Enterprise unleashed? Exercising power through isomorphism in the passive fire protection industry

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the passive fire protection industry which is a sector of construction that has previously been neglected by researchers. I use insights from ethnographic research to present the challenges and daily struggles individuals experience as they contend with working in a deregulated environment. My analysis contributes to the scholarship on Institutional Theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), which has been traditionally used to discuss how organizations become homogenised (similar) through isomorphic pressures (coercive, normative, mimetic) as they seek to enhance their legitimacy and reduce uncertainty. In contrast to previous accounts of Institutional Theory which have ignored a critical understanding of power, I draw on Foucault (1977) to argue that isomorphic pressures exercise disciplinary power by spreading an 'enterprise discourse' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). Enterprise endeavours to reinvent employees as autonomous, responsible and self-regulating subjects.

Although the enterprise discourse encourages self-regulation, in the passive fire industry, it became a counter-discourse as individuals call for more government regulation. In a 'lighter touch' environment (UKAS, 2004: 1), the principles of enterprise (choice, autonomy) were both endorsed and turned back on to the government as employees used it to engage in non-conformance. Consideration of these issues enables a contribution to be made by highlighting the limitations of conventional accounts of Institutional Theory. I suggest that gaps in scholarship can be filled by critically examining the role of isomorphic pressures in homogenising and normalising conduct; this also points to the impact such regimes can have on an industry whose main objective is to enhance life and building safety.

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Introduction

Introduction

This thesis provides insights into the working practices and experiences of individuals in the passive fire protection industry; an industry which manufactures and installs passive fire protection products. Passive fire protection is in several senses, unknown. The materials and products, including ceiling panels, cavity wall panels and intumescent paint (PFPF, 2005), are hidden within the fabric of a building, leaving users, and indeed managers and owners, oblivious to them. Nevertheless, it is an industry with interesting characteristics which has faced, and continues to face significant deregulatory pressures.

The purpose of this introduction is firstly to provide a brief description of the context in which the account is situated: the passive fire industry. I provide background details as to where my interest in this industry arose, and I also introduce the theoretical and methodological lens I have taken during the research process. This discussion is linked to the contributions I seek to make in the thesis and this is followed by an outline of the structure of the thesis, which highlights the central themes to be discussed in each chapter.

The Passive Fire Protection Industry: Definition and Overview

The UK construction industry consists of over 250,000 firms which employ around 2.1 million people (BIS, 2009), producing and installing materials and products used in building projects as diverse as domestic house building and transport systems. The workforce consists of clients (house-builders and developers who decide where buildings should be built); designers

(who decide on the detail); suppliers (who manufacture/supply materials) and contractors (who build).

Within the construction sector are those private sector companies engaged in the manufacturing and installation of fire protection. Market research conducted by AMA Research (2007) into active and passive fire protection in the UK shows the estimated value of both sectors is around £1.25 billion. The active fire protection market was valued at approximately £400 million in 2006, compared to the passive sector which was considerably more at £850 million; the main areas of growth being in the commercial market and new buildings, particularly in apartments where the requirement for passive fire protection is much higher (AMA Research, 2007). The passive fire industry is therefore vitally important to the economy in terms of its provision of products which contribute to saving lives and ensuring building stability.

While the industry is primarily concerned with the safety of life, it also seeks to protect the building, its contents, and minimise environmental damage by reducing fire severity (PFPF, 2005). One of the key principles of passive fire protection is 'compartmentalisation' where a building has fire secure compartments which are intended to prevent the growth and spread of fire, as well as maintain building stability (PFPF, 2005: 30). This is especially important in high rise buildings, where the aim is to prevent fire spread between multiple floors.

It is during the initial process of building projects that passive fire protection is installed. The products are 'passive' until there is a fire and even then they do not require any command to

operate. The materials and the products are designed to enable occupants of a building to escape, whilst also ensuring the safety of emergency services such as fire fighters. It is only through the proper installation and subsequent inspection that the effectiveness of these protection measures can be ensured. Once they are installed they are already effectively working because their mere presence acts as the fire prevention strategy. In comparison, 'active' fire protection involves the use of manual or automatic response methods, including smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and sprinklers (PFPF, 2005). These begin working only when they are triggered by a sensation of smoke or heat.

The passive fire protection industry includes four different 'permeable' levels (see Diagram 1). This begins with government policy writers who are responsible for writing and disseminating the regulations for the industry. Government communicates with trade federations who act as an umbrella body as they transfer information to their members who are predominantly trade associations. Due to the quantity of organizations and the size of the industry, it is not possible for the government to meet with every manufacturer, hence the role of trade associations who act as a conduit through which to achieve this. Associations then inform their members who are manufacturers and contractors. This osmosis effect is used in an attempt to ensure that each level within the industry acquires the same best practice standards, whilst also enhancing their knowledge of regulatory policy to ensure compliance (Trade Association Forum, 2006). Additionally, the industry also consists of external bodies which include certification and testing laboratories and also European organizations whose role is to introduce new legislation or change existing legislation.

A diagram to illustrate the industry levels is provided below.

Diagram 1

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                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │   Government    │
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                        ┌────────┴────────┐
                        │      Trade      │
                        │   Federation    │
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       ┌───────────┬────────────┼────────────┬───────────┐
   ┌───┴───┐   ┌───┴───┐    ┌───┴───┐    ┌───┴───┐
   │ Trade │   │ Trade │    │ Trade │    │ Trade │
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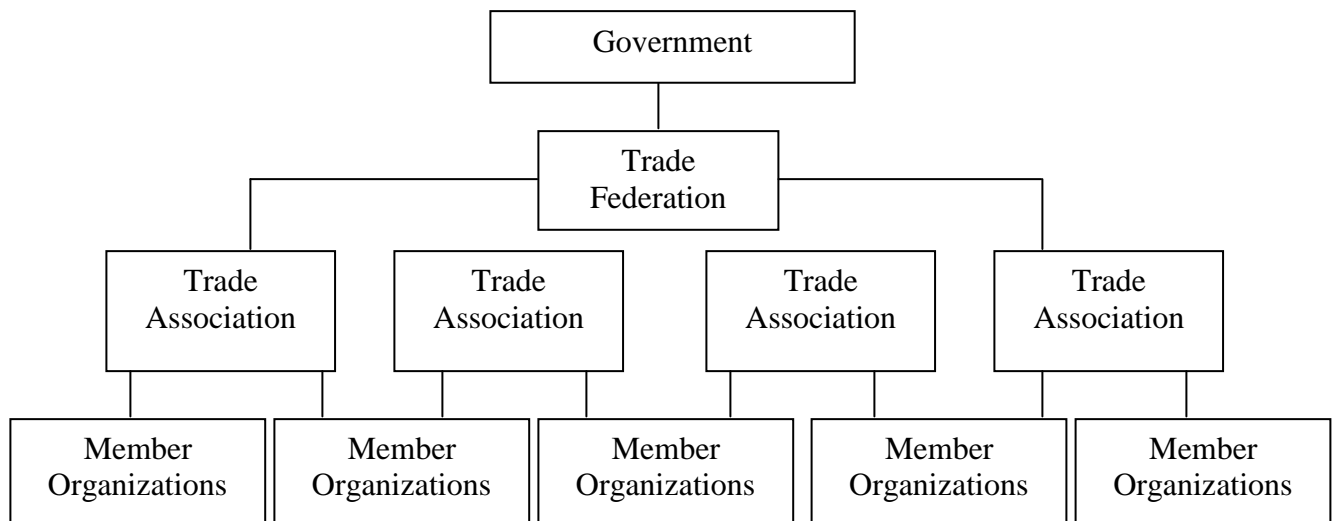
As can be seen from the diagram, the bodies within the industry are all tightly connected with the aim being to improve communication from the government to manufacturing companies. The relationship between each level is intimately connected and this is particularly evident when considering the role played by trade federations and trade associations. The infiltration of knowledge and transference of information which characterises the levels of the industry are widespread as members of one trade association at a particular level can simultaneously belong to another trade association at a different level. For example, a representative of a manufacturer may attend both trade association and trade federation meetings, depending on what is being discussed and whether it is relevant to their business at the time. Third party certification bodies, responsible for testing passive fire protection products are actively involved in the publication of regulatory policy documents, alongside lobbying government officials. They are also members of trade associations so they can support manufacturers who rely upon them to test the quality of their products, but also contribute to enhancing the trade

association's code of practice and facilitating news and events appropriate to the members' activities (Trade Association Forum, 2006).

My decision to select the passive fire industry as the location for investigation is due to a number of different reasons. To begin with, I had significantly good access to all of the levels within the industry because I knew a previous employee of a glass manufacturer who provided the initial introductions and contacts for me. As a result, I was able to meet a range of individuals from different trade bodies, manufacturers and government departments which meant that the opportunity arose to gather in-depth and detailed information which was essential in building up a picture of the industry. The access also meant that I could fulfil my objective of undertaking qualitative research which relied on the usage of semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation. Throughout the thesis I draw on my fieldnotes, recorded interviews and informal conversations to highlight what it was like 'being there' (Van Maanen, 1988), not only as a researcher in the industry, but more importantly to convey the contradictions and challenges which characterised employees' working lives.

My decision can also be justified on the basis that after initial discussions with respondents in the industry I became aware of the pressures associated with deregulation. As I continued to explore this avenue of enquiry, I discovered that the site provided a unique case study on the impacts of the enterprise discourse, as well as providing evidence of isomorphic pressures, a key feature of Institutional Theory. The synergy between the theoretical frameworks and the practice resulted in me realising the contribution I could make to scholarship, especially because there have been no academic studies conducted in this field. The particular

contribution I seek to make will be discussed in a later section of this introductory chapter (pg 12).

The regulation of the passive fire protection industry

The main regulatory document which affects the passive fire industry is referred to as 'Approved Document B' or 'ADB' (ADB, 2006). This document is issued by the government as *guidance* which contains detailed information on fire safety, setting out in minutes/hours the length of time fire protection products, such as a door, would be capable of preventing fire spread before disintegrating or burning. Such methods help to predict the stability, integrity and insulation required for various rooms in a building. ADB is separated in to sections relating to the type of building which the guidance is being used for; these range from residential to industrial facilities, and some even involve advice relating to offshore oil rigs (PFPF, 2005). The document is directed to the entire industry, but each industry sector has different requirements to follow depending on what they are producing or installing. The guidance in ADB is amended to take account of changes in legislation, but the key feature of this document is that it is not mandatory. This means that organizations are under no obligation to fulfil the stated requirements in the way specified in the document, but there is an underpinning expectation that organizations will act with discretion and fulfil them voluntarily. It is stated in the document that:

> …there is no obligation to adopt any particular solution contained in an Approved Document if you prefer to meet the relevant requirements in some other way…(ADB, 2006: 5).

'Some other way' includes a fire engineering approach which The Institute of Fire Engineers define as:

> …the application of scientific and engineering principles, rules [codes], and expert judgement, based on an understanding of the phenomenon and effects of fire and of the reaction and behaviour of people to fire, to protect people, property and the environment from the destructive effects of fire.[1]

Fire engineering involves computer modelling which can be used to prove that because of the design and the use of the building, a lower level of fire protection is possible. This enables cost savings, but still arguably provides essential building and life safety. Ironically, this can result in less usage of passive fire protection products as they are deemed unnecessary because a lower quantity of protection is predicted in advance, using computer simulation. The problem with this approach is that it does not take account of changes to the use or function of a building; it becomes a static approach to fire protection which is only reliable when statistics and predictions are first applied to a building at the construction stage.

Fire engineering is often adopted by developers and architects who want to innovate and design unique buildings; this would not be possible if they followed the ADB's guidance. This is most applicable to iconic buildings which may have multiple floors, complex interiors and are often built at heights which ADB does not cover. The 'Pinnacle', nicknamed the Helter Skelter Tower in London is an example of this. It is set to become London's tallest building with a height of 287.90 metres[2]. Advanced techniques in fire engineering are deemed more effective than standard passive fire protection because it is cost effective and arguably

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[1] http://www.ife.org.uk/about/about/fireengineering
[2] http://www.e-architect.co.uk/london/the_pinnacle.htm

improves the highly complex structural design[3]. This approach to designing and regulating fire safety is known as 'performance-based' which regulates to achieve results, but leaves the 'regulated' to decide how best to achieve these results (May, 2007: 10). The emphasis is on whether a desired level of performance has been achieved as defined by the performance-based rules. In comparison, 'prescriptive-based' regulation entails '…telling the regulated entities and individuals what to do and how to do it' (May, 2007: 9). Prescriptive-based rules tend to be particularistic in terms of specifying the required actions and standards necessary to adhere to them (May, 2007). The suggestions in the Approved Document which 'do not impose any requirements on the management of a building' (ADB, 2006: 9) represents a 'performance-based' approach to regulation. Such an approach fits neatly with the previous and successive governments' regulatory regime including the deregulatory proposals outlined by the Conservative Thatcher government during the 1980s and more recently Labour.

Deregulatory policies – from dependency to autonomy?

The passive fire protection industry, like other sectors (such as financial services, social care, transport) has felt the impact of regulations and changing legislation governing its practices (Ayres and Braithwaite, 1992; Crawford, 2006). One of the most significant impacts followed the election in 1979, of the Thatcherite Conservative government which was committed to deregulation and privatisation. The aim was to enhance competition amongst public sector agencies and increase autonomy and control for local level managers. This sought to minimise the extent to which there was a centralised authority (Hodgson, 2006). At the core of this development was a commitment to eliminating a 'dependency culture' (Heelas, 1991: 74) through laissez-faire management techniques whereby the intervention of the government

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[3] http://www.arup.com/Services/Fire.aspx/

in the regulation of supply and demand was restricted in favour of the free market (Moran, 2001). This was deemed desirable as it allowed the allocation of resources to increase efficiency and competition (Hutter, 2006). This became part of the new 'governance' regime and in particular, public sector governance could be said to have evolved out of the New Public Management (NPM) agenda (Dent et al, 2007). Every public institution (health, education, social services) was subject to market forces in order to reduce their reliance on central state authority; advocating instead that they become 'entrepreneurial managers' (Kolthoff et al, 2007: 404).

