change that its methodology necessarily brings about:

'Continuous process improvement is not a technique so much as it is a method for developing a change in attitude about how work is accomplished efficiently and effectively.'

And whilst any discussion on 'efficiency' implies measurement, the way this is *thought* about is still the fundamental cultural issue, as Seddon (2002: 86) said, 'Any consideration of measurement as a means of process improvement requires a radical shift in thinking and attitude.' Phipps (2001: 657) similarly concludes, 'Listening to the multiple voices of our customers, the staff, the *Gemba* processes, and the organization will be critical as new measures are developed.'

Jeal (2005), in discussing the 'ethos' behind the University of Salford's 'CRISP' (Customer Resolution and Information Services Project) project, also hints at the attitudinal dangers of seeing BPR primarily as a cost-reduction exercise, citing Larsen and Myers' finding that such a 'cost-based' focus 'can result in "serious organisational problems over the longer term" (Larsen and Myers, 1999: 414).'

Jeal further emphasises the importance of recognising what she calls a 'sea of emotions' and of understanding that (in their case at least) the BPR initiative had to 'situate itself within [at least four different] cultures.' She admits that, at Salford, they have 'experienced what could be called a culture shock in beginning BPR.'

Citing Kotter and Cohen (2002), she states that a 'factor in successful change is the overcoming of resistance by recognising people's feelings and the

organisational culture. The implication is then that cultures are changed by changing the emotions that drive them, not the other way around' (Jeal, 2005). In making this point, Jeal is clearly advocating the 'Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour' sequence (Blanchard, 1989), or a rational-linear approach to organisational change (Boddy & Buchanan, 1992), over the alternative of 'Knowledge-Behaviour-Attitude.' Pascale (1990: 264) apparently disagrees when advocating that it is 'easier to act ourselves into a better mode of thinking than to think ourselves into a better mode of acting' – clearly a 'Knowledge-Behaviour-Attitude' approach. Davies (2001: 167), in discussing 'Eddie' (actually Edward) Stobart's thinking in 'having his drivers so smart,' cites Rev. Michael Smith (rector of Linch and Milland in West Sussex), who suggests that there is a case for both approaches:

'Psychologists will say that you have to make people think the right way for them to make the right actions. But the reverse can happen. You can bring about the right actions, in this case making them dress smart and have clean lorries, and the result is that they think the right way. They become proud of their work, of the service they give.'

Perhaps this depends on the 'situation' (Blanchard, *ibid*)?

This behavioural change is a recurring theme and was highlighted by Majchrzak and Wang (1996) when they reported on the 'disappointment' of some companies having 'endured the trauma of reengineering only to discover that their performance is no better – in some cases actually worse than before,' and they raise this 'often overlooked' behavioural issue as the:

'...tendency of managers and reengineering teams to underestimate the actions required to transform the way employees behave and work with one another. They assume that simply changing the organizational structures from functional units into process-complete departments will cause people to shed their functional mind-sets and will forge them instantly into a team intent on achieving common goals.'

Although based on US electronics manufacturers, they claim that their study 'proved that this assumption [was] wrong,' and that they found that 'managers

overlook the importance of changing their organization's culture,' and home in very clearly on the responsibility of management in this issue:

'Many managers do away with functions but fail to change their own positions. They continue to act like functional chiefs even though the functions no longer formally exist... They fail to see that collective responsibility is an attitude, a value, a concern. It means taking an interest in one's colleagues and in improving the outcome of mutual (as opposed to individual) efforts.'

Majchrzak and Wang's (ibid) point of managers changing 'their own positions' reflects very clearly the need for customer-focused altruism made in Hammer and Champy's (1993: 76) original point that managers (also) have to change – 'from supervisors to coaches':

'Managers in a reengineered company need strong interpersonal skills and have to take pride in the accomplishment of others. Such a manager is a mentor, who is there to provide resources, to answer questions, and to look out for the long-term career development of the individual. This is a different role from the one most managers have traditionally played' (p. 77).

And, as Joynson (1995: 21) says, 'It requires a determination to remove any managers who stand in the way.' This may sound harsh, but it, or rather he, is simply making clear that there is no point in any organisation embarking upon a strategic, process-based, people-centred, potentially expensive and possibly radical (in terms of revised organisational culture, structure and management roles) improvement intervention, if a small number of resistant-to-change middle managers could ensure it foundered, primarily because they are unable to adjust. It would be better not to start – because, as Hammer and Stanton (1995a) might say, they are not 'ready'.

Albeit a study of administrative reform in the public sector in Italy, Ongaro (2004) effectively embraced the question of 'readiness' by 'analysing the factors that can facilitate the adoption of [process management, or BPR] in the public sector' and recognising the need to address questions such as:

1. 'Is process management always possible?
2. What are enabling factors for process management in the public sector?
3. And, in particular, how can it be related to public management reforms carried on at the central level?'

Ongaro also raises the issue of the possibility of there being 'degrees of BPR', in noting that amongst earlier literature contributions to BPR in the public sector there was an emphasis on the 'necessity of adopting an incremental approach in reengineering interventions' as a peculiar feature of 'BPR in the public sector.' His own work then considered how public administrations might be 'ordinarily run' with increased focus on processes, possibly (although 'not necessarily') following a reengineering intervention, and on how process management might be effectively employed in the increasingly partnership-oriented public sector:

'...the issue of managing the increasingly complex set of relations among public entities and with private organisations, which determines an increased need of co-ordination.'

Using similar language to Ryan and Goss (1943) and Gladwell (2000), Ongaro discusses the relevance of the 'diffusion of an organisational culture oriented to processes,' and that, 'in the absence of such a culture, performances may even worsen in a process-based organisation compared to a more traditional organisational frame.' Ongaro found that the main feature of this 'diffusion' was that processes 'are perceived by personnel as the "place" where organizational resources are activated and employed,' and that (again) this 'diffusion' required the employment of a number of 'specific instruments' (Ongaro, 2004: Table 1):

- 'the description and analysis of the main processes;
- the development of process indicators (quality of the output, throughput time, costs);
- the assignment of process performance targets; and,
- the development of HRM systems based also on the evaluation and reward of the performance of the process team.'

Part of this diffusion would also be the identification and establishment of process owners – the individuals who, in the case of radical redesign, would 'usually lead the reengineering intervention.' As Hammer and Champy (2001: 112) pointed out, 'Most companies lack process owners, because in traditional organizations people do not tend to think in process terms,' they think functionally, vertically and hierarchically. And whereas Ongaro talks of 'delegation and team working' as the 'two other relevant levers for implementing process management,' Hammer and Champy (ibid: 106) were very clear about the make-up of the overall 'Who will reengineer?' for the success of BPR – 'How companies select and organize the people who actually do the reengineering is key to the success of the endeavour' – and they identified a number of 'roles' that had emerged from the companies they had observed implementing reengineering (ibid):

- Leader;
- Process owner;
- Reengineering team;
- Steering committee;
- Reengineering czar;

...with 'process owner' clearly featured.

The appointment of a 'Reengineering czar' is very similar to Hall et al's (1993: 128) recommendation to, 'Assign an additional senior executive to be responsible for implementation.'

3.6.1 'Success Factors'

Al-Mashari and Zairi (1999), in their paper entitled, 'BPR implementation process: an analysis of key success and failure factors,' provided probably the most comprehensive review of recent literature, and in their 'Fig. 1' (p. 106) produced a 'summary of key success/failure factors in BPR.' The full 'summary' is reproduced in Appendix 2, but they group their findings into five

'key' categories, each providing both 'Success Factors' (CSF) and 'Failure Factors' (CFF) – Table 3.3, below:

Table 3.3: Al-Mashari & Zairi's 'Success' and 'Failure' Factors

Success Factors		Failure Factors
Change of Management Systems and Culture Factors	1	Change of Management Systems and Culture Factors
Management Competence Factors	2	Management Support Factors
Organisational Structure Factors	3	Organisational Structure Factors
BPR Project Management Factors	4	BPR Project Management Factors
IT Infrastructure Factors	5	IT Infrastructure Factors

Source: Al-Mashari, M. & Zairi, M., (1999) 'BPR implementation process: an analysis of key success and failure factors', *Business Process Management Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 106, Fig. 1, 'A summary of key success/failure factors in BPR'

Categories 2 and 3, for example, break down the 'success' v 'failure' issues as follows (Table 3.3a):

Table 3.3a: Breakdown of categories 2 & 3

Success Factors	Failure Factors
<p>Management Competence Factors:</p> <p>Committed and Strong Leadership</p> <p>Championship and Sponsorship</p> <p>Management of Risk</p>	<p>Management Support Factors:</p> <p>Problems related to commitment, support and leadership</p> <p>Problems related to championship and sponsorship</p>
<p>Organisational Structure Factors:</p> <p>Adequate Job Integration Approach</p> <p>Effective BPR Teams</p> <p>Appropriate Jobs, Definition and Responsibilities Allocation</p>	<p>Organisational Structure Factors:</p> <p>Ineffective BPR teams</p> <p>Problems related to integration mechanism, jobs' definition, and responsibilities allocation</p>

On the 'corporate experience of re-engineering' front, Harvey (1995), in, 'Re-engineering: The Critical Success Factors,' offered a report which it was claimed occupied 'a unique position in the growing canon of re-engineering literature by explaining the reasons why projects sometimes succeed in producing radical improvement, but more often fall far short of this goal' (Preface). The report presented considerable guidance on the successful implementation of BPR, underpinned by 'in-depth case studies' of eight organisations – Baxi Partnership, BT, Lucas Industries, National Vulcan Engineering, Pilkington Optronics, Reuters, Western Provident Association, and Xerox – and in the Executive Summary's 'key messages' are the following '10 critical success factors,' suffixed by the comment (or health warning?) 'As rule, the larger the organisation, the more challenging the task':

1. establishing strategic purpose
2. ensuring top management direction and support
3. setting stretching goals for performance improvement
4. defining core processes
5. focussing on customer needs
6. redesigning and creating higher level processes
7. effective change management
8. establishing cross functional integration
9. promoting stakeholder involvement and ownership
10. putting effective planning and project management in place.

Whilst the report (at an initial purchase cost of £445) was undoubtedly the result of a 'programme of up-to-date research' – circa early to mid-1990s – its ten CSFs cannot be found replicated within Al-Mashari and Zairi's (1999) 'summary', although there are some similarities, vis Table 3.4 (overleaf):

Table 3.4: Similarities in CSFs

Harvey (1995)	Al-Mashari and Zairi (1999)
1. Establishing strategic purpose	4.1. Alignment of BPR strategy with corporate strategy
2. Ensuring top management direction and support	2.2/3. Committed and strong leadership, championship and sponsorship
3. Setting stretching goals for performance improvement	4.3. Setting performance goals and measures
4. Defining core processes	
5. Focussing on customer needs	
6. Redesigning and creating higher level processes	4.9. Effective process redesign
7. Effective change management	1.6. Creating an effective culture for organisational change
8. Establishing cross functional integration	3.1. Adequate job integration approach
9. Promoting stakeholder involvement and ownership	
10. Putting effective planning and project management in place	4.2. Effective planning and use of project management techniques

Is it not surprising, therefore, that Al-Mashari and Zairi's (1999) 'summary of key' factors makes no mention whatever of 'customers', other 'stakeholders', or of the need to establish which might be the 'core processes' requiring improvement, given that their paper is promoted as a 'holistic view', 'relating to the hard and soft factors that cause success and failure in BPR implementation'?

Were Al-Mashari and Zairi saying there were no significant concerns raised, in *all* the 'relevant literature' reviewed in their own 25-page report, regarding the issues of adequate customer focus, core process identification, or stakeholder involvement and ownership? Is not this apparent misalignment even more surprising therefore, when a glance at just two of Al-Mashari and Zairi's own 117 references – (e.g.) Kettinger, et al's (1997) 25-page article, and Harvey's (1995) 300-page report – both *do* refer to these issues?

Despite these apparent inconsistencies, it is perhaps more important that there are abundant consistencies between the various CSF and CFF reviews.

For example, the references above to 'effective change management' and 'creating an effective culture for organisational change' – especially perhaps when seen in the context of 'urgency' that might be required within a BPR-style intervention – are redolent of Kotter's (1997: 21) 'Action Plan for Change':

1. Establish a Sense of Urgency
2. Create the Guiding Coalition
3. Develop a Vision and Strategy
4. Communicate the Change Vision
5. Empower Broad-Based Action
6. Generate Short-Term Wins
7. Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change
8. Anchor New Approaches in the Corporate Culture.

(NB These '8' were reinforced in Kotter & Rathgeber's (2006) more populist revival of their basic change management principles in, *Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions*, London, Macmillan.)

3.7 Summary

In summary we can see that whilst the basic tenets of BPR might have been forming in people's minds, and within the activities of organizations, back in the 1980s, it was really only formulated into a recognizable concept in the early 1990s. Whilst Hammer (1990) might have been its progenitor, with subsequently Davenport and Short (1990), Hammer and Champy (1993) and Davenport (1993) being the most prominent, its progeny were sired by many other authors as BPR's potential practitioners sought further guidance.

Its rationale was different from TQM – it was 'radical', not 'incremental' – and whilst it might have been made possible by advances in Information Technology (IT), it was also brought about largely because IT by itself had failed to deliver on its 'productivity' promise (Koenig, 1993).

In what these days might be called the zeitgeist, 'reengineering' caught the spirit of the time. There was still a definite need for organizational change, with growing competitiveness reflecting the desire for continuously increasing living standards in the West and the 'Japanisation' of management and manufacturing techniques, coinciding with a perception that organizations themselves might have become complacent and 'fat' – a view still being reflected upon more than a decade later by Charlie Bell, boss of McDonald's:

'Big companies get fat, dumb and happy. They take their eye off the ball and forget about customers' (Charlie Bell, boss of McDonald's, 'Fat, Dumb and Happy', *The Sunday Times, Business Focus*, September 26, 2004: 5).

Post-natal BPR was developing in various directions but with some common principles in that it was regarded as 'radical' and a means to effect 'transformational' change. However, with these 'directions' came some contradictions regarding issues of application, the role of IT (as 'enabler' or 'driver'), whether it was solely about 'processes' and had it 'forgotten' people (Davenport, 1995a), and did it contrast with or complement TQM and Kaizen? It is evident also that, at this time, the required changes in mindset (mainly that of leaders) were not fully appreciated, nor the differences in application between manufacturing and services recognized, and Seddon (2003, 2008a, 2008b) was to provide valuable contributions to these later.

Further issues around 'leadership' will be covered more fully later, but by the mid-1990s BPR had 'tipped' into the mainstreams of change, improvement and quality management, and interest in and writing on the subject has been fairly constant since then, confirming its place in that spectrum of options. The potential conflict between (e.g.) Kaizen and BPR was resolved with the acceptance of Gulden and Reck's earlier (1992) assertion that 'organizations

need both,' and that TQM and BPR were seen as 'complementary' (Hammer & Champy, 2001).

Gladwell's (2000) 'Tipping Point' illustrates this 'spectral issue', and that whilst BPR is not an 'either/or' decision, there is a point on that 'incremental to radical' spectrum, below which the 'thing' being attempted could not qualify as 'reengineering', sowing the seeds for the possibility of 'degrees' of BPR?

Reengineering's growth appeared to plateau by the late 1990s, with issues around context, culture and behavioural change (management thinking?) emerging as critical to success, with the concept of 'organizational readiness' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995) offering opportunities for pre-BPR self-diagnosis.

High 'failure rates' (although of questionable provenance) were being cited along with conflicts between short- and long-term thinking, plus reengineering still being seen by some as IT-driven. These, along with issues around organisations focusing on (e.g.) 'downsizing' and 'cost reduction' showed a frequent lack of understanding of the true nature of BPR and its need to recognise the concerns of people, their emotions, plus the requirement for fundamental cultural and behavioural change. 'Degrees' of BPR is a continuing theme, along with the emerging recognition of the need for 'process owners' if organisations are to make this cultural shift. Distilling from the above (and earlier) arguments was a broader recognition also of relevant 'Critical Success (and Failure) Factors' (CSF & CFF).

Chapter 4: Key Themes emerging from the Literature

From the above and earlier sections decisions were made regarding a number of key themes that began to dominate as relevant to BPR – currently and generally – and perhaps more specifically to the success or otherwise of planned BPR interventions within the context of this research and the two target organisations (LGOs):

- 'Understanding' of BPR, including clarity of its Definition, Principles, Values and Practical Implementation
- The concept of 'Degrees' of BPR
- Diagnosis of Organisational Capability and 'Readiness' based on emerging CSFs & CFFs

The above would help organisations to 'locate' their planned interventions on a scale up to fully 'radical' BPR, whilst enabling clearer decision-making within strategic focus, and understanding elements of risk. From these also, other emerging themes were:

- Change Management
- Organisational 'Culture'
- Reengineering Leadership and Communication
- The Public Sector environment

Dealing with these in turn does not preclude any overlap nor suggest order of importance or mutual exclusivity; it is simply a way of expanding more on some previous comments, but with further contributions from the more recent literature of others. All of these ultimately, however, have an impact upon the potential for any BPR-type intervention, strategic or not, to succeed or fail. They are not presented as the entirety of Critical Success/Failure Factors (CSF & CFF), but as a distillation of some of the key themes within literature to date that might impact more noticeably on the organisations being researched.

Dealing with those Key Themes

4.1 The concept of BPR – its 'Understanding' and its Implementation

'There was considerable uncertainty about where reengineering would lead'.

(Burke, 2004)

'Uncertainty' is a common word in radical or transformational change programmes, and that is understandable, because 'starting from scratch' implies the potential for travel in previously untrod directions. Whilst organisations' understanding of BPR had gained some common principles – the need for a process-based approach and potentially radical changes – differences remained over this basic understanding, giving rise to contradictions in its application.

It is oft-cited that the bulk of domestic consumers never learn more than a fraction of the facilities available on the home VCR machines (and now DVD players?). The general approach has seemed to be along the lines of plug it in, switch it on, play with the 'buttons' until you figure out the basics, and then live with that low level of competence until a point is reached when something can't be done, or something more complex is needed. Then, and only then, might the accompanying instruction booklet be read. (In BPR's case, however, its growth had spawned a range of so-called 'instructions' – see Appendix 4 – some of which may have been incomplete whilst others raised contradictions.)

BPR could probably be viewed like that. Just as with the VCR in a shop, the concept or 'solution' of BPR might be *sold* by a consultant, briefly 'explained', or even *trained*, and then the organisation's own managers start playing with the more popular or recognisable 'buttons' – cost-cutting, downsizing, restructuring, etc. (outcomes, not method) – but that way the clients/users are never likely to appreciate the full benefits that the technique might, just possibly, have to offer.

In the same way that if the VCR is to be fully utilised and benefits realised, the 'instructions' (e.g. 'Reengineering the Corporation: a manifesto for business revolution', or 'Process Innovation: Reengineering work through Information Technology'?) might first be read, understood, and then practiced until competence and confidence are assured. Then, for the benefits of BPR to be fully realised – or at least given the chance – those same 'instructions' would need to be implemented fully and correctly. Yet Attaran (2000) claims that the 'concept of reengineering is widely misunderstood,' and adheres strongly to the early proponents – Hammer (1990), Davenport & Short (1990), Hammer & Champy (1993) in particular – with:

'Those who label any organizational change as reengineering have victimized it. Many use reengineering as an excuse for lay-offs and plant closures. Others use reengineering to replace TQM or other initiatives. Reengineering is not downsizing, restructuring, automation or more of the same. It means starting from scratch in designing the core business process instead of analyzing the current one. It involves the radical redesign of business. Reengineering is not a quick-fix program and it is not cheap. Reengineering is a challenging process that will require lots of hard work by both management and employees. Lack of understanding of the concept and inappropriate application will all contribute to the organization's failure to appreciate the promise of reengineering.'

He therefore offers a 'six-stage reengineering guide' to implementation:

1. Preparation
2. Assessment
3. Solution
4. Benchmarking
5. Development
6. Transformation

...and an examination of the individual 'stages' suggest that they are not dissimilar from other methodologies offered elsewhere (for example, Al-Mashari and Zairi, 2000: 26, Table I; see Appendix 3). Attaran's stage six places specific emphasis on the needs for committed leadership, the shift

towards process-orientation, plus training and resources; 'Top management support is critical,' they must 'maintain a strong commitment to the vision, break the barriers between the departments, and be flexible as the business environment changes,' and that resources 'must also be committed to the training effort and support must be provided at all stages for those who are being trained.'

The number of 'must be' assertions are redolent of other authors, and the use of 'support' implies once more, at the very least, help for those at the front-line undergoing the change, if not actually the need for the empowerment of self-managed teams. 'Must' is an extremely important word – 'expressing necessity or insistence' (Oxford 1998: 1221) – and implies things that cannot or should not be missed, or at the very least are 'logically very likely' (to be required) in BPR's case.

The 'methodologies' from Al-Mashari and Zairi's (2000) table have been extracted in to Table 3.5 – see Appendix 4 – in order to consider the similarities and differences of those 'eight', plus others have been added from other sources.

Inconsistencies abound, however, as evinced in the first column by Morris and Brandon's (1994) 'Step 4', which in the text (p. 156) is, 'Identify business and work processes', whereas in 'Figure 7.2' (p. 157) is shown as, 'Analyse process baseline information.' So which is it?

Similarly, Ballé (1995) starts by calling his 'Step 5', 'Walk through, talk through' (p. 7), but later it's shown as, 'Check and test, test and check' (p. 38), whereas later still they are both used (p. 81).

It can be seen therefore that there is no shortage of 'guidance' on how to approach BPR. Varied though those examples may be, Blanchard's (1989) question (and answer) – 'How many diets do you need to get slim? The one you stick to!' – serves to succinctly make the point that it might not be particularly important *which* methodology an organisation chooses or prefers,

but what really is important is that, once it's chosen, they *stick* to it – what Blanchard (ibid) somewhat innovatively called 'Sticktoitiveness' – through all its various stages, otherwise there is no point 'blaming' the methodology if the BPR 'didn't work'. Caccia-Bava et al. (2005) made the same point with, 'BPR project managers have ignored some of the literature prescriptions for increasing the likelihood of success in their BPR projects.'

However, Maull et al. (2003) appears to support Attaran's case for 'lots of hard work' with:

'It follows from this that guidance for practicing managers implementing BPR programmes is that if they wish to progress towards full implementation maturity, and avoid the criticism of participating in yet another fad or fashion, they should put considerable effort early in the implementation into developing a strategically-aligned project.'

No pain, no gain, perhaps.

Whilst he might hotly deny that his 'Lean Service' approach is 'BPR', Seddon (2007b: 2) includes an item from a 'reader' – a 'Six Sigma-trained person with 10 years' experience' – pointing out similar misrepresentations of 'Lean':

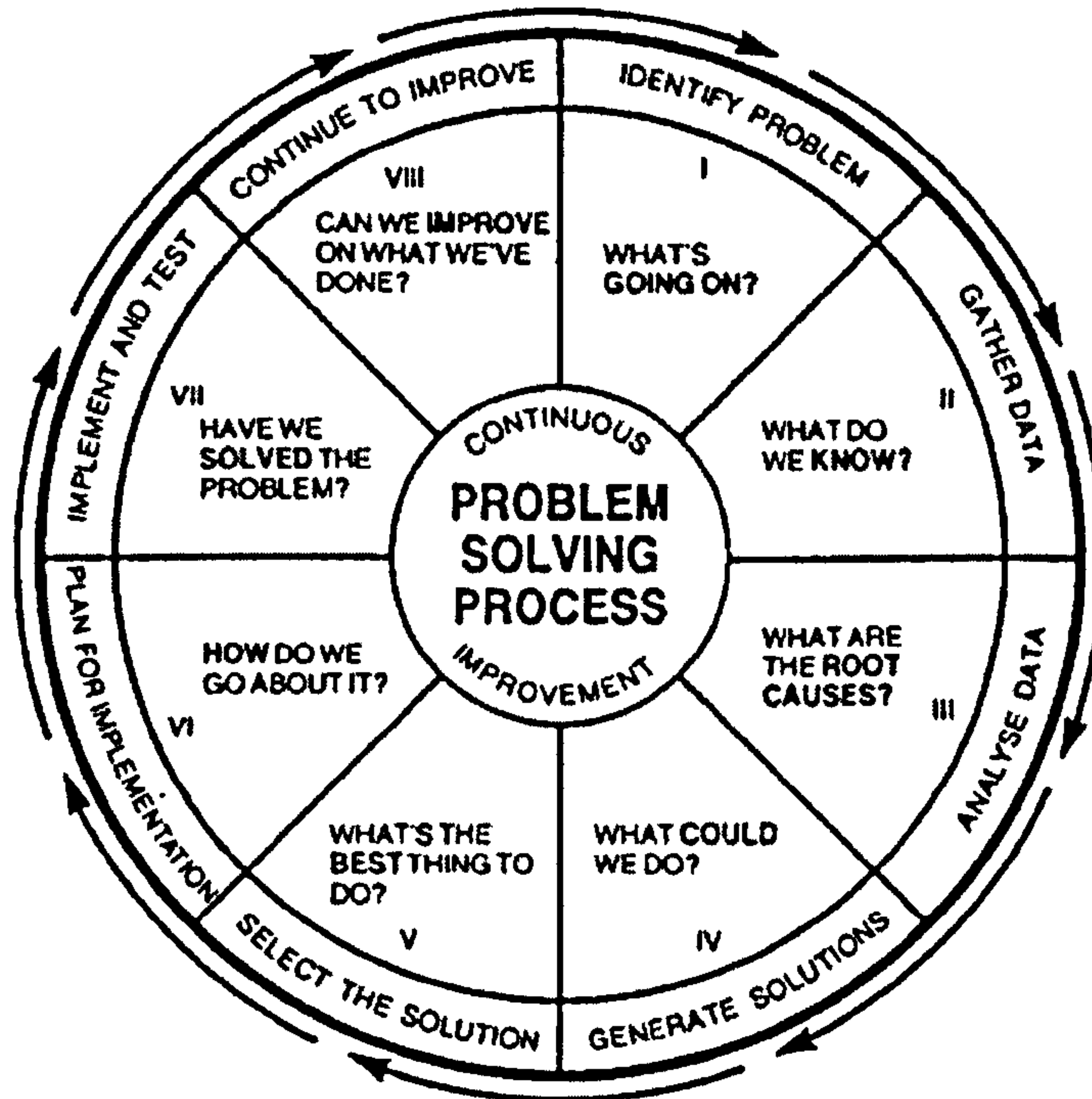
'In a similar fashion to Six Sigma, most 'lean' deployments I have seen do not follow the principles of Deming or Ohno. 'Lean' is viewed as the "clenched fist in the velvet glove" method of process improvement. In most people's eyes, 'lean' = waste reduction = redundancies, this is not the intended experience of continuous improvement, but is the real outcome of cynical 'lean' deployments whose operating model is 'lean' it, centralise it, then offshore it.'

Walston, et al. (2000) suggest also that implementation of BPR is the issue, in that 'the problems lie in the method of its application to business problems,' and one could reasonably suggest that whilst-ever there are 'problems ... in the method of its application,' then true 'BPR' is not being *tested*, something else is, and from that it might also be reasonable to question the so-called (e.g.) '70%' failure rates. *Failures* of change initiatives, perhaps, but failure(s)

of BPR? – we cannot be quite so certain. To highlight this I would refer to the generic Problem-Solving Process (PSP) within Fig. 4.1 and Table 4.1 (both below):

Fig. 4.1: Generic Problem-Solving Process

Generic Problem-Solving Process



Meeting Customer Requirements (1988) Tools and Techniques Handbook for continuous improvement, London, British Telecommunications plc, Section 6, pp. 1-15, 'Problem Solving Process'

Table 4.1: 'Generic' PSP model and 'Generic BPR model'

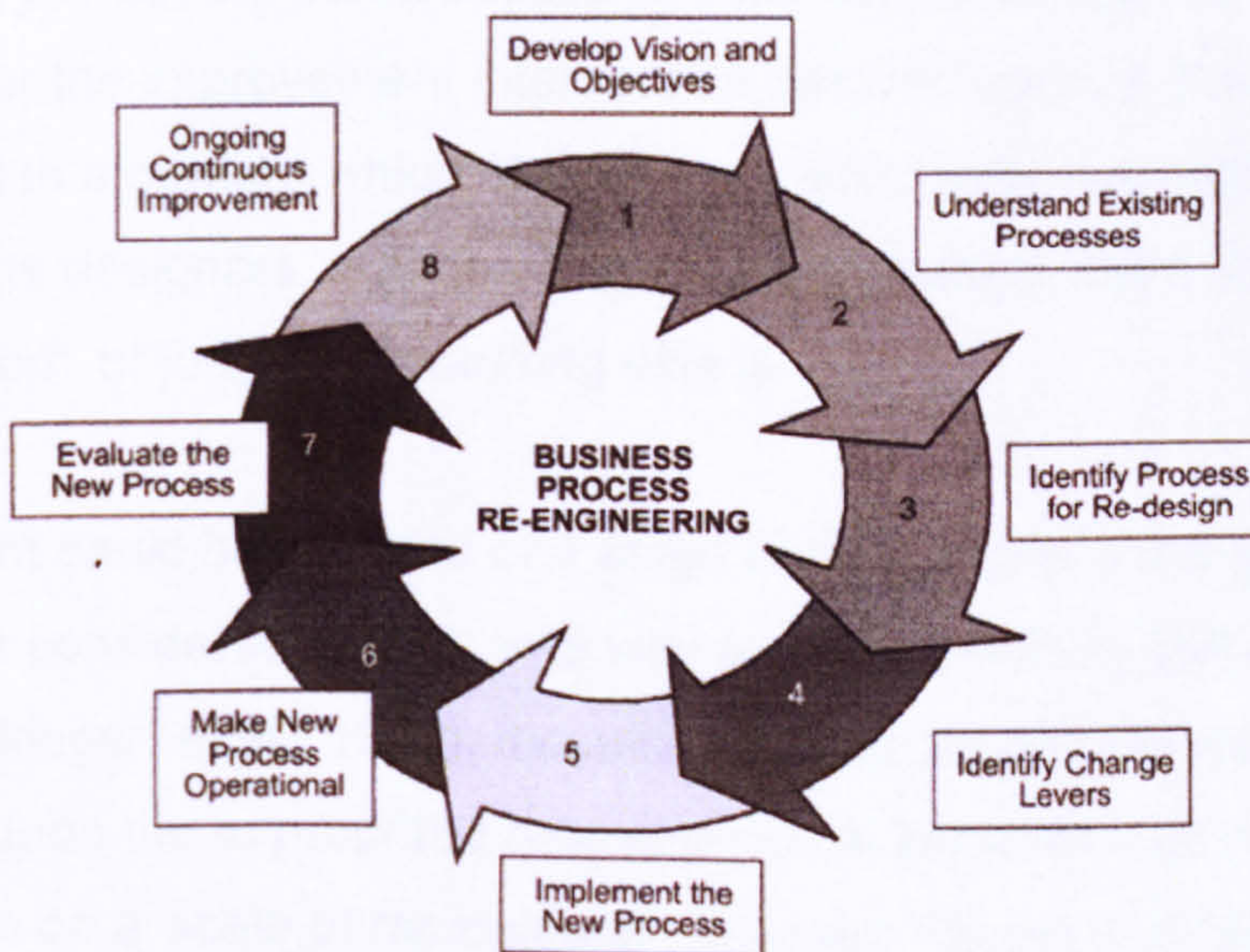
Activity/Stage:	'Generic' PSP model	Generic BPR model*
1	Identify Problem (What's Going On?)	Develop Vision and Objectives
2	Gather Data (What Do we Know?)	Understand Existing Processes
3	Analyse Data (What are the Root Causes?)	Identify Process for Redesign
4	Generate Solutions (What Could we Do?)	Identify Change Levers
5	Select The Solution (What's the Best Thing to Do?)	Implement the New Process
6	Plan For Implementation How do we Go About It?	Make the New Process Operational
7	Implement and Test (Have we Solved the Problem?)	Evaluate the New Process
8	Continue to Improve (Can we Improve on What We've Done?)	Ongoing Continuous Improvement

* Source: Vakola, M., Rezgui, Y., Thompson, J. & Mitev, N., (1998), 'D3100 business process re-engineering strategy', CONDOR ESPRIT 23105 Deliverable

Whilst not identical, the 'generic' nature of these two approaches can easily be seen, and below is the 'Generic BPR model' from which the RHS of the above table derives:

Fig. 4.2: Generic BPR model

A generic model for business process re-engineering:



Source: Vakola, M., Rezgui, Y., Thompson, J. & Mitev, N., (1998) 'D3100 business process re-engineering strategy', CONDOR ESPRIT 23105 Deliverable

On the rear of the handout normally distributed when that first generic PSP is taught within my own institution (see Appendix 5) – primarily during

discussions on (e.g.) Quality and Continuous Improvement – there is a list of no fewer than 35 'Tools and Techniques' (T&T) that might be helpful within any of the eight stages of this process (PSP). The second of the T&T in this list is 'Brainstorming' and, as might be expected, this requirement for creative input features in seven of those eight stages. The only stage – and this might equally be expected – from which it is excluded, is stage VII, 'Implement and Test.' The reason for this – and this is why the point is relevant to this discussion – is that the 'solution' being 'implemented' should be the one 'selected', following the preceding six, logical steps of the P-S process, and *not* something else, otherwise it will not be *that* 'solution' that is being 'tested' and evaluated, but something totally different. The 'Implement and Test' stage does not require the input of further creative thinking, when the decision on *what* to implement has been taken (see also Morris & Brandon, 1994, p. 156; 'Step 8', 'Implement the selected alternative'). Testing *something else*, therefore, renders pointless the logic, structure and purpose of the six preceding stages of the process; and also wasteful, or *muda* in Japanese terms.

And, it is suggested, the same applies to TQM, BPR, Six Sigma, 'Lean', JIT, etc.; whatever the improvement intervention decided upon, if it is not implemented in a manner which at the very least closely resembles that intended by its designers, authors, originators or trainers, then *that* is not what is being 'tested', or judged; *something else* is.

This argument could be pursued one stage further, in that if the generic PSP* (Table 4.2) is considered in the same way as 'Stage-Activity (SA) framework' (see also Kettinger, et al., 1997), it could, possibly, be equally well applied to help decide upon the appropriate *type* of process improvement 'intervention' – perhaps even on a 'scale of radicalness', between Kaizen and BPR – that is required (overleaf):

Table 4.2: Generic PSP and 'Stage-Activity' Framework

No.	Stage	Activity	Details
1	Identify Problem	What's Going On?	How well is the process working?
2	Gather Data	What Do We Know?	What is the feedback from customers, suppliers, clients, etc? What have we seen, and what can't we 'see'? What questions should we be asking of them? – 'Check' (Seddon, 2003).
3	Analyse Data	What Are the Root Causes?	What is the scale of the issue; from minor, to serious?
4	Generate Solutions	What Could We Do	What type of process interventions could be considered?
5	Select the Solution	What's the Best Thing to Do?	Which intervention type should we use in this situation?
6	Plan for Implementation	How Do We Go About It?	What does this decision require of the organisation and its leadership, in order to ensure successful implementation?
7	Implement and Test	Have We Solved the Problem?	Was it implemented correctly and successfully? Has it worked?
8	Continue to Improve	Can We Improve on What We've Done?	Was it the best choice? What else needs to be done?

* Sources: *Meeting Customer Requirements (1988) Tools and Techniques Handbook for continuous improvement*, London, British Telecommunications plc, Section 6, pp. 1-15, 'Problem Solving Process'; and Kettinger, et al., (1997: 58); adapted, Chamberlin 2007

The paramount importance of stage 1 of that generic process – 'Identify the Problem' – was identified by Howe and O'Reilly (2004) in their report on 'BPR and project management' in Chesterfield Borough Council's Building Services Division, when under the question heading, 'Why did it work?', the opening sentence simply states, 'Chesterfield Borough Council defined the problem first.' Apparently they 'knew why they needed to change but were less clear on exactly what they needed to change and the best way to do it'; another example of the 'uncertainty' surrounding such major change projects.

Note: By combining the original (generic) PSP with the 'BPR' version of Vakola, et al. (1998) – both above, pp. 83/84 – a further and potentially more useful 'homogeneous' process might also be considered:

Fig. 4.3: Homogeneous BPR/TQM-PSP/Redesign Process

Activity/Stage:	Homogeneous BPR/TQM-PSP/Redesign Process?
1	Identify Problem or Process (What's Going On?) (What are the Users' Requirements?)
2	Gather Problem Data/Understand ('Map') Existing Process (What do we Know Happens Now?)
3	Analyse Data/Clarify Fundamental User-Requirements (What is the basic Purpose of the Process?) (What are the Root Causes?)
4	Generate Solutions/Potential New Process(es) (What Could we Do?) (How <i>Could</i> it Look?)
5	Select Solution or 'Map' the New Process (Which is the Best Solution/New Process?)
6	Plan For Implementation (How do we Go About It?)
7	Implement and Test – Pilot New Process (Have we Solved the Problem?) (Does the New Process Work?)
8	Continue to Improve the New Process (Can we Improve on What We've Done?) (Shift from BPR to Kaizen.)

Hammer (2004) emphasised this 'uncertainty' aspect of embarking upon such a radical intervention with:

'When envisioning new ways of working, it is impossible to get everything right from the outset... Companies must be prepared to roll with the punches and learn as they go';

and:

'Operational innovation is a step change: It moves a company to an entirely new level.' And this 'uncertainty' is further alluded to by Stebbins, et al., in their study of Blue Shield of California, who conclude that, 'If anything, this study points to the complexity of the BPR change process and suggests that in complex organizations, few short cuts can be taken in process design' (1998: 230/231).

As Bruss and Roos (1993: 57) stated, 'While the original intent of reengineering was to signify a fundamental change in the way business processes are accomplished, many so-called reengineering efforts are simply utilizing document imaging systems to automate existing processes' – what Hammer (1990) called 'paving the cow paths' – and while 'some benefits may be realized in reducing cycle times, the results are not likely to be dramatic.' Aligning with Hammer, they then add that technology 'cannot fix a poorly conceived work process; nor can it create motivating jobs that bring out the best in employees' (ibid: 58).

Collins (2004) provides a critique of Champy's more recent (2002) 'X-engineering' – pronounced 'Cross-engineering' – and states that 'Hammer (1990)' offered 'what claimed to be a radically new and different approach to industrial engineering,' except that, he didn't. Hammer (1990) makes no mention of either 'industrial' or 'engineering', although Davenport and Short (1990) did, but I think it pays to be accurate when critiquing, and especially since (later) he argues that 'in 2002' BPR stands as 'much changed and somewhat tired and doubtful.' He cites Bryant and Chan (1996) as stating that BPR, 'as described by Hammer and Champy, has little to offer practitioners,' that it 'lacks a reliable methodology,' and that it 'offers managers little detailed or practically useful advice on managing the problems of reengineering,' which seems to suggest that those 'managers' – at senior and strategic levels – are incapable of reading a basic text and forming 'practical' ideas from it. Are these people that unintelligent? Bryant and Chan's article ends on the polemic note that BPR has a 'conceptual core that is both rotten and hollow.'

And, like Champy's (2002) updating of the concept of reengineering, Hammer (2004) moves on to something called 'deep change' without once mentioning the word for which he is best known. Pungently redolent of Seddon's (2003) 'how the work works' theme, Hammer talks of the 'invention and deployment of new ways of doing work,' and defines 'deep change' as 'affecting the very essence of a company: how its work is done.'

That little else new is coming out of other more recent literature might be exemplified by a small example from Nwabueze (2000: 459) who starts his Introduction by quoting Hammer & Champy's (1993: 32) definition of BPR as '...the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business process to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, service, and speed,' and then within the next paragraph cites a 'definition' from Tapscott and Caston (1993) – '...a fundamental re-valuation/redesign of a company's business processes and organisational structures in order to achieve dramatic improvements in its critical success factors – quality, productivity, customer satisfaction and time to market, etc.' – saying that this [definition] 'is similar to that of Hammer with the exception that it makes particular reference to "process".' Yet this makes no sense, when H&C's definition specifically contains '...radical redesign of business processes...'

(NB In Nwabueze's article he uses the singular – 'process' – in his citing of H&C's original definition, when it should have been plural – 'processes' – which is identical to Tapscott and Caston's version. It seems there is little 'fundamental' difference between Tapscott & Caston's definition, raising the question of what new has been added by rewording Hammer and Champy's original definition in this way?)

Attaran (2000) states that reengineering 'is not a fad and it is not going to go away soon,' adding that:

'Reengineering is both challenging and rewarding. If implemented properly, reengineering could put your company ahead and possibly way ahead, of the competition.'

...and to reinforce the issue of correct implementation:

'Ignoring the pitfalls can be dangerous because it makes the reengineering effort just another short-lived improvement program. Reengineering is not continuous change. It should be done once and it should be done right.'

4.2 'Degrees' of BPR and Project 'Radicalness'

This perhaps highlights another key issue to merge within the understanding and implementation of BPR; the extent to which it necessarily requires 'starting from scratch' (Attaran, 2001), or a 'clean slate' or 'fresh look' approach (Hammer, 1990; Hammer & Champy, 1993; Linden, 1993), as opposed to there being differing levels or scopes of BPR interventions. Does doing it 'properly', and 'once,' necessarily mean doing it to the whole company, or organisation, or can it be 'done once and properly' to just one key process – across the company (or at least, end-to-end over that process), if not the whole company? Could there be 'degrees' of BPR?

Cao, et al. (2001) state that 'BPR offers a series of tools for identifying the necessary change and rebuilding the organisation in a new image', but Hammer and Champy (2001: 139) would probably argue with that, as they say, 'There are no ten-step procedures that will mechanically produce a radical new design process,' and similarly, in their 1993 publication, that there are 'no seven- or ten-step procedures' (p. 134; although, whereas they might be right about the 'ten', they are not about the 'seven' – see Harrison & Pratt, 1993). And Cao, et al. (2001) reinforce this point of 'understanding' by citing Hammer and Champy's concluding comment that, 'If reengineering fails, no matter what the proximate cause, the underlying reason can invariably be traced to senior managers' understanding or leadership of the reengineering effort' (1993: 213*); although they omit Hammer and Champy's next sentence, which is possibly even more telling: 'Reengineering is always born in the

executive suite. All too often, it dies there as well.' (*Also in Hammer & Champy, 2001: 234.)

What 'BPR' may or may not 'offer' was highlighted by Al-Mashari, et al. (2001) in their 'survey of international experience'; 'BPR's promised business benefits, in most cases, remain very elusive and the problems it creates are a bigger distraction than it could have been anticipated.' And they identified 'some of these problems' – largely focused on *understanding* (or lack of) and *implementation* – with examples in, 'the following areas:

- BPR appeals to senior managers because it promises the quickest short cut to success and business excellence;
- The concept itself has a lot of appeal because it is simple to absorb and its rules are not too complex;
- BPR promises immediate benefits and major leaps in competitive performance. This is very compatible with a culture of "short termism" in the West;
- BPR is promoted as a better alternative to other modern management concepts such as total quality management (TQM), since it is supposed to be less costly to implement and guarantees real benefits much more quickly;
- BPR in most cases refers to the implementation of hard solutions dealing with soft problems, thus suggesting that the use of IT for instance will go a long way to making businesses more effective and securing future competitiveness.'

Whether BPR's 'rules are not too complex', however, might be strongly debated, as the implications, at least, from much of the literature, are that those same 'senior managers' fail to adequately understand the implications of undertaking fully a BPR-type intervention, in terms of their required involvement and commitment, that their roles and organisational structures might be challenged, and even their very existence? Their comment on BPR being 'very compatible with a culture of "short termism"' is very redolent of the short-termist approach of many UK LGO at times of CPA preparation, and one of my target organisations is no exception to this.

However, Al-Mashari, et al. (2001) claim that their 'study begins with a comprehensive review of relevant literature on BPR implementation,' yet

whilst one could understand their omission of Hammer's own 'Reengineering Work: Don't Automate, Obliterate' (1990) as not being strictly to do with 'implementation', it is perhaps more surprising that Hammer and Stanton's (1995a) 'The Reengineering Revolution' is excluded, given its sub-title, 'The Handbook', and that it includes an organisational 'self-assessment diagnostic' of which one part is 'Style of Implementation' (pp. 85-99), and a quarter of the whole text is focused on 'Making it Happen'.

Nonetheless, Burke (2004: 115) found that:

'Hammer and Champy became increasingly concerned, the longer they worked with organizations, about misuse and abuse of the term reengineering and the fact that many who used the term did not understand it. Almost any organizational change effort began to fall under this label. Process reengineering became associated with downsizing, restructuring, automation, more use of technology, delayering, flattening* the hierarchy, reorganizing and total quality management. While related to some of these terms, Hammer and Champy view process reengineering as different from them in critical ways.' (One presumes Burke meant 'flattening'. JC)

Pruijt (1998), for example, called BPR 'big people reduction'.

In Dobson's (2003) 5-year longitudinal study of an 'Australian public organization' whilst posing the question, 'What's in a name?', he found that the staff 'initially accepted this BPR tag but over time they came to reject the term, as they felt it did not reflect what was actually happening.' And according to the then IS Manager, 'the term *BPR* annoyed staff:

Well, the staff simply refused to call it that. "Let's call a spade a spade – we won't call it BPR any more," they said – "It's a false term. Let's not pretend." After a while it became obvious what the agenda was and some of the directors who pushed BPR objected themselves to hiding outsourcing under the term BPR' (p. 227).

As Hammer (2002) said, '...it's better to call things what they really are.'

In summary, there are clearly common principles to BPR as shown in the similarities between proffered 'methodologies' (including those similarities with

generic problem-solving processes), but equally again some contradictions (Brandon, 1994; Ballé, 1995). 'Generic' approaches to implementation abound equally, again displaying differences alongside potential for homogeneity, or common factors.

What remains, though, is a 'fundamental' requirement for greater commonality of understanding in the areas of BPR's basic definition – what it *is*, and what it *isn't* – and its principles, values and practices when aligned with implementation issues. Some criticism of Hammer and Champy's original (1993) treatise has been its lack of prescription, where greater guidance would help practitioners, for example in the areas of expected outcomes and performance measures.

4.2.1 'Degrees' of BPR

'The scope for process redesign can range from restructuring the entire organisation, to the most local rethink of how you do your work' (Nwabueze, 2000: 459).

More than a decade ago Zairi & Sinclair (1995) found considerable 'confusion' in the terminology associated with BPR, in that:

'The literature includes many different terms relating to the management and improvement of processes, including business process improvement, business process redesign, core process redesign and business restructuring, as well as business process re-engineering. These concepts cover a continuum of activities ranging from the continuous improvement of processes to the complete restructuring of organizations. What all these terms have in common is the concept of processes, and the need to improve both their performance and design. The difference appears to be one largely of magnitude' (p. 3).

It is this issue of 'difference' in order of 'magnitude' that yet again suggests the concept of 'degrees of BPR'; alluded to later with, 'In summary, therefore, BPR can be seen to represent a range of activities concerned with the improvement of processes' (ibid: 4). Shin and Jemella (2003) appear to concur with, 'Process improvements fall into three categories: quick hits (low

risk with fast payback), incremental improvement (small degrees of change but significant results) and re-engineering.'

MacIntosh (2003) notes that the 'single biggest issue relates to the debate about radical or incremental change and can be traced back to the early positions adopted by Hammer (1990) and Davenport and Short (1990). Interestingly, Hammer and Champy have both admitted that BPR has not been implemented in the radical manner that they had originally intended (Champy, 1995; Hammer and Stanton, 1995),' and later, MacIntosh (ibid) suggests that on the 'issue of radical vs incremental change, the research presented here indicates evidence that BPR in the public sector can produce both.'

The 'degrees of BPR' case is also pursued by Yung and Chan (2003) with a concept they call 'flexible business process reengineering' (FBPR) – a potentially unfortunate abbreviation for anyone with an intense dislike of the original concept – which employs the 'three management tools' of positioning, continuous improvement and BPR, and which they abbreviate to 'PIR'. They state that:

'employing all three management tools to a sufficient degree could enhance the effectiveness of an improvement project compared to the conventional methodology. The changes could be slightly less "radical" than conventional BPR, but in exchange, it is a relatively less risky strategy and can facilitate continuous learning and improvement.'

However, their paper is based on a single case study and their 'Methodology' section appears to dwell less on their own research approach and more on a hierarchical 'performance benchmarking model' (ibid: Fig. 1) that they appear to be promoting.

Also, in Bragato and Jacobs' (2003) study of 'care pathways in two orthopaedic units in Scotland,' they concluded that it was 'evident that redesign at a micro-level, as illustrated by the care pathway, was both more

successful and more acceptable than the institutional BPR approach,' but noting also that, 'whether these changes could be considered fundamental, remains to be seen.'

Obolensky (1994: 16/17) hints also at this 'degrees of BPR' concept – though perhaps unintentionally – when he states that, 'To succeed, a Business Re-engineering programme will typically need four variables to be right:

- Pain of the status quo;
- Gain of the future change;
- Perceived need for change by leadership;
- Impact across the organization.'

But it is the final 'variable' that, albeit reluctantly, suggests there are alternatives to 'clean slate' or 'all or nothing' approaches:

'Business Re-engineering needs to have an impact across the organisation for it to yield the best results. Typically many organisations shy away from this, and just re-engineer one part of the organisation (often due to political problems of 'invading people's turf'). This is not Business Re-engineering, it is more like process re-design using business process re-engineering (BPR) techniques. Business Re-engineering does not just re-engineer the processes – it re-engineers the minds' (1994: 17).

This differentiation – 'it is more like process redesign' – hints again at Kettinger et al's (1997) similar three-way split of 'Process Improvement', 'Process Redesign', and 'Radical Reengineering'.

The suggestion, however, that the original conception of 'reengineering' had no impact upon the 'thinking' or the 'mind'(s) of an organisation flies in the face of, for example, Hammer's statement that:

'At the heart of re-engineering is the notion of discontinuous thinking – of recognizing and breaking away from the outdated rules and fundamental assumptions that underlie operations. ... Rather, we must challenge old assumptions and shed the old rules that made the business underperform in the first place' (1990: 107);

or Hammer and Champy's (1993) observations that:

'[process redesign] ...demands imagination, inductive thinking, and a touch of craziness. In redesigning processes, the reengineering team abandons the familiar and seeks the outrageous. Redesign asks the team members, especially the insiders, to suspend their belief in the rules, procedures, and values that they've honored their whole working lives. Redesign is unnerving precisely because the team can do whatever it likes' (p. 134);

and, albeit later, Hammer and Champy (2001):

1. 'Only a process-oriented senior executive who is capable of thinking about the entire value-added chain – from product concept to sales and service – can lead a reengineering effort' (p. 230); and,
2. 'It requires that people running companies and working in them change how they think as well as what they do. It requires that companies replace their old practices with entirely new ones' (p. 235).

And when Champy (1996: xxii) posed the question, 'What comes first, changing the way managers think or changing what managers do?' His response included:

'Starting the reengineering process by changing the managerial work, therefore, is going to have greater benefits for the organization.'


Surely these comments suggest 'reengineering of the mind'?

But, returning to the 'degrees of BPR' issue, even Hammer and Champy (1993: 134/135) made it clear that the 'good news about redesign is that while it may require creativity, it's not necessary to start with an entirely blank slate,' and also, this comment makes no distinction between the terms 'reengineering' and 'redesign', which challenges that being put forward by Obolensky (1994: 17), above, though not Kettinger et al. (1997).

Chow-Chua and Goh (2000: 225) suggest quite firmly that '(In fact,) BPR should complement TQM and is definitely not an alternative'; concluding their case with, 'BPR and CI [continuous improvement] should be viewed as complementary approaches, albeit at two different extremes of the change continuum,' and Al-Mashari & Zairi (2000: 31) say that 'BPR can be implemented at different scopes or levels,' suggesting that this 'change continuum' represents a spectrum of initiatives that could range from CI to BPR, and cover a number of 'different scopes or levels' in between.

This issue of 'scopes or levels' of BPR interventions, therefore, could be a potentially fruitful line of enquiry, given that Heygate (1993: 79) suggested that; 'Determining where to peg any particular effort requires careful thought about its scope (single- or multiple-project focus) and the organization's expectations for performance yield (one-off quick hits or integrated, business-system-wide improvements). The basic question to be answered is how extensive – that is, how radical – the redesign should be,' and offered a guide to 'Levels of Process Redesign'; below, Fig. 4.4:

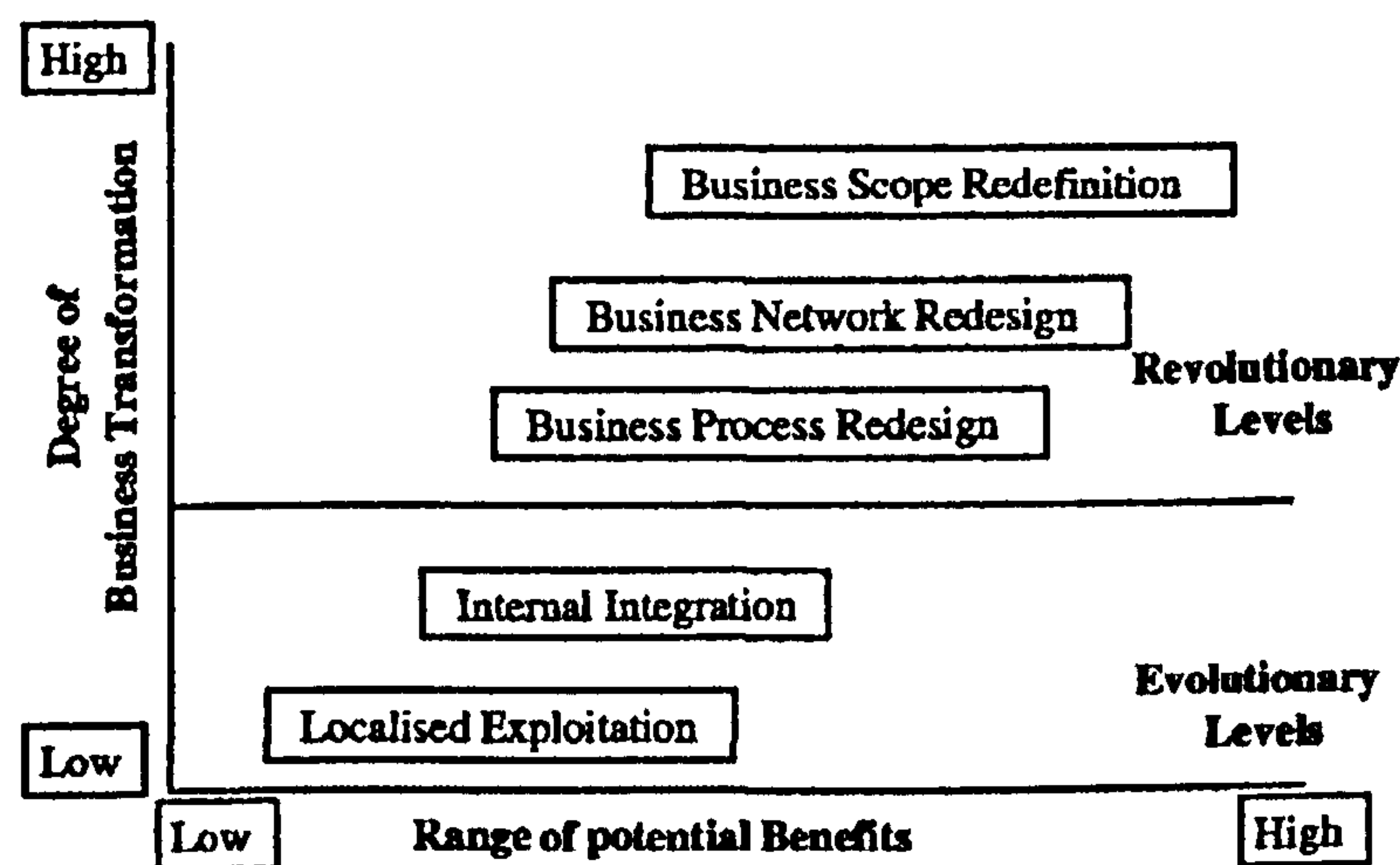
Fig. 4.4: Levels of Process

Levels of process				
				
	Single process redesign	Multiple process redesign	Single major business model change	Multiple, integrated business model change
Level of ambition for change	Quick hits	Continuous incremental improvement	Major investment to be world class in one element of business system	Total commitment to becoming a world leader
Type of program needed	Project-oriented improvement	Bottom-up initiatives (e.g. TQM)	Major process-specific investment	Total commitment to permanent change

Source: Heygate, R., (1993) 'Immoderate redesign', *The McKinsey Quarterly*, No. 1, p. 80

Venkatraman (1994; cited also in Hughes, et al., 2006, Fig. 1) also suggested alternative approaches to BPR based on the 'degree of transformation' and the 'range of potential benefits'; see Fig. 4.5 (below). In their research into the 'evolution of e-government in Ireland' Hughes et al. (2006) commented that 'BPR has been limited and as such this case provides evidence of the existence of the gap identified by Venkatraman (1994) between evolutionary and revolutionary means of business transformation,' with a 'Low'-'High' scale on the Y-axis (above) showing, in effect, *degrees of radicalness*.

Fig. 4.5: Alternative approaches to BPR



Source: Venkatraman, V., (1994) 'IT-enabled business transformation: from automation to business scope redefinition', *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 73-87; also cited in Hughes, M., Scott, M. & Golden, W., (2006) 'The role of business process redesign in creating e-government in Ireland', *Business Process Management Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 78, Fig. 1

4.2.2 Project 'Radicalness'

Kettinger et al. (1997: 71-73) proposed a 'Project Radicalness Planning Worksheet' as part of their discussion on 'Assessing project radicalness,' implying very clearly that there are 'degrees' (at least) of 'radicalness,' and thence, by definition, *degrees* of BPR, as an organisation might scan this 'spectrum' for the most appropriate point at which to scope its change

intervention. They scale the extent (or degree) of 'radicalness' into three levels: 'Process Improvement,' Process Redesign,' and 'Radical Reengineering,' and then suggest eleven 'contingency factors,' against each of which they pose two questions designed to elicit a 'score' against their scale of 'radicalness.' Incorporated within this also is a similar judgement (a 12th 'Factor') on the 'decision-makers' risk-taking propensity', and this is taken account of in the final scoring; see blank example below, Fig. 4.6:

Fig. 4.6: 'Project Radicalness Planning Worksheet'

Factor	Question	Process Improvement	Process Redesign	Radical Reengineering
Strategic centrality	Is the targeted process merely tangential (1) or integral (5) to the firm's strategic goals and objectives?	1 ————— 2 Tangential	3 —————	4 ————— 5 Integral
Feasibility of IT to change process	Does IT enable only incidental change (1) or fundamental process change (5)?	1 ————— 2 Incidental	3 —————	4 ————— 5 Fundamental
Process breadth	Is the scope of the process intra-functional (1) or inter-organizational (5)?	1 ————— 2 Intra-functional	3 —————	4 ————— 5 Inter-organizational
Senior management commitment	Is the senior management visibility removed (1) or actively involved (5) in the BPR efforts?	1 ————— 2 Removed	3 —————	4 ————— 5 Involved
Performance measurement criteria	Are the preferred performance measurement criteria efficiency-based (1) or effectiveness-based (5)?	1 ————— 2 Efficiency Based	3 —————	4 ————— 5 Effectiveness Based
Process functionality	Is the process functioning marginally (1) or is the process not	1 ————— 2 Higher Functionality	3 —————	4 ————— 5 Lower Functionality

	functioning well at all (5)?			
Project resource availability	Are only minimal resources (1) available to support the process change or are resources abundant (5)?	1 ————— 2 ————— 3 ————— 4 ————— 5 Scarce		Abundant
Structural flexibility	Is the organizational structure rigid (1) or is it flexibly conducive (5) to change and learning?	1 ————— 2 ————— 3 ————— 4 ————— 5 Rigid		Flexible
Cultural capacity for change	Does the culture support the status quo (1) or actively seek participatory change (5)?	1 ————— 2 ————— 3 ————— 4 ————— 5 Status Quo		Adaptable
Management's willingness to impact people	Are only modest impacts on people tolerable (1) or is management willing to deal with the consequences of disruptive impacts (5)?	1 ————— 2 ————— 3 ————— 4 ————— 5 Modest		Disruptive
Value chain target	Is the BPR effort targeted at an internal support process (1) or a core process (5)?	1 ————— 2 ————— 3 ————— 4 ————— 5 Support		Core
Propensity for Risk		1 2	3	4 5 Very Risk Averse High Risk Taking

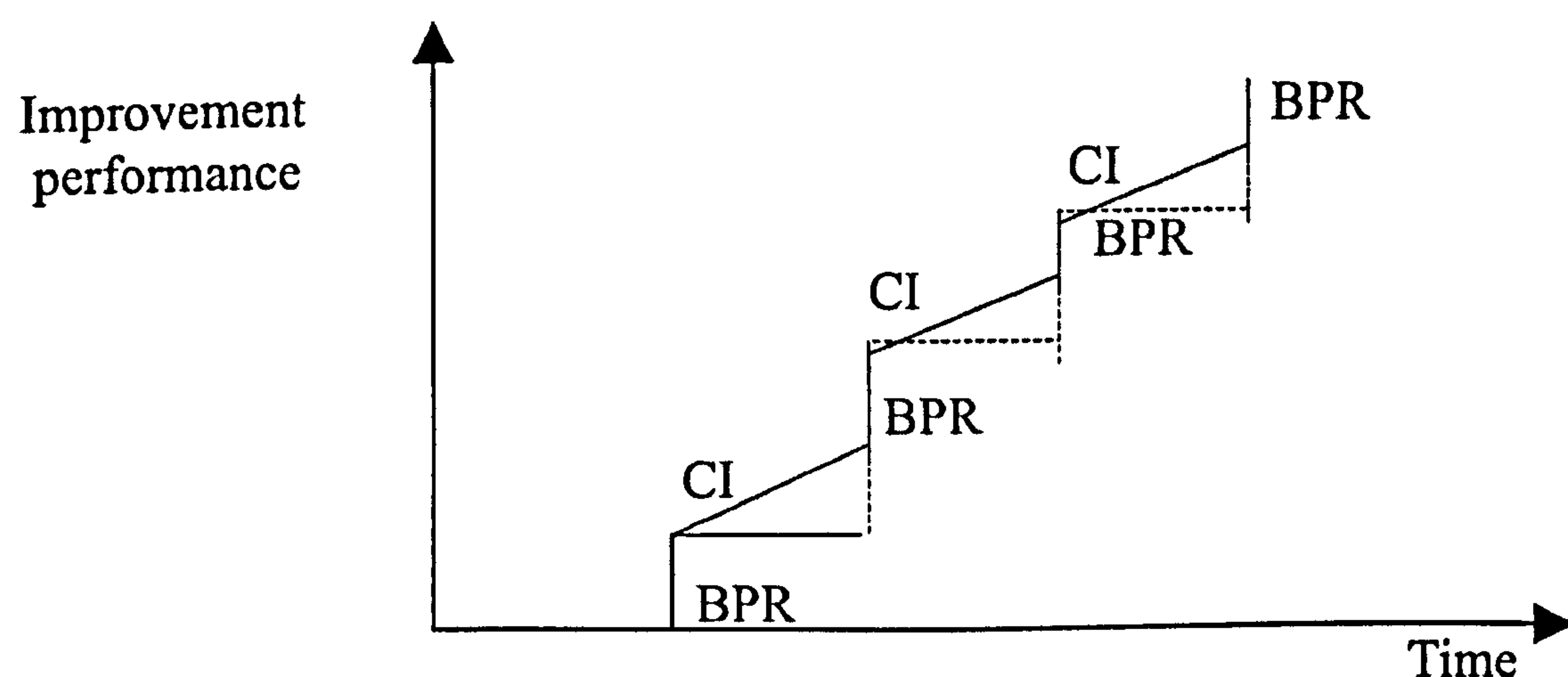
Source: Kettinger, W. J., Teng, J. T. G. & Guha, S., (1997) 'Business Process Change: A Study of Methodologies, Techniques, and Tools, *MIS Quarterly*, March, p. 72, Fig.

However, as with Hammer and Stanton's (1995: 85-99) 'Organisational Readiness' self-diagnosis exercise, it has not been possible to find anyone who has actually used Kettinger et al's 'Project Radicalness Planning Worksheet' (PRPW), above. For example, whilst Zhang and Cao (2002)

mention Kettinger et al's (1997) article, and state, 'Indeed, much of the challenge in constructing a BPR program is to select the type of BPR approach that is best suited to a specific situation, taking into account the organization's objectives, capabilities, and competitive or economic environment (Kettinger et al., 1997),' and, 'As BPR takes place in the context of people and the organization, the risk of failure would be great, if it proceeds without appropriate plans for organizational changes (Kettinger et al., 1997; Grover, 1995),' they make no specific reference to the existence or use of the PRPW.

They do, however, in their Fig. 1 (below) – 'BPR vs CI' – offer further evidence that both BPR and Continuous Improvement (CI) can live side-by-side:

Fig. 4.7: BPR vs Continuous Improvement (CI)



Source: Zhang, Q. & Cao, M., (2002) 'Business process reengineering for flexibility and innovation in manufacturing', *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, Vol. 102, No. 3, Fig. 1, 'BPR vs CI'

Whilst Meadows and Merali (2003: 180) also refer to the Kettinger et al. (1997) article, it is only to state, 'They comment that "methodologies may not be placing enough emphasis on the change ahead"' – although this is misquoted from the original, 'methodologies may not be placing enough emphasis on preparing the organization for the change ahead' (p. 75), which

changes its *emphasis* from the intended, 'organization,' to the 'change' itself – but they still make no mention of the PRP 'Worksheet.'

In fact, in one search of 47 relevant papers which cite the Kettinger et al. (1997) article, it has not been possible to find one that mentions the PRPW, which clearly suggests that none of those other writers was proposing its use in assisting the decision on (or even, consideration of) the degree of 'radicalness' that might be involved, prior to embarking upon a 'Process Improvement'-, 'Process Redesign'-, or 'Radical Reengineering'-type of organisational change intervention. Communication with Professor Kettinger himself (Aug. 2008) has equally failed to elicit any tangible evidence of its use, although he did express interest in the outcomes of this study.

It seems, therefore, that in the same way that Hammer and Stanton's (1995) self-diagnosis of 'Organisational Readiness' (for BPR) appears not to have been adopted – and therefore provides *one* relevant direction for this research – Kettinger et al's (1997) 'PRP Worksheet' provides a further similar opportunity, in considering the aspect of 'degrees of BPR' (or organisational 'ambition') and how this might also link with, or impact upon, the issue of 'organisational readiness'?

To summarise; in essence this continues the argument for greater clarification for what *is*, and what *isn't*, 'reengineering', maintaining the arguments for understanding, but broadening that to embrace the concept of 'degrees' of BPR, where a 'scale' across the spectrum of change approaches would help. Kettinger et al. (1997) provide some insight to this with their scale of 'project radicalness', although there is scant (if any) evidence of the concept's use. Linked to the themes from A-Mashari and Zairi's (1999) 'key success and failure factors', this scale or range of organisational ambition would similarly help organisations position themselves for more (or less) radical change.

4.3 Organisational 'Readiness' – Critical Success and Failure Factors (CSF & CFF)

(NB Not restricted to post-2000)

'In public sector health care there is a paucity of in-depth case study research to determine key success factors for re-engineering in this sector.'

(McAdam & Corrigan, 2001)

Whilst there are other 'key success factors' in the public sector (health care, LGO, etc.), the issue of 'organisational readiness' was perhaps first formally identified by Hammer and Stanton (1995: pp. 85-99), although evidence of its importance in considering elements of success or failure of BPR projects is also to be found elsewhere.

Bruss and Roos (1993: 57) commented that, 'Too often, implementations fail because the readiness of employees for change, as well as the alignment of changes with the organization's culture, have been overlooked.' In their article, 'Operations, Readiness and Culture: Don't Reengineer Without Considering Them,' they emphasised that:

'The Readiness of employees for change must be fostered so that the potential of both the technology and the human resources can be realized. Managing the natural resistance to change and helping to convert that resistance into commitment and enthusiasm is a planned process. This process requires an understanding of the following:

- how technological change has been perceived by employees in the past;
- the level of adaptability of users and managers;
- the degree to which employees have had (and will have during the implementation) opportunities for involvement and participation;
- the degree to which employees perceive the goals and outcome of the implementation to be congruent with their personal/professional goals' (ibid: 60).

And whilst discussing reasons for success or failure, later in the article, they identify, 'Several key factors (underlying) the difference between [imaging]

projects that are successful and those that get stuck in a rut,' and that, 'The most successful [imaging projects] have the following:

- Comprehensive Reengineering objectives to optimize human and technical systems;
- A tightly integrated Strategic Triangle built on business objectives and forming the foundation for change management strategies;
- A high level of employee involvement to build commitment to change;
- Consistent senior-level involvement to support nontechnical improvements;
- Dedicated resources to address the human and organizational issues;
- Broad-based focus on training to support the change effort' (p. 64).

Reis and Peña (2001), under the heading 'Why did reengineering fail?', cite Davenport (1996*) as saying:

'(In his words) "reengineering treated people inside company** as if they were just so many bits and bytes, interchangeable parts to be reengineered". Thus, the case against reengineering based on its lack of concern for people and its takeover by managers who wished to downsize and reduce their staff numbers was made explicit by an earlier proponent.'

Except, that does not present a 'case against reengineering.' That is a case against those who – using Davenport's words – 'forgot people' when they *implemented* reengineering, and that is not the same thing.

(* Actually, '1995' – 'The Fad that Forgot People'.)

(** Davenport said 'companies'.)

Reis and Peña continue in this vein with a 'carrot and stick' analogy, saying that the 'stick was very real:

...the loss of jobs if the firm does not improve quality since it would be unable to compete. Continuing the analogy, could we not conclude that reengineering concentrated on sticks and forgot the carrots? Top-down decision making, ambiguous opportunities for personal development and learning, unstable work relationships and dissatisfaction of providing quality service to customers primarily reflects sticks, not carrots. Could it be, in effect, that reengineering has lacked respect for people?' (2001).

Perhaps, but I suggest that is an assumption too far, because as Obolensky (1994: 16) says, 'In some ways Business Re-engineering is a paradox, because it has to be started as a top-down exercise, but relies very much on bottom-up support and involvement.' Obolensky does not deny the 'pain and anguish' that the 'initial stages of implementation' can often cause, but he does say that, 'typically,' business re-engineering can 'achieve startling results,' and that it 'also allows an organisation to become far more flexible, responsive and able to seize opportunities for change with relish.' The latter words of that sentence sound quite positive – more *carrot*, than *stick*? – so perhaps it is more to do with the 'readiness' of an organisation's culture to facilitate that necessary 'support and involvement'? Gaster and Squires (2003: 262) also hint at the criticality of this to BPR's chances of success:

'If staff are not involved, BPR, even more than most quality processes, will be seen as a threat to jobs. Continued leadership and practical commitment (including project teams and 'product champions') are vital to success.'

Once again there is little that has not been said before. For example, Reis and Peña (2001) say that, 'One cannot force someone to be motivated. Conviction comes from within,' showing clear shades of Herzberg, et al. (1959) and Herzberg (1968a & 1968b); e.g: 'KITA – the externally imposed attempt by management to "install a generator" in the employee – has been demonstrated to be a total failure ... The only way to motivate the employee is to give him challenging work in which he can assume responsibility' (1968a, p. 53). These days, of course, that would say 'he/she', but otherwise there is nothing new.

The reinforcement, though, does no harm, in that they note that, 'The greatest fear of change lies at the top. A Cranfield report on change shows that 90 percent of change initiatives are sabotaged by the board before even taking off, due to their own fears (Conn, et al., 1996)'; confirming, perhaps, the state of executive 'unreadiness' at those levels?

Holland and Kumar (1995) state that, 'One comprehensive survey has revealed two frequent causes for the failure of reengineering programs:

- Targeting wrong or meaningless processes;
- Lack of balanced and sustained executive support' (p. 79).

And, perhaps again alluding to the issues of understanding and readiness, they comment; 'Despite the apparent importance of leadership, however, many executives launch reengineering efforts without completing critical homework,' inferring that these 'executives' are not 'ready'? This role of senior managers is a continually recurring theme, and no less so here:

'Executive support is critical to the success of reengineering. It provides a vision of the future and the perspective to see the processes that need to be altered for that future to happen. Support also includes the courage and patience to supply time and the firm's best resources.

Executive leadership may mean the difference between success and failure in reengineering. Only the top executives have the position to get past the significant obstacles, focusing on the next roadblocks that appear as soon as the first ones are put to rest' (ibid).

Howe and O'Reilly's (2004) report on BPR success at Chesterfield Borough Council's Building Services Division confirmed much the same thing when they say that 'senior managers were involved in the entire process, ensuring understanding and buy-in to the future vision,' perhaps the three most key elements in one sentence from one example; 'involvement' at senior level, 'understanding,' and clarity in understanding the 'vision'?

In their article, 'How to Make Reengineering *Really* Work', Hall, et al. (1993: 119) identified two other 'factors – breadth and depth – that are critical in translating short-term, narrow-focus process improvements into long-term profits.'

Critical to success, they say, is that the 'the redesign must penetrate the company's core, fundamentally changing six crucial organizational elements, or depth levers: roles and responsibilities, measurements and incentives, organizational structure, information technology, shared values, and skills' (ibid).

Discussing one of the 'hard factors' (Al-Mashari & Zairi, 1999) that can affect the success of BPR – that of internal resistance – Hall, et al. (1993: 120) say that 'opposition to the new design can be overcome if top-level managers approach reengineering as a painful but necessary disruption of the status quo.'

Joynson (1995: 21) put it a little more bluntly, 'It requires a determination to remove any managers who stand in the way.' He then, however, sugars this pill with, 'But the good news is that, once we have this commitment, it is comparatively easy to make the change.'

Comparatively easy or not, Hall, et al. (ibid: 121) say also that 'redesign projects often aim at processes that are too narrow and change only one or two of the depth levers,' and that, 'even with sufficient depth, efforts still focus on a process that is too narrowly defined and therefore has little discernible impact on overall performance.' This begs the question – i.e. assumes implicitly – that focusing on a 'narrow' process may not be true BPR, whereas we can see elsewhere this is not a universal view.

However, whereas Harvey (1995) said it was important to begin by 'Defining core processes,' Hall, et al. (ibid) extend this within the issue of 'Breadth', with, 'Managers must first identify the activities to include in the process being redesigned that are critical for value creation in the overall business unit. A process can be as narrowly defined as a single activity in a single function or as broadly defined as the entire business system for the business unit,' which appears in conflict with their comments above, but again infers the possible additional issue of 'degrees' of BPR.

In an LGO – which is more a collection of disparate services, and therefore processes – the consideration of 'breadth' may be less relevant, as it is difficult to find any *one* service process covering the 'entire business system', perhaps giving more weight again to the concept of 'degrees of BPR'?