Advocates of deregulation argue that such policy proposals are advantageous not only for the recipients of the services, but also for the individuals providing them as it 'lets managers manage' (Hood et al, 2000: 284). The aim is to eliminate bureaucratic 'command and control' type structures (Weber, 1947) and replace them with flexible mechanisms that enable individuals to be held accountable for the choices, costs and risks that they create (Moran, 2001; Bartle and Vass, 2007). This form of governance is less dependent on 'coercion', but instead can be referred to as 'enforced self-regulation' (Hood et al, 2000: 296). This involves:

> …the deployment of heavier regulatory tackle against the incompetent or recalcitrant, while lightening the regulatory yoke over good performers (Hood et al, 2000: 296).

Such a strategy allows regulators to deploy resources to greatest effect by focusing only on areas in need of regulatory inquiry. Governments save resources, whilst organizations welcome the prospect of less onerous enquiries into their practices. But the dangers of relying on this approach are not to be underestimated. Organizations are left to self-regulate and those deemed 'responsible' or 'trustworthy' do not have regular reviews, which may result in them

becoming complacent or failing to handle their mechanisms of control effectively to ensure appropriate actions are undertaken. Such challenges can be applied to the changes occurring in the passive fire industry. Reforms initiated under the Conservative government (1979-1997) and continued under New Labour (1997-2010) included the review, simplification and abolition of regulations. This is reflected in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRO, 2005) which was implemented under John Prescott in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), now known as Communities and Local Government (CLG). It is supported by the Better Regulation Executive (BRE) and has given Ministers the power to reform legislation which 'has the effect of imposing burdens affecting persons in the carrying on of any activity'[4]. In 2006, new primary legislation, the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act (2006) was introduced to establish statutory principles and codes of practice, whilst advocating choice and autonomy. Such orders are known as regulatory reform orders and their aim is to deregulate, supported by self-regulation or voluntary compliance. By focusing on only high risk-based premises and encouraging responsibility for one's own practices, deregulation was predicted to reduce government expenditure on enforcement regimes (HM Government, 2008). The annual net savings for the government from this fire safety regulatory reform was estimated at £53 million (HM Government, 2008: 5).

The commitment to self-regulation has meant that in the passive fire industry, building owners and employees are held accountable for the building's risk assessment and compliance to regulations. As a result, individuals face prosecutions if non-conformance occurs, even though many of them who are held accountable are unsure of their responsibilities. A report conducted by the Chief Fire Officer's Association (CFOA) and discussed by Frank Sheehan

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[4] http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2011/20110006.htm

(Chief Fire Officer of West Midlands Fire Service) identified that as many as 54% of businesses were unaware of their legal obligations under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (1997) and a similar percentage had not undertaken a risk assessment of the building (Sheehan, 2005). Occupiers are often unaware of their duties which implies that relying on self-regulation can result in a lack of conformance and safety because people have insufficient knowledge required which stems from operating in a 'lighter touch' (UKAS, 2004: 1) environment where government intervention is minimal.

Deregulation and enterprise

Deregulation is linked to an 'enterprise discourse' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992); the specific meaning and status of which is ambiguous and open to interpretation. du Gay and Salaman (1992: 627-628) make this clear when they indicate that an enterprise discourse involves numerous features, including '…the progressive enlargement of the territory of the market – of the realm of private enterprise and economic rationality…the reconstruction of a wide range of institutions…[*and*] in particular…their orientation towards the customer'. It also encompasses an attempt to '…exercise a form of rule through the production of certain sorts of human subject' (ibid: 628). Enterprise is therefore both a form of organization and an attempt to reconstitute subjectivity. Subjectivity is taken here to mean individuals' understanding and interpretation of the world (Knights and McCabe, 1999). Most crucially, enterprise is a 'discourse' which is used to encourage individuals to believe that they are 'autonomous' and 'responsible', even though their conduct may be controlled through enterprise.

Discourse has been defined from a variety of perspectives; this includes a traditional, narrow view that perceives it as a form of spoken dialogue, to broader interpretations which emphasises it as a way of thinking and its centrality to the social construction of reality (van Dijk cited in Grant et al, 2001). The latter interpretation argues that discursive practices are part of our everyday behaviour, shaping our actions and practices. This derives from the work of Foucault (1977) who emphasises how inequalities in power can determine '…the production, distribution and consumption of particular texts' (Grant et al, 2001: 7). This is supported by Alvesson and Karreman (2000: 1127) who stated that discourse '…acts as a powerful ordering force in organizations'.

I examine the implementation of the 'enterprise' discourse (du Gay and Salaman, 1992) and its role in reinventing employees as autonomous, self-regulating, responsible, and initiative seeking individuals. The scholarship on enterprise will be discussed more comprehensively in Chapter 2. I will use the enterprise discourse to examine the ways in which it can shape, naturalise and inform actions, as well as consider the implications this has for the exercise of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) within the context of Institutional Theory.

Contributions to knowledge: Critiquing and Advancing Institutional Theory using Foucault (1977)

The particular theoretical lens adopted in this thesis derived from an initial interest in Institutional Theory discussed by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) who used the term 'isomorphism' as a means to explain the ways in which organizations become homogenised (similar) with one another. They discuss isomorphic pressures as three main types: coercive

(the state), normative (professionalisation) and mimetic (copying other organizations). These are viewed as mechanisms which pressure organizations towards similarity in form and practice as they seek to enhance their legitimacy and reduce uncertainty (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

When I began interviewing respondents for this research, I became aware of the existence of isomorphism as it was indirectly referenced in discussions; individuals informed me of the ways in which they felt pressured towards similarity through the influence of the state, trade associations and their competitors. These resonated with the three forms of isomorphic pressures discussed in the literature. Although Institutional Theory seemed viable to explain the initial empirical data I was acquiring, as I continued to conduct the research and analyse the data, I noticed a disparity between theory and practice.

Institutional Theory sat uneasily with the power relations that became more evident as my research progressed. My interest in power originated from my undergraduate and Masters degree where I was encouraged to question taken-for-granted assumptions. My understanding of the practical implications of the exercise of power was brought into sharp focus during a work placement in a SME where I was employed during the summer months of my final year as an undergraduate. I saw at first hand the impact of regulatory compliance in the adoption of quality management system procedures, specifically the European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM) model, as a basic requirement of commercial tendering. Initially it appeared to me that this enhanced the organizations' autonomy as they were empowered to make decisions at the local level. It was only by taking a more critical approach that I could

see that despite the discourse of autonomy, it was absent in practice. Governance and accountability were enhanced through EFQM requirements which sought to encourage 'enterprise' and 'best practice' through the 'excellence model' (Kelemen, 2003).

These early experiences of power led me to take a critical view of the practices emerging through my research which drew my attention to how isomorphic pressures can exercise power and spread the enterprise discourse (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). When I related the notion of power back to the literature on Institutional Theory (Scott, 2008b; Rojas, 2010; Mtar, 2010), I noticed that institutionalists were arguing from the perspective of power as something which is held or possessed by powerful individuals. One of my aims in this thesis was to respond to this gap in scholarship by exploring how a Foucauldian lens on power could critique and advance Institutional Theory. In particular, I chose to focus on how the exercise of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) can shape individuals' subjectivity.

Critical Theory encompasses many different theoretical positions and perspectives, ranging from the early Frankfurt School theorists to post-structuralism which includes the work of Foucault. Critical Theory is concerned with challenging prevailing notions of oppression and domination and seeks to provide alternatives in order to free individuals from the constraints imposed on them (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2008; Cassell and Johnson, 2006; Alvesson et al, 2009). Contemporary critical management studies have gained their inspiration from writers such as Weber and Marx's analysis of the labour process. They precede from the objective that society and social relations are distorted, restricted and impeded by technologies which stem from managerialism (Deetz, 1992). This results in individuals being responsive to the

demands of mass production and consumption '…where human beings tend to become reduced to components in a well-oiled machine' (Alvesson et al, 2009: 6).

I decided to ground the thesis in a critical, Foucauldian-inspired understanding of power which directs our attention away from the preoccupation with power being a possession or a commodity, but instead enables it to be viewed as relational and productive. Foucault (1977) argues that our subjectivity is constituted out of, but is not inescapable from the power/knowledge relations which shape our understanding of the world. By drawing on Foucault (1977), I argue that rather than isomorphism simply being used to explain homogenisation, it can be used to shed light on how individuals' subjectivity is (re)constituted through the spread of the 'enterprise discourse' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). The Foucauldian lens I draw upon advances traditional accounts of Institutional Theory and contributes to recent proposals to bridge institutional and critical scholarship (Willmott, 2011; Lawrence et al, 2011; Dover and Lawrence, 2010). As I combine two theoretical frameworks, it raises some interesting questions by identifying the gaps in our knowledge:

- How does the passive fire industry respond to isomorphic pressures which seek to homogenise practices and enhance legitimacy?

- How can our understanding of isomorphism be advanced by relating it to the exercise of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977)?

- What is role of isomorphism in spreading an 'enterprise discourse' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992)?

- How do individuals respond to the call to be 'enterprising subjects?'

Contributions to Empirical Research

The research site chosen for this thesis enables an empirical contribution to be made. The passive fire industry has not previously been researched in academia, and I have not found any literature which has adopted it as an empirical case study. Despite there being available literature on the construction sector (Jørgensen and Emmitt, 2008; Green and May, 2005; Bresnen, et al, 2005), it has not focused exclusively on the passive fire protection industry. This leaves a gap in our knowledge and understanding of an industry which plays a fundamental role in ensuring protection against life and building safety in the event of a fire. The reason why no academic research has been conducted in this field could be attributed to researchers' lack of awareness regarding the industry's existence. Due to its lack of visibility, it is not a well-known industry, and without previous contacts, one is unlikely to be able to gain access to it.

The research conducted for this thesis therefore provides an empirical contribution by shedding light on an industry that has previously been neglected from academic research. In doing so, it could be a starting point for other researchers who may want to conduct research in this field. Further studies may help to promote debate, discussion and even stimulate some individuals to lobby government on behalf of the industry to encourage regulatory change to occur. By disseminating the challenges experienced by the industry and reporting their findings in this thesis, I would argue that it could be a starting point for improvements to occur, which may prevent, or mitigate the effects of future fire related incidents, and have positive effects on changing attitudes concerning the ways that industries are regulated.

In the following section, I offer a brief outline of the structure of the thesis, indicating the core themes to be discussed in each chapter.

Structure of this thesis

Chapter 2: 'A critical theoretical perspective: power; Foucault and enterprise'

In the next chapter, I introduce scholarship on Critical Theory, in particular the Frankfurt School theorists (i.e. Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno) who tend to adopt a repressive view of power. Power is perceived as leading to the alienation of individuals as they experience dominating and restrictive ideologies which constrains their autonomy (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). I compare this with a Foucauldian understanding of power by distinguishing between sovereign and disciplinary power, the latter leads to self-regulation through the control of one's conduct. I then analyse the role of the enterprise discourse. The enterprise discourse is linked to the political ideals and reform projects most closely associated to the 1980s Thatcher Conservative government (du Gay and Salaman, 1992; Heelas, 1991; Salaman and Storey, 2008). In discussing these issues, the chapter will highlight the interrelationship between enterprise and deregulation, in particular, how the discourse prioritises qualities such as self-regulation, responsibility and flexibility (du Gay and Salaman, 1992).

Although enterprise implies the creation of autonomous and entrepreneurial individuals, such an approach is difficult to uphold when normalisation means that individuals continue to be regulated and monitored against truth regimes and established criteria (Rose, 1989; du Gay, 1996). This draws attention to the micro-effects of power and control which often occur in subtle forms rather than being enacted by those in authority. Power becomes a means of objectifying and institutionalising subjects (Foucault, 1977; 1980) and it is this

conceptualisation of power that is used in the thesis to advance our understanding of the exercise of disciplinary power through isomorphic pressures, which leads to the creation of enterprising and homogenised subjects.

Chapter 3: 'Power: the missing piece of Institutional Theory's jigsaw'

This chapter explores the antecedents of Institutional Theory and draws on the history of scholarship surrounding its development to consider how it has progressed from the 1940s to the 1970s and recognises the shifts from 'old' to 'new' institutionalism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Rather than provide an in-depth analysis of each time period, I have focussed on the key contributions which highlight the most important refinements and amendments which have been made within Institutional Theory. For instance, discussions have occurred about the existence of organizational fields and the prevalence of environmental contingencies leading to homogenisation through isomorphic practices (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), as well as the role of institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana, 2006).

This chapter discusses how 'old' institutionalists (i.e. Selznick, Merton) considered power, particularly regarding the interrelationship between organizations and their environment, before considering how 'new' institutionalists focus on isomorphism. Isomorphism has been used to explain how organizations are subject to power from the state (coercive); professions (normative) and 'model' organizations (mimetic) which leads to homogenisation due to organizations' search for enhanced legitimacy (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Failure to view power as productive and relational (Foucault, 1977) has meant institutional theorists have neglected how isomorphic pressures can also exercise disciplinary power, focussing more

predominantly on how the 'powerful' dominate and influence the behaviour of others. I analyse the language used by institutional theorists (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008b; Rojas, 2010) in order to highlight how they have viewed power and applied it to their work. This enables me to compare it with Foucault's (1977) work, and in doing so, I argue that isomorphism has the potential to shape and reconstitute individuals who become self-regulating; this enhances understanding of how power is exercised through isomorphic pressures, which previous accounts of Institutional Theory have neglected.

Chapter 4: 'We just want someone to care': The effects of methodological approaches and researcher engagement'.

In this chapter, I explore the methods adopted to conduct this research and the progressive emergence of the thesis which stemmed from the completion of an MRes. This provided me with the opportunity to gain preliminary access to the research field and acquire the wealth of contacts I required. As well as identifying how I conducted this research, I also present an account of the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the thesis and identify the theoretical paradigm(s) which this research draws upon. I also examine how my chosen research methods enabled me to draw on the notion of 'crystallization' (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2008: 478) which has provided a metaphor for how my data was conceptualised both prior to and after the analysis stage.