Further weight still is added as Hall, et al. (1993: 121), continue:

'At one end of the spectrum were companies that redesigned the narrowest processes, usually a single activity within a single function, such as accounts-payable processes. Middle-of-the-road projects reengineered intrafunctional or cross-functional processes, such as new product development processes. And at the far end were companies that redesigned one or more processes that comprised most of the critical activities in the business unit.'

What this implies, of course, is that the lesser the 'degree' of BPR/redesign, the lesser the overall, bottom-line (in some cases) impact of the results. They may be 'dramatic' in terms of the individual process savings or improvements, but correspondingly diluted in organisational or company terms; e.g. if the process were 'too narrowly defined to have any significant impact on business-unit performance as a whole.' Hall, et al. (1993: 122) then caution the opposite, however, in that, 'Still other reengineering efforts fail because of a too broad, indiscriminate approach.' So, the *breadth* of a process, per se, may not be the critical issue, whereas *defining* it could be.

Harking back to Hammer (1990) or Hammer and Champy (1993), they also say the 'effective transformation ... requires a clean-slate approach to process redesign. Only then can companies avoid the classic reengineering pitfall of fixing the status quo.'

But the potential for failure is forever lurking in the wings; 'Even with sufficient breadth and depth, a reengineering project will fail without the full commitment of senior executives' (ibid). Interestingly, perhaps, of the 'nine cases' in their study, five 'achieved their projected impact,' and in 'four of these five successes, new chief executives were brought in before or during the projects,' with the authors commenting that, 'These Senior executives

understood how to lead an organization through a period of radical change.' And Al-Mashari and Zairi's (1999) point regarding executive commitment to providing 'adequate resources' is also emphasised by Hall, et al. (ibid: 124); 'In the most successful redesigns [in our study], managers made few compromises and were generous with resources.'

Critical also to the success of the reengineering projects was a hands-on approach by senior managers; 'In the six reengineering projects that had significant business-cost reductions, top executives spent between 20% and 60% of their time on the project' (ibid).

In contrast, 'a manager at a less successful company described the leadership of its process redesign as having "the nominal sponsorship of someone two layers down in the organization, but in actuality, it was driven by someone four layers down.'" This isn't, therefore, something that 'top executives' can devolve. Delegate, perhaps, but not devolve (a 'Critical Failure Factor', perhaps?).

Hall, et al. (1993: 125) cite the case of the Banca di America e di Italia (BAI; owned by Deutsche Bank) where 'BAI's transformation started with the CEO's obsession to strengthen the bank's strategic position by creating a "paperless" bank based on just-in-time manufacturing principles,' which, is exactly in line with Seddon's (2007; plus Seddon & Caulkin, 2007) current concept of transferring 'pull' principles from manufacturing (e.g. the Toyota Production System, TPS) into service organisations (private and public sector) within the UK, a system which is continuing to earn Toyota public plaudits:

'Toyota didn't get where it is today by following whims or taking chances. It is, above all, a conservative company. Its fortunes were earned and are still based on hard work and absolute dedication to consistent processes.

The Toyota Production System, which applies lean manufacturing [Krafcik, 1988; Womack, et al., 1990] and depends on precisely controlled just-in-time delivery, continuous improvement and building quality, is the world standard for manufacturing, imitated throughout the motor industry and applied in many others – Boeing, for

example, uses it to build aircraft' (Ray Hutton; 'Toyota's green drive to the top', *The Sunday Times, Business*, September 2nd, 2007, pp. 1 & 8).

(NB Hutton more accurately attributes 'Lean' to Krafcik (1988), rather than Womack, Jones & Roos (1990).)

Arnheiter and Malayeff (2005) define 'pull' as follows: 'The term pull is used to imply that nothing is made until it is needed by the downstream customer, and the application of a make-to-order (MTO) approach whenever possible.' In a service (e.g. customer-facing) environment this can have significant impacts upon the need for levels of the appropriate expertise at the customer front-line, impacting therefore on the nature of leadership at that interface, and that *it* also will need to be based on a 'pull' system; for example, Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) (Blanchard 1989; Blanchard et al., 1994) can – if not should – be exercised in that way.

Further support for this alignment from Hall, et al. (1993: 122) is gained with; 'in the diagnostic phase, the company conducted a comprehensive study of customer needs and found that customers cared more about speedy [insurance] claims processing [as opposed to 'a broad portfolio of products and knowledgeable service representatives'], an area in which the company was underperforming,' which also ties in with Seddon's 'Check' stage, as the start of the redesign process. And again (at AT&T); 'By interviewing employees and customers and following paper trails, the team reconstructed 24 cases, which became the basis for the diagnostic' (Hall, et al., *ibid*: 126).

A synopsis of their CSFs and CFFs are:

'Five Keys to Successful Redesign'

1. Set an aggressive reengineering performance target;
2. Commit up to 20% to 50% of the chief executive's time to the project;
3. Conduct a comprehensive review of customer [etc.] needs;

4. Assign an additional senior executive to be responsible for implementation;
5. Conduct a comprehensive pilot of the new design.

'...And Four Ways to Fail'

1. Assign average performers;
2. Measure only the plan;
3. Settle for the status quo;
4. Overlook communication.

Longbottom (2000, Table III) offers 'Critical factors for best practice technology transfer' in benchmarking projects – see below, Fig. 4.8 – but these could equally well have been proposed as CSF/CFFs for BPR project success...

Fig. 4.8: Critical Success/Failure Factors (CSF/CFF) for Benchmarking Projects

Critical factors	Projects fail	Projects succeed
Project determination	<i>Ad hoc</i> /championing	Clear link to strategic plan
Project emphasis	Focus on performance measures	Focus on measures and methods
Project participants	Metrics Staff drawn from internal department/function Little or no TQM Objectives not clear	Process Cross-function, multi-skill teams, sponsor, facilitator TQM programme Objectives clear
Organization culture	Lack of trust Low training emphasis Poor communication Internal focus on cost and performance measures	Trust Emphasis on training Good communication External focus on adding value to customer
Measurement criteria		

Source: Longbottom, D., (2000) 'Benchmarking in the UK: an empirical study of practitioners and academics', *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Table III

...as the strategic links, focus on methods/process, cross-functional multi-skilled and facilitated (supported) teams, clear goals, trust, ample training, good and continuous communication, and the external focus on the customer could just as well have been proposed by Hammer and Champy in 1993, or Seddon a decade later, regardless of their other apparent differences.

Attaran (2000) states that whilst reengineering is a 'top-down proposition', the 'magnitude of implementing the reengineering process can be a great problem if there is not a major and absolute commitment made by management of the necessary time, money, and other resources needed to make required changes,' and that one 'fundamental source of difficulties' is that 'process gets reengineered and infrastructure does not' – as Seddon (2007a) says, 'structure is subordinate to process.' And: 'It should be undertaken only when there is a clear business case and a strong motivation to change the way things are being done,' and to 'achieve its particular end, reengineering methodology should focus on two strategic guidelines: empowering people and enabling technology,' with company executives recognising the 'need for reengineering' and developing a 'consensus' – what Hammer and Champy (1993: 154) call their 'case for action' (see also Seddon, 2002: 130 – it is up to the 'leaders' to provide the 'framework for action').

This 'commitment made by management' was identified in Paper et al's (2001) 'BPR case study at Honeywell' where in '1990 the entire plant was shut down and everyone taken to another location for an intensive six-hour session. During the session, the need for radical change was articulated. In addition, management explained what the broad changes would be and how the changes would impact the workers,' showing another example of Hammer and Champy's 'case' and Seddon's 'framework' for action.

Honeywell's shift from 'mass' (production) to 'lean' (manufacturing) can also be seen in the following extract: 'WCM* was created to provide resources and take a system-wide view of the plant. WCM supported a focused-factory environment that harnesses the potential of teams. Instead of workers being assigned to a specific area on the factory floor, teams of multi-skilled workers

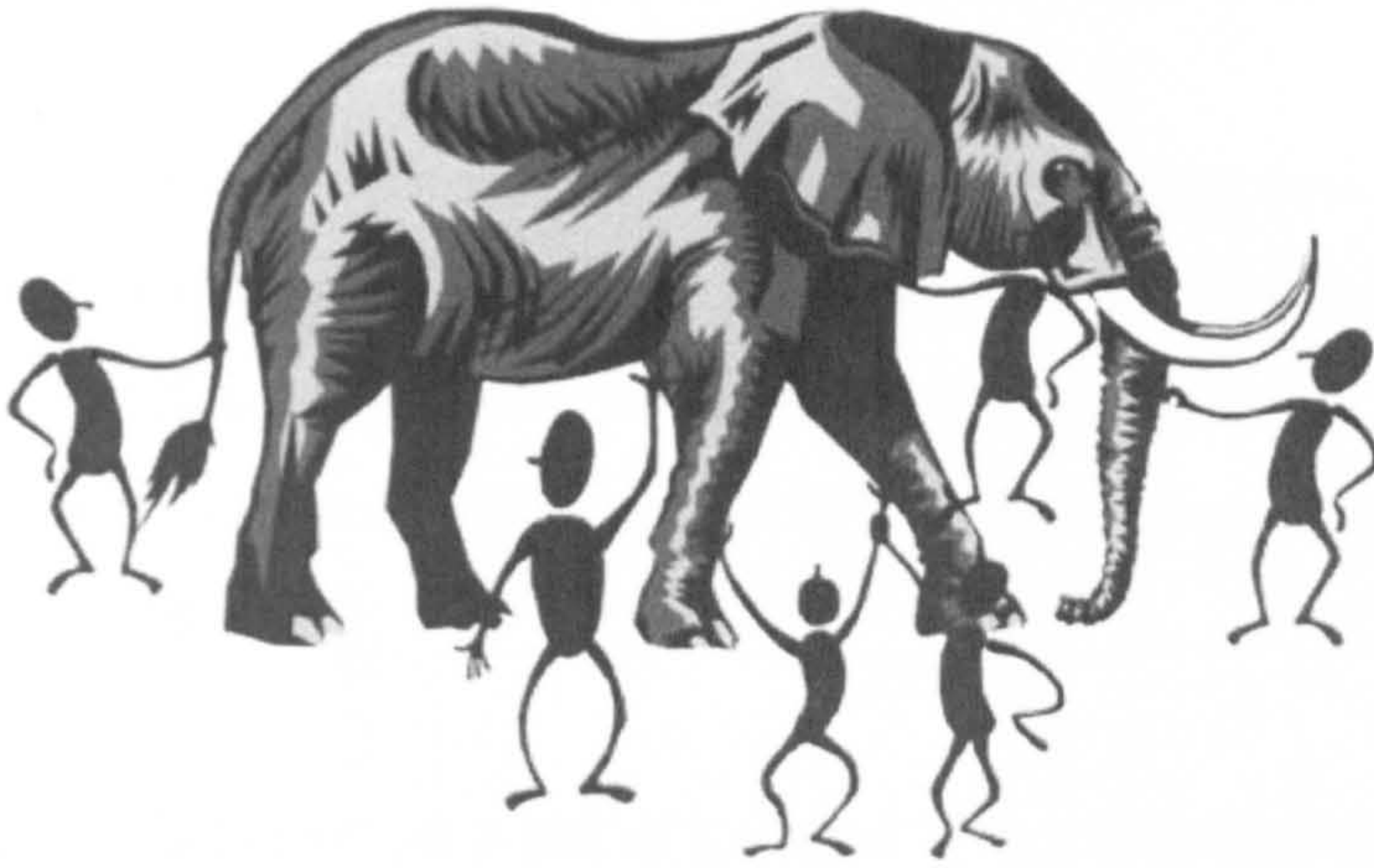
were charged with building entire products or modules from start to finish. WCM provided resources to teams based on the process rather than 'piecemeal events or tasks' (ibid), giving further credence, should it still be necessary, of the need to create 'cross-functional, multi-skilled teams', resourced by a 'sponsor', and supported by a 'facilitator' (Longbottom, 2000), where that latter's role is to 'facilitate learning by discovery and inquiry, not by being told what to do' (Paper et al., 2001).

(* 'World-Class-Manufacturing'; a 3-year programme to 'examine lagging performance results.')

Honeywell's example is little different from Joynson's (1995: 58-75) case study of Lambert Howarth – 'A New Dawn at Rawtenstall' – where, equally, 'teams of multi-skilled workers were charged with building entire products or modules from start to finish,' in this case, slippers. The product is irrelevant; what Joynson did was *reengineer* these workers – in just two working days – from working in 'specific area[s] on the factory floor,' into 'cells', thence reducing the end-to-end time from 3 weeks to 45 seconds. 'Dramatic' results, one might suggest. Equally, though, he also did it by 'harness[ing] the potential of teams,' and delegated to them total control of the 'redesign' – 'involvement', 'trust', and 'empowerment'!

Longbottom's (ibid) requirement for 'trust' and empowerment (Al-Mashari & Zairi, 1999) is emphasized by Paper et al. (2001) with, 'teams need to have control over things that impact their performance. When teams failed, the cause could almost always be attributed to lack of authority to make decisions where the work was actually being done.' They state that (e.g.) for 'process mapping to work, decisions are pushed to the "process" level and employees are given the tools and training they need to excel,' and they cite an example of "'out-of-the-box" thinking' using an illustration called 'Five blind men and an elephant' (see overleaf, Fig. 4.9), except that their 'Figure 1' shows six 'blind men' (oops):

Fig. 4.9: 'Five blind men and an elephant'



Source: Paper, D. J., Rodger, J. A. & Pendharkar, P. C., (2001) 'A BPR case study at Honeywell', *Business Process Management Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 89, Fig. 1, 'Five blind men and an elephant'

Perhaps the sixth (bottom-centre, right) was the 'facilitator'?

The 'criticality' of this as a success factor (CSF) is shown with evidence from Honeywell's results; 'In a little over three years, teams helped reduce defect rates by 70 percent, customer rejects by 57 percent, cycle time on parts by 72 percent, inventory investment by 46 percent, and customer lead times by over 70 percent,' showing that examples of 'dramatic improvement' (Hammer & Champy, 2001: 35) can be found; and, perhaps, that BPR is 'alive and well' (ibid: 2) in organisations where 'Top management ('should', and *do*) make change management a top priority and communicate the change vision across the organization' (Paper, et al., 2001).

Al-Mashari and Zairi (2000) concluded that, 'Recent research studies have shown that BPR is very much alive and well,' and citing Sockalingam and Doswell's (1996) study of BPR in Scotland, that implementation levels were (e.g.) 40% in Scotland, 69% in the USA, 75% in Europe and 27% in the UK.

Sockalingam and Doswell themselves found that the 'results of [their] study indicate that BPR success rates are high,' ranging from '67%' in Scotland to '78%' in America (1996: 43, Fig. 13), and they continue:

'The table suggests that contrary to claims of extraordinarily high failure rates, almost three-quarters of BPR projects are successful in meeting most of their objectives' (ibid).

They qualify these apparent success levels with a health warning that 'evaluation is inherently subjective, and goals and targets set vary between organizations.' But they go on to conclude that, 'Nevertheless, the results are promising,' and that they 'indicate that BPR is both recognized and practiced in Scotland' (ibid).

Paper et al. (2001) 'developed a set of general lessons' which add further to the range of CSF (and CFF) available for guidance:

- Lesson one: people are the key enablers of change;
- Lesson two: question everything;
- Lesson three: people need a systematic methodology to map processes;
- Lesson four: create team ownership and a culture of dissatisfaction;
- Lesson five: management attitude and behavior can squash projects;
- Lesson six: bottom-up or empowered implementation;
- Lesson seven: BPR must be business-driven and continuous;
- Lesson eight: IT is a necessary, but not a sufficient, enabler;

...'Lessons' 'six' and 'seven' reminding us of Obolensky's (1994: 16) 'paradox'?

However, Paper et al. (ibid) criticize the existing (at that time) BPR literature for failing to 'mention the importance of a systematic BPR methodology,' when we have already seen ample versions of these (e.g. Davenport & Short, 1990; Furey, 1993; Guha, et al., 1993; Harrison & Pratt, 1993; Johansson, et al., 1993; Barrett, 1994, Klein, 1994; Petrozzo & Stepper, 1994; Hammer & Stanton, 1995; McAdam & Corrigan, 2001; and others), but they do provide Honeywell's own 'eight step' process to add to this range:

1. Select process
2. Identify boundaries
3. Form teams

4. Develop "as is" map
5. Identify cycle times
6. Identify opportunities for improvement
7. Develop "should be"* map
8. Develop implementation plan

(* NB In other 'methodologies' this is often also known as the "to be" map.)

That the important, or 'critical' to success, issue of 'bottom-up or empowered implementation' was not specifically articulated by Hammer and Champy (1993) is perhaps, on reflection, a reasonable criticism, but Paper et al. (2001) do emphasise this again with '(For) process thinking to work, employees must be empowered to do their jobs since they are the ones that actually do the work,' echoing again Joynson and Forrester (1995) and Seddon (2003).

Zucchi and Edwards (2000: 102) say that 'Fully process-based organisations are still extremely uncommon.' One example is BT, who Harvey (1995: 29-45) suggests is one organisation that has at least made significant progress in this direction, as extracts from his case study 'Summary' show:

- '5. Following the re-organisation, BT created a group-wide process management unit whose role was to help all business units continue to define their core and sub-processes, and to create a process management structure for the whole business.'
- '9. In order to make the new integrated process vision of BT a reality, the company recognises that process management awareness must become part of every employee's job description, and in particular, provides whole hearted support by the senior management of the company' (Harvey, 1995: 29).

However, the health warnings of factors critical to success are equally evident:

- '6. ...the critical importance of setting appropriate performance measures, and deciding ownership of processes emerged as issues to be resolved.
7. Although numerous improvements have already been implemented as a result of process redesign, re-engineering is still highly dependent on managers' interest and commitment for its success. The company-wide Breakout* project has given added senior level support and impetus to re-engineering.'

(* This author was directly involved in Project Breakout – and its subsequent 'Genesis Integrated Pilot' – see also Chamberlin, 1998.)

Other such warnings (CSF/CFF) are to be found elsewhere in the report; citing Roger Cartwright, from BT's Group Process Management Unit in 1994:

'Unless an organisation has compelling reasons to change, radical transformation is probably too painful to undergo' (p. 34);

...which echoes Hammer and Champy's (2001: 154) assertion that, 'It has to be a case for action – a dramatically persuasive argument, supported by evidence, that spells out the cost of doing anything short of reengineering,' and Harvey continues:

- 'Although process management has subsequently been given a high priority within BT, it will only be legitimised when it is recognised as a separate managerial role, or included in job descriptions' (p. 38);
- 'Typically, the commitment to process management depends on the attitude of the process owner' (p. 39);
- 'Ultimately, only strong senior management commitment can ensure that the full range of changes in structure, organisation and management responsibilities are pushed through' (p. 45).

Yet again the issue of 'strong' leadership emerges as a potentially major CSF, and this is considered again later.

In summary; there is considerable advice on how to succeed or fail at BPR, for example: Bruss and Roos (1993), Hall, et al. (1993), Hammer and Stanton (1995), Harvey (1995), Holland and Kumar (1995), Al-Mashari and Zairi (1999), Attaran (2000), Paper, et al. (2000), Reis and Peña (2001), Gaster and Squires (2003), Howe and O'Reilly (2004) from this brief review alone.

What the commonality of these critical success factors (CSF) display is the need for some effective diagnosis of an organisation's 'readiness' (Bruss & Roos, 1993; Hammer & Stanton, 1995) for this level of change, otherwise the balance of evidence from these empirical studies avers the potential to fail. Such early diagnosis would assist organisations to assess their organisational capability, and thence lead to strategies by which those CSFs would be strengthened, so increasing chances of success.

4.4 Change Management

'In order to respond to [new] environmental conditions, organisations in the public sector would need to expand or redirect their efforts in relation to new needs or opportunities. Or they would need to review or revise their ways of working, i.e. by introducing new systems, reorganising, adopting new methods of working and so on. These situations involve the management of change. Managing change is, therefore, not only the preserve of the private sector, but integral to management in public and voluntary sectors' (White, 2000: 162).

Managing change is a huge topic in its own right, but it is not the subject of this study. It is, however, and by definition, an integral part, and so alternatives to BPR-types of radical change will need briefly to be considered. The previous decades have seen a number of seminal texts and articles of the subjects of change management (Lewin, 1951; Kanter, 1985; Henry & Mayle, 1991; Buchanan & Boddy, 1992; Kotter, 1996), strategic change (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1993; Mintzberg, et al., 1998), organisational change (Senior, 1997; Buchanan & Badham, 1999), and learning organisations (Senge, et al., 1999), on the basis that 'learning' and 'change' are synonymous (Kolb, 1984).

Synonymous also is 'employee involvement' (Grazier, 1993) with change programmes, and the first stage of Beer, et al's (1990: 161) 'Six Steps to Effective Change' shows: '1. Mobilize commitment to change through joint diagnosis of business problems.' Their remaining five 'Steps' were:

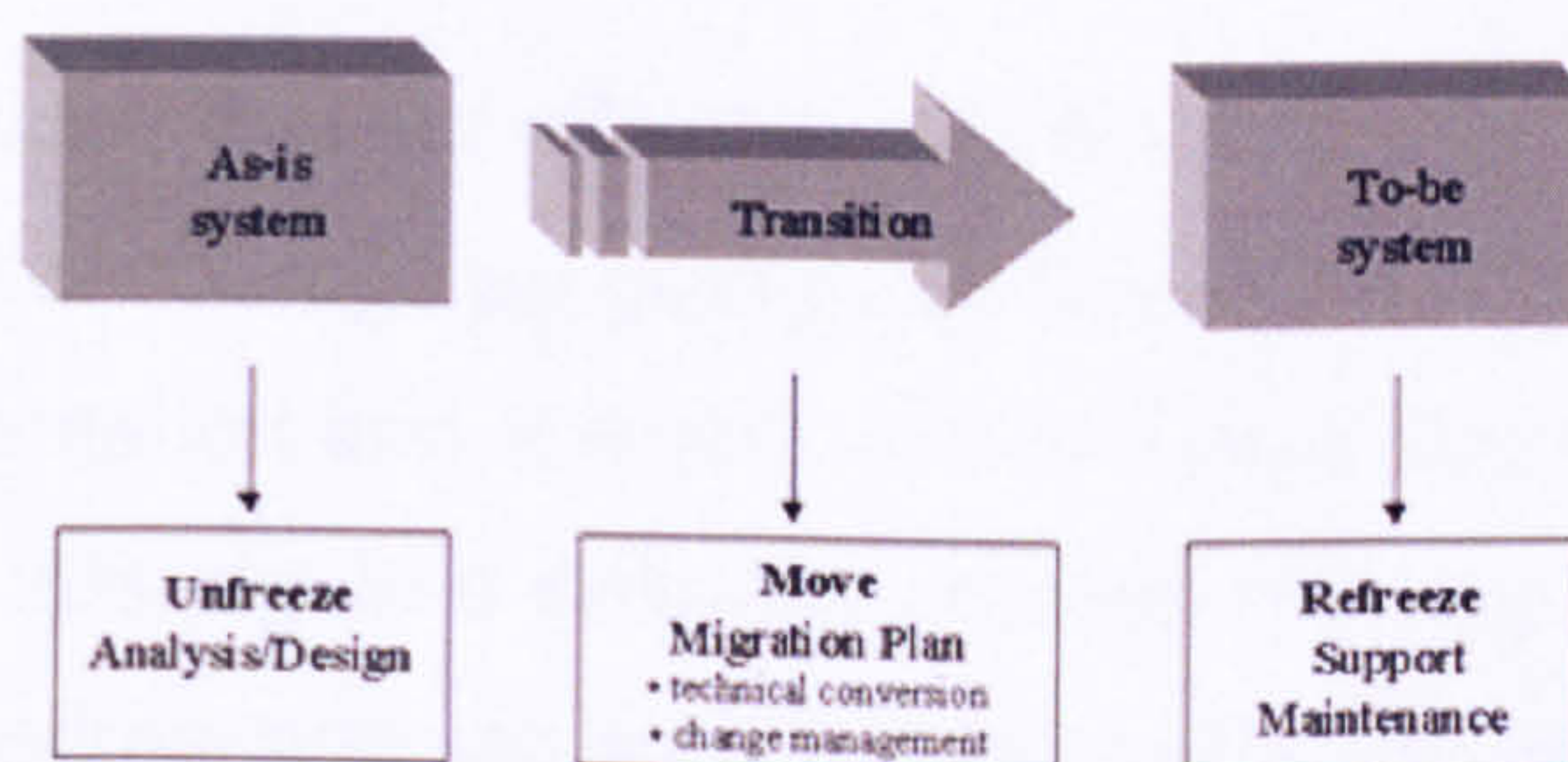
2. Develop a shared vision of how to organize and manage for competitiveness;
3. Foster consensus for the new vision, competence to enact it, and cohesion to move it along;
4. Spread revitalization to all departments without pushing it from the top;
5. Institutionalize revitalization through formal policies, systems, and structures;
6. Monitor and adjust strategies in response to problems in the revitalization process.

Whilst not in any way identical, the contemporary similarities to Hammer's (1990) approach are there in words such as 'problems', 'vision', 'revitalization', 'systems', and 'process'.

Bruss and Roos (1993) confirm this need for involvement with, 'The secret of change management ... is for all employees to feel like masters of their fates rather than bystanders. Capturing their commitment, through participation and involvement, is the single most important effort in the change process,' (p. 57), and, 'To be effective, the reengineering effort must have strong employee involvement' (p. 60).

White (2000: 78) acknowledges that, 'invariably' change models follow Lewin's 'three-step process (Lewin, 1951) of unfreezing, change and refreezing,' – below – and that whilst other 'public sector organisations have adopted business process re-engineering. It is argued that progress using these processes can only be achieved with a transformation team which has been given the authority for change and has internal power or clout, and can effectively communicate with the whole organisation,' alluding also perhaps to Hammer and Champy's (1993: 103) need for a '*reengineering czar*'.

Fig. 4.10: Lewin's basic 'Change' model



Source: http://knowledgeaforethought.blogspot.com/knowledge_aforethought/images/ReFreeze2.gif

This concept of 'unfreezing' was also metaphorically utilised in Kotter's more recent (2006) and much smaller book on change, 'Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions,' which re-emphasised in a more user-friendly way his original (1995, 1996) 8-stage approach to change management:

1. Establish a Sense of Urgency
2. Form a Powerful Guiding Coalition
3. Create a Vision
4. Communicate the Vision
5. Empower Others to Act on the Vision
6. Plan for and Create Short-Term Wins
7. Consolidate Improvements and Produce Still More Change
8. Institutionalize New Approaches

Adapted from: Kotter, 1995

There are strong allegiances between the first five of Kotter's stages, above, Hammer and Champy's (1993: 149) 'case for action' and 'vision statement', and Lewin's 'unfreeze' principle similarly epitomises the 'overcoming resistance' side of his other well established model, 'Force Field Analysis', shown previously (Fig. 3.10, p. 52). Similarly, as Schein (2004: 319) implies, the 'fundamental assumptions underlying any change in a human system are derived originally from Kurt Lewin (1947),' in the form of his 'basic model' – 'Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze' – which when represented in the example above shows synergies also with the terminology of the 'fundamental' stages of BPR.

White (ibid) also states that 'an effective model for change should accommodate and encourage on-going interaction, i.e. it must be iterative and based on experimentation and learning, rather than being a static process,' which could easily infer again a Kolb-like process of doing, reflecting, theorising and experimenting, on an repetitive basis, and again reflects the iterative nature of Beer et al's (1990: 161) 'Step 6'; 'Monitor and adjust strategies in response to problems in the revitalization process.'

This 'on-going interaction' requires the setting-up, or at least the permitting, of self-managed teams, 'where informal networks are self-organising systems, each follows its own rules and together constitute a system where people from personal networks acquire information to learn and so change the

system of which they are a part' (White, *ibid*), which is in tune with Schonberger's (1994) 'teamsmanship over leadership' ideas. He states that the 'substance' of reengineering is 'to do with "organizing around outcomes, not tasks" (Hammer, 1990),' and that – clearly echoing Joynson and Forrester (1995) – in the 'vanguard' of this approach are those 'manufacturing plants that have moved nearly every machine, plus operators and support resources, into cells or flow lines that produce complete units.'

Attaran (2000: 101), again alluding to this need for 'on-going interaction', states that 'feedback loops for employees to air their concerns, must be in place from day one,' because 'resistance and cynicism are inevitable,' and 'getting people to buy into reengineering has proven to be difficult.' Waddell and Sohal (1998), however, are not so *cynical* about the issue of *resistance*, and say that it can be a 'constructive tool for change management.' Whereas it 'has been classically understood as a foundation cause of conflict that is undesirable and detrimental to organisational health' (*ibid*), Burdett (1998), agreeing, offers an alternative approach by, 'taking advantage of the tension derived from rejecting the *status quo*' – what he calls 'innovation drawn out of positive discord' – because (resistance) 'may not be an enemy of change' (Waddell and Sohal, *ibid*). It appears that resistance, as one of Lewin's (1951) 'forces', can be what you make it.

Burke (2004) asks, 'Can reengineering improve an organization?' and then answers, 'I believe so, but it takes a lot of thought, effort and coordination sustained over a long period of time.' He continues:

'Few organizations appear interested in evaluating and learning from their efforts. Managers often decide themselves on the success of their initiatives (Zbaracki, 1998). Decisions made on data are more likely to be valid and support organizational effectiveness. ... These findings are consistent with other writing on the difficulties in bringing about successful organizational change, specifically in the implementation of process reengineering. They highlight the importance of time and effort spent in communicating and gaining staff understanding and acceptance of new ways of doing business. These insights are not new; as conventional wisdom they have been part of your organizational change mantra for decades. Unfortunately, all too often they are

only given lip service. Until serious attention is paid to them, the implementation of process reengineering, along with other organizational transformation, will continue to have mixed success.'

So it appears that 'change' per se, is not the problem, but how an organisation goes about it, which suggests also that the CSF (and CFF) for change management are likely to be little different from those to do with reengineering. It's all in the *doing*, the implementation.

As Burke (ibid) says, and it stands repeating:

'These insights are not new; as conventional wisdom they have been part of your organizational change mantra for decades. Unfortunately, all too often they are only given lip service. Until serious attention is paid to them, the implementation of process reengineering, along with other organizational transformation, will continue to have mixed success.'

The only people who can give the issues surrounding change management 'serious attention' are the organisation's management – or its leaders – and as Holland and Kumar (1995: 79) said, 'When shooting for change, concentrate on two key areas: Aim at the right processes, and get management behind it 100 percent.'

Burke also highlights 'the importance of time and effort spent in communicating and gaining staff understanding and acceptance of new ways of doing business,' and this is echoed (albeit earlier) by Hall, et al. (1993: 127), 'The radically different job responsibilities and skill redesigns posed an immense human-resource challenge. The staff would need training and job support to understand their new roles and the new emphasis on customers and profits.'

Their own attempt at 'the right process' follows the pattern:

- Diagnostic
- Clean-Slate Redesign

- Preparing for Change
- Rollout

And it is again at this 'Diagnostic' stage that the 'employee involvement' has to commence – that *mobilisation* of 'commitment to change through joint diagnosis of business problems' (Beer, et al., *ibid*) – White's (2000) 'on-going interaction.'

Paper et al. (2001) say that the 'major obstacle to change is the employee attitude that "things are OK", so why change.' Why indeed? And as Peters (1992, p. 628) says, 'Change is painful and difficult to implement. "Change of even the simplest sort is hopelessly complex ... even making the case for change is close to impossible".'

And that 'case for change' takes us right back to Hammer and Champy's (1993: 149) 'case for action' – their 'compelling argument for change.' After that case has been made, or as part of its making, employees need to know, 'what to?' Hammer and Champy (*ibid*) put it simply, perhaps too simply; they called it the 'vision statement' – 'what the company [or organisation] needs to become.' They say that the vision acts as a 'flag around which to rally the troops,' and a 'yardstick for measuring the progress' (*ibid*: 154), all of which suggests the need for an organisation-wide integration of the process(es) of change – whether incremental or radical, whether kaizen or reengineering, or wherever in-between – integration through management and employees as a whole.

Cao, et al. (2001) add a further health warning on this very subject, 'This overall failure to integrate the approach throughout the organisation (Siegal et al., 1996), it is argued, frequently results in significant improvements in individual process but fails to produce bottom-line organisation-wide results (Hall, et al., 1993),' and this has key parallels with Dexter et al's (2005, 2006) report into the impact of a middle management leadership training programme on the 'bottom line' within one of the target organizations, where there was

ample evidence of 'individual' improvements in areas such as knowledge, skills and attributes, but it was far less easy to identify where this had impacted upon the organisation's 'bottom line' in a 'organisation-wide' manner. Cao, et al., continue that, 'Conversely, it is evident that a BPR programme can be a powerful change approach if it is integrated with a variety of change initiatives such as cultural and structural change (Stebbins, et al., 1998).'

Stebbins, et al., in their study of Blue Shield of California, confirm that BPR 'can be a powerful change umbrella,' but their health warning again is that 'Top-level management involvement and commitment played a critical role throughout the change process' (1998: 230), and Cao, et al. further support the case for integration by stating that a 'holistic approach to the management of change is needed.' My own previous organisation (BT) took that 'holistic' approach to heart with an organisation-wide integration programme of their TQM initiative in the late 1980s; it was called 'Involving Everyone.' It did.

And it exemplified Obolensky's (1994: 16) 'paradox,' because it 'started as a top-down exercise,' being management-lead, but subsequently 'relied very much on bottom-up support and involvement,' as line-management carried out the bulk of the staff training, the essence of which was to engage the workforce in the tools and techniques of TQM/continuous quality improvement, whilst also seeking their ideas on what to improve, and how.

Cao, et al. (2001) also say, somewhat controversially, that 'BPR says little about problems of resistance,' whereas Hammer and Champy (2001: 179) quite clearly state that, 'The fact is, there will always be resistance to change. But if you are determined to make the changes work, it is no longer an insurmountable issue,' and again (p. 183), '...success requires leaders to be persistent, stubborn, and consistent – leaders who will not back down in the face of resistance or difficulty. Clear communication throughout the organization is a prerequisite for progress in a reengineering effort.' And for 'throughout the organization', read 'integration.'

Cao, et al. (2001) cite Flood (1996), whose 'four key dimensions of organisation (process, design, culture and politics)' were the inspiration for their own 'classification of four types of organizational change':

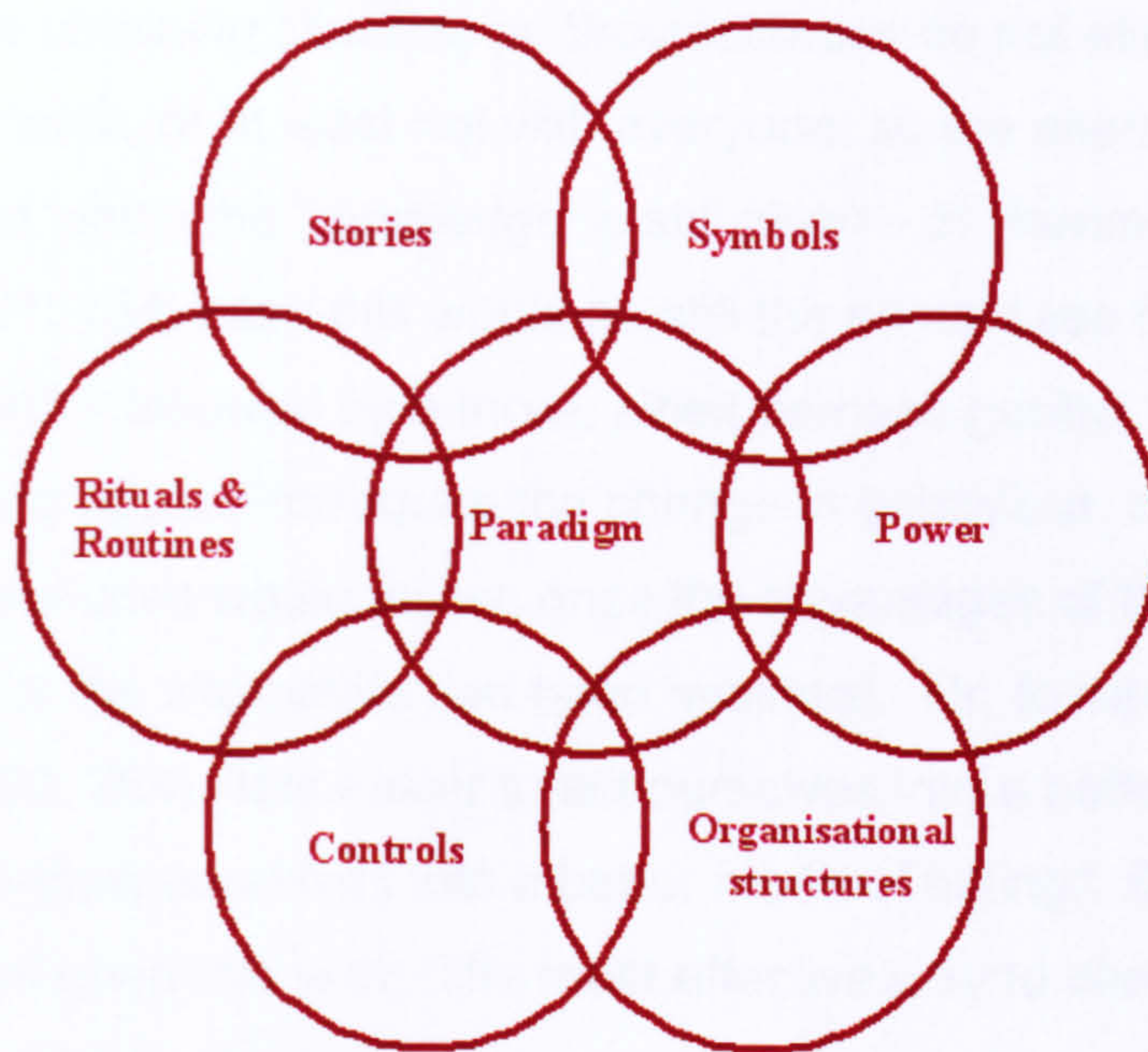
- Processual change – Changes in organisational process and controls over process
- Structural change – Changes in organisational functions, their organisation, co-ordination and control; usually involving a consideration of horizontal and vertical structures, the decision systems, and human resource management
- Cultural change – Changes in values, beliefs and human behaviour in terms of relationships to social rules and practices
- Political change – Changes in power distribution and the way organizational issues are influenced.

Later, they state that organisational change 'can be seen as a dynamic process,' in that:

'...change in any one dimension will probably result in compensatory change in other dimensions (Leavitt, 1964; Nadler, 1988): so, for example, "shifts in the large culture influence individuals, who influence organisational culture, which in turn reflects organisational structure" (DeLisi, 1990). Consequently, any attempt to carry out change through isolated single efforts is likely to fail (Kanter, et al., 1992). This being the case, it implies that to manage organisational change requires diversity of both theories and methodologies: since the four types of organisational change identified are interrelated and interdependent, no one theoretical or methodological position will be able to deal with all aspects of change.'

And again, if 'isolated efforts [are] likely to fail,' then integration is required, which seems like a complicated way of saying what goes round comes round, or, perhaps more structurally and culturally, that all aspects of (e.g.) Johnson and Scholes' (2002) 'Cultural Web' should be considered and included in any attempt at large(r)-scale organisational change – Fig. 4.11 Cultural Web (overleaf):

Fig. 4.11: Cultural Web



Source: Johnson, G. & Scholes, K., (2002) *Exploring Corporate Strategy: Text & Cases*, 6th edition, Harlow, Pearson Education Ltd, FT/Prentice Hall, p. 230, Exhibit 5.11

But 'twas ever thus, surely, that any more forced or 'coercive' (Dunphy & Stace, 1993) 'approach(s) to dealing with organisational change' (Cao, et al., 2001) – e.g. BPR – would, by the very nature of the 'design' of the concept, bring about a new 'structure', which would both necessitate and cause a change/shift in the 'culture', resulting from new forms of 'power distribution' and 'influence', or 'politics'. Blanchard (1989) put it differently in that there were basically two, three-stage approaches to change:

Knowledge – Attitude – Behaviour (KAB)

or

Knowledge – Behaviour – Attitude (KBA)

The first – to gain people's buy-in through the supply of information (Knowledge), followed by adequate persuasion – a 'case for action' and a 'vision statement'? – which then causes a change of mind-set (Attitude) resulting in the new, desired actions (required Behaviour) – would of course be the most preferable.

However, occasionally, if not frequently, this approach either does not succeed, or the obtaining situation or circumstances do not allow time for the 'persuasion' to work, or at least not with everyone, so the alternative 'KBA' has to be applied; in which the 'knowledge' is still given – in Hammer and Champy's (2001: 154) case this would be still the same 'case for action' and 'vision statement' – followed by a more, albeit perhaps gently, 'coercive' persuasion being applied to *require* the change in behaviour, on the basis that the change in attitudes would follow, once the advantages of the new state were realized (or the alternative had been avoided). Or, to repeat the words of Pascale (1990: 264), 'It is easier to act ourselves into a better mode of thinking than to think ourselves into a better mode of acting.' Beer et al. (1990: 159) confirmed this with; 'The most effective way to change behaviour, therefore, is to put people into a new organizational context, which imposes new roles, responsibilities, and relationships on them,' reminding us again of Champy's (1996) comment:

'Starting the reengineering process by changing the managerial work, therefore, is going to have greater benefits for the organization.'

Pascale et al (1997) called this 'revitalization'; meaning a 'permanent rekindling of individual creativity and responsibility, a lasting transformation of the company's internal and external relationships, an honest-to-God change in human behavior on the job.'

That this 'thinking' or 'change in human behavior' might be an emotionally-driven journey through changing attitudes was highlighted by Kübler-Ross (1969), and Scott and Jaffe (1994), and, in CSF terms, Jeal's (2005) view was similarly that:

'A factor in successful change is the overcoming of resistance by recognising people's feelings and the organisational culture. The implication is then that cultures are changed by changing the emotions that drive them, not the other way round.'

It might still be the case, however, that changing people's *behaviour* first in Pascale's terms might be the more expedient, if not also successful approach (see also Davies, 2001: 167)?

A recent example from China highlights this occasional need for *forcing* change in organisations that, previously, have shown little willingness to be *persuaded* by other means. In a (The) Sunday Times article (August 26th, 2007) entitled, 'China pays a high price for America's T-shirts,' Jane Spencer reported that 'The crackdown on [company name] was part of an increasingly aggressive campaign by China's central government to curb the environmental damage wrought by decades of industrial expansion'; where language such as 'crackdown,' 'increasingly aggressive,' and 'curb,' suggest very clearly that a KAB-type of attitudinal persuasion approach had not been successful, and it was time for a KBA-type of behavioural intervention – forcing the company concerned to 'act,' as Pascale said, 'into a better mode of thinking.'

Doyle (2001) highlights the issue of tensions between empowerment of (e.g.) teams, and stresses:

'For instance, we have seen that whilst an empowering culture is leading to greater dispersal of change agency, the extent to which the organisation can or would want to exercise control and the mechanisms becomes a strategic issue. Too much coercive, bureaucratic control risks creating frustration and de-motivation amongst managers and employees stifling innovation. Too little control and there is a risk of initiative anarchy, overload and fatigue.'

In a later article, Doyle (2002) raised the issue of the 'theoretical and practical implications facing those who have responsibility for "managing the change managers",' and concluded that a 'more explicit organisational focus to develop change agents from novices to experts should be included in future HR strategies.' A decade earlier this *expertise* was the central thrust of Buchanan and Boddy's (1992) 'The Expertise of the Change Agent,' where they opened with the statement that the 'management of change is now commonly viewed as a complex and difficult area, worthy of special attention

and study, from both theoretical academic and practical management viewpoints' (p. 1).

Such 'tensions' were reflected in a quotation from Gus Crosetto (Vice President of Training and Development at FannieMae; 'the world's largest diversified financial company and the US's largest source of home mortgage funds'), cited in Paper, et al. (2003), but it also highlights the imperative for combining that training and 'expertise' with integration and employee involvement: 'We are really managing chaos. Controls are minimal as compared to an autocracy. The time and effort we put into developing the people system is daunting, but the benefits are amazing.'

(* NB Not only was Crosetto Vice President, Corporate Learning at Fannie Mae, he was also Sr. Director of Learning & Leadership Development at Freddie Mac. Now, however, some five years on and with both of those organisations effectively nationalised, the words 'chaos', 'minimal controls', 'daunting' and 'amazing' might have a different resonance.)

Tom Peters had earlier taken a positive view of this 'daunting' issue in his (1988) treatise 'Thriving on Chaos', in which he gave 'Prescriptions for a World Turned Upside Down' (pp. 1-45), giving yet another example of that pyramidal inversion with Nordstrom's organization chart, shown in Fig. 4.12, below:

Fig. 4.12: Nordstrom Organization Chart



Source: Peters, T. J., (1988) Thriving on Chaos, London, Macmillan, p. 370, fig. 16

Peters urged that, 'First-line management's role is to support the front-line people. Middle management's role is to act largely as facilitator, greasing the skids and speeding up actions, especially those actions (most) requiring cross-functional, multi-unit co-operation.' Nordstrom called this concept their 'helping hand' aimed 'upward' (ibid: 369).

The involvement of HR in aspects of BPR implementation (at Leicester Royal Infirmary; LRI) – this 'helping hand' – was highlighted by Ashton (2002: 5), where the emphasis of the reengineering effort was refocused 'on working more closely with clinical teams to help them to develop and redesign their own services,' and Ashton's report states that, 'The results from this approach were astonishing.' In an 'overview of the HR contribution,' Ashton reports that the change programme at the LRI 'resulted in many improvements in quality, capacity, cost and patient care,' and that with the 'help of skilled HR practitioners [it] leveraged more intangible benefits in organizational culture,' giving examples such as:

- 'team-based performance management and problem-solving;
- improved teaching and research opportunities;
- more collaborative working relationships across the patient process;
- more effective skills and career development;
- heightened management focus on clinical issues;
- more timely senior-management decision taking; and
- a focussed and more committed workforce' (ibid: 6).

There are other approaches to organisational change, and as we have seen these can range from incremental to radical approaches, using such concepts as TQM, Kaizen, Benchmarking, Six Sigma, EFQM, Investors in People, Reengineering, and Change Management per se.

McAdam (2003) reported that, 'Over the last decade there has been a continuous development of Reengineering and Benchmarking theory and practice in an attempt to meet the demands of large-scale change and increased globalization and competitiveness in organisations. Benchmarking

is the external (in the present context external to the organisation) comparison of any organisational feature against "best in class" or "world class" practice.'

The criticism of benchmarking has been that by 'aspiring only to be as good as the best in its industry, the team sets a cap on its own ambitions' (Hammer & Champy, 1993: 132), or that it is simply 'playing catch-up' (Obolensky, 1994) whereas the protagonists would argue that 'there is much published research, which is generally supportive of benchmarking' (Longbottom, 2000).

On the subject of 'quality' per se, Kim and Ramkaran (2004), citing Pirsig (1974) invite the reader to 'Consider then this definition: "Quality is neither mind nor matter, but a third entity independent of the two... even though it cannot be defined, you know what it is".'

The same could perhaps be said of Change Management; we 'know what it is,' but getting it right is a different matter. It's the implementation.

To summarise in line with the study's objectives, this has broadened the context into the wider issues of change management. What this reinforces is that need for a cultural readiness within organisations, or the need for them to assess their capability for such fundamental changes if they are not sure – to 'evaluate and learn from their efforts' (Burke, 2004). Quintessentially BPR is a 'clean slate' approach (Hall, et al., 1993), so as Obolensky's 'top-down/' 'bottom-up' 'paradox' implies it will require that 'clear communication throughout the organization' (Hammer & Champy, 2001). According to Burke (ibid) it will take 'a lot of thought, effort and coordination over a long period' and 'isolated efforts [are] likely to fail' (Kanter, et al., 1992), and whether Kotter's (1996/2006) 8-stage model is the chosen approach, its generic sense is reinforced. Organisation-wide change is unlikely not to involve a parallel or foundational cultural shift, and organisations will need to *know* if they are 'ready' and capable for such fundamental changes, or to gain that knowledge through pre-assessment.

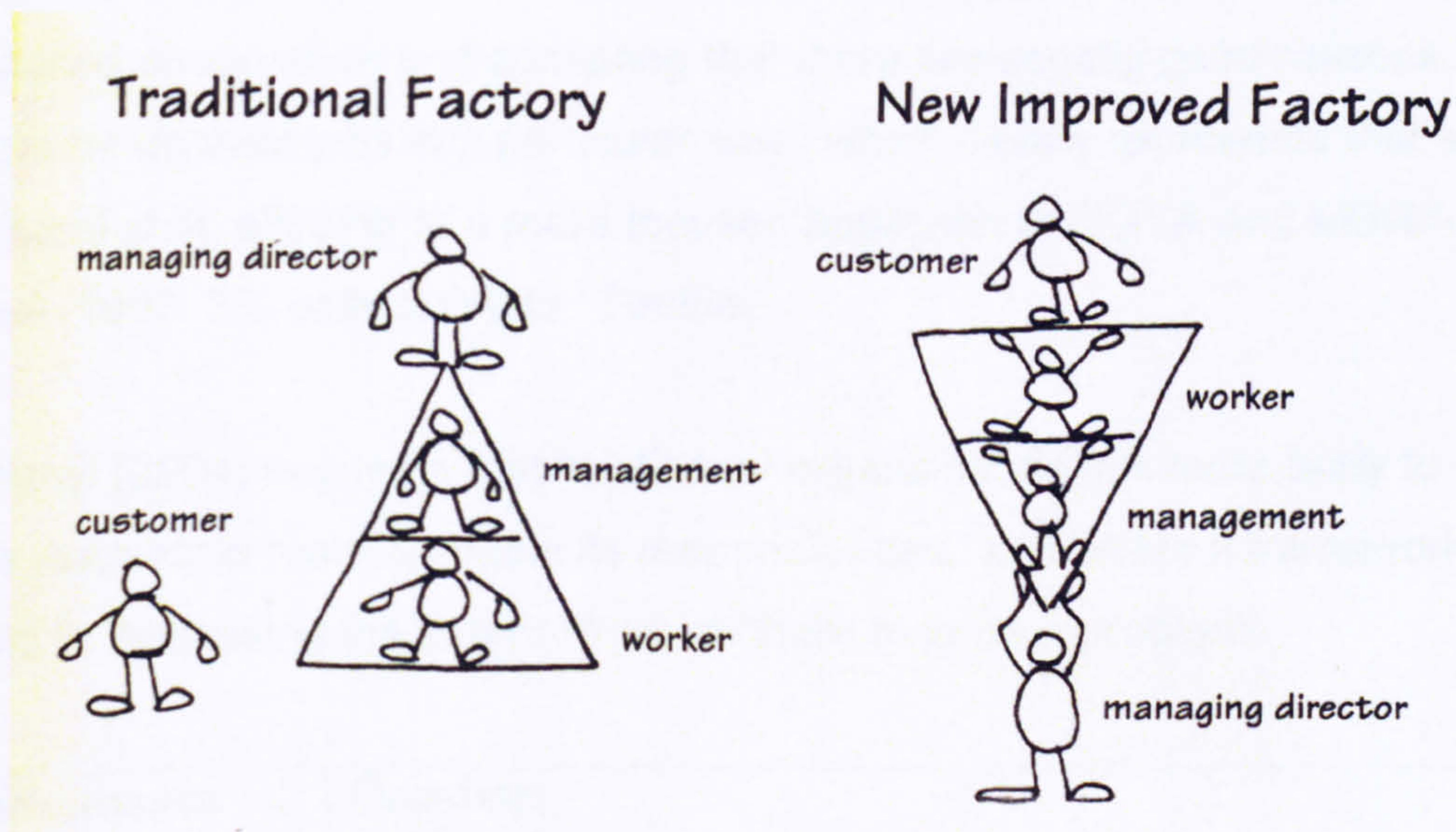
4.5 Organisational 'Culture'

'Reengineering entails as great a shift in the culture of an organization as in its structural configuration. Reengineering demands that employees deeply believe that they work for their customers, not for their bosses' (Hammer & Champy, 2001: 79).

The above seems a relatively simple statement, but in fact it infers, or rather 'demands,' a paradigmatic shift, if not a pyramidal inversion, of the culture and structure of organisations attempting BPR.

What Blanchard (1989: Tape 1/Side 2) calls 'Turning the Pyramid Upside-Down,' Joynson and Forrester (1995: 21) show as the structural, and therefore cultural, contrasts between the 'Traditional Factory' and the 'New Improved Factory'; below, Fig. 4.13:

Fig. 4.13: Johnson & Forrester's 'Inverted Pyramid'



Source: Joynson, S. & Forrester, A., (1995) *Sid's Heroes: Uplifting Business Performance and the Human Spirit*, London, BBC Books, p. 21

Whilst this in itself does not specifically imply a process-orientated culture, Joynson and Forrester continue, 'The key is to lead the workforce to change its perception of itself and the company through convincing them that *they* are the real experts and that *they* can deliver immense improvements more or

less immediately,... They must be given ownership of the process and be supported in the changes they want to make' (ibid).

Hammer (2004) in his article, 'Why don't we know more about knowledge?', acknowledges this same point of worker-level expertise and introduces the terms 'deep smarts' to describe people who 'draw on a huge store of tacit knowledge, built through years of experience.' He says they 'are also able to take a systems view of a complex product, an organization or an environment.' Hammer says that 'process' is about 'positioning all individual activities in the larger context in which they are performed,' and Seddon (2003: 29) reinforces the same point; 'In the longer term what is required is to change the whole system. Roles and measures have to change from managing through the hierarchy to managing flow, managing the work end-to-end.'

Hammer (ibid) emphasises that to 'really understand work practice requires detailed observation and accepting that there are usually good reasons why workers do their jobs in a particular way,' which clearly represents that same cultural shift, alluding to a more focused approach to GOYA and MBWA; what Imai (1997: 35) calls going to '*Gemba*'.

Spanyi (2004) suggests that 'traditional organizations are more likely to have the leadership team abdicate its responsibilities,' and offers a framework to help in 'assessing the extent to which there may be a problem':

Performance Dimension	Question
Mindset	Have you defined an enterprise-level model of your major business processes on one or two pages?
Strategy	Is there a shared understanding of which business processes need to be improved, and by how much, to deliver on strategic direction?
Execution	Have senior executives taken accountability for the performance of the enterprise-level business processes?

	<p>Has there been management training on business process improvement and management with a specific focus on the improvements needed to deliver on strategic goals?</p> <p>Is there a clear review mechanism to assess progress on a monthly and quarterly basis?</p>
Rewards	<p>Is some part of senior management's performance bonus based on business process performance?</p>
Structure	<p>Are there regular conversations about fine-tuning structure, measures and rewards to optimize customer-touching business process performance?</p>
Culture	<p>Is there a groundswell to move customer impacting decisions progressively closer to the point of contact?</p>
Leadership	<p>Are there more cross-departmental meetings to talk about delighting customers?</p> <p>Do department heads promote the enterprise view of performance in department meetings?</p>
Technology	<p>Are there lively cross-functional discussions on where (in which enterprise business processes) IT dollars should be invested?</p> <p>Is there leadership consensus on which IT capabilities need to be deployed on a company-wide basis?</p>

Source: Spanyi, A., (2004) 'BPM – The Enemy', *Article – Business Process Management Group*, Spanyi International Inc., pp. 5/6

Ongaro (2004) states that 'in the absence of such a [process-oriented] culture, performances may even worsen in a process-based organisation compared to a more traditional organisational frame,' and in the context of LGOs, continues:

'Public administrations, still characterised by a very limited orientation to end-users (a pre-requisite for the development of a process culture), will meet many difficulties in implementing process management, even though the broader cultural setting has evolved.'

These 'difficulties' were possibly why Al-Mashari and Zairi (1999) identified 'Change of Management Systems and Culture (Factors)' as the first of their 'analysis of key success and failure factors.'

Hammer (2004) offers some encouragement in this regard, with, 'Furthermore, because every proposed major change in operating procedures is invariably greeted with a chorus of "it will never work," a lengthy implementation period gives opponents an extended opportunity to campaign against it.' ... 'Companies would also be wise not to try to implement an innovation all at once. Breaking a large-scale implementation into a series of limited releases creates momentum, dispels scepticism and anxiety, and delivers a powerful rejoinder to carping critics,' thus reminding us of the continuous nature of cultural change. As Burke (2004: 115) says, 'The process of change is as important as the nature of the change.'

Willmott (1994: 44) comments that, 'BPR is likely to encounter difficulties of implementation even where employees overtly espouse its objectives... It also poses an immediate or deferred threat to job security and conditions of work' – but so, perhaps, does going out of business.

The issue of culture, or at least 'people', is identified by Bruss and Roos (1993: 57) in:

'...many reengineering projects focus exclusively on technology, thereby failing to address human and organizational aspects of reengineering. In these instances, organizations fail to explore nontechnical solutions to improving business processes, such as training, or changes to structure, procedures, and management practices.'

In a pilot with West Lancashire District Council, Vaughan (2005a: 2/6; 2005b: 2/11) reported that designing their own 'conceptual model to fit the operating context of smaller Local Authorities [required] an understanding of prevailing culture,' or, citing Deal and Kennedy (1982), the 'corporate tribe.' As Jeal (2005) found when they reengineered Customer Services at the University of Salford, 'We have experienced what could be called a culture shock in beginning BPR.'

Cao, et al. (2001) comment that 'a cultural view sees change in terms of people's relationship to social rules and practices,' and they cite Flood (1996)

as finding that 'organisational culture means, "...there are people who share a common history in some way, have a common sense of belonging, and are therefore readily able to engage with other people who share these feelings".' But of course 'feelings' of 'belonging' might easily be replaced by feelings of 'soon-not-to-be-belonging', if BPR is seen as a serious threat to the status quo (which, of course, it is), and Nwabueze also highlights these 'anxiety' aspects with, 'the constant threat of job loss cannot inspire innovation and creativity in employees' loyalty and team working are never fertilised in a field of fear... – Therefore it can be argued that Hammer and Champy (1993) completely missed the most vital elements that are the substance of any change process' (Nwabueze, 2000). And this same issue of a 'serious threat to the status quo' was reported by Bragato and Jacobs (2003); 'Understandably, these changes were resisted by doctors, who saw them as a threat to their power and autonomy.'

And under 'Climate', Nwabueze (ibid) says that 'BPR is characterised by downsizing, rightsizing and delayering,' whereas Hammer (1990) makes it clear that 'We cannot achieve breakthroughs by cutting fat and automating existing processes,' stating that, '(Rather,) we must challenge old assumptions and shed the old rules that made the business underperform in the first place' (p. 107), which could suggest that Hammer, at least, hadn't actually 'missed' the point?

Surprisingly, Cao, et al. (2001) state that BPR 'ignores structural, [and] cultural ... dimensions,' when, as we have already seen, quite clearly Hammer and Champy (2001: 79) state that 'Reengineering entails as great a shift in the culture of an organization as in its structural configuration,' so perhaps it is they (Cao, et al., 2001), rather than the original authors, who have 'missed' these 'most vital elements'.

On the issues of motivation versus stress (in the workplace) Nwabueze (2000) argues that 'job characteristics theory' (Hackman & Lawler, 1971) states that 'the worker would be self-motivated to perform well' ... 'if four core job characteristics' ... 'are present in a job', namely:

1. skill variety,
2. job identity,
3. autonomy, and
4. feedback.

However, this was two decades before BPR had been formally articulated, yet those same four 'characteristics' could be said to be present within the effective, supportive and entrepreneurial leadership of process redesign. For example:

1. skill variety – BPR clearly implies new jobs, roles and responsibilities;
2. job identity – as above, the inherent 'uncertainty' of BPR, along with the 'people' themselves being involved in job redesign, infers some 'control' over those new identities;
3. autonomy – empowerment of the workforce is a key component of BPR; and,
4. feedback – the 'quick and dirty' philosophy of experimentation within service redesign similarly implies – requires? – continual and effective feedback from leaders and customers on the effectiveness of those new processes.

These issues of 'autonomy' and 'empowerment' were studied by Jarrar and Zairi (2002) who concluded that the 'whole concept of "employee empowerment" is still an infant in terms of practical implementation. Although various benefits stand to be gained, organisations are still not willing to hand down power to employees and the "control" mentality is still abundant.' Belmiro et al. (2000) comment that the 'culture of departmentalisation has created in people's minds a kind of "ethical boundary" which needs to be challenged and confronted' – challenging, as Hammer (1990) said, those 'old assumptions.'

Commenting on structural aspects, Zucchi and Edwards (2000) say the 'typical re-engineered organisation is likely to have adopted a matrix structure,

with a reduced number of organisational levels' – and – 'employees' career paths in the re-engineered organisation now tend to be more a function of the skills acquired through training, and experience gained in different activities within the organisation, than occupational seniority,' the past tense inferring *successfully* 're-engineered organisation(s),' and therefore a successful cultural shift.

Mingers (2000:734) is clearly talking of culture when he reflects on his own 'scientific' background when commenting on his 'rude awakening' as he 'soon discovered that real-world organizations were not easily and tidily fitted into mathematical models – they had social and political dimensions which were not touched by the OR [Operational Research] techniques I had learned,' and that there was 'the embarrassment of relying on data that turned out to be patchy, often impossible to measure, and as much a reflection of its own processes of production as a reflection of "objective" reality.' But the following passage perhaps highlights the cultural resistance aspects more poignantly:

'Most importantly (and shockingly) I discovered the politics of organizations: the projects that never got started because certain people refused cooperation or information; the projects that were eagerly welcomed because they could be used by one department against another; the antagonism towards us, and indeed attempts at sabotage, when our studies threatened the power or position of particular groups. These "extraneous factors," that were never mentioned in OR books or courses, seemed to have more influence over the success or otherwise of my work than anything I might do with OR techniques' (Mingers, 2000: 734).

Whilst not exactly refusing 'cooperation', or displaying 'antagonism,' Thong et al. (2000: 248-252) state that because 'public organizations rely more on appropriations and less on market exposure, there is less incentive to reduce cost and improve operating efficiency. This results in increased reluctance to adopt the massive changes that come naturally with BPR'; furthermore, 'public officials are often characterized as being less innovative and exercising greater cautiousness and rigidity in their actions, presenting a barrier to achieving the breakthrough in thinking required for BPR'; and then in

summary, 'adoption of BPR is likely to be slower in the public sector.' Cultural drag?

They caution (ibid: 248) to 'expect the differences between private and public organizations to have an impact on BPR,' and have identified a series of 'issues that are relevant to BPR in the public sector.' They are replicated here in Table 4.3, below and overleaf, and pay particular attention to the areas of '(1) deciding to adopt BPR; (2) setting objectives of BPR; and (3) implementing BPR,' with the 'potential implications on BPR' summarized in the last column:

Table 4.3: 'Salient Characteristics of Public Organizations and their Implications for BPR'

Topic	Proposition	Implications for BPR
Environmental Factors 1.1 Degree of market exposure (reliance on appropriations)	1.1.a. Less market exposure results in less incentive for cost reduction, operating efficiency, effective performance. 1.1.b. Less market exposure results in lower allocational efficiency (reflection of consumer preferences, proportioning supply to demand, etc.). 1.1.c. Less market exposure means lower availability of market indicators and information (prices, profits, etc.).	Increased reluctance to adopt massive changes required for BPR. Slower adoption of BPR. Increased difficulties in setting BPR objectives and benchmarking.
1.2 Legal, formal constraints (courts, legislature, hierarchy)	1.2.a. More constraints on procedures, spheres of operations (less autonomy of managers in making such choices). 1.2.b. Greater tendency towards proliferation of formal specifications and controls.	Increased difficulties in redesigning procedures to support redesigned processes. Longer time required for specification and approval of redesigned procedures.
1.3 Political influences	1.2.c. More external sources of formal influence, and greater fragmentation of those sources. 1.3.a. Greater diversity and intensity of external informal influences on decisions (bargaining, public opinion, interest group reactions). 1.3.b. Greater need for support of "constituencies" – client groups,	Increased difficulties in obtaining approval for reengineering project and redesigned processes. Increased difficulties in BPR prioritization and setting objectives of BPR Increased difficulties in obtaining approval for reengineering project and redesigned processes.

	sympathetic formal authorities, etc.	
Organization-Environment Transactions 2.1 Coerciveness ("coercive," "monopolistic," unavoidable nature of many government activities) 2.2 Breadth of impact 2.3 Public scrutiny 2.4 Unique public expectations	2.1.a. More likely that participation in consumption and financing of services will be unavoidable and mandatory (Government has unique sanctions and coercive powers.) 2.2.a. Broader impact, greater symbolic significance of actions of public administrators. (Wider scope of concern, such as "public interest.") 2.3.a. Greater public scrutiny of public officials and their actions. 2.4.a. Greater public expectations that public officials will act with more fairness, responsiveness, accountability, and honesty.	<p>Lower incentives to reengineer services.</p> <p>Increased difficulties in evaluating impact and benefits of BPR.</p> <p>Increased hesitance in adopting BPR.</p> <p>Increased difficulties in setting BPR objectives, designing process alternatives, and selection of redesign alternatives.</p>
Internal Structures and Processes 3.1 Complexity of objectives 3.2 Authority relations and the role of the administrator 3.3 Organizational performance	3.1.a. Greater multiplicity and diversity of objectives and criteria. 3.1.b. Greater vagueness and intangibility of objectives and criteria. 3.1.c. Greater tendency of goals to be conflicting (more tradeoffs). 3.2.a Less decision-making autonomy and flexibility on the part of public administrators. 3.2.b. Weaker, more fragmented authority over subordinates and lower levels. (1. Subordinates can bypass, appeal to alternative authorities. 2. Merit system constraints.) 3.2.c. Greater reluctance to delegate, more levels of review, and greater use of formal regulations. (Due to difficulties in supervision and delegation, resulting from 3.1.b.) 3.2.d. More political, expository role of top managers. 3.3.a. Greater cautiousness, rigidity. 3.3.b. More frequent turnover of top leaders due to elections and political appointments results in greater disruption	<p>Increased difficulties in setting BPR objectives, designing process alternatives, and selection of redesign alternatives.</p> <p>Reduced autonomy to drive a BPR project, which could lead to lower success or failure.</p> <p>Increased difficulties in redesigning the human resource system to support the redesigned processes.</p> <p>Insufficient level of empowerment given to staff to support the redesigned processes.</p> <p>Insufficient devotion of top management time and effort to BPR project.</p> <p>Greater barrier to achieving breakthrough in thinking required for BPR.</p> <p>Increased difficulties in sustaining a BPR effort.</p> <p>Increased difficulties in redesigning</p>

3.4 Incentives and incentive structures	of implementation of plans. 3.4.a. Greater difficulty in devising incentives for effective and efficient performance.	the human resource system to support the redesigned processes.
3.5 Personal characteristics of employees	3.4.b. Lower valuation of pecuniary incentives by employees. 3.5.a. Variations in personality traits and needs, such as higher dominance and flexibility, higher need for achievement, on part of government managers. 3.5.b. Lower work satisfaction and lower organizational commitment.	

Source: Thong, Y. L., Yap, C. S. & Seah, K. L., (2000) 'Business Process Reengineering in the public sector: The case of the housing development board in Singapore', *Journal of Management Information Systems*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Summer, pp. 249-251, Table 1

These 'differences between private and public organizations [having] an impact on BPR' might have been what Hammer and Stanton (1995b) had in mind when they stated, 'New people in new jobs also need to be managed and measured in new ways.'

Joynson and Forrester (1995: 21) are almost unrealistically dismissive when they state, 'Most business textbooks tell you that culture change can take up to five years to achieve. Unfortunately, by this time the business may no longer exist – there are world-class companies waiting to grab your customers. In fact a major change can be carried through in just two days, and the whole process should be completed in less than nine months!', yet they are simply reinforcing the urgency of the necessity for this shift. They achieve this *culture change* 'in just two days' by engaging cross-functional teams from the existing workforce to 'redesign' their working layout to improve flow and reduce inventory, etc., normally into some form of U-shaped 'cell' structure, and whilst they never use the term 'reengineering', this approach is clearly echoed by Caputo and Pelagagge (2003) with; 'Reengineering activities are especially aimed towards layout optimization mainly by resorting to a U-shaped cell-based architecture,' which they describe as 'an unusual

type of cellular manufacturing, especially adopted in just-in-time (JIT) production systems,' as (e.g.) in Toyota's TPS.

But it was never going to be easy, as Laurie Fineman, then a senior process manager in BT's Network and Services division (cited in Harvey, 1995: 42) observed, 'To some extent, the lag in creating a process management culture is a consequence of what Fineman tags the phenomenon of glacial movements in big companies.' And even though LGOs are not 'companies' per se, they are mostly 'big', so perhaps the newly *heated* environment resulting from (e.g.) Sir Peter Gershon's (2004) 'Independent Review of Public Sector Efficiency' might already be accelerating a 'glacial' retreat, revealing, ripe for erosion, the morainic deposits of outdated public sector cultures?

The geological analogy continues with Seddon's (2003: 16) statement that such changes require 'a seismic shift in the organisation's culture.'

Summing up, and accepting the considerable overlap with the previous section; analogous to Hammer's (2004) 'deep smarts' an organisation's culture could be described as its 'deep roots', or its 'huge store of tacit behaviour'. Spanyol's (2004) framework for 'assessing the extent to which there may be a problem' simply reinforces even further the criticality to success of organisational capability for change, or its 'readiness'. Issues of 'politics' and 'empowerment' stay in the frame, and although non-UK, Thong et al's (2000) study highlights some 'salient characteristics' of the potential for cultural drag in public sector organisations.

4.6 Reengineering Leadership and Communication

'When they arrived at the Red Sea, Moses said, "Here's the plan. We're going to march into the sea, the Lord will part the waters, and we'll walk through on dry land." His followers looked at the Red Sea and said to him, "You first." He went, they followed. Being out front when the risk presents itself is part of leadership. (This story also demonstrates the value of having your boss on your side, as Moses certainly did.)' (Hammer & Champy, 1993: 105).

One of the five categories of Al-Mashari and Zairi's 'key success factors' (p. 106) is that of 'Management Competence Factors,' the first of which is 'Committed and Strong Leadership.' The third is 'Management of Risk.'

Hammer and Champy emphasise this issue of risk and, although not using precisely the same language, if 'failure' is to be avoided, the need for 'Championship and Sponsorship,' the second of Al-Mashari and Zairi's 'Management Competence Factors':

'Most reengineering failures stem from breakdowns in leadership. Without strong, aggressive, committed, and knowledgeable leadership, there will be no one to persuade the barons running functional silos within the company to subordinate the interests of their functional areas to those of the processes that cross their boundaries. No one will be able to force changes in compensation and measurement systems, no one will be able to compel the human resources organization to redefine its job-rating system. There will be no one to convince the people affected by reengineering that no alternative exists and that the results will be worth the agony of the process' (p. 107).

This combination of championship, committed leadership and risk is evinced in Hall, et al. (1993: 131) who cite an example from AT&T's Pat Russo, who:

'...brought her senior managers together and made sure that they understood that implementation would proceed immediately. While at times privately fearful that the plan might not work, she publicly gave her unequivocal support for the new approach, and she made successful implementation a key measurement for her field managers.

The radical changes of the reengineering project were initially met with resistance by the managers and employees who would have to make the changes work. The clear

commitment of the leadership team was central to developing the necessary depth of commitment throughout all levels of the organization' (p. 131).

In the same paper, but another organisation (BAI – Banca di America e di Italia), Hall et al. cite the bank's CEO's clarity in understanding this requirement for 'committed, and knowledgeable leadership':

'In addition, he had a well-formed idea of the process: "My role was to act as a defender, so that daily urgencies didn't get in the way of the team's work. At the same time, I kept the tension up by calling frequently and by wandering around.'" (p. 130).

This short, final phrase represents a nonetheless powerful concept – 'MBWA', Managing By Wandering Around' – first brought to light by Peters and Austin (1986, p. 6; 1988, p. 6), but originally coined in the Hewlett Packard organisation (Packard, 1996: 155) as 'Managing By Walking Around,' and more than hinted at with Davenport's comment that, 'To really understand work practice requires detailed observation and accepting that there are usually good reasons why workers do their jobs in a particular way' (Davenport, in Hammer, et al., 2004).

Yet it requires a commitment to 'wander', as Hall et al. emphasise, 'Even with sufficient breadth and depth, a reengineering project will fail without the full commitment of senior executives' (p. 124), and Hammer (2004) reinforces this with, 'Thus, it [operational innovation] will never get off the ground without executive leadership.'

Ongaro (2004) suggests that it is 'the process owner [who] usually leads the reengineering intervention,' and Hammer and Champy's (1993: 149) 'case for action' and 'vision statement' are their two 'essential messages' that comprise their 'selling job' (p. 148) that senior managers 'must communicate to the people who work in their organizations.' But Holland & Kumar (1995) imply also the requirement for thorough preparation prior to embarking upon this company-wide articulation, 'Despite the apparent importance of leadership, however, many executives launch reengineering efforts without completing

critical homework. ... Such fundamental change needs major doses of vision and perspective as well as time and energy.' They *have to understand*.

Hammer (2004a), in his article entitled 'Deep Change,' states that, 'Many top managers are ignorant about operations and uninterested in learning more.' Perhaps they 'wander' insufficiently? He talks about the need 'to find a leader who can grasp what they have in mind and then spearhead the innovation effort,' and under the heading, 'Making it Work,' Hammer offers four suggestions:

1. Look for role models outside your industry;
2. Identify and defy a constraining assumption;
3. Make the special case into the norm;
4. Rethink critical dimensions of work.

Holt and Rowe (2000) talk of 'critical leadership,' and define it as the 'capacity to envisage how effective activity is governed by both technical challenges (the provision of expert advice, knowledge and systems), and the more nebulous, but equally crucial, value perspectives...,' adding that such 'leadership is attitudinal, rather than control oriented' (Seddon, 2003), and that such leaders 'are critical because they are problem solving.' This reinforces the point made by Walker and Black (2000) on the importance of a process-based structure that is 'consistent with cross-functional efforts': '...critical leaders use both adaptive and disruptive techniques of analysis and speculation to shift perspectives, encourage innovation and erode obstructive fiefdoms' (Holt & Rowe, 2000).

And the erosion of 'obstructive fiefdoms' appears not to be a recent issue, as Argyris (1962) said, 'Managers love empowerment in theory, but the command-and-control model is what they trust and know best.'

However, whilst hardly any of the available literature denies importance of the role of top-level, corporate or senior management leadership, sponsorship, championship, or commitment to change, etc., this neither always nor

necessarily implies a top-down approach. Beer et al. (1990) promote this message very clearly with, 'Effective corporate renewal starts at the bottom,' – Obolensky's (1994) 'paradox,' again? – and state that many companies are:

'reducing reliance on managerial authority, formal rules and procedures, and narrow divisions of work. And they are creating teams, sharing information, and delegating responsibility and accountability far down the hierarchy' (p. 158).

Under 'The Role of Top Management,' they continue this theme:

'The best senior manager leaders we studied held their subordinates responsible for starting a change process without specifying a particular approach' (p. 165).