This chapter acknowledges that research is a multi-faceted and complex process due to the interrelationship and expectations of both researcher and respondents. This was brought to light when I became subject to continuous questioning regarding my role in the research field

and how subsequently this led me to be defined by the majority of respondents as someone who could 'help them'. I also present some thoughts on the ethical implications of conducting research and point to how reliance on static and rigid frameworks of ethical assessment can be unduly restrictive when attempting to apply them in practice.

Empirical Findings and Analysis in the Passive Fire Protection Industry

The findings from my empirical research are presented in three interrelated chapters; all of which provide an insight into the regulatory practices and experiences of individuals in the passive fire protection industry. Each empirical chapter is constructed around one of the isomorphic pressures (coercive, normative and mimetic) and these are critically analysed in relation to the empirical material which has implications for how we understand isomorphism in terms of its exercise of disciplinary power.

Chapter 5: 'Coercive Isomorphism': Releasing enterprise in the construction industry; a neglected field' is the first empirical chapter and seeks to challenge the traditional understanding of 'coercive' isomorphism as a power exercised by the state. The chapter begins by providing a contextual account of the enterprise discourse within the passive fire protection industry by analysing government White Papers, starting with those originating during the Thatcher Conservative government in the 1980s. These have been selected on the basis that they represent the most relevant attempts to systematically demonstrate the propagation of the enterprise discourse. I focus on papers which were published during the Thatcher Conservative government (1979-1997) and also those in place after her reign, as a means of demonstrating the continuation of enterprise by successive governments.

I argue that there is evidence of a shift in the regulation of the passive fire industry from a bureaucratic approach, to the implementation of an enterprise discourse which reflects the principles of devolved responsibility, accountability and self-regulation (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). I explore how the enterprise discourse within the passive fire industry can be linked to the exercise of disciplinary power, and I draw out the implications of this in terms of how it advances an alternative, critical understanding of 'coercive' isomorphism. This also provides an empirical contribution because according to institutional theory, 'coercion' is exercised through government state regulation but, in the passive fire industry, state regulation is not mandatory. Instead, self-discipline is promoted which renders individuals responsible for their own behaviour by internalising desirable norms and values (Foucault, 1977).

Chapter 6: 'Normative isomorphism: The role of trade associations in institutionalising (un) desirable practice'.

In this chapter, I highlight the specific role of trade associations in the context of Institutional Theory which conceptualises them as a normative isomorphic pressure (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). I intersperse interview extracts alongside vignettes gathered from non-participant observations of annual general meetings and informal gatherings undertaken by selected trade associations. I argue that the exercise of normative isomorphism by trade associations is a form of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) as trade association members participate in the enterprise discourse through internalising norms of professionalisation and best practice in an attempt to enhance compliance. The chapter considers how these practices sought to individualise members which reflected the attempt by government to spread the enterprise

discourse in order to encourage self-regulation, but also to standardise and normalise conduct. Members appeared to want to remain legitimate, but also be viewed as compliant by customers and other industry bodies. Self-discipline therefore involves not only regulating one's own behaviour, but also disciplining others (Rose, 1998; 1999; du Gay and Salaman, 1992).

I draw out some of the implications of exercising disciplinary power through normative isomorphism and suggest that despite the importance attributed to trade associations' role, the ways in which they operate can encourage members to invoke varying degrees of compliance, ranging from complete adherence, to superficial practices. Drawing on the empirical material from the passive fire industry, I suggest that self-regulation within the context of a deregulated market can be a counter-productive strategy. Trade association members can use the 'norm' (Foucault, 1977) of enterprise to purposely differentiate themselves which enables them to engage in non-compliance and negligent practices. Foucault's (1977) conception of disciplinary power provides an insight into how the producers of discourse are not omniscient as resistance and opportunistic practices are explicitly intertwined with power. The lack of mandatory enforcement in the industry enables individuals to turn the enterprise qualities back onto the government meaning that the enterprise discourse is redefined and rearticulated as individuals exercise 'choice' and 'autonomy' in order to achieve objectives which challenge government's originally intended objectives.

Chapter 7: 'Mimetic isomorphism': Fulfilling the 'lighter touch' gap through cultural control devices'

In this final empirical chapter, I explore the implementation of an enterprising culture employed by one organization, Aqua-Tilt, who is a global manufacturer located in the passive fire protection industry. I provide background details as to how the current 'culture journey' was implemented which draws attention to a predecessor culture called 'Gung Ho'. This provides initial insights into the processes by which institutionalised practices are transferred amongst organizations through mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Organizations do not just replicate each other, but pressure towards homogenisation occurs on a much wider scale as organizations copy the practices initiated by management gurus or through written cultural material.

I utilise interview data and observational material to explore the ways in which individuals collectively and individually engage with the corporate culture implemented by management. My account specifically examines various culture initiatives such as a reward system, training and development processes, and team camps which sought to use enterprise to reconstitute employees' subjectivity, or in other words, to reshape the way they thought about the world. It becomes apparent that enterprise is interlinked with power as it aims to create individuals who fit with corporate objectives as they become homogenised through self discipline, and are thus measured and judged against the same normalising criteria (Foucault, 1977). The chapter explores how Aqua-Tilt's enterprising culture has become adopted in the passive fire industry as the main 'model' and provider of advice, support and regulatory guidance to others. A Foucauldian interpretation suggests that this 'model' is a form of disciplinary power. Aqua-Tilt becomes a benchmark and a visible gaze (Townley, 1998) by judging and regulating other organizations' conduct in order to improve performance within the industry.

Recognition is also given to the contradictions that the enterprise discourse illuminates because despite the exercise of power, individuals still create 'unmanaged spaces' (Bolton and Boyd, 2003: 297) in an attempt to distance themselves or redefine the homogenising pressure which they experience. This chapter provides a contribution to Institutional Theory in terms of acknowledging that homogenisation is not only due to replication through mimetic isomorphism, but can stem from the exercise of disciplinary power through an enterprise culture. This occurs at the same time as individuals employ resistance techniques to challenge and redefine what enterprise means to them.

Chapter 8: Concluding Chapter

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I take the opportunity to review the contents of the previous chapters and highlight the contributions I have made to scholarship. In contrast to previous accounts of Institutional Theory, I have analysed it from Foucault's (1977) notion of relational and productive power. As the empirical material demonstrates, each isomorphic pressure exercises disciplinary power and by spreading the enterprise discourse, they become effective mechanisms to enhance compliance through the reconstitution of subjectivity.

This chapter reinforces how successive governments' 'lighter touch' framework (UKAS, 2004:1) can be a counter-productive strategy to improving compliance. Despite it fulfilling the requirements of enterprise which include responsibility, autonomy and accountability (du Gay and Salaman, 1992), these qualities are used by some sectors of the industry to engage in non-compliance. Relying on the spread of enterprise through isomorphism to regulate individuals'

practices is insufficient to ensure compliance. Sectors of the passive fire industry use enterprise to engage in resistance as they 'choose' to be non-conforming. Regardless of whether individuals embrace or challenge enterprise, they still reinforce it by participating within its discursive framework.

A Critical Theoretical Perspective: Power, Foucault and Enterprise

Introduction

This is the first theoretical chapter of this thesis and it introduces the theoretical lens upon which this research is based. I firstly introduce Critical Theory focussing on the Frankfurt School theorists in order to contextualise the discussion prior to exploring the work of Foucault (1977; 1980). This enables me to distinguish the perspective on power which the Frankfurt School theorists have taken, which is predominantly associated with how individuals in positions of authority exercise power in repressive ways over those who are deemed passive, weak or powerless. In contrast, Foucault (1977) sees power as productive and relational. The chapter goes on to use Foucault's (1977) understanding of power to explore the enterprise discourse and its link to the political ideology of the Conservative Thatcher government during the 1980s and 1990s.

Critical Theory

'Critical Theory' encompasses more than one school of thought and should not be treated as an approach which can be '…reduced to discrete formulaic pronouncements or strategies' (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2008: 404). For example, Critical Theory includes the neo-Marxist tradition based on the works of Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse, as well as post-structuralist writings associated with Foucault. In the orthodox tradition of Critical Theory, reference is made to the Frankfurt school which was founded in Germany in 1922 and was affiliated to the Institute of Social Research at Frankfurt University during the twentieth century (Stirk, 2000). The Director of the Institute during the 1930s was Horkheimer who advocated for

interdisciplinary research and argued that at the core of critical research was the distinction between the natural and social sciences (Connerton, 1980; Held, 1980). As Bronner and Kellner note (1989: 1), Horkheimer contributed to revising:

> …both the Marxian critique of capitalism and the theory of revolution…In the process a "Critical Theory" of society emerged to deal with those aspects of social reality which Marx and his orthodox followers neglected or downplayed

Bottomore (1984) also recognised that Horkheimer developed his approach through a critique of positivism (discussed in chapter 4) and so proposed that social science could not produce objective, value-free or politically neutral knowledge. Social theorists could also not exist as passive observers because they were always part of the research process (Held, 1980; Bottomore, 1984).

The Frankfurt School was pivotal in generating the theoretical foundations of Critical Theory as it became concerned with changing reality through the concepts of emancipation and enlightenment (Alvesson et al, 2009). These will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. Critical Theory departed radically from 'traditional theory' (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008; Held, 1980) which was based on not changing society but merely interpreting it. Horkheimer asserted that traditional theory was based on general and consistent features, which led to knowledge, rather than to direct action (Jay, 1973). Traditional theory therefore maintained a separation between thought and action which was not directed towards a critical restructuring of oppressive situations (Jay, 1973). This led Horkheimer to argue that traditional theory's aim was to preserve the status quo, or gradually change society, but that in essence, individuals should accept their social position and work to fulfil the objectives required of

them. Critical Theory, by contrast, argues that social structures are part of the 'Abuses and dysfunctional aspects of capitalist society' (Horkheimer, 1937 cited in Tar, 1977: 31) and therefore aimed to instigate change. Critical Theory challenges mainstream approaches to the study of society and management as it provides a critical reflection on a large number of issues including rationality, progress, autonomy and control (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Alvesson et al, 2009).

The Frankfurt School has strong links to Marx. Members of the School appear closely connected to the idea of a critical, emancipatory intent (pg 31) which was also part of the Marxian tradition (Jay, 1973). But rather than focussing on the revolutionary potential of the working class, critical theorists direct their emancipatory project to all individuals (Bronner and Kellner, 1989). The implication is that anybody who is exposed to and restricted by ideologies, practices and repressive regimes in a capitalist society are potentially able to experience Enlightenment which seeks to remove the oppression from modern society. With regards to the contribution I seek to make, emancipation as discussed by the Frankfurt School and in more recent literature (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2008; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992) implies that power is 'one-dimensional' (Marcuse, 1964). The term 'one-dimensional' originates from Marcuse (1964) who was one of the new generation of Critical Theorists and examined the effects of domination on individuals. *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) discusses how capitalist societies and organizations restrict individual autonomy and minimise the chances for emancipatory action. Marcuse was particularly concerned about the effects of consumerism and technology in Western societies, as rather than them promoting wealth and

satisfaction, they created misery, destruction and waste (Marcuse, 1964). In relation to technology, Marcuse (1964: 158-159) stated:

> …technology also provides the great rationalization of the unfreedom of man and demonstrates the 'technical' impossibility of being autonomous, of determining one's own life. For this unfreedom appears…as submission to the technical apparatus which enlarges the comforts of life and increases the productivity of labor. Technological rationality thus protects rather than cancels the legitimacy of domination, and the instrumentalist horizon of reason opens on a rationally totalitarian society.

The lack of autonomy that such practices provide is also evident where consumerism is concerned. For instance, Marcuse argues that consumption and the needs which we aim to fulfil from it (satisfaction, happiness) has resulted in increased alienation because '…the commodities of lodging, food and clothing, the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers…the indoctrination [*individuals*] carry…becomes a way of life' (Marcuse, 1964: 12). Individuals become absorbed into the capitalist society as their sense of identity and self are linked to the commodities which they buy. Individuals strive for 'false' wants created by advertisements, the media and socialisation which results in them exercising choice; this 'choice' does not however enhance autonomy, instead it is a form of domination as it aligns the individual to established patterns of society (Marcuse, 1964: 5). As Marcuse (1964: 144) stated:

> …[the] objective order of things' – economic laws, the market, etc – itself the result of domination, created a higher rationality, that of a society which sustains its hierarchical structure whilst exploiting the natural and mental resources of its citizens and distributing the benefits of its exploitation on an ever wider scale

As a consequence of this '*One-Dimensional Society',* a '*One-Dimensional Man'* was produced as individuality was lost and individuals succumbed to the roles and behavioural norms which

society had created. Marcuse (1964) supports the underlying proposition of Critical Theory which advocates that rather than enabling '…human flourishing, organizations incubate and normalize stress and bad health, naturalize subordination and exploitation…[*and*]…erode morality, create and reinforce ethnic and gender inequalities' (Alvesson et al, 2009: 8).

Power is viewed by the Frankfurt School of critical theorists (e.g. Horkheimer, Marcuse) as repressive as it restricts individuals' actions; this fits with the theory's epistemological standpoint which derives from a concern to engender a critique of the status quo, and simultaneously to minimise the effects of asymmetrical power relations (Cassell and Johnson, 2006). Inquiry that aims to be 'critical', involves an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society and does not shy away from political objectives for organizational change. Stimulus for change can exist in the form of emancipatory actions which are an attempt by individuals to gain control over their own lives with the objective of improving justice and fairness (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2008). Critical research highlights the contradictions and tensions in the world which have come to be accepted as inevitable and taken for granted, thus they become institutionalised (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2008). In order to accomplish emancipation, critical researchers seek to heighten individuals' 'critical consciousness' (Cassell and Johnson, 2006: 802). This involves:

> …the process through which individuals and groups become freed from repressive social and ideological conditions, in particular those that place unnecessary restrictions upon the development and articulation of human consciousness (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992: 432).

Critical Theory seeks to foster the self-knowledge and understanding of individuals in order that they become aware of how the world is socially produced and open to transformation. Jermier (1998) argues that this can be difficult because people are not always able to articulate

the structural conditions which are repressing them, or they have been institutionalised to accept their situation as natural. Critical researchers therefore aim to highlight political struggles, power and hierarchical relationships which may at first glance appear to be 'ordinary work' in organizational settings (Duberley and Johnson, 2009: 350). This indicates the need to uncover instrumental/technical rationalities which may be the most oppressive forms of contemporary society, especially when there is a preference for means-end objectives (Bronner and Kellner, 1989).