Paper et al. (2001) say that, 'Top management has to live the new paradigm by being active participants in the change process. Top management endorsement is not enough. They have to interact with teams and management to let their people know that change is a priority and that they understand what is being done at the process level to make change happen.'

They continue:

'The biggest obstacle to execution was within the middle management ranks. Members of middle management were too used to being experts in a specific area.' ...

'Behavioral change is the most difficult type of change. It takes time and patience. Execution of a major change program therefore requires a lot of time to reap desired benefits.' ... 'If managerial attitude remains that of "command and control" and/or their behavior does not change, transformation will most likely fail.'

In his article on 'Deep Change,' Hammer (2004a) stated that the leadership '(executive) must have both the imagination and the charisma needed to drive major operational change' – 'transformational leadership' (Bass & Avolio, 1994) of change, perhaps.

Kotter (1995) was very clear about 'Why Transformation Efforts Fail,' and his first 'error' in this context was that of failing to establish a 'Great Enough

Sense of Urgency,' (p. 60), and one way to do this was by making the 'status quo seem more dangerous than launching into the unknown.' Pascale et al. (1997) repeated these same messages with an example from Sears, 'To generate a sense of urgency, (Sears' CEO) set difficult goals' (p. 134), and the need to create 'relentless discomfort with the status quo' (p. 139).

Moran and Avergun (1997: 147) stated that the 'job of the change leader is to challenge people to test, re-calibrate, and improve their attitudes, assumptions, relationships, processes and outcomes.' But they make the point that 'this type of critical questioning can take place only in a safe environment and change leaders must help create this safe environment.' A difficult 'challenge' itself, perhaps, and the change leaders themselves might need help or support from elsewhere.

In a report on 'HR's role in re-engineering at Leicester Royal Infirmary,' Ashton (2002) confirmed that, 'Clinical and executive management leadership at the hospital were crucial to initiate, sustain and achieve process re-engineering. The key here was visible and tacit support of different power groups, in addition to leaders explaining to staff why the changes were being undertaken and how they improved patient care in practice.'

These relatively few examples from the leadership of (and) change literature all agree that leadership itself, in its many forms, is critical to success, and whatever the views of various writers on BPR itself, per se, none appear to claim that leadership is not critical to its success. What will be interesting, and perhaps more especially in the light of Hammer and Stanton's (1995: 85-99) 'Self-Assessment Diagnostic,' and Kettinger et al's (1997: 71-73) 'Project Radicalness Planning Worksheet,' is the degree to which the 'leadership' (or lack of it) within the two collaborating LGOs will have affected the outcomes of their respective reengineering efforts.

In summary, and as previously stated – 'BPR in the Early 1990s' – committed leadership, and effective and continuous communication, are critical to the success of BPR initiatives. Al-Mashari and Zairi (1999) talk of 'committed and

strong leadership' and 'championship and sponsorship', alongside 'effective communication' and 'People involvement, training and education'. The messages are quite simple, and they align with Kotter's (1996/2006) steps 3, 4 and 5:

3. Create a Vision
4. Communicate the Vision
5. Empower Others to Act on the Vision

Hammer's (2004a) accusation of 'ignorant' and 'uninterested' top managers, and Paper et al's (2001) 'biggest obstacle' being 'middle management', only reinforce Holt and Rowe's (2000) need for that 'critical leadership' at all levels. Allied with the repeated need for a 'sense of urgency' (Kotter, 1995; Pascale, et al., 1997), leadership and communication remain 'crucial' (Ashton, 2002) to successful change.

4.7 Public Sector Context

'In response to a relentless pace of change, many in the public sector are looking to business improvement/transformation philosophies and approaches developed in the private sector to see if they can be applied within the public sector. Such an approach is business process reengineering (BPR).'

(McAdam & Mitchell, 1998)

Five years on, this 'relentless pace of change' is reflected also in the following passage from Zeppou and Sotirakou (2003):

'Managers in the public sector are under constant pressure to improve the performance within their organisations. They are expected to satisfy the various stakeholders, to increase efficiency, effectiveness and quality, to achieve organisational goals and results and to establish a culture of continuous improvement, change and distinct service orientation. To fulfil these difficult and complex roles, public managers turn to specific approaches practiced in the private sector, such as total quality management (TQM), business process reengineering (BPR), strategic management, benchmarking etc.'

It is one of these 'specific approaches,' BPR, to which the two collaborating LGOs have turned as part of their change management strategies and that is also at the core of this study. Its purpose is reinforced by Zeppou and Sotirakou (2004), who also claim that:

'The amount of research devoted to strategic management, TQM, BPR, etc. in the public sector, continues to lag significantly behind comparable studies of the private sector and is characterised by definitional inconsistencies, which demonstrate that the maturity and acceptance of these practices is far greater in the private sector.'

And later, citing a range of authors, Sotirakou and Zeppou reflect on a:

'...public sector metamorphosis from a rigid and congested bureaucracy to a modern and flexible organization [that] defines the agenda of Modernization and administrative reforms...';

continuing:

'In the past decade governments around the world have enthusiastically adopted the idea of reinventing government, which implies a shift away from the traditional bureaucratic management of public service towards a more entrepreneurial one, dubbed new public management (NPM).'

They state that this 'modernization is tantamount to creating a "learning public administration",' but whether their study of a 'Greek public organization' is generalisable to the UK is open to question. Either way, it is this 'lag' in the public sector, against the greater 'maturity and acceptance' in the private sector that is more pertinent to the question of whether BPR is 'alive and well' in these specific LGOs under investigation.

A number of themes are already apparent here:

- the 'relentless pace of change';
- 'constant pressure to improve (the) performance';
- 'increased efficiency, effectiveness and quality';

- a culture of 'continuous improvement';
- a 'lag' in the rate of 'acceptance';
- a 'metamorphosis' to a 'modern and flexible organization';
- 'reinventing government';
- the emergence of 'new public management' (NPM);
- and of course, business process reengineering (BPR).

In the opening chapter of their book, 'Reinventing Government,' Osborne and Gaebler (1993: 2) cited the American people as demanding the same things – 'in election after election and on issue after issue, more performance for less money' – applying that 'constant pressure to improve (the) performance.' And then they talk of a sign of 'hope':

'Slowly, quietly, far from the public spotlight, new kinds of public institutions are emerging. They are lean, decentralized, and innovative. They are flexible, adaptable, quick to learn new ways when conditions change. They use competition, customer choice, and other nonbureaucratic mechanisms to get things done as creatively and effectively as possible. And they are our future.'

And although 'lean' in this context is different from that discussed elsewhere, they could equally have been writing about the UK, as in 1998 Keen and Scase also wrote:

'Local government has experienced an unprecedented rate of change during the 1980s and 1990s, which has been precipitated mainly, but not exclusively, by the policies of successive Conservative governments' (p. 1).

'Not exclusively', because in the decade since 1997 the government has been Labour, or at least, 'New Labour,' and it was by this government, under then Prime Minister Tony Blair, that Sir Peter Gershon, CBE, was asked in August 2003 to undertake a 'Review of Public Sector Efficiency,' which he presented in July 2004.

Among his findings, he reported that: 'auditable and transparent efficiency gains of over £20 billion in 2007-08 across the public sector [had] been

identified and agreed. Over 60 per cent of these are directly cash releasing' (£12 billion), and that, 'a gross reduction of over 84,000 posts in the Civil Service and military personnel in administrative and support roles' would result. However, we are now past the fiscal year when we should be able to see, and judge, whether any of those 'auditable and transparent efficiency gains' have been made within the two collaborating LGOs.

Albeit a study in Italy, Ongaro (2004) also raises other relevant questions in the area of process management in the public sector:

1. Is process management always possible?
2. What are the enabling factors for process management in the public sector?
3. And, in particular, how can it be related to public sector management reforms carried on at central level?

Ongaro (ibid) comments that:

'The wave of managerial reforms in the public sector since the beginning of the 1980s has, to a large extent, produced the overcoming of the "traditional" self-orientation of bureaucratic systems. The re-orientation of public administrations to end-users conceived as customers (customer-orientation) is seen as a crucial component of the "legitimation" of the public sector in society.'

and observes also:

'Process management does not entail the absence of traditional hierarchical relations (an evolution that might be, in many respects, impossible in the public sector)' (ibid).

As we have seen and discussed elsewhere, it is not the 'absence' of a 'traditional hierarchy' that is the issue, but more its cultural 'reorientation', or even inversion.

Nearer to home, and more recently, Pederson and Hartley (2008) refer specifically to 'reengineering' in their article on the 'changing context of public sector leadership and management':

'Both in Denmark and in the UK, the focus on results and outputs has paved the way for a number of management and steering technologies such as quality management, the balanced scorecard and other elements of performance-based management. Central government and local organizations in the two countries have introduced and promoted tools and techniques such as business process re-engineering, process mapping, lean thinking, six sigma processes and benchmarking.'

'Lean thinking' in this context is that implied previously (e.g. Krafcik, 1988) in terms of systems thinking. In discussing the links between ('soft') systems thinking and the 'world of public affairs,' Mingers (2000: 750) comments that, 'We still have, in the United Kingdom, major problems of poverty, inequality, health, and education, and the current government recognizes how vital systems thinking is with its slogan of "joined-up government",' – what Pollitt (2003: 67) refers to as 'JUG' – although Seddon (2008: 133) argues that the extent of that joined-upness and UK plc's commitment to, or even understanding of, systems thinking, is 'failing those who need care':

'The impact of the reform regime has had on social care is nothing short of shocking.'

He said they ('as consultants'):

'...were struck by the enormity of the regulations burdening the service... The controls imposed by the regime are, as with other services, driving enormous waste into the system. Care is poor and costs are high.'

(NB The term 'joined-up government' was actually called 'effective joint working' in 'The Victoria Cimbíé Inquiry' (Laming, 2003: Rec. 14, p. 373).

'Joined-up' was also coined in a BBC News report – 'Joined-up drive to help children' – later that same year (10th July):

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/3055363.stm>

And, although strictly a 'health care' study, McAdam and Corrigan's (2001) investigation identified:

'...a number of unique characteristics of public health organisations which have a bearing on the application of BPR in a public sector organisation. It was found that the application of BPR in a professionalized organisation, such as the one examined, presents special issues for the introduction of a management technique which proposes to bring about radical change. Professional autonomy and established hierarchies may be at stake. Consequently, considerable political expediency can take place. Furthermore the empowerment of staff to bring about such changes is important.'

LGOs have *traditionally* been founded on these *professionals*, though they have been naturally organised vertically into functional hierarchies, as opposed to horizontally into process 'streams.'

In a study of the 'public sector' in the US, Gullidge and Sommer (2002) echo the problem this point creates with, '(However) process management does not work very well when overlaid on a hierarchical command and control management structure,' and they cite Champy (1995/96) in that, 'the shift to process management requires a restructuring (i.e. a reengineering) of management,' all of which continues to emphasise the need for attitudinal and behavioural changes within the senior echelons of the public sector – those 'established hierarchies.'

More positively, perhaps, MacIntosh's (2003) article – 'BPR: alive and well in the public sector' – almost by itself confirms the prime mover of this research proposal, and whilst he concludes that 'public sector BPR projects can face greater restrictions in terms of providing resources for improvements, even in circumstances where there is evidence that an investment would be justified,' he nonetheless observes that, 'the concept of BPR appears to appeal to public sector organisations.' This 'appeal', however, is unlikely to be sufficient. *Understanding* 'appears' to be what is required (initially, at least; i.e. pre-reengineering), along with determination and real commitment from those senior echelons of the hierarchy.

He concludes by stating that 'BPR projects can succeed in the public sector and that while academic interest in BPR is fading, the public sector's interest

may persist for some time to come.' That 'public sector interest' is clearly evident, and not 'fading', within the UK.

In a study of the UK police force Greasley (2004) states that in public sector organisations 'such as the police there will be a need to reconcile the multiple objectives of stakeholders such as the government, employees and victims of crime,' and whereas Attaran and Attaran (2004) claim that Hammer and Champy (2001) have sought to 'reinvigorate the topic for the new millennium,' and that their 'clear revision of their famous book ... once again brings process improvement to the forefront of business management consciousness,' Greasley (ibid) assists by offering a 'scoring system developed to prioritise [such] processes for improvement,' based on their 'impact' on critical success factors (CSF) and the 'extent of change required' to the process; see Fig's 4.14, below, and 4.15, overleaf:

Fig. 4.14: Greasley's (2004) 'Impact (external perspective) marking guide'

Mark	Impact (external perspective) marking guide
0	This individual process has minimal or no effect on the individual CSF
1	This individual process is dependant on another process, in order for it to have an effect on this CSF
2	This individual process has a marked influence on this CSF
3	The individual process has substantial impact on whether another process can maximise its beneficial effects on this CSF
4	The individual process has substantial influence on this CSF
5	The individual process is a critical part of being able to achieve the individual CSF

Source: Greasley, A., (2004) 'Process improvement within a HR division at a UK police force', *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 230-240,

Table II

Fig. 4.15: Greasley's (2004) 'Innovation (internal perspective) marking guide'

Mark	Innovation (internal perspective) marking guide
0	This process cannot be improved for this CSF
1	This process achieves its objective but could be improved even further
2	This process achieves its objective but could be improved by review of both automation and process improvement
3	This process does not effectively achieve all its objectives and could be improved by review of both automation and process improvement
4	The process exists and functions but need substantial alteration to meet its objectives
5	The process either does not exist or only partially exists and fails to meet any objectives

Source: Greasley, A., (2004) 'Process improvement within a HR division at a UK police force', *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 230-240, Table III

With possibly no, or only modest modification, this could potentially be useful to LGOs. Equally, however, so perhaps more critically, its two 'perspectives' could just as effectively be covered by Kettinger et al's (1997) 'Factors' no. 1, 3, and 6 (see Fig. 4.6), with its similar '1 to 5' rating scale.

Hughes et al. (2006: 86), in researching e-government in Ireland, concluded that 'initiatives that fit within the evolutionary classification [see also 'Degrees' of BPR and 'project Radicalness', 4.2, p. 90,,,) can be achieved in a timely and successful manner.' Their case also illustrates that, 'more revolutionary initiatives are achievable but that the development of these initiatives beyond basic services requires sophisticated business network[s] and BPR.'

They end by saying that:

'...an important area for further research is to investigate the unique nature of processes within the public sector so that IS platforms can be developed that accommodate less efficient processes rather than platforms that require unobtainable process redesign.'

This somewhat downbeat steer to future researchers appears to imply that because (e.g.) LGOs are 'less efficient,' one should set the bar lower for BPR/ Process Redesign initiatives, a suggestion Sir Peter Gershon might disagree with. That certainly does not appear to have been the case with the London Borough Council (LBC) visited. Perhaps the 'process' should be 'redesigned' *before* the 'platforms' are 'developed'? Then 'pull' the IT (Seddon, 2007a)?

Becker et al. (2006), investigating 'e-government-indicated business process reengineering (BPR) projects in public administrations,' mention the need for the 'introduction of a process manager' in the same way that Hammer and Champy (1993: 102) mentioned the '*process owner*', and (p. 103) the '*reengineering czar*'. This was underpinned by the 'concept of total specialist processing, already very familiar in business circles,' the aim being to 'eliminate the functional division of processing activities, and to facilitate processing a transaction through to completion,' what Seddon (2008: 35) calls to 'study the flow of work: how everything works from end-to-end from [e.g.] the claimant's point of view.' Whilst this echoes Gullede and Sommer's (2002) concern that 'process management does not work very well when overlaid on a hierarchical command and control management structure,' a current example of this 'business circle' *familiarity* was to be found in BT (BTtoday, 2007: 23) where their 'Trouble-to-resolve (T2R)' process is defined in this same 'end-to-end' way, as:

'...from problem identification to resolution. This begins when a customer has told BT they are not happy with a product or service, or when BT has proactively spotted a problem. It ends when that problem has been resolved and the customer is satisfied' (p. 23).

However, even though this organisation's heritage was firmly in the 'public sector' – The GPO/Post Office Telephones; Post Office Telecommunications – until the early 1980s, British Telecommunications plc (British Telecom; BT) has been very firmly 'private sector' since November 1984*, hinting again that this might have been the means by which it began to overcome any 'lag' in the rate of 'acceptance' of its 're-orientation'?

(* <http://www.btplc.com/Thegroup/BTsHistory/Privatisationinfosheetissue2.pdf>).

Whatever the reason, it was the election of the Thatcher administration in 1979 that brought with it the 'firm commitment to reduce waste and bureaucracy in order to improve efficiency' (ibid) – precursoring the Gershon initiative by 25 years – and resulting subsequently in the Telecommunications Act 1984 and a new organisation that ultimately provided the impetus towards BT's process-based 're-orientation' throughout the first half of the 1990s.

LGOs, whilst not being 'privatised' as such, have nonetheless had to similarly 're-orientate' themselves and 'look for ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their management and service delivery systems' (Keen & Scase, 1998: 4), and traditional management systems 'based on hierarchical, and relatively centralized, control systems, are seen as giving way to 'arm's length' negotiated relationships between groups of managers' (ibid: 7). For example, one such arm's-length management organisation (ALMO) was created within the collaborating LGO, CityC, when (what I will call) 'City Homes' was created from the then Housing Division of the City Council. It is this change in 'relationships' that Osborne and Gaebler (1993: 166) – the same year as the publication of Hammer and Champy's original text – called 'Customer-Driven Government: Meeting the Needs of the Customer, Not the Bureaucracy,' and introduced the concept of 'Listening to the Voice of the Customer' (ibid: 177). Whilst never specifically mentioning 'processes,' 'redesign' or 'reengineering,' they nonetheless conclude with:

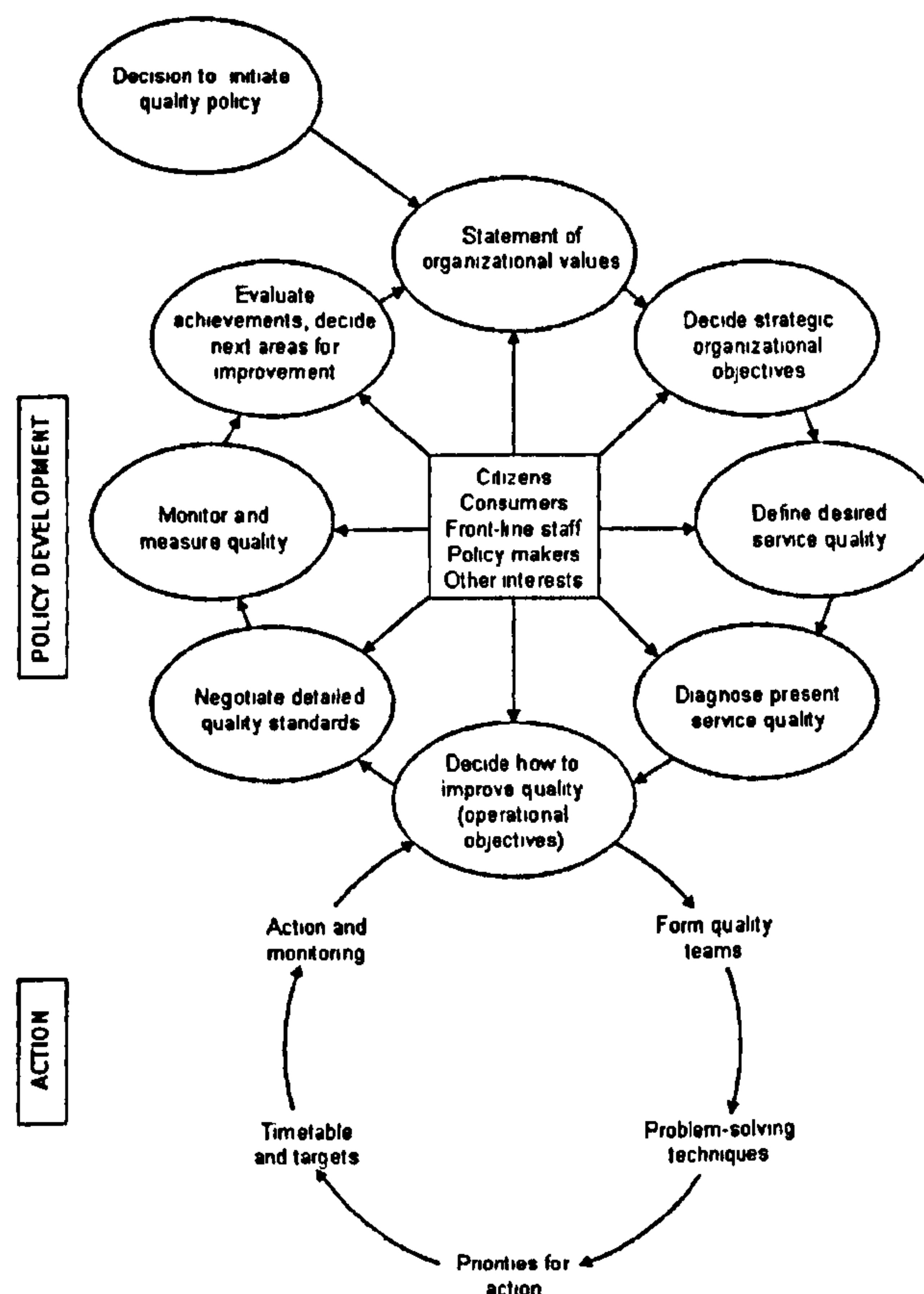
'Our governments are in deep trouble today. In government after government and public system after public system, reinvention is the only option left' (p. 331).

'Only option' or not, and 'alive and well' or not, it is still very much on the agenda.

'Reinvention' was not the 'only option' being put forward by Gaster (1995; cited again in Gaster & Squires, 2003), who developed a 'model for service

quality' (below, Fig. 4.16) in order to 'provide a tool for systematic analysis of what is actually happening in any one organization or service.'

Fig. 4.16: A model for service quality



Source Gaster & Squires (2003), p. 40, Fig. 3.1

This was in response to what they saw as various 'exhortations ... since the early 1990s' for the public sector to 'adopt particular quality systems' (Gaster & Squires, 2003: 3). The debate, however, appears to be moving away from 'systematic analysis' based on a 'classic 'policy-implementation' cycle' (ibid: 41), and towards 'systemic analysis' (Jackson, et al., 2007; Seddon, 2008) where public (and private) sector organisations are viewed end-to-end as 'systems'.

Gaster and Squires (2003: 16) set the context for this drive for improved service quality – calling it the 'modernization agenda'* – as driven by central government, although for 'different political reasons', with:

'The Conservative governments of the 1980s and early 1990s, motivated by the desire to 'roll back the state', mainly used methods to change the *structure* of the public sector and spend less on it. These methods included the introduction of the contract culture** (Compulsory Competitive Tendering, or 'CCT', in local government), some privatization (prisons**), some devolution (schools) and the 'internal market' (health). Since 1997 and the election of a Labour government for the first time since 1979, the focus on the public sector has intensified, with a much greater concern for 'quality' and 'results' and with some 'extra' spending on health and education. Labour has apparently been more interested in the *process* of service delivery, introducing policies of 'Best Value' and neighbourhood management in local government, and emphasizing the need for more consumer choice and 'joined-up' services. Taken together, these measures were advertised as being part of the Labour Government's 'modernization' agenda.'

(* See also Berlaymont, 2007: 'Tony Blair arrived strong and with a modernising agenda that seemed to put Europe at the heart of Britain as much as the other way round'; and Maer, 2005: 'The Modernisation Committee was established in May 1997 with a remit to "consider how the practices and procedures of the House should be modernised".')

(** This 'contract culture' was also a keystone of BT's 'privatization' in 1984, by the same Conservative government.)

Seddon firmly challenges Gaster and Squires' observation that we should use 'methods to change the *structure* of the public sector' in order to 'spend less on it.' He argues (2007a) that 'structure is subordinate to process,' and that more 'money' would be 'saved' if 'the *process* of service delivery' were viewed that way.

If ('New') Labour were 'interested in the *process* of service delivery' (Gaster & Squires' emphasis in both cases), their record for translating that interest into real and 'cashable' improvement is coming under greater scrutiny – perhaps culminating in the 'massive 17.6% swing from Labour'*** in the Crewe and Nantwich by-election on May 22nd 2008 – from the academic world and the press (Seddon, 2008; Caulkin, 2008; Davis, 2008, overleaf), for both its 'joined-upedness' and the success of its 'Best Value' and other policies.

(*** Source: <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/pressass/20080523/tuk-cameron-hails-end-of-new-labour-6323e80.html> – accessed 23 May, 2008)

These are indications that this research is possibly more relevant now, in late 2008, than it was when it was first proposed four years ago in October 2004, and was perhaps most clearly evinced by comments from Evan Davis, the BBC's economics editor, when reporting on his own interview with Sir Peter Gershon on the Radio 4 'Today' programme (Davis, 2008), when he said (to Carolyn Quinn):

'You might remember the National Audit Office said, 'We don't really think the numbers that are being attached to all the savings that are made, are, necessarily terribly accurate...' I think the jury's out, and the National Audit Office I think sometimes found that things that looked like savings, you know we're cutting aircraft carriers or cutting things from the Ministry of Defence for example were, were really just about, *cutting* things rather than savings or making things more efficient, and one of the things Sir Peter was saying was really that, this is the, just the beginning. Over the next, three years the, the targets are far more ambitious, they want *cashable* savings, efficiency savings, and they need them because the public finances are in a, pretty messy state, and if they're going to achieve all that over the next few years well they, they're going to have to do a lot more radical surgery to public sector activities. They're going to have to reengineer things, they're going to have to think about whole processes, and so really the, the message of the last three Gershon years is, it's only just begun and this is going to be a huge theme in the public sector.'

(BBC/Radio 4 'Today', 19th March, 2008, 07.50)

To ensure this point is not lost, the key phrases reinforcing this ongoing need within the public sector and local government were:

- 'Sir Peter was saying ... really that, this is ... just the beginning.'
- 'Over the next, three years* the, the targets are far more ambitious, they want *cashable* savings, efficiency savings';
- 'public finances are in a, pretty messy state';
- 'over the next few years well they, they're going to have to do a lot more radical surgery to public sector activities';

- 'They're going to have to reengineer things, they're going to have to think about whole processes.'

(* 2008-2011)

His comment – 'radical surgery to public sector activities' – is interesting in that he chose the word 'activities', rather than 'services' (since 'surgery' still *implies* 'cutting things'), and also because it suggests the point in his final sentence on thinking 'about whole processes' implies just that. It's what Seddon (2007) calls this 'thinking thing', and the 'thinking' will need to be about those 'savings, or making things more efficient.' As Davis said:

'..it's only just begun and this is going to be a huge theme in the public sector.'

The 'hugeness' of this 'theme', and possibly also its urgency, is reinforced by Seddon's opening paragraph in his 2008 book – *Systems Thinking in the Public Sector: the failure of the reform regime... and a manifesto for a better way* – as he states:

'The purpose of this book is to illustrate how 'bureaucracy and red tape' have driven public services in the wrong direction. The cost is not just the cost of the bureaucracy itself; there is an additional cost because the changes being mandated by that bureaucracy are the wrong things to do. The bureaucracy has made services worse, and public sector morale has been sapped' (Seddon, 2008b: iv).

This 'theme', as we have seen from the literature, is what Deming (1986: 153) suggested could take 'ten years' to effectively implement (e.g. in that instance his '14 points for quality'). Deming was possibly sowing the seeds for its own failure when more rapid solutions were required by those senior managers carrying corporate responsibility for major improvements, and apparently this is equally relevant in the public sector today. In terms of BPR, specifically, Hammer and Stanton again brought this speed issue clearly to the fore with:

'You must reengineer quickly. If you can't show some tangible results within a year, you will lose the support and momentum necessary to make the effort successful. ...

Stay focused and narrow the scope if necessary in order to get results fast' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995: 30).

These rapid improvements are clearly what Davis (above), and Gershon (presumably) was saying were needed, but another 'Davis' (1993: 51; citing Larry Skinner of Texas Instruments) differed slightly with his claim that 'Reengineering projects often take a year or more in the formulation phase and another 12 to 24 months to implement' – implying a 1- to 3-year overall timescale. This suggests that Hammer and Champy's 'year' might be too short, whilst Deming's 'ten years' could be unnecessarily (or at least undesirably) long. Sirkin and Stalk (1990: 26-31) referred to this short-termism, in that 'many managers itch to short-circuit the process,' resulting in 'unsatisfactory results ... because the organization does not truly understand its problems or the processes needed to resolve them.' However, Sir Peter Gershon, in that same interview (above), aligned himself with Deming:

'I've always taken the view that really, to have sustained improvement in public sector efficiency you need something like a 10-year programme.'

Kane's (1986: 32) point that 'success is long-term' hints at those same tensions inherent within the problem – those of timescale – when most senior management careers are rarely 'long-term' in many organizations, although in the UK public sector this might not be the case. Albitz (2006) hinted at this urgency issue with, 'as you know, we Americans need something new each month,' what Gaster and Squires perhaps refer to as 'management fashions' that 'come and go,' yet this need for managers to 'espouse' these new 'fashions' in the interests of 'efficiency and economy' can be in conflict with 'other values, such as sensitivity, flexibility and responsiveness' (ibid: 49). And they emphasise:

'Managers and professionals are extremely important – vital – to the successful introduction of policies to improve service quality. If they are not on board, acting as change leaders and change agents, it is likely that the policies will make no progress and have no impact.'

These 'change leaders and change agents are what Becker et al. (2006) called the 'process manager', and Hammer and Champy (1993: 102) called their *'reengineering czar'*.

When Davis questioned Gershon on the issue of his name having now become a 'verb' in the English language (at least within the public sector), he modestly responded that it was a, 'rational management exercise/thing,' yet that same 'rational management', normally a key 'driving force' for change (Lewin, 1951), might not be sufficient to bring about the necessary and parallel 'cultural change.'

Pollitt (2003: 70/71) provides a health warning against JUG's potential for throwing 'the baby out with the bath water,' as he says there are benefits 'associated with the more traditional approaches to organizing by organizational 'silo':

'Membership of, and loyalty to, a single organization and its activities has often provided a powerful focus for adhesion among public servants at all levels. Strong personal identification with more abstract cross-cutting objectives, or with a temporary multi-organizational team, may be more difficult to cultivate.'

Pollitt himself might be a victim of his own resistance to cultural change because, 'difficult' or not, it is the 'adhesion' to those 'silos' that could be the first to go if the public sector is to successfully move towards organisations based on processes and systems. Perhaps more importantly, though, in a reengineered systems-based organisation, it might not even need the 'bath'.

More recently Seddon (2008b) has focused on public sector reform and specifically on a 'systems thinking' approach, having moved away from 'lean* thinking' because of its – in his view – primary relevance to manufacturing (e.g. Toyota's TPS).

(* Arnheiter and Maleyeff (2005) explain that 'Lean production was derived from the need to increase product flow velocity through the elimination of all non-value-added activities.')

It is also worth noting that, as a concept, 'Lean' does not receive universal acclaim. In his article 'The Darker Side of Lean', Mehri (2006: 24) challenges the Womack, Jones and Roos (1990: 225) view that:

'Lean production is a superior way for humans to make things. It provides better products in wider variety at lower cost. Equally important, it provides more challenging and fulfilling work for employees at every level, from the factory to headquarters.'

He states that the 'Japanese work system had an entirely different effect than the idyllic life portrayed in *The Machine that Changed the World*,' that Parker and Slaughter (1988) defined lean work as "management by stress," and that 'more recent scholars claim that "lean work" is a regression to the old practices of Taylorism' (Mehri, *ibid*).

Mehri's work is not easy to dismiss, as his earlier book (2005), he states, was based on his 'years as a covert participant observer,' and he claims that there is a different 'theory of work' at Toyota, one that 'holds that a "culture of rules" determines what goes on in the Japanese workplace,' and he criticises Womack et al's book (and others like it) for just looking 'at the numbers without any regard to the human costs of lean work implementation,' stating that there was 'not a single quote from the people who work within the system: the employees who dedicate their lives to hard work on the line and in the office.' He concludes later that the TPS is 'certainly lean, but it is also unhealthy and dangerous.'

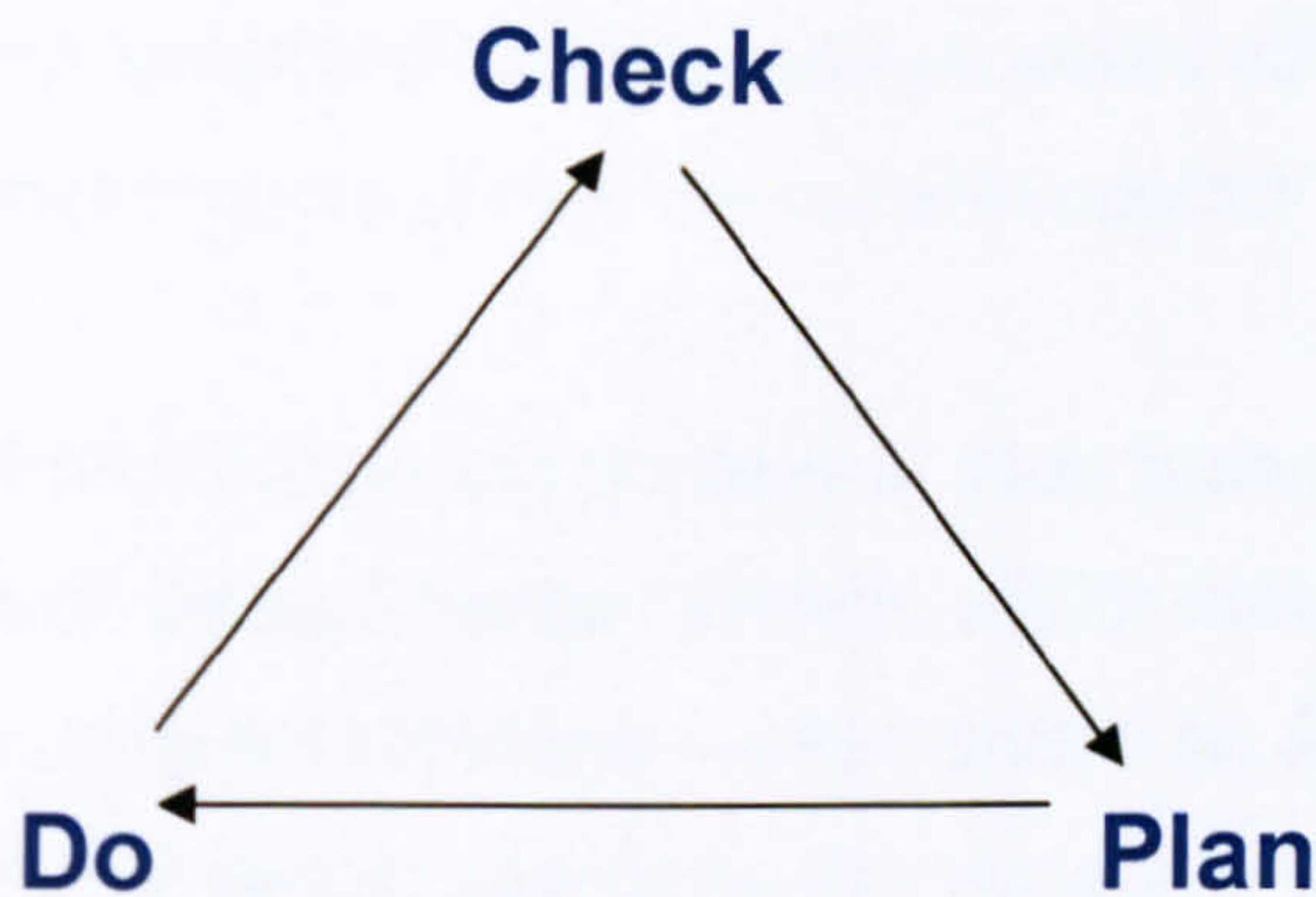
Fishman (2007), however, in his article about Toyota's Georgetown (Kentucky) factory, appears to counter this indictment with observations such as, 'Continuous improvement is not some add-on to the real work,' ... 'It is what he [Howard Artrip, an assembly area manager] comes to the factory for every day thinking about. It isn't exhausting, it's exhilarating.' Fishman makes an allusion to Seddon's 'a better way to make the work work' approach with, 'It [Toyota] is always looking to improve the process by which it improves all other processes,' and he cites former Toyota manufacturing employee John

Shook; "Once you realize that it's the process itself – that you're not seeking a plateau – you can relax. Doing the task and doing the task better become one and the same thing. This is what it means to come to work" – countering Mehri's 'unhealthy and dangerous,' perhaps?

However, Seddon was initially a staunch advocate of 'Lean,' especially in its emerging applicability to service organisations, particularly LGOs, and his approach is to think of the organisation as a 'system,' and to start with Deming's 'Check' in order to understand the system's 'purpose'; Fig. 4.17:

Fig. 4.17: Seddon's model for 'Check'

The place to start is check:



Source: Seddon, 2007a

And Nwabueze's (2002) comment on 'BPR in the NHS,' that, 'Data should be captured only once at their source,' is totally in line with Seddon's (2003: 61) view that front-line people should 'obtain clean information.' He says that the 'starting place with the systems approach is to look outside-in, to know how your organisation is perceived by your customers,' and to ask what are the 'types and frequency of demands that customers place on the system?' This, he continues, leads on to 'Purpose,' the reason why the 'system' (or process) exists at all – the customer's 'purpose.' As Hammer and Stanton (1995) said, 'Those who think the purpose of their work is to please the boss, or to perform the same task over and over again, have little in common with those whose first concern is creating value for the customer and taking responsibility for the performance of an entire process.'

Champy (1996: 121 & 123) says that we must 'not just ask the usual questions about how we can do this operation better, but whether we should be doing it at all' because occasionally there is the need to 'rethink our purpose.'

Seddon's (2003) second book was called 'Freedom from Command & Control', and Champy (1996: 10) echoes this with, 'the whole tool kit of command-and-control management techniques no longer work,' and Attaran (2000) also says that the 'old ways of managing the organization, the vertical organization, and command-and-control techniques no longer work.' The waste that could be incurred if this cultural managerial shift is not made and maintained is exemplified by Paper et al's (2001) experience with Honeywell, where they observed that an 'unlimited training budget would still be wasted if trainees return to a work environment of "command and control".'

Whilst Champy (ibid) said that 'change will go deeper than technique,' and Hammer (2004) also wrote of 'Deep Change,' (White, 2000) stated that 'complex problems require complex solutions – often stated as Ashby's (1965) law of requisite variety that only variety can deal with variety' – 'all the stakeholders and institutions, i.e. the "whole system" affected by uncertainty, need to be involved in the change process.' This again links to Seddon (2002: 22) with, 'it is the whole system that needs to change if real advances in service and quality are to be made,' and (2003: 19) – on the subject of 'variety' (or variation in demand) – 'Ohno's solution to the variety problem was to put variety in the line.' The 'deep' theme (or 'Big'; Fineman, cited in Harvey, 1996: 42), along with 'Lean' thinking, is continued with Belmiro, et al. (2000: 1187) in, 'However, a big change occurred within the company [company D] when they began to make-to-order instead of making-to stock' with links to 'Lean' (Krafcik, 1988, Womack, et al., 1991). As Champy (1996: 9) emphasised, 'we must create change – big change – and fast.'

Paper et al. (2001) provide further evidence of a shift to 'lean,' this time within Honeywell, with, '(The) flow scheme was designed to facilitate a "pull" system

that is triggered by customer orders,' in line with Toyota's TPS, and they say that it is 'important for employees to understand that optimization of the whole system is the goal, not individual departments or subsystems.'

In addition to ('freedom from') command and control (C&C), White (2000) considers also issues of structure and leadership with:

'The authority wanted to control change in a top-down fashion through fear of losing control to the public. A top-down approach to change is usually effective when operating in a stable environment. But in a turbulent environment the change is so widespread that it routes round any autonomy. Only bottom-up change was seen to be effective for the authority in the case study. By managing bottom-up, there is an acknowledgement of the variety that exists in the system.'

And this is not new, as Emery and Trist (1965: 28/29) pointed out, 'turbulent fields demand some overall form of organization that is essentially different from the hierarchical structured forms to which we are accustomed.' Champy (1996: 113) again: 'It's crucial that we move much of management's command-and-control function to the front lines when we redesign and reassemble tasks.'

On the issue of 'fundamental rethinking,' Belmiro et al. (2000: 1197) say that, 'Many have asked what exactly Hammer and his followers meant by, for example, the expression 'starting from scratch.'" And Seddon (2007a) recommends that we ask customers – and continue to re-ask, through 'Check' – what a successful outcome of their visit or transaction would 'look like,' and continuously refine or redesign processes (through 'Plan' and 'Do*') to suit that consensus. The first time you do this is likely to result in BPR-like transformation of 'method' (ibid), but thereafter it's kaizen, or somewhere in between.

(* NB These derive from Deming's 'Plan – Do – Check – Act' cycle, itself derived from Shewhart's (1939: 45) 'cycle', articulated in Deming's (1986: 88) 'Out of the Crisis' as 'Plan – Carry out – Observe – Study', Fig. 5. Although

popularised as the 'Deming Cycle', Deming always referred to it as the 'Shewhart Cycle'.)

Other similarities show Belmiro, et al. (ibid) claiming that the 're-engineering flag is all about revolutionising the way the work is done, beginning with migration from a functional to a business process structure' – what Seddon (2003) refers to as 'the way the work works.'

Zucchi and Edwards (2000: 214) say that:

'...managers in the re-engineered organisation believe that their role has changed. In particular, they feel they now have to focus more on process performance-related measurements and meeting assigned targets, and that they now tend to be more accountable, visible and responsible. The managers believe they have to delegate more, and are most likely to perceive their role as that of a facilitator, rather than, for example, "command and control" one.'

Whilst this is clearly in line with Seddon's view in terms of roles and the 'Command & Control' issue, there could also be an implication that, prior to *being* 're-engineered,' these managers might have been unaccountable, not particularly 'visible,' and not 'responsible' for any 'targets', none of which are exclusively *reengineering* issues.

Seddon is also vocal on the currently controversial issue (at least in the public sector) of target-setting – which he generally opposes – and individual 'measures.' For example, he states (2003: 61/62) that instead of 'measures being used to command and control, the purpose of measures is to develop knowledge through action on the system' (or process), and that the 'test of a good measure [is]: does this help in understanding and improving performance?' He – as was Deming (1986)* – against measures targeting 'people', and goes on: 'Measures derived from the command and control philosophy do not pass this test. Systems measures do.' Whereas, in apparent opposition, Johnston et al's (2001) article, 'Target setting for evolutionary and revolutionary process change,' says quite clearly that, 'radical change strategies emphasise individual performance so the

performance measurement system "should measure the location of specific results and individual employee performance", (citing Hall, et al., 1993: 129). However, they also conclude that, 'the benefits of adopting a particular change strategy are being constrained. Many managers adopting radical change strategies are adopting targets based on past performance and this may make it more difficult for them to achieve the desired revolutionary step-change in performance,' suggesting alignment with Seddon's view that targets are more constraining than 'liberating'.

(* See also: <http://maaw.info/DemingsRedbeads.htm>, and Neave, 1990: pp. 101-108, 'The Experiment on Red Beads', and Deming (1986/1991, pp. 346 & 459.)

So whilst Seddon is by no means an advocate nor (by his own assertion) a practitioner of BPR, as can also be seen elsewhere, his basic philosophies and approach – save his emphasis on the process of 'Check' and the 'variety' in demand – are basically in line with quintessential BPR principles with his focus on: customers' desired outcomes; understanding what comes *in* to a 'system' (process) at the front end, in the form of 'Type' and 'Frequency' (T & F) of 'Demand'; and in working primarily on the 'system' (process) itself, and not *on the people* within it.

(NB Further discussion of 'John Seddon & BPR' is continued in Appendix 6)

4.8 Public Sector Summary and Overall Research Focus

The dearth of, and therefore need for, further research into BPR's application within the UK public sector, and specifically local government organisations (LGOs), is only reinforced by the above; for example Zeppou and Sotirakou (2004) and Hughes et al. (2006: 86), respectively:

'The amount of research devoted to strategic management, TQM, BPR, etc. in the public sector, continues to lag significantly behind comparable studies of the private sector.'

'...an important area for further research is to investigate the unique nature of processes within the public sector.'

Also, in line with the remaining (and increasing; Davis, 2008) need for LGOs to deliver on the Gershon (2004) requirements are the observations of others on the need for continuing public sector reform, e.g:

- the 'shift away from the traditional bureaucratic management of public service' (Zeppou and Sotirakou, 2004).
- '...new kinds of public institutions are emerging. They are lean, decentralized, and innovative' (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993: 2).
- 're-orientation of public administrations to end-users conceived as customers' (Ongaro, 2004).

Ongaro (2004) also strengthens the need for this specific research when he poses the questions:

1. Is process management always possible?
2. What are the enabling factors for process management in the public sector?

However, McAdam and Corrigan (2001) offer one health warning on the risks associated with attempting such radical change in organisations used to operating in hierarchical and functional 'silos':

'Professional autonomy and established hierarchies may be at stake. Consequently, considerable political expediency can take place. Furthermore the empowerment of staff to bring about such changes is important.'

...whilst Gullledge and Sommer (2002) pose another:

'...process management does not work very well when overlaid on a hierarchical command and control management structure.'

All this reinforces the need for attitudinal and behavioural changes within the senior echelons of the public sector, but begging the question again whether those 'senior echelons' are 'ready' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995) for such 'radical' (Kettinger, et al., 1997) change?

The 'appeal' of BPR clearly remains (MacIntosh, 2003), but whether this 'appeal' is likely to be sufficient is doubtful. A much greater degree of pre-engineering *understanding* by and within senior management is also required, along with a tangible organisational 'readiness', combined also with determination and real commitment from those same 'senior echelons' of the hierarchy, and a willingness to effect its 'reorientation'.

This clear need to propagate process-based thinking and organisations, requiring a definite shift from 'command and control' structures, is again reinforced by a range of writers from Argyris (1962), via Champy (1996), through to Attaran (2000), Zucchi and Edwards (2000), Paper et al. (2001), Gullidge and Sommer (2002), and more recently Seddon (2003, 2007, 2008).

At the beginning of this review one of the stated aims was to lead the researcher towards any gaps in current knowledge in order to clarify the ultimate focus of this research. However, as Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (1800-1891) said, 'No battle plan ever survives contact with the enemy,' and this 'plan' was no exception. Whilst McAdam and Corrigan's (2001) comment on the 'paucity of in-depth case study research to determine key success factors for re-engineering in this sector,' was aimed primarily at public health care, the evidence from this review is that the same can be said regarding research into BPR within local government organisations in the UK.

By the very nature of the process of reading and 'researching' in parallel, some themes emerged along the route. Rather than change the *raison d'être* for the study, it has reinforced it and sharpened the focus, providing a means by which to boost the robustness (and focus the contribution) of the research.

The first of these was the discovery of Hammer and Stanton's (1995) 'Self-Assessment Diagnostic,' and this, allied with their concept of 'Readiness,' was at a time prior to the commencement of the main period of field research, and so was used to enable some structure to be added to those key interviews.

The second was Kettinger et al's (1997) 'Project Radicalness Planning Worksheet,' which complemented the previous item in the second round of interviews, whilst seeking evidence of project outcomes. This was also able to give a stronger foundation to the emerging – from the literature – concept of 'Degrees of BPR', e.g. Zairi and Sinclair (1995), Bragato and Jacobs (2003), MacIntosh (2003), Shin and Jemella (2003), and Yung and Chan (2003).

The aim was to not be trammelled by previous writings, but released from them. Issues of Change Management, Leadership, Structures, BPR per se, and IT, are already well covered. The foundations of BPR are there, buried under the edifice, but they are not what people ultimately will look at, so the focus has remained on those 'Two Local Authorities,' with the ultimate aim to make that contribution to 'knowledge and understanding of BPR implementation within the public sector,' but specifically LGOs. However, if that contribution was to be meaningful, in terms of changing 'knowledge and understanding' to the extent that LGOs are better enabled to embark upon such BPR-type interventions – or to understand when to choose not to – the research had, ultimately, to be accessible to and consumed by those policy-makers and practitioners.

I hope that, as Jackson (1996: 587) said, I have succeeded in making that:

'...concerted effort to reach practitioners and compellingly engage them with rhetorical critiques that are informed by all that is good about the academic tradition,'

and that we have found some way to:

'...more reliably enable (e.g.) a Council to gauge its chances of success, were it to choose to adopt the more radical approach to change that BPR offers.'

The key areas that have emerged, and upon which therefore to focus in terms of factors critical to the successful implementation of reengineering within these LGOs, are:

- the concept of 'degrees' of BPR, or 'project radicalness';
- the state of 'organisational readiness' prior to embarking upon BPR;
- change management, specifically in the public sector context;
- issues around a public sector (LGO) 'culture', and;
- senior management's leadership, commitment and communication.

These themes represent the primary gaps in that local authority context upon which to base the primary research, whilst accepting also that other themes might emerge – and have emerged – during that study process.

Part Three: Research Methodology

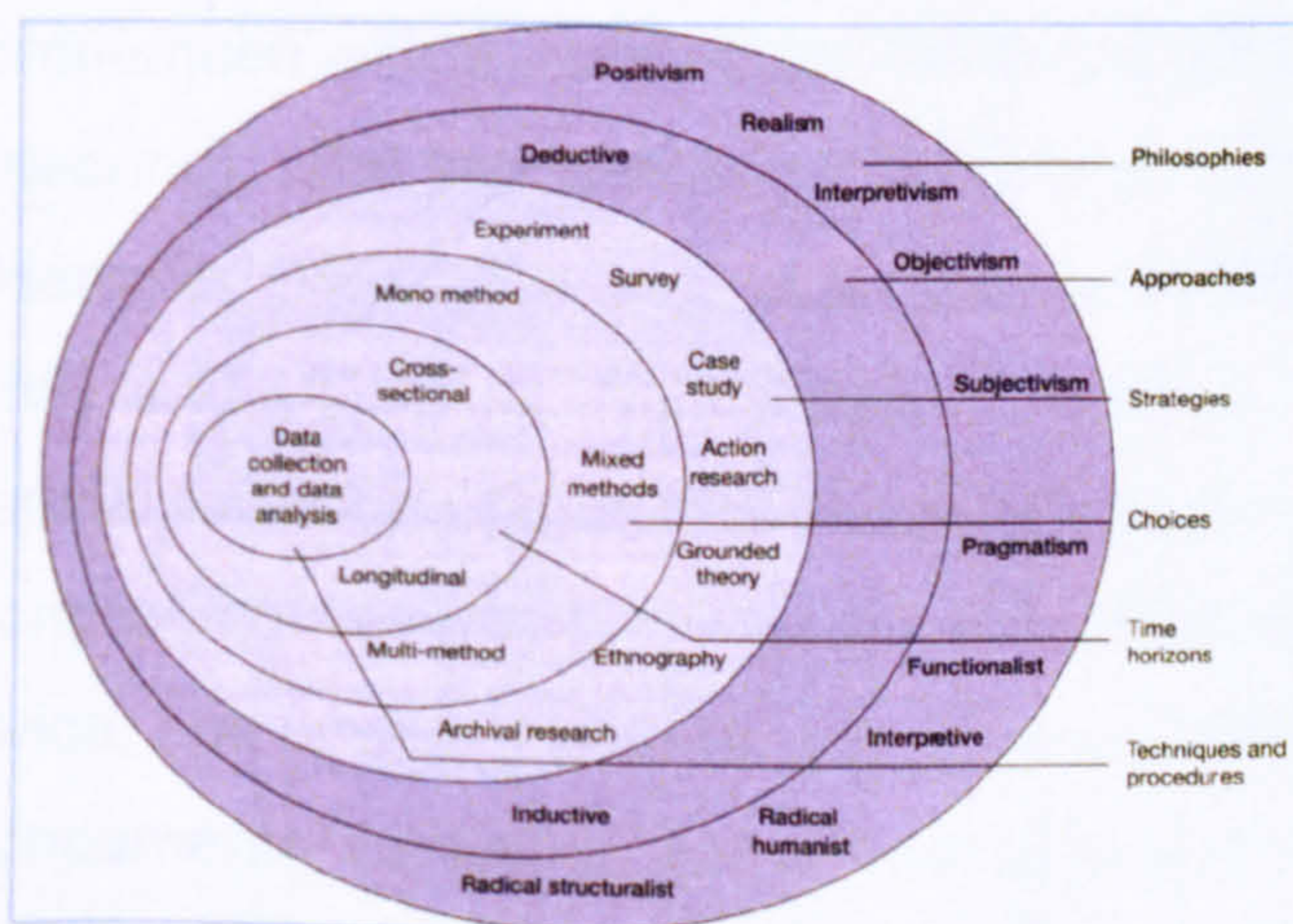
Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction & Context

This chapter will set out the methodology of the research. It begins by introducing the structure of the chapter and the approach taken. From taking a relatively basic concept, it uses this to understand the necessary width and depth of the issues involved. From the basic blocks of introduction, context, objectives and philosophy, the foundations are laid for the remainder of the chapter. It is also somewhat reflexive, as this has been the nature of arriving at my understanding of each stage, or layer, that is passed through.

The starting point structurally was to consider the revised version of Saunders et al's (2000: 85) research 'onion' (revised in 2007: 102/132) – see below, Fig. 5.1 – as it provided an acceptable initial structure for considerations of philosophies, approaches, strategies, etc., with its metaphorical representation of the 'layers' that 'need to be peeled away' before getting to those more 'central' issues of data collection, analysis and presentation.

Fig. 5.1: Saunders et al's (2000: 85) research 'onion'



Source: © Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., (2007) *Research Methods for Business Students*, 4th edition, London, FT/Prentice Hall, p. 102, Fig. 4.1/p. 132, Fig. 5.1

Holden and Lynch (2004: 397) pose the question, 'Why research?', and Bryman and Bell (2003: 5; citing Tranfield & Starkey, 1998) comment on this, arguing that:

'...much management research has lost touch with the concerns and interests of practitioners and that management and business researchers must relearn how to be responsive to them in order for their research to retain value and purpose.'

Bryman and Bell (ibid: Box 1.1), citing Gummesson (2000: 9) refer to this balance 'between theory and practice' in the context of the differing purpose of consultants and academic researchers:

'Backed by bits and pieces of theory, the consultant contributes to practice, whereas the scholar contributes to theory supported by fragments of practice.'

This is an important point, reflected in this research's third objective (5.2, p. 178).

5.1.1 Pre-understanding

I came to this study with a degree of 'preunderstanding' (Gummesson, 2000: 57, cited in Bryman & Bell, 2003: 304; Coghlan, 2001: 51); an initial standpoint based on prior 'knowledge, insights and experience' (Gummesson, ibid), and so I commenced with a basic understanding of BPR (Business Process Reengineering). The 'reengineering' I believed I *understood* was that propounded by Hammer (1990), Hammer and Champy (1993), and Hammer and Stanton (1995), and which has already been defined as, 'the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvement in critical, contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service, and speed' (Hammer and Champy, 1993: 32), or, more succinctly, 'the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to bring about dramatic improvements in performance' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995: 3).

From this followed the structured review of relevant literature based on the research objectives (overleaf) and primary areas (keywords) such as: BPR; Reengineering; Process Reengineering/Redesign; Public Sector; Local Government; Change Management; and Quality and TQM; as previously stated. Emergent from this were the issues of 'Organisational Readiness' (Hammer & Stanton, 1995), leadership, understanding, the possibility of 'degrees of BPR', and critical success factors (CSF) – primarily from Al-Mashari & Zairi (1999) – which further directed the secondary research.

The key 'gaps' in the literature were perceived to be around the 'paucity' of research into the use and application of such 'radical' change management processes as BPR (or Service Redesign, SRD) within the public sector, specifically LGOs within the UK, and more relevantly (then and now) against the backdrop of Sir Peter Gershon's 'Spending Review 2004: Efficiency Review – Releasing Resources for the Frontline: Independent Review of Public Sector Efficiency' (2004), the first results of which were planned to be delivered by LGO within the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

Whilst much of the literature gave suggestions of generic reasons for the 'failure' of BPR, none were specifically focused on the public sector or LGOs within the UK, although Al-Mashari & Zairi (1999: 106, Fig. 1) distilled a broad base of the key, or 'critical', issues down to five headings:

- Change of Management Systems and Culture;
- Management Competence Factors;
- Organisational Structure Factors;
- BPR Project Management Factors (and);
- IT Infrastructure Factors.

A full breakdown of these is shown in Appendix 2.

The key gaps therefore appeared to be gathering around the Hammer and Stanton (1995) question of 'organisational readiness'; the possibility of

whether – despite the uncompromising *hardness* of Hammer et al's original definition(s) – there were in fact 'degrees' of application of BPR in evidence, thus influencing the level of 'readiness' required, especially perhaps, when set against the background of a public sector/LGO culture; and of leadership. Leadership itself is a widely debated subject in its own right, but the impact of its presence, or absence, was no less relevant, if not more so, in this context.

5.2 Objectives

The primary research objectives were to:

- To identify and critically evaluate empirical research evidence on BPR with particular emphasis on practice in the public sector;
- To investigate the adoption of BPR within the range of change management practices in two selected local authorities;
- To make recommendations for policy makers and practitioners regarding the adoption of BPR as a change management technique within the public sector;
- To contribute to knowledge and understanding of BPR implementation within the public sector.

Combined with the suggested 'gaps', these directed an approach to the research methodology with a primary focus on the issue of BPR (or its equivalent) within a possible range of change management practices, as situated specifically in the public sector, but, more narrowly, within local government organisations (LGOs).

The potential contribution from the research was initially identified as located in three key areas:

1. The richness of the body of data gathered via the two main case studies;
2. Addressing the gaps in the literature as far as:

- 2.1 the variation in 'definitions' of BPR, and the possible range, or 'degrees of', BPR currently being practised;
- 2.2 providing stronger links to the critical success factors (CSF) for the implementation of BPR within a public sector/LGO environment, and specifically a possible 'measurement scale' for the concept of organisational 'readiness'.

As additional clarification, and in line with the third and fourth objectives listed above, the research would provide further insight for other LGOs who, in the prevailing climate, might be considering whether or not to embark upon 'radical'/'transformational' change programmes and – supplementing the potential use of Hammer & Stanton's (1995) 'Organisational Readiness' criteria – an understanding of the concept of 'degrees of BPR'.

Set within that context, this chapter will describe the approach taken to research design, using as an initial guide the 'onion' structure mentioned above;

- Philosophies
- Approaches
- Strategies
- Choice of method(s)
- Time horizon and Sample
- Research access
- Data collection and analysis
- Data interpretation and presentation

The first issue for me to consider therefore was my 'philosophy':

- '... the rational investigation of the truths and principles of being, knowledge, or conduct;
- '... the critical study of the basic principles and concepts of a particular branch of knowledge, esp. with a view to improving or reconstituting them' (Webster, 1989: 1082).

5.3 Philosophy

The previous 'onion' analogy also hints – via Ibsen's play, *Peer Gynt* – at the reflexivity problem, as Freud (cited by Gill, 2008) said:

'When Gynt peels the onion to try and find its central core, that which makes it an onion, he discovers that the layers don't hide the truth. They are the truth.'

And if this research is to reveal any 'truth', it will be from that whole process, and not any single 'layer', but, as researchers, this is underpinned by the way we view the world. Saunders et al. (2007: 107) suggest that: 'The challenge here is to enter the social world of our research subjects and understand their world from their point of view,' what Patton (2002: 11) describes as 'observations and interviews out in the real world.'

5.3.1 Epistemology

This issue of 'truth', or what is true, equates to what it is that 'constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study' (Saunders, et al., 2007: 102), or in a 'discipline' (Bryman & Bell, 2003: 13) – the question of epistemology. Earlier versions of this concept (e.g. Saunders, et al., 2000: 85) showed this outer 'Research Philosophy' *layer* as ranging between the two extremes of Positivism and Phenomenology, with no suggested gradations in between. The later version, shown above, having replaced 'Phenomenology' with 'Radical Structuralist', has now filled this void with a range of alternative 'positions' between those two extremes of the spectrum. Holden and Lynch (2004: 398) consider these two extremes (or 'polar opposites') as objectivist and subjectivist, and accept that these have been 'labelled variously in the literature' (ibid: 399), e.g:

- Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) – positivism and phenomenology;
- Hughes and Sharrock (1997) – positivism and interpretive alternative.

They show these 'labels' arranged under each of the 'polar opposites' as follows:

Fig. 5.2: Alternative Philosophical Paradigm Names

Objectivist	Subjectivist
Quantitative	Qualitative
Positivist	Phenomenological
Scientific	Humanistic
Experimentalist	Interpretivist
Traditionalist	
Functionalist	

Source: Holden & Lynch, 2004, Fig. 1, p. 399

Easterby-Smith, et al. (1994: 27) referred to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) 'polarities' on this positivist-non-positivist divide whilst creating a 'useful classification of the key features of positivist and phenomenological paradigms' (Remenyi, et al., 1998: 103), as shown in table 5.1, below:

Table 5.1: Key features of positivist and phenomenological paradigms

	Positivist Paradigm	Phenomenological Paradigm
Basic beliefs:	world is external and objective observer is independent science is value-free	world is socially constructed and subjective observer is part of what is observed science is driven by human interest
Researchers should:	focus on facts look for causality and fundamental laws reduce phenomena to simplest elements formulate and test hypotheses	focus on meanings try to understand what is happening look at totality of each situation develop ideas through induction from evidence
Preferred methods:	operationalise concepts so they can be measured take large samples use multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena	small samples investigated in depth or over time

Source: Remenyi, et al., 1998: 104, Table 6.1

Patton (ibid: 95) avoided 'labels such as logical positivism, postpositivism, logical empiricism, realism, transcendental realism, and objectivism [as] jargon-ish,' and because they, 'have disputed definitions, and carry negative connotations for many, so they come with lots of baggage,' and used the term '*reality-oriented qualitative inquiry*' to describe this perspective. In the context of this 'real world research' Robson (2002: 40) contends that whatever forms the focus of that research cannot be 'hermetically sealed from external influences,' and, in beginning to discuss pragmatism, says that it is time to 'stop the talking and get on with one's own thing [and] use whatever philosophical or methodological approach works best for a particular research problem at issue' (p. 43). Bryman and Bell (2003: 14), though, define 'positivism' as:

'an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond.'

The 'and beyond' point is important, because they suggest five 'principles' also entailed within positivism, two of which are:

3. Knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basis for laws, and;
4. Science must (and presumably can) be conducted in a way that is value free (that is, *objective*).

'Facts' might be what we search for, but they are likely to be subject to the 'world view' of the participants in the process, and whilst being as *objective* as possible might be a clear aim, no-one is ever 'value free':

'Crucial to the interpretivist epistemology is that the researcher has to adopt an empathetic stance. The challenge here is to enter the social world of our research subjects and understand their world from their point of view' (ibid: 107).

Bryman and Bell clarify this confusion by stating that 'Interpretivism is a 'contrasting epistemology to positivism' (p. 5), and, citing Taylor and Bogdan

(1975: 13/14), that the 'phenomenologist attempts to 'see things from that person's point of view' (p. 17). They point out that 'since the 1960s there has been a drift away from viewing [i.e. scientific practice] in positivist terms' (p. 14). If this research is to *investigate and critically evaluate the empirical research evidence on the adoption of BPR* within these two local authorities, then an interpretive, 'empathetic stance' is likely to be the most appropriate.

5.3.2 Ontology

Saunders, et al. (ibid: 108) state that ontology is 'concerned with the nature of reality,' whereas for Bryman and Bell (ibid: 19), it is 'concerned with the nature of social entities' and whether or not these have:

'...a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors.'

Commenting on these 'constructions', Patton (2002: 97) highlights the possible confusion (mentioned above) between (e.g.) interpretivism and interpretivist, with his view on the distinction (citing Crotty, 1998) between 'Constructivism' and 'Constructionism':

'It remains to be seen whether this distinction will gain widespread use since the two terms are so difficult to distinguish and easy to confuse.'

Whether reality is 'external' or internal (socially constructed) provokes strong debate and Patton (ibid: 101) says that external-reality-oriented researchers are 'skeptical of the subjective knowledge of constructivism.' He gives some 'sense of [this] gulf' by quoting Levitt (1998: 34) from an article entitled, 'Why Professors Believe Weird Things':

'Scientific evidence – which is to say the only meaningful evidence – cannot be neutralized by 'subjective knowledge,' which is to say bullshit.'

And Patton goes on to cite Levitt (ibid: 35) as commenting on constructivism in terms of a 'particular manifestation of postmodernism':

'...a particular technique for getting drunk on one's own words.'

This is highly redolent of Disraeli's (1804-1881) famous quote (on William Gladstone) that he was, 'Inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity'; though Patton, however, also cites Schwandt (1997: 134) as providing a 'more conciliatory tone' when guarding against taking the 'rhetoric of constructivism' too literally:

'...many qualitative inquirers have a common sense realist *ontology*, that is, they take seriously the existence of things, events, structures, people, meanings, and so forth in the environment as independent in some way from their experience with them. And they regard society, institutions, feelings, intelligence, poverty, disability, and so on as being just as "real" as the toes on their feet and the sun in the sky.'

The phrase 'common sense realist' implies – as the derivation supports, that 'sense' which is 'common' to all – and one might give an item of fruit, an apple, or an orange, as an example. All would agree that the (e.g.) apple is round in shape, that it is 75mm in diameter, and that it weighs 50gms; a 'reality-oriented' positivist or objectivist, 'common to all' perspective, perhaps. Differences, sensory ones, occur however, once the apple is eaten. One person's 'sharp' flavour will be just as *real* as another's 'sweet'. We will perceive its smell differently, and could easily be divided over views as to its colour, or texture; the 'subjective knowledge of constructivism', perhaps?

In clarifying constructionism, Bryman and Bell (ibid: 20) state that:

'In recent years, the term has come to include the notion that researchers' own accounts of the social world are constructions. In other words, the researcher always presents a specific version of social reality, rather than one that can be regarded as definitive.'

That 'specific version', and this 'researcher's own accounts', would be gained only after one had entered, however temporarily, the 'social world of [these *specific*] research subjects,' to 'discover' and reveal their 'truth'.

In summary, the epistemological and ontological implications for this specific research – i.e. one that would apply here but not be generalisable to a different 'social reality' – would best be positioned as subjectivist and social constructionist.

Saunders et al. (2007: 110) reinforce this emphasis on the research itself with their definition of 'Pragmatism', which argues that:

'...the most important determinant of the research philosophy adopted is the research question – one approach may be 'better' than the other for answering particular questions.'

Patton (ibid: 69) offers:

'a pragmatic strategy of matching concrete methods to specific questions, including the option of tactically mixing methods as needed and appropriate.'

And later, he defines this 'pragmatism' as:

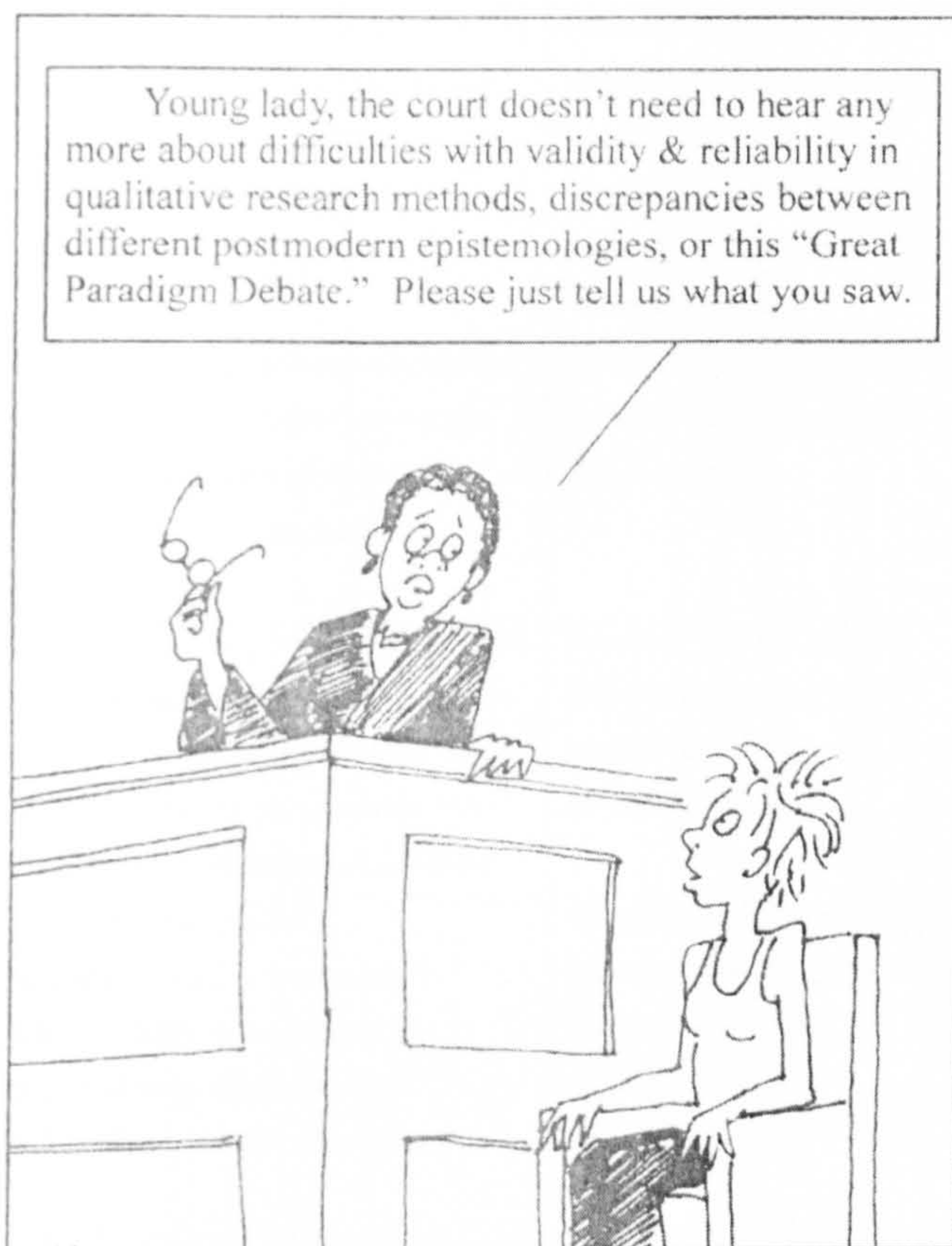
'judging the quality of a study by its intended purposes, available resources, procedures followed, and results obtained, all within a particular context and for a specific audience.'

Fearn (2005: 154), reflecting on a conversation with American pragmatist Richard Rorty, articulated it thus:

'I wondered what the difference was between saying that the hard concrete floor beneath my window is real and saying that I will always hurt myself if I jump out. If you can get law-likeness then why do we not thereby have Reality? Rorty said:

The only difference is that if you put it the first way then some philosopher will say 'Let us think about the nature of reality', whereas if you put it the second way then maybe you can avoid that. I don't want to encourage them. There are lots of choices you can make that will result in disasters, and if you want to call that the impact of reality, then fine.'

Patton sums up this 'great paradigm debate' rather humorously, perhaps even pragmatically...



Source: Patton, M. Q., (2002) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd edition, London, Sage, p. 103

In conclusion therefore this study aligns with an interpretive philosophy.

5.4 Approaches

Returning to Holden and Lynch's (2004) subjectivist and objectivist perspectives, they show a useful table to depict the 'major research implications arising from each perspective' in terms of research approaches, entitled, 'Choosing the Appropriate Methodology' (p. 403, Fig. 5):

Table 5.2: Choosing the Appropriate Methodology

Positivist Perspective		Subjectivist Perspective	
Independence	The observer is independent of what is being observed.	The observer interacts with subject being observed.	Interaction
Value-freedom	The choice of what to study, and how to study it, can be determined by objective criteria rather than by human beliefs and interests.	Inherent biasness in the choice of what to study, and how to study it as researchers are driven by their own interests, beliefs, skills, and values.	Value-laden
Causality	The aim of social science should be to identify causal explanations and fundamental laws that explain regularities in human social behaviour.	The aim of social science is to try to understand what is happening.	No Cause and Effect
Hypothetico-deductive	Science proceeds through a process of hypothesising fundamental laws and then deducing what kinds of observations will demonstrate the truth or falsity of these hypotheses.	Develop ideas through induction from evidence; mutual simultaneous shaping of factors.	No Hypothetico-deductive reasoning
Operationalisation	Concepts need to be operationalised in a way which enables facts to be measured quantitatively; static design – categories isolated before study.	Qualitative methods – small samples investigated in depth or over time; emerging design – categories identified during research process.	Operationalisation
Reductionism	Problems as a whole are better understood if they are reduced into the simplest possible elements.	Problems as a whole are better understood if the totality of the situation is looked at.	No reductionism
Generalisation	In order to be able to generalise about regularities in human and social behaviour it is necessary to select samples of sufficient size; aim of generalisations is to lead to prediction, explanation and understanding.	Everything is contextual; patterns identified – theories then developed for understanding.	Generalisation
Research Language	Formal, based on set definitions; impersonal voice; use of accepted quantitative words.	Informal, evolving decisions; personal voice; use of accepted qualitative words.	Research Language

Source: Holden & Lynch, 2004, p. 403, Fig. 5, 'Key Research Implications of the Subjective and Objective Perspectives'

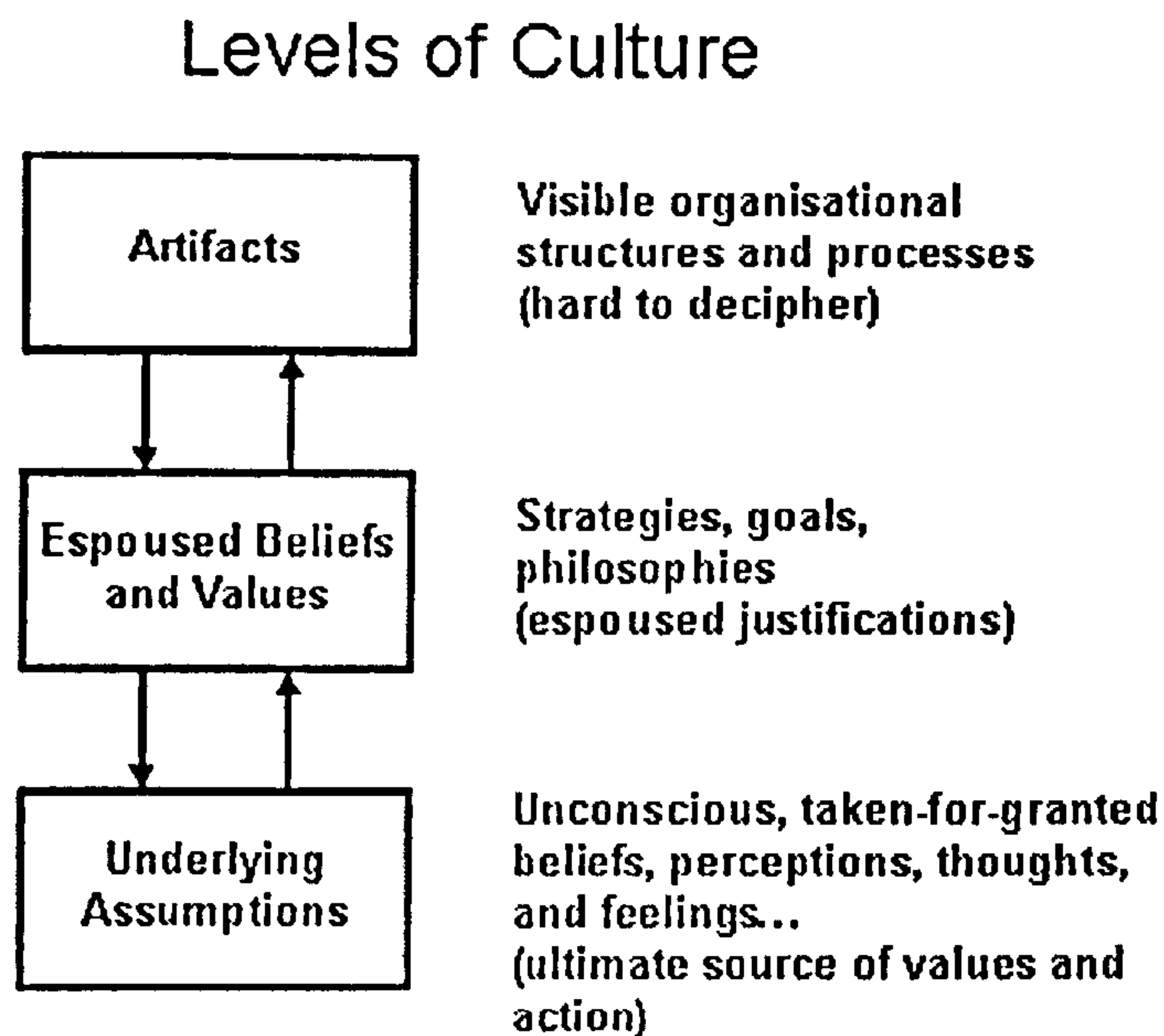
This will be utilized later to summarise this research's approaches.