Seeking Enlightenment

The Enlightenment tradition is core to Critical Theory and it is based on the critical questioning of customs, practices, morals and the recognition of competing power interests between groups and individuals (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2008). Seeking enlightenment refers to how researchers aim to uncover the processes through which power operates upon individuals and groups who are subject to constraints and domination.

The notion of enlightenment was discussed by Adorno and Horkheimer in their book the 'Dialectic of Enlightenment' (1947) which sought to explore the ambivalence regarding the origin of social domination. This involved exploring the 'culture industries' which was a term coined by Adorno and Horkheimer to describe the mass forms of entertainment which provided calculated pleasure, but paralyzed critical self-reflection (Burrell, 1992). Entertainment was perceived as a form of deception which led individuals to accept the status quo (Bronner and Kellner, 1989). The argument being that the ideas adopted are not those of the ruling class, but rather that technology and technological consciousness produce 'a new

phenomenon in the shape of a uniform and debased 'mass culture' which aborts and silences criticism' (Bottomore, 1984: 19). With this in mind, the question being posed in the Dialectic of Enlightenment was why 'mankind, instead of entering into a truly human condition, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism' (Connerton, 1980: 71). Horkheimer began by questioning the revolutionary ability of the working class to revolt against capitalist oppression and the liberating capacities of science and technology. That said, rather than improving the human condition, science and technology rapidly became the object of critique because they were being used to reinforce hierarchies and coercion (Stirk, 1980). Adorno and Horkheimer envisioned the self-destruction of the Enlightenment because economic growth and productivity, which could potentially improve society, instead were being used to enhance repression. The Dialectic of Enlightenment '…is a dynamic process which appears to allow no exit' (Connerton, 1980: 71) which means the hope of achieving enlightenment shrinks to an impossible objective. The origin of this pessimism could be related to the historical situation at the time the Dialectic of Enlightenment was produced, in particular, the existence of mass culture and fascism (Bronner and Kellner, 1989). I argue that the perception taken about the Enlightenment reinforces how Critical Theory perceived power in terms of it being exercised over people, rather than something which they engage with.

Critical Theory and emancipation

Moving away from the Frankfurt School, Kincheloe and McLaren (2008) have more recently drawn on the work of Paulo Freire (1985), who argued that critical research can be used to create a better world. Freire (1985: 39) believed that:

> …it's important to appreciate that social reality can be transformed; that it is made by men and can be changed by men; that it is not something untouchable, a fate or destiny that offers only one choice: accommodation. It's essential…that fatalism be supplanted

by a critical optimism that can move individuals towards an increasingly critical commitment for radical change in society.

Researchers should therefore become immersed in their respondents' world and encourage them to engage reflexively to recognise the forces that shape their lives (Freire, 1985). As Cassell and Johnson (2006: 802) state:

> …the intent is to engender through reflection new (socially constituted) self-understandings that are consensual and simultaneously expose the interests which produce and disseminate knowledge which was taken to be authoritative and hence unchallengeable

The importance of this is that organizational respondents begin to understand existing practices as socially constructed and hence realise their own role in the production and reproduction of those practices. Fenwick (2003) discusses the emancipatory potential of organizational learning. She argues that although such approaches can be instrumental, oppressive and apolitical, when combined with collective praxis, it is possible to identify larger problems in society which are often the features which help to create and sustain repressive conditions. Encouraging people to critically assess their personal experiences and analyse them in terms of broader oppressive forces can generate change (Fenwick, 2003). It can be said that:

> [*critical research*]…is based on '…a fundamental departure from dominant practice or experience…[*aiming*] to free people from some oppression, to free them to take control of their lives' (Foley, 2001: 28, cited in Fenwick, 2003: 619).

This approach to emancipation and organizational change reinforces Critical Theory's approach to power which suggests that it is oppressive and can minimise autonomy. The Frankfurt School theorists (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse) imply that power emanates only

from those deemed to be 'powerful' who possess power in order to dominate and restrict the behaviours of others.

Critical Theory's perspective on power can be related back to the notion of emancipation, because emancipation is used to suggest that it can free individuals from power and manipulation. This suggests that emancipation operates on a grand scale by implementing strategies which override repressive situations to create autonomy and minimise domination. Where my research is concerned, I lean towards Alvesson and Willmott's (1992) work who argue that emancipation can also be a 'micro' act. Emancipatory actions can be used to engage in resistance, and hence liberate individuals from current dominating situations. Alvesson and Willmott (1992: 446) argue that:

> The idea of micro-emancipation is to search for such loopholes in managerial and organizational control that arise from the contradictory character of power techniques and their ideological reproduction

Rather than viewing control as stemming solely from management, individuals can also engage in critical thought, thereby resisting and challenging hierarchical forms of power. As Deetz (1992: 336) argues 'With every 'positive' move in disciplinary practices, there is an oppositional one'. I did not envisage myself, as a researcher, being able to promote any 'oppositional' or transformative action amongst my respondents in order to stimulate a critical consciousness amongst individuals. That said, my presence and questioning of the existing practices may have encouraged small-scale changes to take place as respondents reflected on their working conditions. For example, in Aqua-Tilt (see Chapter 7) individuals used and redefined symbols and practices, such as a reward and recognition scheme, for their own purposes. Rather than it being solely a managerial strategy used to control employees, it was

adapted by individuals who decided to reward everyone within the team, rather than only those who deemed deserving of it. When questioning individuals about how these practices could lead to change, the reply of *'I've never thought about it in that way before'* indicated to me that they were reflecting on their situation which could possibly lead to resistance and change occurring. As Freire (1985: 39) recognised: 'Through their own thought and actions, people can see the conditioning of their perception in their social structure, and in this way their perception begins to change…'.

Fournier and Grey (2000: 21) support this by arguing that Critical Theory should be involved with 'critique' which aims to improve society, even if these improvements are 'local, small and modest'. Critique is not always visible and can become an exchange process between intellectuals 'conducted behind the closed doors of academic conferences where researchers can parade their critique, and ponder upon its righteousness' (Fournier and Grey, 2000: 22). Despite power still appearing to be exercised in a dominating way, Alvesson and Willmott, (1996: 18) argue that research subjects should be involved in dialogue in order to 'foster the development of organizations in which communications (and productive potential) are progressively less distorted by socially oppressive, asymmetrical relations of power'. Some theorists, however, argue that this can lead to managers adopting critical research to legitimise hierarchical and oppressive practices (Nord and Jermier, 1992) which would minimise any progress towards eliminating oppression and domination. Fournier and Grey (2000: 27) suggest that:

> …we need to free the notion of engagement from the straitjacket within which it has become trapped by debates promoting or refusing dialogue with managers, and re-imagine engagement in terms of a broader organizational constituency.

Power is viewed by some critical theorists as repressive and dominating and it is also seen as asymmetrical because it imposes constraints and obligations onto an oppressed group who seek emancipation. The following section will introduce Foucault's work and his alternative approach to power; that is as a relational and productive phenomenon.

Foucault: The history of sovereign and disciplinary power

Sovereign power is a form of power which stems from the state and it is '…a mechanism of power that was effective under the feudal monarchy' (Foucault, 1980: 103). This form of power used laws, rules and regulations ultimately based on the right 'to kill and let live' (Foucault, 1997: 214). Sovereignty '…is a specific rule over things. It seizes them, whether they are goods, time, bodies or ultimately life itself' (Dean, 1999: 105). Such forms of coercive power can be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries where power was invested in the sovereign ruler or God, who were perceived as having ultimate authority over territory and land (Foucault, 1988; 1991). The power held by those deemed to be in positions of authority is reflective of the developments in the penal system where the right to punish was directly connected to the authority of the King. Crimes committed were not crimes against the public, but illustrated disrespect to the King himself. The public displays of torture and execution became public affirmations of the King's authority to rule and punish, and hence, supported Foucault's (1977) notion of sovereign power. During the eighteenth century, there were a number of transformations which defined what is meant by the

government of the state which relates to the developments surrounding Foucault's position on power.

In contrast to sovereign power, disciplinary power is at the core of Foucault's (1977) work and it has a long history stretching back to monastic, military and educational practices (Foucault, 1977). It is concerned with the human body which during the classical age became an object and target of power. The body was regulated, monitored and controlled and this was applicable to aggregates of individuals such as armies, school pupils and factory workers (Foucault, 1977; Dean, 1999). Such mechanisms did not treat the body '…*'en masse'*, 'wholesale', as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it 'retail', individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion…' (Foucault, 1977: 137; emphasis in original). Power is seen as obtaining a hold on the body through monitoring movements in order to meticulously control any activity undertaken. This led to docility; that is a body '…that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (Foucault, 1977: 136). These methods were extended during the seventeenth and eighteenth century to include schools, factories, manufacturing plants and armies and it correlated with the development of the bureaucratic and administrative apparatus of the state (Dean, 1999). These forms of discipline occurring through and over the body were significantly different to previous forms because they were not just concerned with the skills or aptitude of the body, but the ability to make it more obedient and useful (Foucault, 1977; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). Discipline seeks to regulate the individual by reshaping their conduct '…in a space of regulated freedom' (Rose, 1999: 22).

Knights and Vurdubakis (1994: 169) argue that Foucault's (1977) perception of power as relational and productive enables us to avoid the traditional '…dualistic perspective that presumes power to be held by the powerful and wielded over the powerless'. It '…enables us to examine labour process conceptions of control and resistance as differentially constituted by power-knowledge relations and discourses' (ibid: 170). In examining Foucault's (1977) work, Knights and Vurdubakis (1994) discuss how the critiques of Foucault can be discarded once these dualistic assumptions are eliminated. For instance, one of the critiques they discuss is the question of whether agency is possible if all subjects are constituted by power. Knights and Vurdubakis (1994: 191) reply by stating that 'It is not a matter of some people having power and others lacking it but the ways in which acts of resistance are also exercises of power and how the same set of agents can be involved in both exercising power and resisting its effects at one and the same time'. This interrelationship between power and resistance will become apparent in the empirical chapters (5-7).

A core feature of Foucault's (1977) disciplinary power is the discussion of Bentham's 'Panopticon' which is based on an annular building with a tower in its centre that contains large windows which overlook the cells of the outer peripheral building. A supervisor would be located in the tower and 'By the effect of backlighting, one can observe…standing out precisely against this light, the small captive shadows of the periphery' (Foucault, 1977: 200). The power being exercised is therefore both 'visible' and 'unverifiable' as Foucault (1977: 201) describes:

> Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the innate must never know whether he is being looked at…but he must be sure that he may always be so

The notion of the Panopticon helps us to understand the exercise of disciplinary power and aids the process through which individuals become shaped and constituted into self-regulating subjects. The Panopticon can be applied to modern organizations because the use of core competencies, teamwork and reward and recognition schemes leads to individuals being produced as '…homogeneous effects of power' (Foucault, 1977: 202). It enables the regulation of numerous bodies by only a few observers and also reinforces how power is not simply the property of an authority, or sovereign.

Discipline can be related to both sovereignty and governmentality. Sovereignty, as discussed, refers to a practice of monarchical rule which is concerned with the exercise of power through rules, constitutions and parliaments (Dean, 1999). Discipline, in comparison, exercises power through the individual subject as they regulate their own conduct and thereby it 'becomes the principle of his [*her*] own subjection' (Foucault, 1977: 202-203). When conceptualised in this way, both forms of power (sovereign and discipline) are linked to what Foucault (1991: 102-4) has referred to as governmentality. This was defined by Foucault in three ways: firstly, it focuses on the exercise of power which targets the population around health, education and welfare. To govern properly and ensure the happiness and prosperity of the population, it is necessary to govern the economy (Dean, 1999). Secondly, governmentality is related to sovereign and disciplinary power as discussed above, and thirdly, the term is used to explain how the population is contained within 'apparatuses of security' (Foucault, 1991: 102) which include police, army and intelligence services. The apparatuses defend, manage and maintain the population and those that '…secure the economic, demographic and social processes that are found to exist within that population' (Dean, 1999: 20). The individual and the population

were therefore both governed by normalising practices and as Foucault (2003: 253 cited in Randall and Munro, 2010: 1490) recognised 'The norm is something that can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regularize'.

The relationship between sovereignty, discipline and governmentality is far from clear and as Rose (1999: 23) acknowledges in relation to Foucault's (1977; 1991) work on the topic:

> Foucault was far from consistent in his own thinking about the relations between the different ways in which he analysed power. He certainly cautioned against conceiving of a chronology that went from 'sovereignty'…to 'discipline'…to 'governmentality'… (Rose, 1999: 23).

The three forms of power have been conceptualised as a triangle (Foucault, 1991), but instead I take the argument of Rose (1999) who views them as not separate, but as interlinked. Governmentality has not replaced the other forms of power but has refocused them in order to take into account the population, both individually and collectively. As Foucault (1997: 300) made clear 'I intend this concept of 'governmentality' to cover the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other'. The more explicit focus placed on the individual as an entity to be ruled and monitored gives concrete form to a different political rationality and '…a new kind of relationship between the social entity and the individual' (Foucault, 1988: 153). In France and Germany, the new techniques to undertake this were referred to as 'police' or 'Polizei' respectively. These had a very precise meaning, not like that used in Britain, and 'When people spoke about police at this moment, they spoke about the specific techniques by which a government in the framework of the state was able to govern people as individuals significantly useful for the world' (Foucault, 1988: 154). As forms of government

changed and developed, new mechanisms were being used to exercise power, especially through monitoring the conduct of the individual body.

The visible subject: technologies of the self

From the end of the eighteenth century, the rationality of government shifted from sovereign power towards disciplining the minutiae of individual behaviour, actions and even souls. Government sought to regulate individuals' actions through encouraging an internalisation of norms and values which led to self-discipline (Dean, 1999). The term 'bio-politics' or 'bio-power' (Foucault, 1979: 140-4) was adopted to capture the 'endeavour, begun in the eighteenth century, to rationalize problems presented to governmental practice by populations: health, sanitation, birth rate, longevity, race' (Foucault, 1997: 73). Society is divided into those who are defined as sick and healthy, criminal and dangerous, mad and sane, and the unemployable and abnormal (Foucault, 1991; Dean, 1999). These 'dividing practices' (Foucault, 1991: 208) are a means by which we constitute ourselves and others, because it is through excluding some and including others that we come to recognise our role and position in society (Foucault, 1988). For example:

> …all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal)' and that of…differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized...) (Foucault, 1979: 199).