Whilst not explicitly shown, the border-line between Saunders et al's two outer layers could easily have been the spectrum from Quantitative (Positivist) to Qualitative (Phenomenological; Radical structuralist; Subjectivist) approaches to research, leading to the 'Deductive' or 'Inductive' discussion. As Saunders et al. (2007: 117) say, the *deductive* approach is one 'in which you develop a theory and hypothesis (or hypotheses) and design a research strategy to test the hypothesis', and then, to 'test this hypothesis you utilize another characteristic, the collection of quantitative data' – implying a positivist stance.

If this research had been at the positivist end of that spectrum, it would 'probably [have adopted] the philosophical stance of the natural scientist' (Saunders, et al., 2000: 85), having assumed that I was 'independent of and neither [affecting nor] affected by the subject of the research' (Remenyi, et al., 1998: 33). However, this research was not designed to deliver 'quantifiable observations that [would] lend themselves to statistical analysis' (Saunders, *ibid*).

Rather, I decided to 'deliberately enter the world' Moustakas (1995: 82) of these organisations to observe and perceive what Saunders et al. (2000: 86) describe as the 'rich insights [in] this complex world,' enabling the discovery of what Remenyi, et al. (1998: 35) called the 'details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them.' In the world of organizational behaviour, the 'reality working behind (them)' might best be described as the organizational 'culture', which according to Schein (2004: 25-37) operates on 'several different levels' (see Fig. 5.3, overleaf), with the third (and lowest) level being those 'deeply embedded, unconscious, basic assumptions that [are] the essence of culture' (*ibid*: 25). It is in discovering these 'underlying assumptions of which group members are often unaware,' Saunders et al. (*ibid*: 86) argue, that what they labeled phenomenologist, operating at the opposite end of the spectrum, '(offers) the opportunity of discovering this vital third level: 'the reality working behind the reality';' their underlying sense-experience.

Fig. 5.3: Schein's (2004) 'levels of Culture'



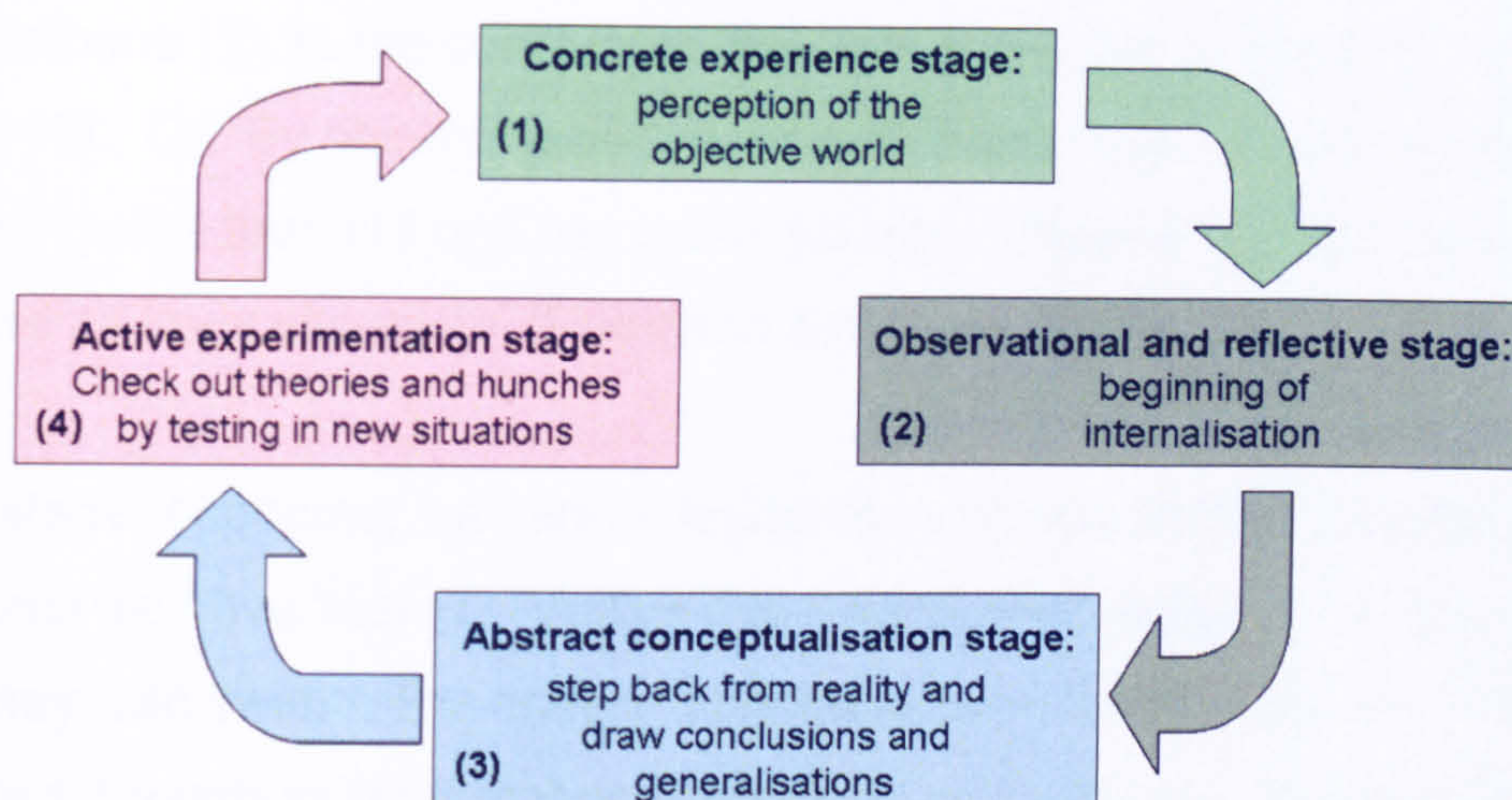
© E. H. Schein (2004) *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, p. 26, Fig. 2.1

If the approach was to be inductive (theory-building) rather than deductive (theory-testing), the research would be based initially on the observations and perceptions of those participants within the co-operating LGOs. It would be more 'qualitative', and would try and 'find meaning in it' (Patton, 2002: 2; citing Halcolm's *Laws of Inquiry*).

In the same way that, '(according to the empiricists) we could only know that which was within our experience' (Fearn, 2005: xiii), the decision was to start with the 'experiences' of others, or their 'concrete experiences' as depicted in Kolb, et al.'s (1995; cited also in Remenyi, et al., 1998: 100/101, Fig. 6.1) 'Learning Cycle', overleaf (Fig. 5.4).

(Note: The numbers (1-4) in the model *do not* indicate the prescribed order of use. They are simply to be used as a key, to link the specific stages in the model to references within the text, below. For example, whilst the RHS/Inductive and LHS/Deductive links are made in the following discussion, there is no suggestion, in qualitative research, that Box '1' is always the starting point. Box '3' – 'theory' – could equally be the starting point, if an initially deductive approach was to be used. It is accepted fully that induction can inform deduction, and, equally, that deduction can inform induction, in a qualitative research process.)

Fig. 5.4: Kolb's Learning Cycle



Source: Mullins, L. J., (2002) *Management and Organisational Behaviour*, 6th edition, London, FT/Prentice Hall, p. 369, Fig. 10.4

Stage 1 of the diagram above raises yet again the issue of 'objectivity', when it uses the phrase 'perception of the objective world.' Patton (2002: 263/264) alludes to this when commenting on the 'advantages of fieldwork' in that it provides the 'opportunity to move beyond the selective perceptions of others,' and that field observers 'will also have selective perceptions.' This harks back to Mullins' (2005: 435) comment that:

'We all have our own 'world', our own way of looking at and understanding our environment and the people within it. A situation may be the same but the interpretation of that situation by two individuals may be vastly different.'

My 'objective' view will not be the same as someone else's 'objective' view, but the risk to be strenuously avoided, however, was, as Dodson (2002: 69) says, 'when it comes to presenting their findings, it's only human that some end up proving their own subjective bias in the name of objective science.' Marshall and Rossman (1995: 146-148) proposed '20 standards for judging qualitative study reports' and these were utilised to help avoid this risk.

The right-hand loop of Kolb's cycle – Concrete experience (1 – Fig. 5.4, above), through Observation & reflection (2), to Abstract conceptualization (3)

(or 'theory formulation') – effectively replicates the general principles of induction, 'where one moves, for example, from having observed a number of yellow lemons (1), to the conclusion that all lemons are yellow? (3)' (Fearn, 2005: 115). Or, 'By observing particular swimming frogs (1) we can make an informed guess that all frogs can swim' (3): i.e., 'These frogs can swim – therefore all frogs can swim' (Robinson & Groves, 2003: 30).

At this stage, of course, we cannot legitimately conclude that 'all frogs can swim' until we have 'tested' – Active experimentation stage (4) – 'all frogs' to see if they 'can swim'. The 'theory' may have been 'built' (induced), but not yet tested through to confirmation (deduced), or certainty – Halcolm (ibid) again:

- When in doubt, observe and ask questions.
- When certain, observe at length and ask many more questions.

Should we come across, observe, a 'frog' that cannot 'swim', we must return through to 'reflection' and additional 'conceptualisation' towards a new theory, or theories, by observing at greater 'length' and asking 'many more questions'.

This Inductive vs Deductive distinction could also be illustrated as follows:

- Inductive – Research then Theory;
- Deductive – Theory then Research.

However, the deductive left-hand loop – Abstract conceptualization (3), through Active experimentation (4), to Concrete experience (1); the 'swim-test' – did not form the main part of this research, as the primary aim was to establish, through observation of and reflection (2) upon the experiences of others(1), whether BPR, as defined, was evident (3). But whilst that was not the primary aim, the plan was still to 'test' – 'check out' in Kolb's terms – some of the findings with a focus group comprising contributors and interested parties from the key participating organizations (4) (a 'member check', Lincoln

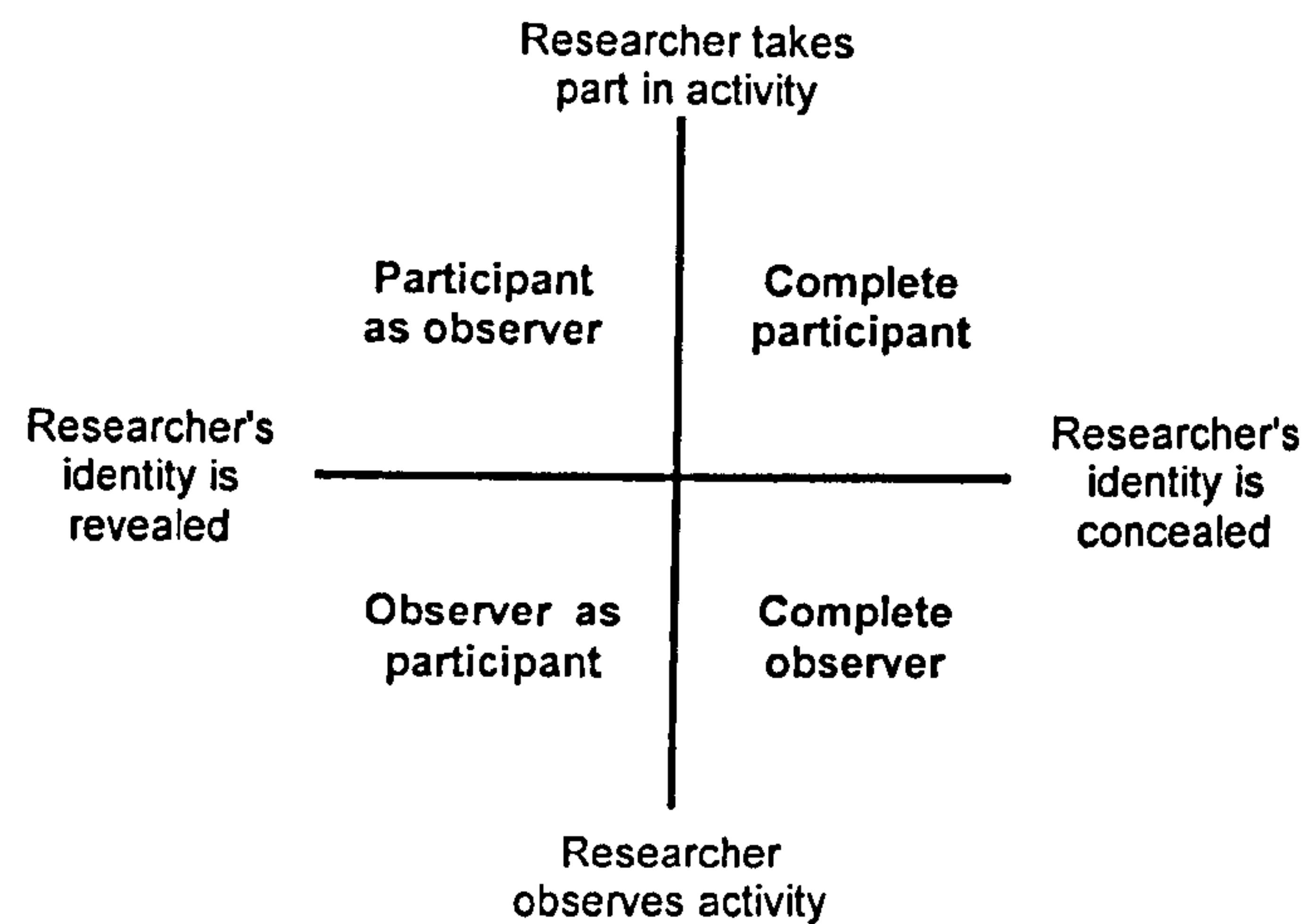
& Guba, 1985: 236), identifying any 'hard' measures supporting those findings from the tangible results of the participants. Other emergent issues were also subject to some 'deductive testing' along the way.

From the outset this was designed to be a Qualitative Inquiry, looking for those 'rich insights' (Saunders, *ibid*) – placed towards the inductive end of the positivist-phenomenological spectrum – informed by deductive evidence drawing on factors from the literature review. Whilst initially approached from the viewpoint of a non-participant observer, it became apparent fairly early on, whether through actively 'teaching' the people who might eventually become the subjects of the research, or 'passively' 'being there' – what Moustakas (1995: 82-83) called 'Being-In...I enter with the intention of understanding and accepting perceptions and not representing my own views or reactions' – that I would be 'participating' at least to some degree, so 'participant observer' (Patton, 2002: 4; Saunders, et al., 2005: 105) would be a more accurate approach:

'To understand fully the complexities of many situations, direct participation in and observation of the phenomenon of interest may be the best research method' (Patton, 2002: 21).

'Direct participation' might well be 'the best', but this research did not allow that and so I was not able to fully 'adopt the perspective of those studied by sharing in their day-to-day experiences' (Denzin, 1970: 185). At best it was 'indirect', in that, for example, I was part of a team that previously (2004-2006) had been contracted (in the case of CountyC) to teach Service Redesign (SRD) to their participants (potential or actual), which itself had blurred the edges between participation and observation, illustrated by Saunders, et al's (2000), 'Typology of participant observer researcher roles' (Fig. 5.5):

Fig. 5.5: Typology of participant observer researcher roles



Source: Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., (2000) *Research Methods for Business Students*, 2nd edition, London, FT/Prentice Hall, p. 223, Fig. 8.1

What was not 'blurred' was my identity nor purpose, and the qualitative design was to be 'naturalistic' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to the extent that it took place in the real-world settings of those participants and, within the limits acknowledged above.

In summary, driven by the objectives and subsequent gaps in the literature, this research approach was to be largely inductive, but with some elements of semi-structure using key themes from the literature review as a basic framework. This was perhaps a more 'inside-out' approach, in that once the objectives and approach had been decided, the methods, etc., became apparent. It is appreciated that this is not the same 'outside-in' approach as implied by Saunder et al's 'onion', but is consistent with Churchill and Iacobucci's (2005) view that the first step in research design is to, 'Formulate the Problem':

'Only when the problem is defined carefully and precisely can research be designed to provide pertinent information. Part of this process includes specifying the objectives of the research...' (p. 40).

5.5 Research Strategy

Research strategies are intrinsically linked to the purpose of the research and its objectives. The primary objective – (to) 'identify and critically evaluate empirical research evidence on BPR, with particular emphasis on practice in the public sector' – was equally intrinsically linked to the original proposal's purpose question of, 'Is BPR 'alive and well' (Hammer & Champy, 2001: 2) within local government?'.

As Saunders et al. (2007: 133) point out, the 'classification of research purpose most often used in the research methods' literature is the threefold one of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory,' but, as in this case, the research project may have 'more than one purpose' (ibid), and that the purpose of the enquiry 'may also change as the study proceeds' (Robson, 2002: 58).

Objective two – 'investigate the adoption of BPR within the range of change management practices in two selected local authorities' – would satisfy the 'exploratory' aspect, by finding out 'what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light' (ibid: 59).

The remaining objectives; three and four:

- to make recommendations for policy makers and practitioners regarding the adoption of BPR as a change management technique within the public sector;
- to contribute to knowledge and understanding of BPR implementation within the public sector;

...would satisfy the descriptive and explanatory purposes of the study; a) by aiming 'to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations' (ibid) within, primarily, the two LGOs; and b) attempting to establish some

'relationships between variables' (Saunders, et al., 2007: 134), using mainly qualitative data.

However, a specific implication of the term '*explanatory (causal)*' (Yin, 2003a: 5) implies causal links: a study aiming to present 'data bearing on cause-effect relationships – explaining how events happened' (ibid), and was therefore used with caution, as no attempt to generalise cause-and-effect relationships was appropriate within this research design. Whilst clearly *exploratory* and *descriptive*, Yin's (2003a: 69) view is that *explanatory* case studies are 'the most difficult and the most frequently challenged.' It was not impossible, however, that a 'potential causal path' – whereby the case study might make an 'inroad into the attribution problem' – might emerge, and thereby 'suggest important clues to possible cause-and-effect relationships,' but these could not be claimed to have 'the certainty of true experiments.' As Yin (ibid) emphasises, 'doing an explanatory case study might be better than not making any inquiry at all,' and Paper, et al. (2001), citing Yin (1994), say 'case studies are appropriate in new and dynamic areas of research,' and that although they 'rate low on generalizability, they rate high on data richness.'

Hartley (in Cassell & Symon, 1994) accepts that in single case studies the 'disentangling of what is unique to the organization from what is common to other organizations can be difficult,' making any attempt to generalise equally 'difficult'. However, the purpose of this study was *not* to prove generalisability, but so long as rigour is demonstrated it can be suggestive, and Hartley says later that:

'The aim of writing with a clear conceptual framework rather than a narrative will also help to relate theory to the literature and aid generalization. Where the researcher has been able to undertake more than one case study, this clearly increases confidence in the findings, though it is unlikely that the sample size will ever be large and single case studies can have authority in their own right.'

Her points regarding the 'clear conceptual framework', relating 'theory to literature' and undertaking 'more than one case study' are relevant, and will be evident elsewhere in this section.

As, therefore, with the previous 'layers', some of the spectral choices could be quickly eliminated; e.g. with 'Experiment' (this was not primarily a deductive approach); 'Archival research' ('administrative records and documents', whilst made available to me, were not the 'principle source of data'; Sanders, et al., 2007: 143); as the two extremes.

'Survey', however, whilst similarly 'associated with the deductive approach' (ibid: 138), was initially utilised on a small scale (18 respondents) to establish the degree of foreknowledge (or 'preunderstanding') within CountyC's interviewees prior to their SRD training during 2006. For reasons that emerged later, this was partially ill-conceived and, reflexively, provided almost as many questions as answers. The opportunity to carry out the same process with CityC's respondents was thwarted when a temporary breakdown in communications saw the BPR training commence prior to this being possible. Even so, this probably would not qualify as 'reliable' usage – 'data are collected consistently' (ibid: 364) – as it was not utilised to gain a 'large amount of data from a sizeable population,' highlighting what they call, 'the capacity to do it badly!' (ibid: 138/139).

From the opposite direction, the chance to adopt an 'ethnographic' strategy, whilst 'rooted firmly in the inductive approach,' was inappropriate because of its prohibitively 'very time-consuming' nature, and it would have required immersion in the 'social world being researched as completely as possible' (ibid: 142/143), which neither the time constraints of the study (notionally three years) nor the access agreements established would permit. The case for such 'immersion' was previously expounded by Pirsig (2006: 32-34), but the 'extended participant observation' (Saunders, et al., 2007: 143) required was not practicable. Where this study would, however, have an element of ethnographic approach, was in its attempt to research the 'phenomenon [of BPR] within the context in which it occurs' (ibid) – those LGOs – and similarly,

the criteria of finding a 'setting or group that will enable you to answer your research question(s) or meet your objectives,' and of building 'a high degree of trust with [my] research participants' (ibid) adequately were met by the access arrangements negotiated and relationships established during SRD training and other UoD/Council(s) partnership activities.

The establishment of these relationships could also have facilitated a Grounded Theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which, according to Saunders, et al. (2007: 142), should best be thought of 'as 'theory building' through a combination of induction and deduction,' but whilst having accepted that this research would be predominantly inductive (Kolb, 1984, RHS), the deductive component would not be sufficiently robust to lead directly to the 'generation of predictions' which would then be 'tested in further observations' (Kolb, 1984, LHS). Therefore this quintessentially Kolb-like cycle of constant 'reference to the data to develop and test theory' (ibid: 142) might be more appropriate for any subsequent study, following on from the 'explanatory' (ibid: 133) remit of the objectives of this research.

Midway along the Inductive/Deductive continuum lay 'Action research', a term first coined by Lewin (1946), and referred to by Patton (2002: 195) as 'going where the action is, talking to people and observing what is happening.' Whilst he does not define it, in talking about 'Clarity About Purpose' he confirms what was stated previously that 'Purpose is the controlling force in research' and, in making these 'methods decisions', that the purpose of *Action research* is to 'solve a specific problem' (ibid: 213). As such it 'becomes part of the change process by engaging the people in the program or organization in studying their own problems in order to solve those problems' (ibid: 221, citing Whyte, 1989). However, whilst this study did not set out to solve anyone's 'specific problem', the 'benefits' that Marshall and Rossman (1995) referred to from 'engaging [with] the people,' could embrace what Moustakas (1995: 82) says:

'...represents a new experience for the other and is enough to enable a flow and unfolding that lead to fresh awarenesses, that clarify and inspire the person to make new choices, to initiate new behaviours and actions.'

Fig. 5.6: The 'action research spiral'

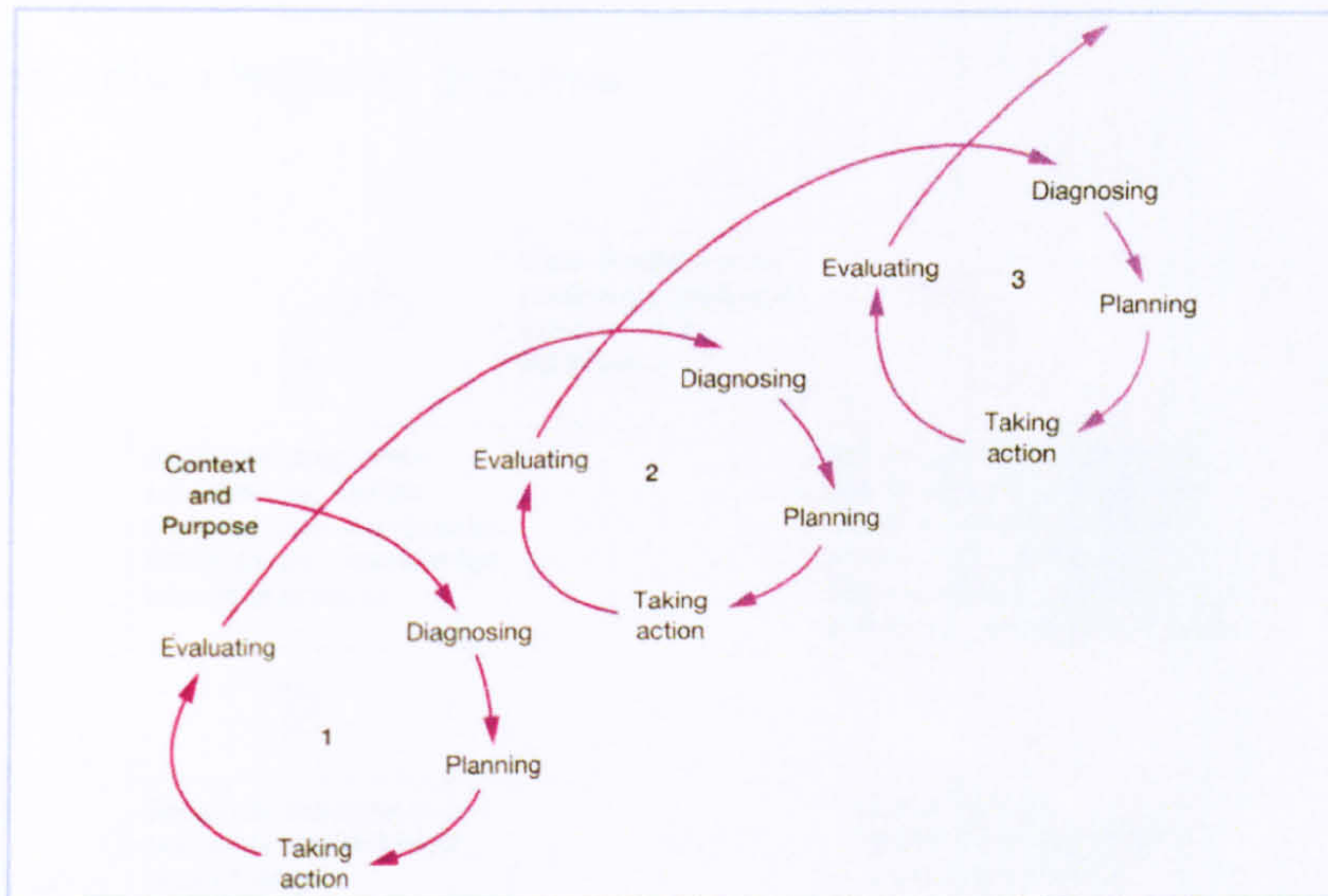
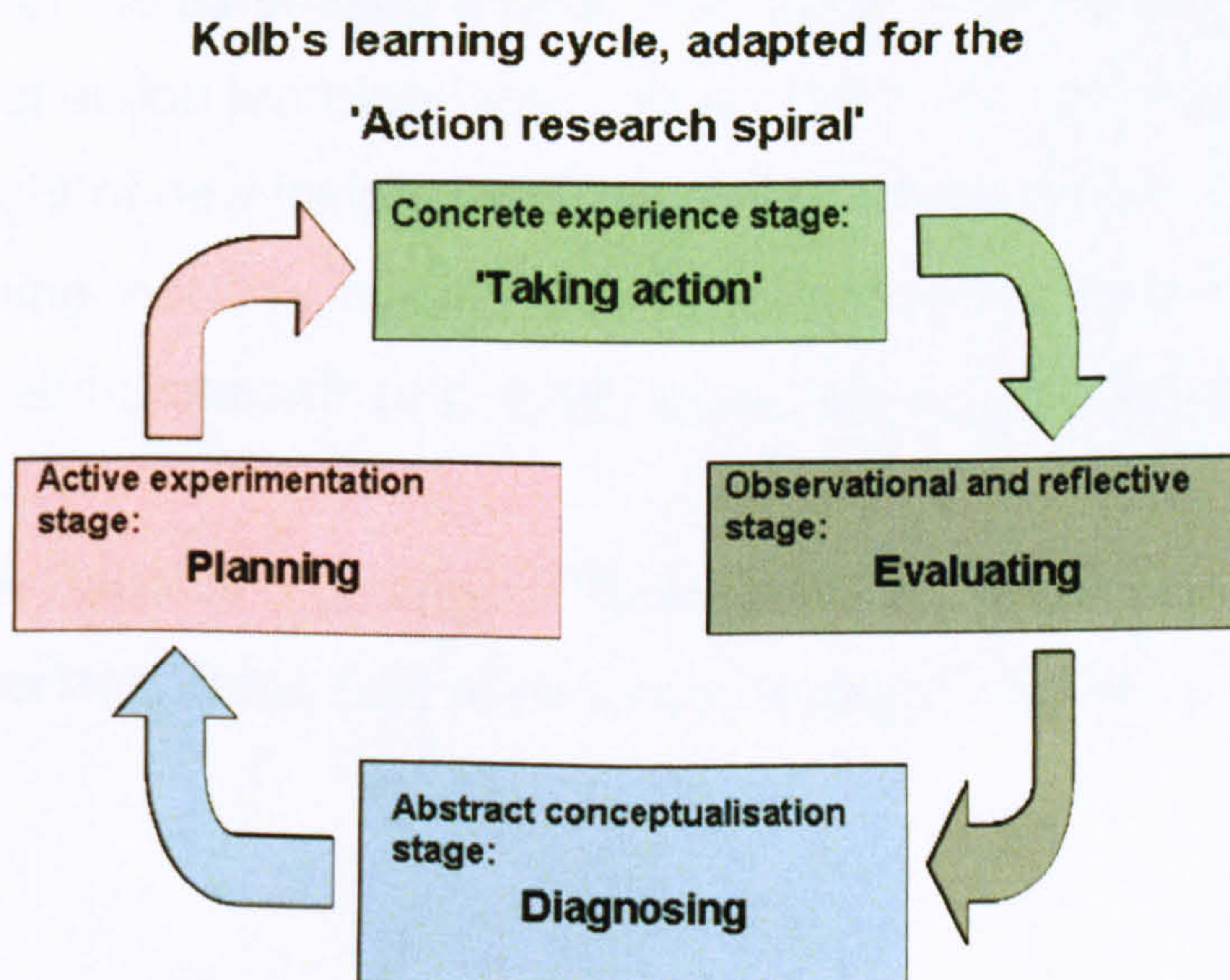


Figure 5.3 The action research spiral

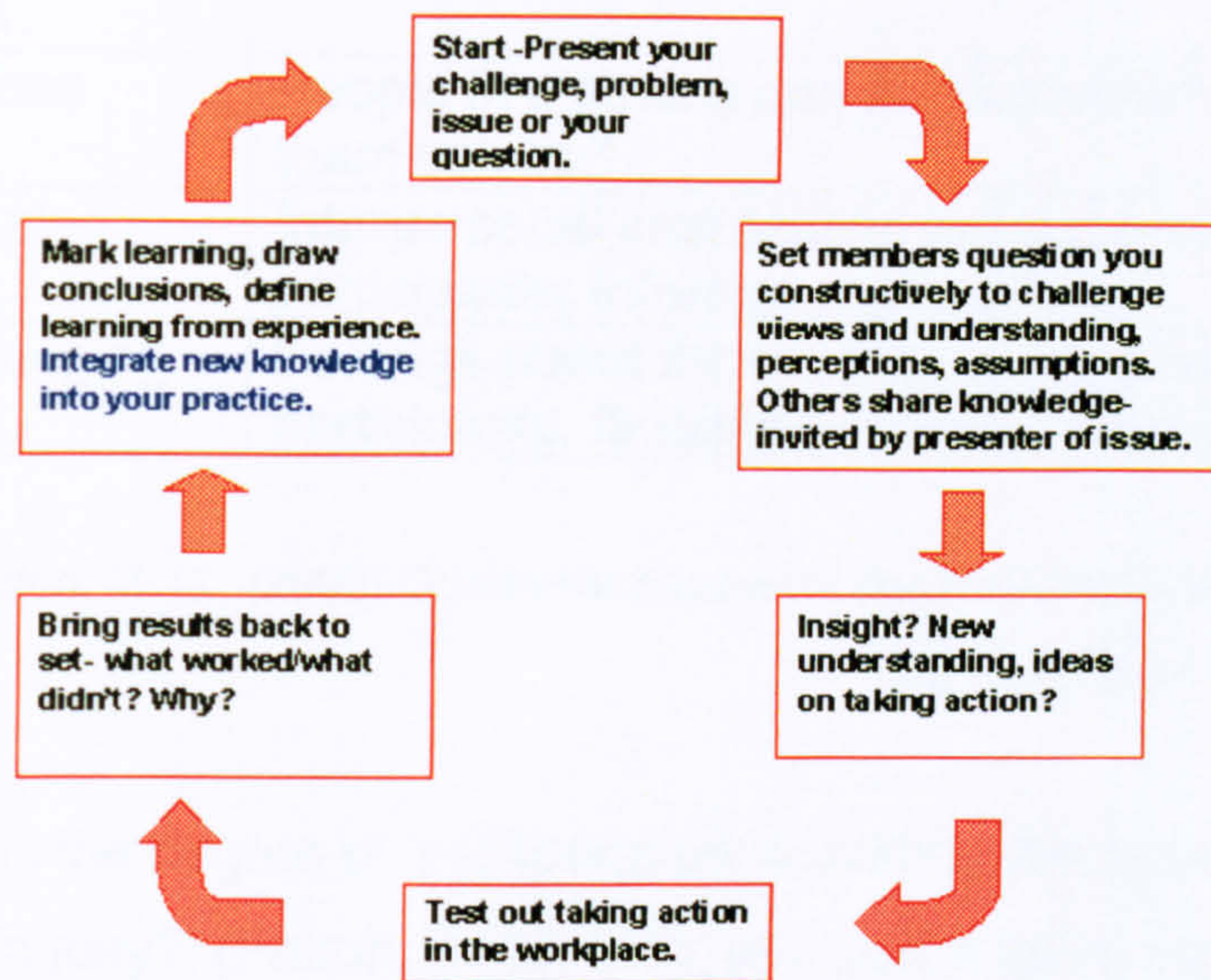
Saunders et al. (2007:141) illustrate the action research process with their 'action research spiral' (see above, Fig. 5.6), emphasising the 'iterative nature of the process of diagnosing, planning, taking action and evaluating,' which is little different (if rotated through 90°) from Kolb's 'iterative' learning cycle also – below (Fig. 5.7, adapted):

Fig. 5.7: Kolb's Learning Cycle (adapted)



In fact, whilst there clearly are differences (both in 'purpose' and in detail), there are also considerable similarities between action research and the principles of Action Learning (Sets), as in Fig. 5.8, below:

Fig. 5.8: The action learning process



Source: <http://www.natpact.nhs.uk/cms/316.php>

Whereas the action learning spiral commences with a 'specific context and a clear purpose,' so the action learning set seeks to work *with* a specific organisational or individual issue (context) and to work *on* 'real problems' (purpose). All of the asterisked criteria in the table overleaf align closely with the principles of action learning (sets); i.e. to: 'work on real problems'; 'take action in the light of new insight [and] begin to change the situation'; and 'focus on learning, not only about the issue being tackled but also on what is being learned about oneself' (e.g. <http://www.natpact.nhs.uk/cms/316.php>).

Extracting from Patton's 'Typology of Research Purposes' table (2007: 224, Exhibit 5.3; overleaf, Table 5.3) allows this 'strategy' also to be largely discarded:

Table 5.3: Typology of Research Purposes

Type(s) of Research	Action research
Purpose	Solve problems in a program, organization, or community
Focus of Research	Organization and community problems
Desired Results	Immediate action: solving problems as quickly as possible*
Desired Level of Generalization	Here and now*
Key Assumptions	People in a setting can solve problems by studying them selves.*
Publication Mode	Interpersonal interactions among research participants; informal unpublished
Standard for Judging	Feelings about the process among research participants, feasibility of the solution generated

Source: Patton, M. Q., (2002) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd edition, London, Sage, p. 224, Exhibit 5.3

Another issue is the degree of 'collaboration' posed by the question of 'Who Conducts the Inquiry?' (Patton, 2002: 269), and in this case my 'insider perspective' did not come from directly 'involving the insiders as coresearchers', but from my own 'empathetic neutrality' – that emotional 'middle ground' between becoming too, collaboratively involved and remaining too distant (ibid: 49/50).

Within the suggested strategies 'layer', therefore, 'Case study' emerged as the primary choice for this research, or one of the 'ways in which qualitative inquiry can contribute to practical knowledge and pragmatic understandings' (Patton, 2002: 137).

5.5.1 Case Studies

'A case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case. The single leaf, even a single toothpick, has unique complexities – but rarely will we care enough to submit it to case study. We study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for the detail of interaction with its context. Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.'

(Stake, 1995: xi; also cited in Patton, 2002: 297)

With the two 'cases' in mind, whilst doubling the potential for 'complexity', both were equally of 'very special interest' as both, albeit independently, 'interacted' with their 'context(s)'. The opportunity provided was to study both 'cases' – Objective 1; 'investigate BPR within the range of Change Management practices within LGOs' – in order to *come to understand* their activities within the 'important circumstances' of their individual strategies for change, and against the background of contemporary needs to do so. As Paper et al. (2003) found, a case study allows one to 'delve deeper than the literature.'

Yin (2003b: 15) states that the 'most important' application will be to '*explain* the presumed causal links in real-life interventions' in order to provide 'the explanations (that) would link program implementation with program effects' (ibid) – have the BPR *programs* delivered the 'Building on Excellence' (BonE; CityC's term) or 'Service Redesign' change *effects* in both LGOs? – but a more 'realist' (Miles & Huberman, 1994:4) approach was to identify *relationships* that might then be interpreted to 'provide a *causal description* of the forces at work' (ibid), or as Hartley (1994: 212) says:

'The strength of case studies lies especially in their capacity to explore social processes as they unfold in organizations.'

The time-frame was also opportune with, through 2004, 2005 and 2006, both organisations becoming involved in BPR or Service Redesign (SRD; CountyC) training, to assist in enabling their change programmes to commence, and therefore providing valuable 'preunderstanding' (Gummesson, 1991) of the context and relevant organisational issues:

'The disciplines from which the researcher comes, as well as his or her work experiences, will have a strong influence upon the research strategy that is favoured' (Remenyi, et al., 1998: 100).

Hartley (ibid: 218) advises one to gain a 'general overview of the structure and functioning of the organization,' suggesting the option of, say, 'half a dozen 'orientation' interviews' as one means to achieve that 'overview'. In my case that 'overview' had been gained in the same way as that 'preunderstanding', above, through other involvements within both co-operating organisations.

In CountyC's case, the individual students' projects became the individual 'case(s)', whereas CountyC itself would be the 'unit of analysis' (Yin, 2003b: 22-26), and the 'time boundaries' (ibid: 26), would be those delineated by the duration of the individuals' projects – on the assumption they achieve(d) completion – or as far as the point at which they can be assumed to have ended, with or without that 'completion.'

With one of BPR's fundamental tenets being 'dramatic' (*improvements in performance*; Hammer & Stanton, 1995: 3), it was reasonable also to employ 'purposive sampling' (Saunders, et al., 2000: 174) to seek out any 'critical cases' where BPR (CityC) or SRD (CountyC) has had a significant impact, because they 'make a point dramatically (or because they are important)' (ibid).

These *critical cases* were to be provided by the training cohorts of both LGOs as their trainees embarked upon (or continued with) their selected change projects. In CountyC's case this cohort (2006) consisted of eighteen personnel, all of whom completed an initial 'benchmarking' questionnaire (see Appendix 7) to establish their levels of knowledge, understanding and experience, prior to the commencement of SRD training (May to July, 2006). CityC, however, having planned a series of training sessions for September 2006, subsequently cancelled those (e-mail and Voicemail, Aug. 18th) through 'lack of numbers.' Until more information became available on how this might

be progressed, I had to acknowledge this, also, as additional evidence of BPR's viability within that organization. This issue brought reality to the initial point that the data for this analysis would come from within 'one or both' of the target organisations, but, had CityC resumed their BPR training programme, the same, minimally modified, initial questionnaire would have been applied there also.

Given Gershon's (2004: 29) *agreement* for 'the whole of local government (to deliver) a stretching but achievable ... minimum level of annual efficiencies by 2007-08,' such *impact analysis* – the assessment of the 'impact of proposed change(s) on their own organisation' (Elexon) – might identify where any *critical cases* of LGOs' implementation of BPR/SRD had delivered those *efficiencies*; has the implementation of BPR/SRD enabled these already 'Excellent' Councils* to improve even further?

(* CityC moved from 'Good' to 'Excellent' with their 2004/05 CPA.)

NB From this point the terms BPR and SRD were considered interchangeable, although the use of BPR will predominate. The term Service Redesign was favoured by the County Council for reasons of *acceptability*. This became apparent during the delivery of training when the leaders of their Change Management Team (CMT) informed the University of Derby (UoD) tutors that use of the term 'Business Process Reengineering' (BPR) was 'less acceptable.' This in itself provided an illustration of the contextual, if not also cultural, differences obtaining between two otherwise geographically close LGOs.

Whilst the purposive sample was primarily those two training cohorts, a further opportunity and additional 'access' was gained with a London Borough Council (LBC) for a supplementary one-off interview – held on Friday, 28th July, 2006. This approach followed LBC's presentation at the London GovNet Conference on 28th June, 2006, where they reported on their 'successes' with BPR. Whilst LBC might not themselves have claimed to be exercising 'best practice' within their field, on their website they did claim to have progressed

'From 'weak' to 'good' in 18 months – and 'getting even better,' under the banner, 'Improvement Continues.'

In her paper 'Building Theories from Case Study Research', Eisenhardt (1989: 536) states that 'The case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings,' and that (citing Yin, 1984) case studies 'can involve either single or multiple cases, and numerous levels of analysis.'

In the same paper she also states that an 'initial definition of the research question, in at least broad terms, is important in building theory from case studies.'

Yin (2004: xiv) makes the distinction between the "case" and the "case study", where, 'The "case" is the real-life set of events from which data will be drawn. The case can be a concrete affair.' In contrast, 'the "case study" is the substance of your research inquiry, consisting of your research questions, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, interpretations, and conclusions' (ibid: xiv).

On this basis there were two differing 'single settings'; the two 'case studies' of CityC and CountyC, with, in each 'setting', a difference in the 'cases' presented. In CountyC's case, the 'cases' were the individual 'concrete' projects of the 2006 SRD cohort; whereas in CityC's case, the 'case' itself evolved from the potential of a similar 'cohort' of BPR projects, into the more general issue of where the Council-wide approach to BPR was going.

Within this study, the 'initial' proposal had been to 'test Hammer & Champy's (2001: 2) assertion that 'Re-engineering is, in fact, one of the success stories of business history,' but in the context of its employment within UK local government change programmes.' In broad terms, it was to establish if BPR was 'alive and well' (ibid) within local government?', and therefore whether it had been the 'enormous success' (ibid: 5) that local authorities had proclaimed, or at least intended, BPR to be, within that context. Those broad

aims were then translated into the specific research objectives (repeated earlier) and embracing the two participating organisations – the research focus.

Mintzberg (1979: 585) noted that 'No matter how small our research sample or what our interest, we have always tried to go into organizations with a well-defined focus – to collect specific kinds of data systematically.' The 'well-defined focus' of this research was to be found in those primary research objectives.

'Without a research focus, ...' as Eisenhardt (ibid) says, 'it is easy to become overwhelmed by the volume of data' (p. 536).

However, Eisenhardt's multiple case approach was challenged by Dyer and Wilkins because it 'neglects some of the strengths of the classic case study method' (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991: 613). Their criticism of Eisenhardt's use of 'multiple cases (contexts)' was that it focused 'so much on the constructs developed and their measurability that we often miss the context, the rich background of each case,' because, the more 'contexts a researcher investigates, the less contextual insight he or she can communicate' (ibid: 614). This would result, they suggested – because of the *constraints* of the 'number of cases being studied' – in descriptions that would be 'rather "thin", focusing on surface data rather than deeper social dynamics'; what Light (1979) called the 'deep structure' of social behaviour. In simple terms, this was a breadth versus depth argument.

In this research, however, the 'number of cases' examined were primarily in the same two (organisationally similar) 'contexts' – CityC and CountyC – therefore the ensuing descriptions were less likely to be 'thin'; and the additional concern expressed (Dyer & Wilkins, ibid: 615) over the difficulty of understanding the 'political behavior' (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988) – because of the 'several cases' (Dyer & Wilkins, ibid) from which examples were chosen – was equally less likely, because in this *case* the *political behaviour* would all, primarily, be within the same two 'contexts', those same

'social settings'. This research's strategy is aligned with Hartley (ibid) who suggests case studies can be 'theoretically exciting', 'meaningful' and data-rich,' and she challenges the 'simplistic' argument that they lack 'rigour and reliability and that they do not address the issues of generalizability' by saying that this 'level and type of argument is totally outmoded' (p. 208).

5.6 Choice of Method

Whilst there had been a small amount of quantitative data collection – e.g. the initial questionnaire with CountyC – the predominant 'method' in this study was to focus on the generation of 'non-numerical data' (Saunders, et. al., 2007: 145), so it is legitimate to claim that, to some extent, the *research choice* had nonetheless been 'multiple methods'. However, Saunders et al. point out that the term 'multi-method' is 'restricted within either a quantitative or qualitative world view,' so it would be more legitimate to describe this research choice as a 'multi-method qualitative study' (ibid). Patton (2002: 68) is more sanguine about this and sees no need to be a 'qualitative methods purist,' advocating instead a 'large repertoire of research methods,' which can include (e.g.) 'analyses of quantitative data' and 'in-depth interviewing.' This point is emphasized because two items (Hammer & Stanton, 1995; Kettinger et al., 1997) emerged during the research and both were used to gather supplementary numerical data to support the 'in-depth interviews':

'Multiple methods and a variety of data types can contribute to methodological rigor' (Patton, ibid).

The choice of semi-structured interviews for Stage 2 of data capture was based on the knowledge of what the participants in each case had been doing by that time. In CountyC's case, most had completed their Learning Through Work (LTW) project assignments and, following assessment by a fellow tutor, these provided the topic lead for those particular participants. In CityC's case the interviewees were members of CityC's 'Pilot Group' trainees, plus the new Change Managers and the Head of Change Management. In both cases a similar 'guide' was used to list the 'questions or issues that [were] to be

explored in the course of the interview' (Patton, 2002: 343), see Appendices 8 and 9.

The style of the interviews was a mixture of 'formal' and 'informal' (Holden & Lynch, 2004), or 'conversational' (Patton, *ibid*: 342), where some of the questions were allowed to 'flow from the immediate context.' In addition to the 'guided' structure, in both cases all interviews commenced with a statement of the background, purpose, legitimacy and anonymity of the process, and then by the completion of the 'BPR definition' sentence, and then the Hammer and Stanton (1995) 'Organizational Readiness' self-diagnostic questionnaire.

All interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

The possibility of repertory grids had been considered but rejected because of the difficulty that:

'...it is quite complex, both for the researcher to use and for the respondent to complete' (Bryman & Bell, 2003: 134).

Another aspect was its requirement for respondents to 'base their responses on a common set of stimuli' (*ibid*: 135), which was considered inappropriate for this study where participants were requested to talk more freely, albeit within the context of semi-structured interviews.

This choice of primarily qualitative method is supported by a detailed appendix (see Appendix 10) using Marshall and Rossman's '20 standards for judging qualitative study reports' (1995: 146-148).

5.7 Time Horizon

The investigation of the two Councils was to be 'Cross-sectional', rather than 'Longitudinal' (Saunders, et al., 2007: 148), but with the intention of studying the progress of the SRD/BPR training participants, as they pursued their own redesign/re-engineering projects over the succeeding 12-18 months – '(Even)

with time constraints it is possible to introduce a longitudinal element to your research' (ibid). This time-frame was chosen for three key reasons:

- a) the initial 3-year duration of the researcher's PhD funding (what Patton – 2002: 68 – calls the 'constraints of resources and time');
- b) the advantageous parallel timing of the two LGOs' BPR/SRD training and change initiatives, and;
- c) if their 'management [was] serious about reengineering' (Hammer & Champy, 2001: 118), then (it) 'usually takes a year' (ibid), so the time 'constraint' should not, in theory, have been an impediment.

5.8 Research Access

The strong contacts previously built within both LGOs resulted in my being granted the desired research 'access' for this evaluation from the outset. The existing customer/supplier and *partnership* arrangements between UoD and the two sponsoring LGOs inevitably resulted in numerous kaizenesque (Imai, 1997) discussions on all sides, as we continually strove to improve their respective HE programmes, but this position was not abused by overtly attempting to manipulate the 'phenomenon of interest' (Patton, 2002: 21), e.g. their change programmes. It had to be acknowledged, however, that any such conversations or discussions would unavoidably have potential to *influence* the 'phenomenon of interest' (ibid), and that in fact the very nature of some of those conversations and discussions might have been attempting to create such influence.

5.9 Data Collection

The data for this analysis has '(typically) come from fieldwork' (Patton, 2002: 4) within, primarily, both of the target organisations – from 'observations and interviews out in the real world(s)' (ibid: 11) of those LGOs:

'...open-ended responses permit one to understand the world as seen by the respondents' (ibid: 21).

At the outset it had been considered that this would be a Qualitative Inquiry from the viewpoint of a 'non-participant observer' (ibid: 4); what Moustakas (1995: 82-83) calls 'Being-In'...'I enter with the intention of understanding and accepting perceptions and not representing my own views or reactions':

'Evaluative research, quite broadly, can include any effort to judge or enhance human effectiveness through systematic data-based inquiry' (Patton, 2002: 10).

However, this was of necessity reviewed because, whilst there might have been no intention to manipulate the 'phenomena of interest' (ibid: 21), nor to represent 'my own views or reactions,' it was unreasonable to maintain that this would be the case when:

- a) the CityC Change Management Team (CMT) had sought my 'feedback' after at least one of their initial 'Highways' workshops;
- b) I had been engaged in teaching on the CityC's Management Development Programme, one declared aim of which was to 'promote organisational change' within CityC (Dexter, et al., 2006), and;
- c) I was also involved with CountyC in the actual training of some of their own personnel in Service Redesign (SRD – 'reengineering') techniques.

So, whilst not qualifying as an actual 'participant', at the very least I might have *influenced* the thinking and/or actions of some of these LGOs' personnel:

'To observe is to interact, so the "scientific" detachment of structuralists or any other rationalist position is untenable' (Appignanesi & Garratt, 1995: 79).

Given therefore that I had continued as part of the teaching team for the CityC's bespoke management and leadership development programme, *and* had contributed to CountyC's Service Redesign training programme, it was

impossible to continue to support a fully 'non-participant observer' standpoint. By any account I was 'participating', even if indirectly, as 'the very act of observation influences what is seen' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 39). I was, at the very least, 'being with' (Moustakas, *ibid*).

The so-called *fly on the wall* 'position' was therefore equally 'untenable', as the fly becomes a distraction, an irritant, even, because people do *know* that it is there. I needed to *be* 'in', amongst those researched, at least to the extent that any distraction was minimised and the *fly*, when *off the wall* (and disguised as a 'human') became therefore less visible.

The overall structure of the research was as follows:

5.9.1 Stage 1 – Discovery/Exploratory

Linking back to the '*form*' (Yin, 2003b: 7) of the research questions, the initial aim was to consider which of Kipling's (1902) 'Six Honest Serving Men' were relevant to the task. I was asking "'who," "what," "where," "why," or "how" questions' (Yin, *ibid*) regarding BPR activities.

This was carried out through a variety of means (including access to documentation; interviews with Senior Managers, Council Change Managers, Training & Development Managers and line managers; observation of meetings; participation (as both tutor and observer) in training events; questionnaires with project leaders) to establish, in broad terms, who was doing what, where and why they were doing it, and, to some degree, how they were approaching BPR:

CountyC: an initial questionnaire was used to gain an insight into the current (pre-SRD training; see Appendix 7) level of understanding of BPR and other change/quality mechanisms; why the participants were involved in the programme; and their perceptions as to why CountyC were adopting this method of (relatively) radical change.

In this case also, I was part of the teaching team on the SRD/BPR training programme, from May to July 2006.

(NB Within the County Council Training and Change Management units, BPR was referred to as 'Service Redesign' [SRD], but 'BPR' has been used here interchangeably.)

In CountyC's case, the question of who was doing what, where and why they were doing it, and, to some degree, how they were approaching BPR, was answered primarily by the submission of 'Learning Through Work' (LTW) assignments to a colleague (leader of the Service Redesign/SRD training, SRT), which – after his initial, formal 'academic feedback' – were passed to me for follow-up through planned face-to-face interviews. These took place from December 2006 through to March 2007, and covered most of the SRT cohort (12 out of 18 participants).

CityC: attendance at consultants' early meetings with CityC personnel (inc. their Highways Dep't) was agreed, to observe the design approach, both by the consultants and the Council, and to be 'in at the start' of the process. With the unfortunate loss of the opportunity to be present during the training of CityC's 'Pilot Group', the initial data collection was via interviews with the (then) two new, 'temporary', change managers, and the head of CityC's change management team. As with CountyC, relevant documentation – Customer Service Review, Change Management Strategy, Workforce Development Plan 2007/2010 – was also made freely available.

BoroughC: additional access was gained to a south London borough council (LBC), following their presentation at a GovNet event (June 28th 2006) on their successes with BPR – interview with Council Leader and Director of Customer and Corporate Services on 28th July 2006 – and a copy of that 'presentation' was also supplied.

5.9.2 Stage 2 – Projects

CountyC: following the UoD-provided BPR (SRD) Training (May-July 2006) and the submission of their LTW (Learning Through Work) projects, in-depth interviews were held during Dec. '06 and Jan./Feb./March '07 with the bulk of the course participants (12) to provide further feedback on those projects, and to question them more deeply on their progress (or lack of) to date:

'Qualitative researchers rely quite extensively on in-depth interviewing' (Marshall & Rossman, 1999: 109).

The questions/interview design focused on the CSF/CFF* emerging from the research to date and from the literature. These interviews were followed up approximately one year later to gather outcomes and results as part of the 'Impact Analysis'. (* CFF – 'Critical Failure Factors'; Al-Mashari & Zairi, 1999.)

CityC: following the cancellation of the second and third tranches of BPR training, in-depth interviews were held with senior CityC managers (Change Management, Training, Director/Chief Officer level) and operational managers who had been part of the 'Pilot Group', focusing on those same areas of; their understanding of BPR, leadership issues, and the 'readiness' of the Council to embrace change at this more radical end of the TQM-BPR spectrum. As with CountyC, these in-depth interviews were audio-recorded, then transcribed verbatim, prior to review and subsequent 'Template Analysis' (Symon & Cassell, 1998: 118-134; King & Cassell, 2007). The 'verbatim' aspect was primarily for the purposes of accuracy, or fidelity – 'the ability of the investigator later to reproduce exactly the data as they become evident to him or her in the field' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 240; Brown, 2007) – and later reference: 'clearly the greater fidelity can be obtained using audio or video recordings' ... 'the authenticity of which cannot later be denied' (ibid: 240/241).

More importantly perhaps, my personal approach to the interviews was a preference to fully engage with the interviewee, rather than have my head down for the bulk of the time, scribbling away making inadequate and

inaccurate notes of only a fraction of what was said. Whilst Lincoln and Guba (1985: 241), however, 'do not recommend recording except for unusual reasons,' the advances in technology since this view was posited have increased the convenience and reliability of that process. For example, whilst they claim as one of their opposing arguments that 'finding the right spot on the tape for this purpose [in order to 'return to an earlier point'] is a difficult task,' with 'tape' no longer the medium of choice, the ability to find precise locations from a digital recording using a PC has obviated this 'difficulty'.

City Homes (ex-CityC Housing Dep't): A further opportunity arose regarding 'City Homes' – a CityC ALMO (Arms-Length Management Organisation) – where the researcher was invited to a presentation on a 'process-based' change initiative – Thursday, 7th Dec., 2006. This opportunity was followed by others within this ALMO; e.g. to assist a BPR training day on 17th May 2007, subsequent observational involvement, and the chance to interview two participants.

In both main cases (Councils), this stage of data collection continued until sufficient data was deemed to have been gathered; the indication of this being that 'no new information is forthcoming' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 202) from the projects/interviews.

Consequently the original plan was to hold periodic, 1:1 interviews with selected (but possibly all) participants, spaced probably (but not necessarily) at six-month intervals. Those interviews were designed to be 'semi-structured' because – as with structured interviewing – whilst there was likely to be a 'series of [largely] pre-established questions' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 68), I sought to go beyond the allied 'limited set of response categories' (ibid), but rather, as with 'unstructured interviewing', to utilize an approach that could 'provide a greater breadth of data..., given its [the research's] qualitative nature' (ibid: 74).

Having said that, the unstructuredness was not such that the interviews were solely 'conversational' (Patton, 2002: 342), nor so 'open-ended' (ibid) as to

lose their purposiveness (Saunders, et al., 2000: 174), though many of the questions did 'flow from the immediate context' (Patton, *ibid*). However, 'no plan of battle survives engagement with the enemy,' so this *emergent* nature of that 'flow' was part of the plan, and the initial 'six-month intervals' became approximately one year.

The aim had remained ultimately to test Hammer and Champy's (2001:2) assertions that Reengineering was 'alive and well' within LGOs; that it is 'in fact, one of the success stories of business history' (2001:2); and whether it has been the 'enormous success' (*ibid*: 5) claimed, in this UK, public sector context. To do this, two approaches were utilized.

The first approach was to establish whether what was being claimed as Reengineering or BPR (or SRD) matched the criteria auditable back to Hammer and Champy's original definition of; 'the fundamental re-thinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service and speed.' The key words in this were (and therefore still are) 'fundamental', 'radical', 'dramatic' and, most importantly, 'processes', and the means to establish adherence to this was to ask participants to give *their* definition of BPR by completing the sentence:

'Business Process Re-engineering (or Service Re-Design/SRD) is defined as...'

Using this, the first aim was to understand the actuality – that it really was 'reengineering' being undertaken – in line with the primary objective; (to:) 'investigate BPR within the range of Change Management practices within LGOs' – as opposed to some other, less well defined and more gradual change process, in order to establish the point at which it might then be suggested these LGOs had 'tipped' (Gladwell, 2000), from 'small and cautious steps' (Hammer, 1990) and 'incremental' approaches, over to an essentially more 'radical' BPR.

The second approach was to establish the organisation's 'state of readiness' for embarking upon such a 'radical' process of change, and utilize Hammer and Stanton's (1995: 86-88) suggested tool, 'The Self-Assessment Diagnostic', which covered the three areas of 'Reengineering Leadership', 'Organizational Readiness', and 'Style of Implementation' (see Appendix 11).

5.9.3 Stage 3 – Impact Review

One key issue here was to establish, through further interviews and document analysis, whether 'dramatic' improvements and gains had been made, with supporting evidence. See 'Impact Analysis' (Chapter 7, p. 338) for how this plan had to evolve as the research progressed.

It was during this phase also that a further, emergent, research instrument was used for gauging the participants' views of their project's 'radicalness', based on Kettinger et al's (1997) 'Project Radicalness Planning Worksheet'. In CountyC this was 'tested' with a brand new cohort of SRD trainees, all of whom had reached 'Project Initiation Document' (PID) stage of their proposed projects. These results were grouped to gain a feel for the overall view from that specific new cohort, whilst also acknowledging the statistical problems in doing such an 'average'.

Within CityC, because of the suspension of further BPR training, this was tested with the most senior change manager (since promoted to Head of Service, Customer Service), in a retrospective context. This one questionnaire is considered in greater detail in the 'Impact Analysis' section.

5.10 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis was essentially about reduction, to constituent parts; primarily through template analysis (King & Cassell, 2007):

'Each phase of data analysis entails data reduction as the reams of collected data are brought into manageable chunks, and interpretation as the researcher brings meaning

and insight to the words and acts of the participants in the study' (Marshall & Rossman, 1995: 113).

Yet this process, for me, was not about 'constituent parts'. Constituencies, to some degree, yes, but not constituent parts. It was about the 'whole'. The whole issue of BPR being 'alive and well' in the UK public sector, in this case LGOs, articulated through research objectives and broken into constituent parts, but it was about the whole.

One of (if not) the primary reasons for recording the interviews verbatim was to maximise the potential of an essentially brief and notionally hour(+)-long opportunities to engage in discussion on this subject; robust discussion. Discussion that would have been far less robust – probing and revealing, as they were – had the focus been on capturing, in manuscript, mere inarticulate and inaccurate fragments (<10%, maybe?) of those exchanges.

Listening again later, as I did in each case to 'correct' the draft transcriptions, I occasionally winced at that very robustness, at my 'challenge'. In most cases, however, the interviewees made positive comments regarding those same opportunities – to discuss – opportunities normally (or at least, often) denied them. Many of these were 'off-record', but some were captured and these are a few examples:

- 'But sitting there with you, it takes you out of the culture... So it – it opens you up and you actually think slightly more freely.' (MS/LM1-2)
- 'And you're probably more honest as well. With you. Because sometimes it's difficult to be very honest with someone who is very senior to you, for fear, of pushing things too far; for fear of it not being, accepted. ...we'd love to be able to have this type of conversation with the person that we've listed in here, for example. We'd love to be able to do that. And we'd love to be able to work through those issues and move things forward, but I'm not quite sure how it would be received.' (ET/LM1-2)
- '...it's been – it's nice to have an opportunity just to say, "This is how I see it," because you don't do that when you're at work.' (RT/Non-Mgr)

- 'I think that it's been really useful for a few reasons. One because it's made me think, more and more about, the project that we've – we've been working on [Name] and I and perhaps, that we need to go back to the beginning and, think about what we're doing, and funnily enough, I have actually got a meeting with that department this afternoon...' (BH/LM1-2)
- 'Sorry to be having a bit of a dump, really, because that was an opportunity to, um, talk about some frustrations that I don't always, get a chance to talk about.' (EM/HoS)
- 'I've really enjoyed that again.' (FB/CMT)

This was the 'richness' of the whole.

Throughout the course of an interview one could *sense* the essence of corporate cause-and-effect. Not in the sense of positivistic causal links, but in the chaos and uncertainty of the corporate world; or, even, the order and stability of corporate certainty, within the chaos of an uncertain world. In modern parlance one might say; "Whatever..."

Whatever; whoever; wherever; why-ever; whenever; however; Kipling, again. Those 'six honest serving men', serving the cause (and effect?) of analysis. This drew me back to that fundamental positivism-to-non-positivism spectrum – 'QUANTS v QUALS' (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) – and the compatibility versus incompatibility argument of the 'paradigm wars'. Intuitively, I believed, I had settled on pragmatism, and I was with Rorty (Fearn, 2005: 154) on that, I didn't want to 'encourage them'. I believed, as Einstein had, that 'you can't count everything that counts, and everything that counts can't be counted.'

What 'counted', in my case (cases), were the interactions within each of those robust interviews. I always came away sensing the richness of the whole. And yet, somehow, those wholes had to be analysed; not quantitatively, but qualitatively. Some form of reductivism would obtain – 'selecting, pruning, editing, commenting, interpreting, delivering judgements' – involving the 'prejudices of (this) narrator' (Schama, 1992: 322). But only so far. I could not – must not – lose the everyday experiences of the real worlds of the

participants, wherein lay the richness of the data. As Gleick (1988: 6) said, 'Everyday experience and real pictures of the world have become legitimate targets for inquiry.' In these uncertain but real worlds, for me at least, the positivist/quantitative case finally foundered. Gleick again: 'chaos eliminates the Laplacian fantasy of deterministic predictability' (ibid). There was just too much going off. Yet, from this 'too much', some analysis must be attempted.

But what form of qualitative analysis can capture the 'overall impression upon leaving'? Whole-sense analysis? No. Some form of reductivism had to be used. The reductivism of *this* narrator. My perceptions. My interpretation of what 'counted'. This was *my* research, and I needed to do my 'own thing' (Robson, 2002: 43). Somewhere within this *too-muchness*, I needed to seek out the 'order *masquerading* as randomness' (Gleick, 1988: 22). What might be those 'initial conditions' upon which BPR within LGOs might be so 'sensitively dependent'? Was it possible to identify the 'nails', for the want of which BPR would be 'lost'?

Marshall (1984: 116; cited in Bryman & Bell, 2003: 293) described 'herself as an 'interpretor' rather than a manipulator of data,' someone who, inductively, is:

'...concerned with capturing other people's meanings rather than testing hypotheses.'

In discussing the 'nature of qualitative research' Bryman and Bell (2003: 279) commence by saying that it is a strategy that 'usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data,' adding that:

'As a strategy it is inductivist, constructionist, and interpretivist, but qualitative researchers do not always subscribe to all three of these methods.'

Whether I 'always subscribe to all three' of those methods is debatable, but it appears to be the case this time, whilst acknowledging some limitations.

The process consisted of gathering, cross-checking and analysing the findings from the breadth and depth of data gathered. Analysis was both 'thematic' (King & Cassell, 2007) – seeking evidential correlations with those pre-established criteria, and CSF/ CFF previously identified – and emergent, identifying any new issues (contextual, cultural) arising from the discussions and observations:

'In the very act of constructing data out of experience, the qualitative researcher singles out some things as worthy of note and relegates others to the background' (Wolcott, 1994: 13).

The process began with verbatim transcription of the interviews by a third party. On receipt of the transcriptions the recordings were also listened to again from end to end, whilst correcting the detail of the transcripts (missing or misinterpreted words or phrases) in manuscript. The typed versions were then corrected in the finest detail so they were as accurate as possible. The transcripts were then analysed, initially using the 'themes' from the Literature Review, plus capturing any new or emergent themes. During this stage of the process the digital recordings were listened to again, sometimes repeatedly, to clarify any intonation or interpretation issues where the meaning may have been in doubt. Theme 'cards' (examples in Appendix 12) were created for every interviewee and encoded so the precise words/phrase/quotation could be reclaimed as necessary. It was during this stage that some of the issues (quotations, etc.) within the corrected transcripts were inevitably 'relegated to the background,' the remainder – those deemed relevant – being transferred to 'cards'.

After all the interviews had been analysed and those relevant extracts transferred on to cards, an Analysis Process Review Meeting was held in December 2007 to distil the major themes and validate the initial interpretations (see Analysis Stage 2 for full details of this stage of the process).

Subsequently, 'interpretations' were formed – where possible, but not always, into those 'major themes' – what Prasad (1993; cited in Bryman & Bell, 2003: 283/284) described as 'grouping together incidents, events, or pieces of conversation related to a particular theme.' At this stage also 'others', again, were 'relegated', as part of that interpretivist approach, and this became the research's 'Conclusions'.

This is where some criticisms could occur, should these interpretations be seen to be 'too impressionistic and subjective' (ibid: 299), where:

'...these criticisms usually mean that qualitative findings rely too much on the researcher's often unsystematic views about what is significant and important, and also upon the close personal relationships that the researcher frequently strikes up with the people studied.'

These possibilities cannot be denied. However, this is countered by the robustness of the process being 'tested' and challenged at various stages throughout the final year. Personal 'relationships' were not an issue, as they were based on prior inter-organisational co-operation, they were not so 'close' as to lose the purpose of the interviews taking place.

5.11 Stage 4 – Member Checking

Themes were then synthesised from all the cards (approximately 700) into 'Conclusions' (see sep. section), using a form of presentation, based on Brown (2007), using direct quotations from the anonymised participants.

The summarised findings were subsequently 'tested' with the Heads of Change Management in both Councils. Owing to the sensitivity of the initial findings, each manager was met separately on grounds of confidentiality. The results of these two meetings are précised at the end of the main 'Impact Analysis' section.

5.12 Data Presentation

It was decided to present the findings by 'stage'; within those stages by Case Study (Council), and within each case study by theme. The style of data presentation is initially descriptive, using specific quotes from participants (Brown, 2007), combined then with analysis and interpretation. However, whilst the philosophical approach is interpretive, the data presentation avers towards the actuality, in order to retain the richness provided by the interview process (Wolcott, 1994).

5.13 Assuring the Quality of the Research Process

5.13.1 Reliability

According to Bryman and Bell (2003: 32), 'reliability' is:

'concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable.'

In qualitative research, Bryman and Bell (p. 35) call this 'dependability', and in terms of 'external reliability', they say that the 'degree to which a study can be replicated ... is a difficult criterion to meet in qualitative research' (p. 288).

The reliability in this case was achieved by the application of a relatively consistent but semi-structured approach, and by adopting an appropriate 'empathetic stance' (Saunders, et al., 2007), relevant to each participant. No two 'conversations' would have been the same – either between participants, or if different interviewers had seen these same interviewees – but in the context of these situations, *and* that a group of my 'peers' have acted as 'auditors' (Bryman & Bell, 2003: 289), the results are considered dependable.

5.13.2 Validity

Similarly, in qualitative research Bryman and Bell (2003: 288) suggest that validity equates to 'transferability', and since such research 'typically entails

the intensive study of a small group, or of individuals sharing certain characteristics (i.e. depth rather than breadth),' they say that 'qualitative findings tend to be oriented to the contextual uniqueness ... of the social world being studied' (ibid: 289). Whilst these two Councils (cases) were 'unique' in respect of their individual identities, they also 'share certain characteristics' with many other LGOs across the UK. This does not infer that the results would be transferable, but, as Lincoln and Guba (1985: 124) state:

'the degree of *transferability* is a direct function of the *similarity* between the two contexts' (their emphases).

That there are similarities between UK LGOs in the broader sense is clear, but it would be up to each individual LGO to consider the potential for transferability to (or generalization within) its own 'unique' context, or 'social world'.

5.13.3 Bias

How do I know my own bias? At times I am a rational-linear thinker, at others, lateral. The rational-linear part of me might accept BPR as a 'reasonable' change process, no different in principle from TQM, Six Sigma, IIP, EFQM, or 'change management' generally. In other words, I might be 'biased' in favour. The lateral part of me would want me to go 'off-piste' and search for all the other angles prior to implementation – if not 'biased' against, then at least cautious.

I had no wish to 'make it work' in those organizations through the aegis of this research, although some might perceive potential for a conflict of interest through my involvement with training on the topic in at least one of the co-operating LGOs.

There was also the issue of 'participant bias', or interviewees saying 'what they thought their bosses wanted them to say' (Saunders, et al., 2007: 149). Whilst normally this might be 'designed out' by ensuring the 'anonymity of

respondents' (ibid), this was not possible in these cases, as far as the Change Management Teams (CMT) were concerned, as they knew who had been trained, and therefore 'approached', but anonymity of respondents' responses was maintained throughout by 'coding' their identities. Similarly, and primarily because of the previously established 'trust' between interviewer and interviewees, participant bias was deemed to be minimal or non-existent.

5.13.4 'Goodness': Value and Logic

Marshall and Rossman (1995) discuss the issues of 'value' and 'logic' of qualitative research in the context of defending the 'soundness' of the project and 'demonstrating the usefulness' of the work. Whilst initially aimed at developing a logic to 'defend' a proposal, their subsequent '20 standards' are utilized here to assist in judging the 'goodness' of this qualitative study' (ibid: 146-148) – see Appendix 10.

5.13.5 Ethics

At all stages of this research every participant was assured that the conduct of the research would comply with the University of Derby's code of conduct for research ethics:

'As a reflection of its core organisational values the University of Derby is concerned to protect the rights, dignity, safety and privacy of research participants, the welfare of animals and the integrity of the environment. The University of Derby is also concerned to protect the health, safety and academic freedom of researchers and the reputation of the University as a centre for appropriately conducted, high quality research. Underpinning the standards are the ethical imperatives of Do No Harm (non-maleficence) and Do Good (beneficence)' (<http://www.derby.ac.uk/research/ethics>).

In addition each participant was assured of both organisational and individual anonymity, and as such all identities have been randomly 'coded' to avoid personal identification. Whilst the difficulty of organisational anonymity is accepted, both have also been 'renamed' within all the core text. Also, all

participants were offered (and some accepted) complete verbatim transcripts of the interviews in which they took part.

5.13.6 Testing

Lincoln & Guba (1985: 314) describe 'member checking' as both formal and informal, and where:

'data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility' (ibid).

In this investigation a short but 'formal' session was arranged between myself, one member of the 'supervision team' (primarily to take notes), and the Head of Change Management in each participating LGO, respectively, in order that the 'claim to credibility' could be more 'meaningfully' entertained (ibid: 315) – see Analysis & Findings, Stage 4, 'Member Check', Testing (8.1, p. 369).

5.14 Summary

To summarise it might be useful to reconsider the 'onion' from the inside-out, or approximately in reverse. Starting with the objectives of the research (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005), the basic strategic choice was for a Case Study (Hartley, 1994) based on qualitative enquiry using mixed methods (Patton, 2002). Time horizons were primarily cross-sectional (Saunders, et al., 2007) but augmented by previous experience and interventions over a period of two years. Data collection was in the main based on in-depth interviews, plus observation and secondary data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Moustakas, 1995; Patton, 2002), but planned and emergent questionnaires were also used in support. Primary analysis was thematic ('template'; King & Cassell, 2007), with later Impact Analysis (group and individual), followed by representative conclusion testing. The research approach was primarily Inductive, with elements of semi-structure – summarised in Table 5.4, overleaf:

Table 5.4: Summarised Methodology

Summarised Methodology	
Choice of Method	Mixed methods; primarily Qualitative, with some Quantitative data in support
Time Horizons	Cross-sectional, with interventions over two years
Data Collection & Analysis	Initial questionnaire (one case only) In-depth interviews (28) – mainly semi-structured Observation, plus Secondary data Emergent supplementary surveys (27; 27; 22 respondents) Primary thematic ('template') analysis; impact analysis Conclusion 'testing'
Strategies	Case Studies (aligned with Hartley, 1994)
Approaches	Inductive, with some semi-structure
Philosophies: (Ontology & Epistemology)	Interpretive Ontology: Social Construction Epistemology: Subjectivist