Relating this to bio-politics, a trajectory emerges from the eighteenth century which is concerned with the government of the population and its optimisation. The bio-power emanating from these practices acts through discourses related to medicine, social work and

psychiatry which defines and normalises how people should act (Clegg, 1998). What is viewed as 'normal' then becomes institutionalised.

Individualised forms of power, whereby the self and its personality, attitudes, skills and motivation are constituted as the features to be managed and controlled can be referred to as 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988: 18; McKinlay and Taylor, 1998: 199). These technologies '…permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (Foucault, 1988: 18). Technology in this sense is the mechanism by which the production, manipulation and constitution of subjects can occur (McKinlay and Taylor, 1998) and it operates through objective and subjective means. Individuals experience power relations by being made objects of knowledge. For example, recruitment and selection procedures are premised on the basis that they will enhance knowledge of the individual in terms of their skills, aptitude, personality and preferences which make them governable and manageable (Townley, 1998). Subjectively, individuals acquire an image of themselves which becomes part of their identity and in doing so their behaviour can be modified or changed accordingly (McKinlay and Taylor, 1998). These ways of thinking and judging individuals are linked to how Foucault (1977) suggested that power was relational and productive. Relational power exists between individuals and occurs in the context of social relationships; this challenges the ways we normally consider power which views it as a property or possession (Foucault, 1977). As Foucault (1981: 93 cited in Knights and Vurdubakis, 1994: 172) makes clear: '…one needs to be nominalistic no doubt; power is

not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with, it is the name one attributes to a complex strategical relationship in a particular society'.

Technologies of the self can be contrasted with what Foucault (1988: 18) referred to as 'technologies of power' '…which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject'. It was made clear that these technologies rarely operate independently from one another. For instance, Dean (1999: 32) draws our attention to how technologies of power do not simply 'determine' subjectivity but '…elicit, promote, facilitate, foster and attribute various capacities, qualities and statuses to particular agents'.

As discipline evolved, its specific forms became more evident which involved techniques such as 'enclosure' which confined individuals into a space where they could be observed and which minimised any inconveniences which may occur (such as theft, disturbances at work). This works in harmony with 'partitioning' whereby individuals are separated from one another and are encouraged to work in their own space which makes it easier for their behaviour to be judged, assessed and monitored (Foucault, 1977). This was particularly evident in the monastic cell where solitude was necessary '…to both body and soul…' (Foucault, 1977: 143). Such disciplinary techniques also infiltrated into schools and factories with the use of timetables which partitioned time in order to ensure individuals made use of their working day, as well as enabled the regulation of their behaviour by minimising the engagement with companions (Foucault, 1977).

To govern is to therefore bring individuals into a definable space where power can be exercised. Power is related to how space is arranged: where people stand, sit and how this determines the conduct of those subject to it. For example, the factory at the end of the eighteenth century was based on the ordering of space and distributing individuals within it to make it easier to discipline, supervise and classify workers according to skill and speed (Foucault, 1977). This ordering of space can be related back to Bentham's metaphor of the Panopticon. As discussed earlier, the architecture of the building ensured that the prisoner was under constant observation from a central point of inspection, but the guard was not visible by the inmates (Foucault, 1977). Power was less attached to the actual guard but more '…in the sheer impossibility of avoiding the observer's gaze and the realization that one was always, in principle, subject to it' (Clegg, 1998: 35). Despite this power appearing to be omnipresent, Foucault (1991) acknowledged that resistance was possible and when applying this to the actual functioning of prisons in the nineteenth century, he stated: 'It is absolutely true that criminals stubbornly resisted the new disciplinary mechanisms in the prison…the actual functioning of the prisons, in the inherited buildings where they were established…was a witches' brew compared to the beautiful Benthamite machine' (Foucault cited in McKinlay and Taylor, 1998: 175).

Governing also includes the accumulation of knowledge through the utilisation of documentation and inscription devices. This indicates the specific link between power and knowledge because Foucault (1980) sees power as productive and it is the productive aspects of power/knowledge which makes it so seductive and effective. An individual is constituted through the positioning they have within particular relations of power and these relations are

exercised through specific 'knowledges' in that they create and help to sustain the self-governing subject (du Gay, 1996: 63). Compared to the observational practice of discipline in the Panopticon, knowledge is acquired and used to make subjects visible and governable by using maps, charts, diagrams and pictures which statistically collate data on anything ranging from birth and death rates to identifying where inhabitants live (Rose, 1989; 1999). It is a form of knowledge which:

> …disciplines the body, regulates the mind and orders the emotions in such a way that the ranking, hierarchy and stratification ensures…not just the blind reproduction of a transcendent traditional order…it produces a new basis for order in the productive worth of individuals defined by new disciplinary practices of power (Clegg, 1998: 30).

Accumulating knowledge about the population can be used as a comparable device which marks out individuals from one another against normalised criteria of what is deemed desirable. It becomes a means of governing through subjectivity as 'Psychological inscriptions of individuality enable government to operate upon subjectivity…it makes persons amenable to having things done to them – and doing things to themselves – in the name of their subjective capacities' (Rose, 1989: 7-8). Acquiring knowledge of the population, coupled with on-going power relations makes individuals more amenable to control through subjectivity as it becomes a form of governing based on enhancing the health and well-being of the population, as well as placing it in a space which can be managed and disciplined (Dean, 1999). This reinforces the productive aspects of power and became the basis of political reform associated with enterprise and liberalism.

Enterprise, Liberalism and Subjectivity

Having explored Foucault's work (1977) and his concept of power, in this section I apply it to discuss and analyse the discourse of enterprise. Enterprise is a state driven programme involved with governing organizations and individuals through the exercise of disciplinary power as it combines 'technologies of power' with 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988: 18). The spread and effects of enterprise can be analysed through the lens of Foucault (1977) as the discourse reconstitutes subjectivity and aims to transform individuals into autonomous and self-regulating beings (du Gay and Salaman, 1992).

The early part of the nineteenth century became associated with social ills surrounding poverty, unemployment, child labour and dependent mothers, which led many to experience poor living conditions and declining standards of well-being (Dean, 1999). A rationale of government referred to as 'welfarism' (Rose, 1993 cited in Dean, 1999: 54) sought to deal with these societal problems and culminated in the welfare state. This began in Britain under the Labour government in 1945 when Lord Beveridge was commissioned to undertake a report which focused on '…particular problematizations, interventions, institutions and practices concerning unemployment, old age, disability, sickness, public education and housing, health administration, and the norms of family life and childrearing' (Dean, 1999: 55). Government gradually moved towards being more socially focused; a form of 'social government' (Dean, 1999: 126) that aimed to instigate improvements for the overall improvement of the population.

In contrast, more contemporary state proposals associated with the Conservative government project of the 1980s and 1990s (Rose, 1999) saw welfare state programmes such as 'workfare' or 'naming and shaming' (Rose, 1999: 263-265) as being overly bureaucratic and restricting individual rights and responsibilities, as well as not helping the social poor but benefiting middle and upper class income groups (Friedman and Friedman, 1980). It was felt that there was too much reliance on the state for ensuring the elimination of societal problems which led to the government being concerned with a neo-liberal commitment to choice, responsibility and individual control over one's fate. This is captured in an early statement by Margaret Thatcher in 1980, which clearly highlighted the state's unwillingness to intervene:

> the first principle of this government…is to revive a sense of individual responsibility…[*We*] need a strong state to preserve both liberty and order…[*But we*] should not expect the State to appear in the guise of an extravagant good fairy at every christening, a loquacious and tedious companion at every stage of life's journey, the unknown mourner at every funeral (Margaret Thatcher 1980 cited in Hall, 1986: 127).

The state was to take on a different relationship with citizens; it would be responsible for the maintenance of order and the law, whilst citizens would be concerned with their well-being and life-style by being responsible and enterprising (Rose, 1999). This was voiced through the political aspirations of encouraging a shift from dependency to enterprise (Rose, 1989). This objective is still evident in successive governments' proposals with the current chancellor, George Osborne, repudiating the concept of 'universal benefit' which is the idea that everyone, not just the poor, benefit from social protection (Sorman, 2010). In a Guardian newspaper article it was stated that '…Lord Beveridge trusted the state to hold our hand from cradle to grave, Cameron and Osborne have asked us to stand more or less alone on our own two feet'[5]. This was even more strongly stated when benefits were referred to as a 'lifestyle

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[5] http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/oct/17/welfare-state-rest-in-peace/print

choice' which had to be eliminated as the annual welfare bill amounted to £192 million[6]. The 'big society' has become central in the parliamentary debate during 2011 with David Cameron arguing for an increase in responsibility and autonomy by suggesting the increased participation of citizens in local communities through enterprising initiatives such as volunteering (Seldon, 2011). The implication being that 'We need a society built on trust, with communities, local institutions and individuals given the trust to run their own lives. We need a society built up on personal responsibility rather than on the abnegation of it...The big society is the future' (Seldon, 2011).

These governmental proposals throughout recent years have arguably resulted in a heightened emphasis on the enterprise culture since its emergence as a central tenet of the 1980s Thatcher government, where it became evident in political thought and practice (Keat, 1991). Enterprise fits with the notion of the 'free market' which aims to enhance competition (du Gay, 1996), as well as decentralise business units so that local level managers are encouraged to take more responsibility for their practices. Such practices aim to remove excessive and obtrusive bureaucratic controls and enable managers to be more focused on meeting requirements and performance targets (Hill, 1991).

Enterprise can be classified into two main features (Keat, 1991). At one level of analysis, the emergence of enterprise can be seen as a form of radical restructuring which has been associated with other environmental developments such as enhanced competitiveness from foreign industry, deregulation, increased consumer focus and new technologies (Fuller and

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[6] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/7995456/Welfare-the-lifestyle-choice-that-Britons-must-make.html

Smith, 1991 cited in du Gay and Salaman, 1992). These have even been traced back to the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism where the emphasis was on moving away from a single product to the growth of product variability and consumer choice (Hill, 1991). For companies wanting to meet this challenge, they were required to become customer focused, flexible and innovative in order to meet demand. Consumers are no longer seen as the passive receptors of a Fordist era who willingly accept anything. Instead, consumers are seen as enterprising; selective, searching and forcing change (du Gay and Salaman, 1992).

Although enterprise appears to operate in an environment of 'lighter touch' regulation (UKAS, 2004: 1) with limited government intervention, this does not mean that bureaucratic forms of control have been eliminated (Fournier and Grey, 1999). Enterprise exercises power by governing individuals' conduct as the qualities and norms associated with it (choice, autonomy, drive, competitiveness) are internalised which leads to self-discipline. Advocates suggest that this results in improved customer quality whilst ensuring that organizational objectives are met (Storey et al, 2005). The 'sovereign consumer' is also key to the enterprise discourse as it contributes to the internal restructuring of organizations, especially as there is a requirement for employees to become each other's customers, referred to as 'internal' customers (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 621). Both 'internal' and 'external' customers are an important contributor to sustaining the enterprise discourse as they help to shape and define employee subjectivity and identity by participating in customer reports and surveys which act as a mechanism of control, judging and monitoring employees' behaviour (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). As a result of this, 'internal' employees are tasked to treat each other '*as if* these were customer/supplier relationships' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 618) and in doing so,

organizations are restructured in order to replicate 'inside' what would normally occur on the 'outside'.

The second feature of enterprise involves reconstituting subjectivity in terms of individuals believing that they are autonomous and responsible, even though control remains through subjectivity (self-actualization, autonomy, empowerment) (Storey et al, 2005). With this in mind, it can be said that there are two types of social practices which have the ability to shape and define subjectivity in order to characterise individuals as 'enterprising subjects'. One is 'regulatory' which focuses on large-scale population control, such as birth rates, planning of urban environments, and the other is 'disciplinary' which is through the body as it becomes individualised through normalisation practices (McNay, 2009: 57). As Foucault (1997: 249) made clear regarding the two mechanisms: 'one is a technology in which the body is individualized as an organism endowed with capacities, while the other is a technology in which bodies are replaced by general biological processes'. Enterprise within a neoliberal era reflects a situation 'whereby everything would be controlled, to the point of self-sustenance, without the need for intervention' (Foucault, 1979: 241). A core component of enterprise involves what Rose (1989: 16) sees as involving '…teaching the arts of self-realization that will enhance employees as individuals as well as workers'. This means that becoming a better employee is the same as becoming a better self.

Rose (1998) suggests that the enterprising self has endured because of its appeal across the political spectrum. He analyses the enterprise culture, political power and subjectivity from three different dimensions. They include the political, institutional and ethical and he suggests

that enterprise operates successfully on all three because it 'links up a seductive ethics of the self, a powerful critique of contemporary institutional and political reality, and an apparently coherent design for the radical transformation of contemporary social arrangements' (Rose, 1998: 153). Enterprise is transformed into a lifestyle project which individuals aspire to in order to be better workers, citizens and individuals. The enterprise self, according to Rose (1998: 154; emphasis in original) is a self which is productive and calculating as it '…calculates *about* itself and that acts *upon* itself in order to better itself'.

The notion of freeing the individual from constraints and helping them to develop into more productive and enterprising subjects is not only applicable to work organizations, but also to everyday life. For instance, citizens at all levels of society should be reformed into 'the kind of person who can be trusted to be 'free'' (Heelas, 1991: 83). A tension is evident, however, because as discussed above, the Thatcherite notion of being free is bound up with continuing control. The promotion of the free individual implies that utilitarian individualism is acceptable, but people are enterprising in so far as they are controlled and directed towards the 'right' kind of enterprise; that is that they are economically productive and are responsible, disciplined individuals who do not take advantage of their 'freedom'. The autonomous individual can still thereby exercise their freedom, but through the context of responsible self-management (McNay, 2009). McNay (2009) argued that individual autonomy is not in opposition to enterprise, but instead central to it because power is exercised to encourage individuals to self-discipline. This is reinforced by Rose (1999: 10) who argued that the:

> …strategic deployment of coercion, whether it be in the name of crime control or the administration of welfare benefits, has been reshaped upon the ground of freedom…These might include, for example, the argument that the constraint of the few

is a condition for the freedom of the many, that limited coercion is necessary to shape or reform pathological individuals so that they are willing and able to accept the rights and responsibilities of freedom…

This means that '…certain values and presuppositions about human beings and how they should live…given the name of freedom and liberty, have come to provide the grounds upon which government must enact its practices for the conduct of conduct' (Rose, 1999: 11).

The 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 1988; Rose, 1999: 3) refers to a government practice which aims to shape and guide the conduct of others. It also involves the practices associated with how we monitor and restrain our own desires and passions in order to become self-disciplined subjects. Government shapes the field of freedom and it provides the space in which individuals can become self-regulating in that we govern ourselves through the rights and responsibilities endowed to us through being empowered. This fits neatly with liberalism which has been referred to as '…seeking to set limits to state or governmental activities…curtailing state power by appealing to the imprescriptible rights of individuals' (Burchell, 1991: 125). The regulation of freedom can be traced back to the early nineteenth century where the prison, workhouse and asylum were all regulated on the basis of normality and rationality (Rose, 1999). They created a setting for their inmates '…to the extent that they sought to invent the conditions in which subjects themselves would enact the responsibilities that composed their liberties' (Rose, 1999: 72).

Government through freedom, links to notions of responsibilisation which shifted ideals of appropriate conduct on to individuals and their families. The home, for example, became a space which linked the public (state) objectives of hygiene, good health and appropriate

conduct, with the desire individuals had internalised for ensuring their family was healthy and happy (Rose, 1999). This combination of 'public' concern with 'private' responsibility was made possible through the liberal strategy of experts (doctors, self-help guides, religious institutions) who translated the daily worries of citizens into a language 'claiming the power of truth' (Rose, 1999: 132). The use of experts can be seen as 'translation' techniques (Rose and Miller, 1992: 181) as they are the mechanism by which governmental requirements and political aims are filtered through to individuals' own aspirations as free citizens. Rose (1999: 49) refers to this as 'government at a distance' as individuals' autonomy and the objectives of government are not at odds. The norm is central to this process as individuals are required to imbibe and meet standards which are set by others which render them measurable and comparable. Dent (2003) examines the processes which brought together medics and managers in an actor network of power relations that redefined the role of the medical profession in the context of governmentality. Rather than being autonomous and self-regulating, doctors' clinical work was made more accountable and transparent as their practices became 'management issues' (Dent, 2003: 111). Being 'autonomous' can therefore mean that paradoxically:

> …free individuals become governable…as normal subjects. To be free, in this modern sense, is to be attached to a polity where certain civilized modes of conducting one's existence are identified as normal, and simultaneously to be bound to those 'engineers of the human soul' who will define the norm and tutor individuals as to the ways of living that will accomplish normality (Rose, 1999: 76).

The above quote reinforces that rather than the state exerting its control throughout society, this alternative approach can be seen as the 'govermentalization of the state' (Rose, 1989: 5; Dean, 1999: 102) as government is now more concerned with the '…transformation of the rationalities and technologies for the exercise of political rule' (Rose, 1989: 5).

Making meaning for people: living the life of enterprise

Governing individuals through the constitution of subjectivity aims to harness 'the psychological strivings of individuals for autonomy and creativity and channelling them into the workplace to enable the search for 'total customer responsiveness', 'excellence' and success' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 625). Enterprising companies 'make meaning for people' by encouraging them to believe that they have control over their own lives…their contribution is vital, not only to the success of the company but to the enterprise of their own lives' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 625). Work is '…no longer necessarily a constraint upon the freedom of the individual to fulfil his or her potential through striving for autonomy, creativity and responsibility' (Miller and Rose, 1990: 27). This reflects Foucault's (1977) conceptualisation of power as productive because enterprise encourages self-regulation as the discourse enters 'into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives' (Foucault, 1980: 39).

Self-regulation is an important concept in the sphere of enterprise because it involves the exercise of disciplinary power whereby one's life and behaviour is organised and regulated according to '…rational thought, exactitude, and supervision, it also embraces a mode of personal existence within such practices. It entails training in the minute arts of self-scrutiny, self-evaluation, and self-regulation' (Rose, 1989: 222). In one of du Gay's (1996) later works, he provides an interesting conceptual link between enterprise and management discourses through the lens of Foucault's concept of government as a form of power (Foucault, 1982). du Gay (1996: 61) argues that management use practices such as recruitment, application forms

and communication groups as a means of seeking to '…delineate, normalize and instrumentalize the conduct of persons'. It can be said that:

> The 'employee', just as much as the 'sovereign consumer' is represented as an individual in search of meaning and fulfilment, one looking to 'add value' in every sphere of existence. Paid work and consumption are just different grounds for the same activity; that is, different terrains upon which the enterprising self seeks to master, better and fulfil itself' (du Gay, 1996: 65).

In the context of consumption, du Gay (1996) highlights how consumers in an enterprise economy are encouraged to shape their lives through the purchasing choices they make as autonomous, self-regulating and responsible beings. This is however associated with technologies of power (Foucault, 1988) as despite individuals appearing to be self-regulating and autonomous, their subjectivity is the concern of organizations and governments who prescribe a way of behaving to match the dictates of the market (Shanker et al, 2006). A paradox is evident here as an enterprising consumer is required to choose due to the effects of the normalising (Foucault, 1977) criteria of the discourse which subscribes to the virtues of autonomy, responsibility and self-discipline, but at the same time, individuals attempt to find a 'meaningful' self through consumption (Shanker et al, 2006: 1020). The result is that '…not only are people expected to choose, but they are forced to choose in order to be 'free' (Shanker et al, 2006: 1020). Subjectivity is therefore not constituted through passivity or repressive forms of control, reminiscent of theorists from the Frankfurt School, but instead through ideas associated with self-responsibility, autonomy and differentiation (McNay, 2009). Arguably, however, being active and participatory citizens or consumers, who are able to choose can actually have the reverse effect by reducing freedom and autonomy. Having

more choice, autonomy and liberty can result in increased complexity and confusion, which does not always result in increased empowerment.

The lack of empowerment given to consumers in an enterprising culture is evident when organizations encourage consumers to express their discontent if products or services do not match their required quality standards, but then react by exercising disciplinary power (Shanker et al, 2006). For instance, Muniz and Schau (2005) undertook a study which considered how enterprising consumers were continually loyal to, and worshipped the brand of Apple Newton even though it had been discontinued. But consumers were gradually becoming disgruntled and felt that Apple product quality was declining. They established a blogging forum which could be seen as '…a medium through which technologies of the self may operate' (Shanker et al, 2006: 1025) which allowed consumers to exercise empowerment by contributing their own thoughts and reactions. Apple's reaction to the blogging site resulted in them taking one blogger to court; this demonstrates how organizations become uncomfortable with consumer freedom because it enables one's conduct to be exposed and questioned (Muniz and Schau, 2005). This is in response to the exercise of power by the bloggers who attempted to be self-regulating, empowered subjects.

The example above illustrates that discourses are not fixed and totalizing as du Gay (1996: 149) implied when he suggested that enterprise was a 'dominant discourse'. Enterprise does not eliminate other discourses entirely and the implementation of it can be uneven and contradictory. Fournier and Grey (1999: 117; emphasis in original) critiqued du Gay for failing to take into account resistance and they state 'We are left with the impression that the

discourse of enterprise is *the* discursive resource on the basis of which employees' identities and employment relationships will be reconceptualized, rather than merely one among many others'. As Foucault (1979: 94) argued in relation to power through discourse: '[*power*] is not something acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away' (Foucault, 1979: 94). This suggests that there are always likely to be traces of other discourses evident at the same time as enterprise because power is never fixed; it is reproduced and renegotiated through subjects' adoption and reinforcement of the discursive practices.

McCabe (2008) for instance examines the interrelationship between a Fordist discourse and an enterprise discourse in a UK bank. Neither discourse was adopted wholeheartedly. Even though management espoused the enterprise discourse, it was the Fordist discourse which repressed it. Employees were encouraged to be enterprising by showing skills such as 'business awareness'; 'initiative' and 'teamwork' (McCabe, 2008: 376). Individuals were required to do more than what was expected of them and work was intensified in order to ensure customers' needs and expectations were continually met. Additionally, although teamwork was encouraged, a sense of collectivism was prevented through the designing of the ASCs (Area Service Centre) which consisted of time sheets, the monitoring of individual error rates and efficiency (McCabe, 2008). These had the effect of producing individualised employees who were prevented from becoming enterprising; this demonstrates how the two discourses were in conflict. A similar sentiment runs through the work of Doolin (2002) who studied hospital clinicians in New Zealand. A government driven change programme which saw clinicians as enterprising subjects was not implemented in a uniform way. Doolin (2002)

identifies a range of responses to the programme as clinicians drew upon it in complex and varied ways.

Studies have illustrated that even if people do not embody the enterprise culture in its totality, they are still reproducing it (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). Fenwick (2002) identifies that female entrepreneurs redefined their identity to avoid the male enterprising traits such as competitive individualism and aggressiveness. Other studies (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2008) have demonstrated how even in situations where enterprise appears to be resisted by those engaging in its discursive effects, they are still actively reinforcing the discourse. Older workers in particular were defined as a 'product' whose appearance prevented them from acquiring jobs, as well as them being 'risky' which made them unsuitable for small business ownership (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2008). Individuals' reliance on service providers to find them jobs (a service which promoted enterprising qualities) demonstrates that individuals were not existing outside of the enterprise discourse, but actively reinforcing it as they engaged with the enterprise qualities.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the critical theoretical lens of the thesis by drawing on Foucault's (1977; 1980; 1988) notion of power which considers it as productive and enabling, rather than solely negative and repressive. This contrasts with Critical Theorists who view power as emanating from the powerful which has the potential to repress and dominate those who are subject to their power. Drawing on scholarship surrounding the notion of power, the chapter provides a historical section on the mechanisms of power which distinguishes the shift which

has occurred since the seventeenth and eighteenth century. As government regimes focused on the regulation of individual bodies and the population, disciplinary power emerged. Drawing on the notion of liberalism provided a means by which to conceptualise the development towards more contemporary forms of government which extol the virtues of the enterprise discourse.

The notion of enterprise has been considered from a Foucauldian standpoint. I argue that individuals experience an exercise of disciplinary power which has the effect of normalising conduct and subjectivity against established truth regimes and criteria. Ironically, the semblance of a release from one form of control in terms of domination by a sovereign is replaced with another form in the guise of self-regulation. What is interesting about enterprise is that it advocates freedom, choice and autonomy, but in the process, these qualities are used to regulate conduct and social practices. As each individual regulates their conduct, disciplinary power is reinforced. Such lifestyle choices entail a relation to authority which is never absent. The responsibility for ensuring a successful life and developing an identity which one is proud of is placed solely on the individual's shoulders. This is not only applicable to work organizations but everyday life, ranging from the family to the consumer.

The next chapter will draw on the issues discussed here to explore more specifically how Foucault's work (1977) can be used to criticise and advance Institutional Theory by focusing on its neglect of a critical understanding of power. This will provide a theoretical lens for the three empirical chapters which are structured to explore the existence of enterprise and the

exercise of disciplinary power through the isomorphic pressures evident within the passive fire

industry.

Power: The Missing Piece of Institutional Theory's Jigsaw

Introduction

This chapter expands upon and critiques Institutional Theory through drawing on Foucault's (1977) understanding of power. I begin by identifying the antecedents of Institutional Theory and the scholarship surrounding its development to consider how it has progressed from the 1940s to the 1970s; this highlights the shift and divergences which exist between the 'old' and 'new' institutionalism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). 'New' institutionalism has also been referred to as 'Neo', but for the purposes of this chapter the former term will be used. The chapter will highlight the most significant developments which have been made within Institutional Theory and which are relevant for this thesis. In doing so, I will draw attention to how power was perceived by early new institutionalists which has contributed to the lack of a critical understanding of power. This will be followed by a more in-depth critique of Institutional Theory through analysing the language used by its theorists thereby highlighting how they have approached the notion of power and applied it to their own work. This chapter provides a lens for the empirical chapters which follow because the three analysis chapters are structured around, and explore isomorphism from a critical perspective.

Early approaches to Institutional Theory: The founding fathers

Institutional Theory has had a long history dating back to the work of Weber where the interest in institutions as a body of study in their own right could be said to have come to the fore. Whilst a detailed account of Weber's work would detract attention from the focus of this chapter, I will briefly identify key features of this contribution in order to contextualise the

following discussion. Weber was an influential theorist in the field of organizational sociology and employed the idea that cultural rules and governance structures influenced social behaviour. This is particularly evident when considering his typology of authority – *traditional, rational-legal and charismatic* (Weber, 1968: 215; emphasis added). The 'traditional' approach considered how authority was exercised due to tradition or custom which accepted individuals' position of power; this could include a monarchical form of government to the traditional male head of a family. The second authority system, 'rational-legal', predominantly focuses on rules and regulations tied to legitimate authority. The third system, 'charismatic', stemmed from the acceptance or devotion to the leader's personality and their normative patterns of order (Weber, 1968: 121).

Relating this aspect of Weber's work to Institutional Theory, it can be said that it is most relevant when considering his discussion of the increasingly formal rationalisation of all spheres of human conduct which was instigated by rational bureaucracy (du Gay, 2000). This was associated with the 'iron cage' metaphor and could be said to be axiomatic of the process of institutionalisation. Institutionalisation implies that individuals become entrapped and restricted by the procedural formalities and constraints which govern conduct. This perspective was adopted by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) as a means of explaining the constraining, homogenising processes organizations experience due to isomorphism (pg 72).

Shortly after Weber's work was translated into English at the end of the 1940s, a selection of scholars at Columbia University renewed interest in bureaucracy under the leadership of Merton. Theorists began to consider organizations as worthy of interest; they included

Selznick (1949) and his work on the Tennessee Valley Authority and Gouldner (1954) who studied a gypsum mine. Although I will not go into detail about all of these specific studies, they formed the beginnings of 'old' institutionalism. Below I will summarize the work of Merton and Selznick, before considering Parsons' contribution to Institutional Theory.

Merton

Merton did not directly discuss institutionalisation but explored how organizational processes led officials to conduct themselves in a way that ensured they conformed to rules, even if the rules interfered with the purposes of the organization (Scott, 2008b). Within bureaucratic settings, this produced conformity and discipline, but resulted in individuals following rules to the point of rigidity and ritualism (Scott, 2008b). Institutionalisation therefore became a practice which involved values and '…attitudes of moral legitimacy which are established as a means in their own right, and are no longer viewed as merely technical means for expediting administration' (Scott, 2008b: 21). With regards to power, Merton's work implies that individuals conform to rules and regulations as the rules exert a degree of control over individual behaviour, preventing other forms of conduct being exercised. This perspective on power remained influential and was implemented into the 'new' Institutional Theory reflected in the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983). Accordingly, the focus of such actor-centric analysis '…is upon struggles between groups 'possess(ing) power to bring about the outcomes they desire' (Pfeffer, 1981: 3 cited in Khan et al, 2007: 1059). I provide an alternative, critical understanding of power, which enables a critique of the exercise of power through isomorphic pressures, but commends a less agency-centric view compared to previous accounts.

Selznick: 'Infused with value'

Expanding and building on Merton's work was Selznick (1949) who was the leading pioneer of old institutionalism and became influential through his work based around the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). The TVA was established by Congress in May 1933 to plan for the use and development of natural, sustainable resources of the Tennessee River drainage and its adjoining territory. This involved the construction of dams, the production and distribution of electricity and fertilizer, and the deepening of the river channel. Selznick (1949) analysed the ways in which the TVA's administrative leadership aimed to engage in democratic planning to meet the demands of local people, and thereby lending '…reality, wholesomeness, and stature to the enterprise as a whole' (Selznick, 1949: 7). The TVA existed in a hostile institutional environment which meant that the official 'grass roots' ideology had to be adapted to relate to the requirements of local interests, but this had restrictive consequences for the Authority's behaviour and policies (Selznick, 1949).

Selznick's analysis is based specifically on the ways in which the TVA responded to local interests and power relations. The mechanism used to deal with this is referred to as 'informal cooptation' which was implemented to ensure the representation of interests through 'administrative constituencies'. This aimed to meet the '…pressure of specific individuals or interest groups which are in a position to enforce demands' (Selznick, 1949: 15). The reliance on 'informal cooptation' in the TVA meant that the risk of 'absorbing and neutralizing the threat posed by large-scale farming interests inevitably resulted in a substantial dilution of the political influence of small-scale farmers, ethnic minorities, and conservation groups within local communities' (Reed, 2009: 562). This reflects a repressive understanding of power

because it implies that '…officials and ordinary members…have a special access to and power over the machinery of the organization while those outside the bureaucratic ranks lack that access and power' (Selznick, 1949: 10). Selznick (1949:9) stated that '…there is a split between the leader and the led, between the agent and the initiator'. Selznick's conceptualisation of power has contributed to the early view of it as emanating from those in positions of authority or rule. The aim of the TVA to improve the conditions of local areas by minimising the economic and social neglect became an overarching objective, but as Selznick (1949: 5) recognised, it was '…clothed with the power of government but possessed of the flexibility and initiative of private enterprise'. Despite all good intentions, analysis of the TVA indicates that the governing elite were perceived as holding administrative power as they exercised control '…to win the consent of the governed' (Selznick, 1949: 13).

Selznick (1949) captures the inherent aspects of 'old' institutionalism, particularly with its analysis of group conflict and organizational strategy, illustrated when the TVA's external constituencies were bounded and co-opted as a means by which to protect the overarching programme (Selznick, 1949; Reed, 2009). Selznick's attention to the embedding of the organization into the local community also reinforces the salient features of 'old' institutionalism compared to the prevalence of outside environments such as industries and professions which influence organizations operating under the banner of 'new' institutionalism.

Talcott Parsons: Organizations and their Environments

Talcott Parsons was also a well known and influential sociologist during the 1950s and 1960s, especially in America where he was recognised for his contribution to 'normative' aspects of behaviour such as trust, commitment and values (Heckscher, 2009). Parsons argued from the standpoint of 'voluntarism' which implies that individuals have the ability to make choices, despite them being constrained and restricted by the context in which they were located (Heckscher, 2009: 608). Parsons' theoretical contribution was the emphasis he placed on the interrelationship between different value spheres, especially that of 'subjective' and 'objective', discussed below. It was argued that institutions are 'moral phenomena' (Parsons, 1990: 326) which implies that the '…primary motive for obedience to an institutional norm lies in the moral authority it exercises over the individual...He obeys it because he holds it, or the principle embodied in it, good for its own sake' (ibid). In his early writings, Parsons stressed the 'subjective' elements of institutions, which involves how '…institutions are intimately related to, and, in part at least, derived from ultimate value attitudes common to the members of a community' (Parsons, 1990: 326). When Parsons studied organizations, he however shifted emphasis to the 'objective' or to '…a system of norms defining what the relations of individuals [or organizations] ought to be' (Parsons, 1990: 327). Parsons argued that organizations are legitimated by the wider structures within society and Scott (2008b) illustrates this using the examples of schools by arguing that they gain legitimacy because their goals of education and training are connected to the wider cultural values of enhancing knowledge and educational attainment.

Scott (2008b) has written a seminal book on the history of Institutional Theory and argues that Parsons' definition of institutionalisation was a combination and synthesis of previous theorists, dating back to the work of Weber and Durkheim. Parsons argued that institutionalised normative systems were complied with because they became '…a needs-disposition in the actor's own personality structure' (Parsons, 1951: 37 cited in Scott, 2008b: 14). Individuals comply because of their belief in the value and 'moral' authority which institutionalised action provides, rather than due to their own self-interest (Scott, 2008b). Cooper et al (2008) analysed Parsons' contribution to Institutional Theory and stated that because his approach focuses heavily on the 'needs' of actors to undertake certain tasks, it does not take into account any strategic decisions. This displays a functionalist approach to institutionalisation which treats individuals as passive and implies that power is repressive as '…the very strength of the moral attachment of the community to these norms will…tend to canalize interests in conformity with them…the same strength of moral attachment will tend to visit disapproval and sometimes overt punishment on those who violate them' (Parsons, 1990: 326). DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 17) even argued that Parsons' theorisation is limited because 'culture as an object of orientation existing outside the actor is dismissed in favor of culture as an internalized element of the personality system…'.

The theorists that I have so far discussed form the early framework of Institutional Theory that developed into 'new' institutionalism, which involves a sociological perspective deriving from the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983). They discussed how institutionalisation can constrain forms of interaction as they become taken for granted and lead to organizational

homogenisation (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). For instance, DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 148) state that:

> Once disparate organizations in the same line of business are structured into an actual field…powerful forces emerge that lead them to become more similar to one another. Organizations may change their goals or develop new practices, and new organizations enter the field. But…organizational actors making rational decisions construct around themselves an environment that constrains their ability to change…

Homogenisation can be seen as an exercise of power which emphases 'constraint'. I seek to advance this perspective by using the work of Foucault (1977). The following section will provide an insight into new institutionalism in order to contextualise and enhance our understanding of how the shift occurred from 'old' to 'new' before I focus more specifically on the critique of Institutional Theory and the theoretical contribution that this thesis seeks to make.

New Institutionalism

New institutionalism could be said to have originated in 1977 with Meyer and Rowan's (1977) seminal paper *'Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony'*. The paper examines how organizational structures reflect the myth of their institutional environments, rather than the demands of their work activities. Organizations use social practices and technical requirements which specify in a rule like manner, how best to pursue their intended objectives (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Organizations respond to such institutional pressures by creating myths in order to maintain their legitimacy and hence demonstrate compliance. The myths are adopted so that organizations can avoid adhering fully to the demands of the environment, or external requirements (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). The

myths and ceremonial practices are thereby adopted and built into the organization which then creates '…the necessity, the opportunity, and the impulse to organize rationally…' (Meyer and Rowan, 1991: 45). Myths buffer the organization and provide the means of justifying to superiors, stakeholders and customers that should plans fail, procedures were in place which can demonstrate the original decisions made. The general advancement that this development provided was a conception of formal organizational structures reflecting not just technological imperatives, but:

> …institutional forces, vaguely defined at the time as 'rulelike' frameworks, 'rational myths' and knowledge legitimated through the educational systems, by social prestige, by the laws…and the courts (Meyer and Rowan, 1977: 341-343).

Many of the early discussions based on institutional environments were perceived as '…imposing requirements and/or constraints on organizations' (Scott, 2008a: 429) which suggests that power was exercised to ensure conformity and for organizations to be successful, they had to conform to the dictates of the institutional setting. For example, Selznick's (1949) understanding of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) adopted this approach to power. Selznick (1949: 10-11) stated that 'The moment an organization is begun, problems arise from the need for some continuity of policy and leadership, for a homogeneous outlook, for the achievement of continuous consent and participation...in defending the organization against possible encroachment or attack'. As the TVA '…absorbed local elements into its policy-determining structure, we should expect to find that this process has had an effect upon the evolving character of the Authority itself' (ibid). Selznick's (1949) argument is not entirely inconsistent with Foucault (1977) because he appears to recognise that power can also be relational and productive. Power is not the exclusive property of those who exercise it, but its

effectiveness is dependent on the individuals subject to it as they seek to consent and participate with it.

Having discussed the distinctions between 'old' and 'new' institutionalism, I will make them more explicit by identifying them in the form of a table, reproduced from DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 13) (see Table 1).

Table 1: Distinguishing features of old and new institutionalism

(DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 13).

	Old	New
Conflicts of interest	Central	Peripheral
Source of inertia	Vested interest	Legitimacy imperative
Structural emphasis	Informal structure	Symbolic role of formal structure
Organization embedded in	Local community	Field, sector, or society
Nature of embeddedness	Co-optation	Constitutive
Locus of institutionalization	Organization	Field or society
Organizational dynamics	Change	Persistence
Basis of critique of utilitarianism	Theory of interest aggregation	Theory of action
Evidence for critique of utilitarianism	Unanticipated consequences	Unreflective activity
Key forms of cognition	Values, norms, attitudes	Classifications, routines, scripts, schema
Social psychology	Socialization theory	Attribution theory
Cognitive basis of order	Commitment	Habit, practical action
Goals	Displaced	Ambiguous
Agenda	Policy relevance	Disciplinary

DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 12) recognise that old and new approaches to Institutional Theory both discuss institutionalization as a means of constraining organizational practices, but they are based on different sources of constraint (see Table 1).

The 'old' approach takes the view that informal aspects of an organization influence and depart from the formal structure, whilst new institutionalism argues that irrationality originates in the formal structure itself (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). The old approach implied that informal structures, such as organizational norms, constrained aspects of the formal structure whilst meeting the needs of elite interests. The new approach emphases irrationality in formal structures because the diffusion of organizational practices that provides legitimacy, is achieved through the adoption of ceremonial practices (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2008b).

Additionally, there is a divergence between the old and new approach in terms of their notion of the environment (see Table 1). The old approach views organizations as embedded in local communities because of the ties established between local communities and organizational leadership; this is often through 'cooptation' which was discussed in relation to Selznick (1949). This indicates that the old approach perceived a tension between organizations and their environments with the latter determining and influencing the former. New institutionalism focuses instead on the environment as having less of an influence and considers the impact of the field, industry sector or society. Seen in this way, the environment is not 'co-opted' by the organization, but instead it is '…creating the lenses through which actors view the world and the very categories of structure, action, and thought' (DiMaggio and

Powell, 1991: 13). Another important difference between the two approaches is concerned with the notion of an organizational character which originates due to 'custom and precedent' (Selznick, 1949: 182). In comparison, the new institutionalism focuses on the role of the environment in terms of legitimating organizations and their corresponding structures (Zucker, 1991). This is likely to increase similarity as organizations become subject to the same environmental pressures and hence organizations are perceived as being more stable (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

New institutionalism rejects rational behaviour, stressing the unreflective, routine and taken-for-granted nature of human behaviour, and the process through which organizations are created by actors themselves (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This leads to a distinction being made between the assumption of cultural and cognitive bases of institutionalised behaviour. For the old institutionalists, the cognitive forms of behaviour were values, norms and attitudes and organizations were institutionalised when they were 'infused with value' (Selznick, 1957: 17). The new institutionalism argues that cultural obligations enter into social life as taken-for-granted scripts, rules and classifications (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

As seen from the above discussion, there are a number of distinctions between old and new institutionalism and one of the key features of new institutionalism is its emphasis on similarity and legitimacy. This is clearly evident through the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and their discussion of the three forms of isomorphism. The fundamental aspects of their work are discussed in more depth below as isomorphism provides the structure for the empirical chapters for this thesis.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) – Isomorphism, Homogenisation and Legitimacy Seeking

Sociological accounts within Institutional Theory draw heavily on the influential work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983) who discussed how organizations respond to environmental contingencies. It is these theorists who I originally drew upon when deciding to use Institutional Theory as the framework for the thesis; it was only after considering their work from a more critical perspective especially through using the work of Foucault (1977) that I was then able to see how advancements and a critique could be applied. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) contributed to the macro level analysis of institutional systems and the effects that environmental factors have on organizations. They distinguished between three institutional pressures – *coercive, normative* and *mimetic* (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 150; emphasis added) which are discussed in more depth below.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 147) use the 'iron cage' metaphor to argue that organizations experience imprisonment through the process of homogenisation. This develops from Weber's idea of the 'iron cage' of bureaucratisation which was once seen as '…an efficient and powerful…means of controlling men and women that, once established, the momentum of bureaucratization was irreversible' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 147). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that bureaucratisation now occurs as a result of processes which make organizations more similar which implies that the requirement to conform is an imposition on organizations as they experience isomorphic pressure. Institutional theorists' understanding of homogenisation as a result of isomorphism reflects a repressive view of power because it suggests that there is no choice but to conform to the demands of the environment, or by others who are more 'powerful'. Perceiving isomorphism through Foucault's (1977)

understanding of power is a useful means of analysing how advancements can be made to Institutional Theory by examining power as relational and productive. A similarity does however exist between Institutional Theory and Foucault (1977) which is evident in Riaz's (2009: 27) work who applied an Institutional Theory perspective to analyse the global financial crisis. Riaz (2009) argued that the 'iron cage' of homogenisation can be turned 'inside-out', as organizations '…represent powerful interests (which could be considered their own or those of their agents) that have a bearing on the survival of the institutional framework in the domain of the organization's operation and influence' (Riaz, 2009: 28). This suggests that power can be exercised by both institutions and organizations in a social relationship. Organizations can 'reverse-legitimate' institutions which means that organizations deemed successful (or deviant) can legitimate (or de-legitimate) the institutions to which they belong, rather than simply viewing the institutions as exercising legitimating power and institutional pressure (Riaz, 2009). Foucault's (1977: 27; emphasis added) notion of relational power can be seen as:

> …not localized in the relations between the state and its citizens or on the frontier between classes and that they do not merely reproduce…the general form of law or government…[*instead*] they define immunerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its *own risks of conflict, of struggles…*

Foucault's (1977: 27) reference to power involving *'…conflict, of struggles'* resonates with Riaz's (2009) study which identified how organizations, through the process of 'reverse-legitimacy' are capable of exercising power, rather than merely being perceived as passive recipients.

The three isomorphic pressures

In this section, I discuss the three forms of isomorphic pressure which DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified in their seminal article *'The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields'*. The founder of isomorphism, Amos Hawley (1968), argued that "Units subjected to the same environmental conditions...acquire a similar form of organizations" (Hawley, 1968 cited in Scott, 2008b: 152). 'Isomorphism' has also been used to describe the process whereby "…organizations in a field resemble each other more closely over time" (Ashworth et al, 2005: 3). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) distinguished between 1) *coercive* isomorphism which stems from the state and political influence; 2) *normative* isomorphism which is associated with professionalization and involves the work of trade associations, and 3) *mimetic* isomorphism which results from responses to uncertainty. DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 67) made it clear that, 'This typology is an analytic one: the types are not always empirically distinct'. For example, an organization may be encouraged to mimetically copy their counterparts by conforming to a particular task, but then specifying the profession responsible for its performance (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Although the three forms of isomorphism may overlap in empirical settings, they derive from different sources and result in varying outcomes. The following section will therefore discuss each isomorphic pressure separately.

Coercive

Coercive isomorphism is the result of '…formal and informal pressures exerted onto organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent or by cultural expectations…' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 67). The pressures of coercion '…may be felt

as force, as persuasion, or as invitations to join in collusion' (ibid: 67). An example may be the introduction of a government regulation which requires organizations to conform in order to avoid sanctions or allegations of misconduct. The existence of legal rules affects organizations' behaviour and structure as decision makers apply the same requirements across all organizations. The criterion of conformity leads to homogenisation as organizations are expected to conform to the same standard requirements. DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 68) argued that:

> …the expansion of the central state, the centralization of capital, and the coordination of philanthropy all support the homogenisation of organizational models through *direct authority relationships* (emphasis added)

The reference to *'direct authority relationships'* suggests that the notion of power is perceived as imposing and restrictive because it implies that it is exercised by one individual body over others in order to achieve desirable outcomes and ensure conformity. That said, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) note that coercive isomorphism is not always imposed through direct force, but can occur more subtly. The notion of power existing through coercive isomorphism is evident in the work of Currie and Suhomlinova (2006) who studied knowledge sharing in the NHS. They grounded their analysis within new Institutional Theory and argued that coercive isomorphism involves a '…direct imposition' (ibid: 4) by examining how knowledge sharing is restricted between managers and hospital doctors because the latter:

> …*enjoy positional power* within the UK health care system that, in the main, comes from the professional institutions to which they belong…..Their *privileged position*…was reinforced during the inception of the NHS (Currie and Suhomlinova, 2006: 25; emphasis added).

The reference to doctors enjoying *'positional power'* and being in a *'privileged position'* suggests that individuals acquire and maintain power as experts within their field which they

can then exercise to determine, influence and direct the behaviour of others. This fails to take account of how power exists relationally amongst all hospital clinicians because power '…invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them' (Foucault, 1977: 27). This suggests that participating in a discourse of medicine is never simply about the exercise of doctors' or managers' power because both affect and constitute the subjectivity of each other. Individuals are not simply responsive to power, but are actively involved in exercising it. By perceiving managers as 'powerless' we fail to recognise that they are also able to '…emancipate themselves through the building of alternative institutional arrangements' (Lawrence et al, 2011: 57). When analysing such practices, 'We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an affect of power…' (Foucault, 1979: 100). The engagement and participation with discourses can therefore lead to self-discipline through the internalisation of desirable norms and behaviour which could (re) constitute one's subjectivity (Foucault, 1977).

Normative

Normative isomorphism stems primarily from professionalization which is defined as the 'collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, to control 'the production of producers' (Larson, 1977: 49-52 cited in DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 152). Professionalization involves two key features which lead to homogenisation: formal education and the growth and use of professional networks that spread between organizations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Formal education originates out of universities and professional training associations whereby individuals learn norms of

professional behaviour. Trade associations are also another feature of normative isomorphism as they define, propagate and disperse professional codes of conduct and standards of performance which their members are expected to comply with. This means that 'Such mechanisms create a pool of almost interchangeable individuals who occupy similar positions across a range of organizations and possess a similarity of orientation and disposition…' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 71). These strands of normative isomorphism lead to homogenisation as individuals and organizations begin to share similar norms, knowledge and standards of behaviour (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Zucker, 1991).

Normative isomorphism is also exercised through the employment and infiltration of personnel from within the same industry. This may involve recruiting individuals on fast-track schemes or from the same training bodies which results in common promotion practices, skill-levels and even personality (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). For example, chief executives are virtually indistinguishable, not only in relation to their career background and education, but also due to the socialisation which they have experienced. This includes codes of dress, organizational vocabularies, personal behaviour and methods of joking, speaking and addressing others (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Kanter (1977) refers to this process as the 'homosexual reproduction of management' as professionals are selected from the same universities and on the basis of similar attributes which may also lead to them viewing organizational policies and practices in the same way. Normative isomorphism is felt by all individuals, even those who may be perceived as having escaped from the homogenisation process, such as women chief executives who are rare. When organizations in a field are similar to one another, individuals do not escape the socialisation process, but instead are

subjected to it throughout their employment, particularly when they are exposed to trade association workshops, trade magazines and professional networks. As Greenwood and Hinings (1996: 1038) suggest:

> Any normative scheme implies differential access to and control over key decision processes within organizations…the prevailing archetypal template in an organization 'gives' power to some groups and not to others

This quote suggests that normative isomorphism involves the exercise of power which is acquired and held by one individual or group and exercised over others. The suggestion that some individuals are *'given'* power implies that it is a possession, rather than a relational entity which all individuals have access to (Foucault, 1977). Normative isomorphism is also argued to involve shared understandings and norms which encourages homogenisation. As Greenwood et al (2002: 59) argue:

> …shared understandings, or collective beliefs, become reinforced by regulatory processes involving state agencies and professional bodies, which normatively and/or coercively *press conformity* upon constituent communities

The suggestion that bodies *'press conformity'* upon others in order to induce a response indicates a perception of power which involves direct imposition to ensure compliance. For example, in the passive fire industry, successive governments have adopted trade federations and trade associations as bodies to transfer knowledge and appropriate standards of performance to their members. This creates the pressure for homogenisation as the information and structures are transmitted amongst numerous organizations involved in these networks. That said, homogenisation does not mean that efficiency is enhanced; it is more likely that the similarity simply ensures that organizations are perceived as conforming and

legitimate, not that they are becoming more efficient at what they do (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Organizations and individuals are not 'powerless' in their response to isomorphic pressures. Adoption of a possessive, rather than a relational conception of power, means that Institutional Theory neglects how individuals can exercise power through rearticulating and redefining practices for their own purposes (see chapters 5-7).

Mimetic

The third form of isomorphism does not involve coercive authority or professionalization, but instead originates due to uncertainty which acts as a powerful force that encourages imitation. In situations where goals are uncertain and when objectives are unclear, organizations may turn to their counterparts in order to replicate their practices (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Mimetic isomorphism can be advantageous to organizations who are struggling with uncertainty, because by copying others they can yield desirable outcomes with minimal expense.

Organizations that become 'models' which others replicate may not intentionally establish themselves as such, but are often drawn upon because they are perceived as offering solutions to ambiguous circumstances and they provide security for other organizations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Replication can stem from different sources, such as belonging to a trade association which directly transfers models of desirable behaviour, or alternatively more successful organizations are replicated due to their practices being perceived as effective and of a high standard (see Chapter 7). The proliferation of management techniques, such as TQM and JIT were in part an attempt to replicate Japanese practices in order to enhance successful

working and improve efficiency (Hill, 1991). Modelling can also involve a ritualistic aspect because organizations that adopt and mimic their counterparts are also attempting to demonstrate their legitimacy. This is particularly important when faced with a competitive industry or when the customer base is large, because organizations are under pressure to meet expectations and to provide the high quality services and products that are delivered by other organizations.

The literature associated with management gurus can also be seen as contributing to a form of mimetic isomorphism because it can be used by managers and personnel to acquire information and practices which can be replicated within their own organization. As other organizations in the industry select the literature and advice as a source of guidance and a model to mimic, the programmes and content of the practices are transferred and replicated. This indicates that homogenisation does not just occur when one organization replicates another, but it is also possible because gurus are used and adopted as sources of inspiration which influence the practices of multiple firms, both locally and globally. This is seen in Chapter 7 where I discuss the role of Aqua-Tilt, a global manufacturer who draws on the advice of gurus such as Ken Blanchard and Stephen Covey. Aqua-Tilt's managers replicate the gurus' ideas in order to implement an enterprising culture. The cultural attributes are then transferred to Aqua-Tilt's customers which leads to an infiltration of practices which encourages mimetic isomorphism across a number of organizations. In a similar way to the coercive and normative strands of isomorphism, mimetic copying does not automatically guarantee improvements in efficiency. It may be the case that replicating another organization enhances legitimacy and credibility, or viewed from Foucault's perspective, modelling can be

understood as a form of disciplinary power which normalises conduct as organizations are benchmarked and made visible when judged against their counterparts (Townley, 1998).

The emphasis on similarity and homogenisation is a long-standing theme throughout DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) work and more recent organizational scholars (i.e. Bachmann and Zaheer, 2008) have also used it in their work. For example, in the context of exploring how the particular forms of isomorphism can create 'trust' between organizations in a given institutional setting (Bachmann and Zaheer, 2008). Whereas Hawley (1968 cited in Scott, 2008b) focuses on isomorphism stemming from competitive pressure due to organizations striving to survive in their environment, the work of new institutional theorists places more emphasis on legitimacy (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Legitimacy can be defined as a '…generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions' (Suchman, 1995: 574). For example, organizations that adopt and display a quality standard are likely to be trusted, and as a result, customers are more likely to trade with them.

Expanding DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) work

Scott (2008b) has elaborated and expanded on DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) line of argument by providing an analytical framework which defined three different pillars of Institutional Theory. These consist of the *regulative, normative* and *cultural-cognitive* (Scott, 2008b: 50; emphasis added). Firstly, the regulative pillar envisages institutions as mechanisms which *'constrain and regularize behaviour'* (Scott, 2008b: 52) and:

> …regulatory processes involve the capacity to establish rules, inspect others' conformity to them, and, as necessary, manipulate sanctions, rewards or punishments – in an attempt to influence future behaviour (Scott, 2008b: 52).

This quote supports the argument that institutional theorists perceive power as being exercised to direct and influence the behaviour of others, especially with the reference to *'establishing rules'; 'manipulating sanctions'* and the *'attempt to influence future behaviour'*. It also focuses attention on Institutional Theory's notion of legitimacy which, in the context of the regulatory pillar, would be those organizations that are '…operating in accordance with relevant legal or quasi-legal requirements' (Scott, 2008b: 61). Scott (2008b: 53) makes the point that the state is a *'rule maker, referee, and enforcer'*, but this ignores how the power being exercised is not simply repressive and coercive, but can create subjects who internalise the state's requirements as their own. For example, as I discuss in Chapter 5, the state does not just exercise coercive isomorphism through issuing government White Papers in order to induce conformity and homogenisation, but through the enterprise discourse, reconstitutes individuals who participate and engage with the discourse because:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourses (Foucault, 1980: 119).

Scott (2008b: 53) sees power differently as he argues that it stems from '…powerful actors [*who*] may sometimes impose their will on others, based on the use or threat of sanctions'. Scott's (2008b) regulatory pillar relates to DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) concept of coercion which originates primarily from the state or regulatory agencies and implies the restraint of individuals' behaviour. Evidence of this is in their reference to how organizations are

'…structurally determined by the constraints posed by technical activities' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 150-151). There is no acknowledgement in Scott's (2008b) work that power could also be productive. Despite Scott (2008b: 52) stating that: 'Institutions work both to constrain and empower social behaviour', viewing individuals as 'empowered' takes on a different meaning when explored from the perspective of Foucault (1977). As we recall with Foucault's (1977) use of the Panopticon metaphor (see chapter 2), self-regulation is concerned with creating a '…state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (Foucault, 1977: 201). This results in individuals perceiving themselves as empowered and autonomous, whilst regulating their own behaviour.

The Normative Pillar (Scott, 2008b)

The second pillar identified by Scott (2008b) is normative. This involves rules 'that introduce a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension into social life' (Scott, 2008b: 54). Normative systems include norms and values which guide social behaviour. Institutional theorists discuss how action involves norms and values which link to one's organizational role and defines desirable and legitimate behaviour, as well as how these expectations can become internalised. In a similar way to the regulative pillar, normative systems can place constraints on behaviour, but also empower and enable social action. As Scott (2008b: 55) states:

> Normative systems are typically viewed as imposing constraints on social behaviour, and so they do. At the same time, they empower and enable social action. They confer rights as well as responsibilities; privileges as well as duties; licenses as well as mandates.

Through Scott's (2008b: 56) recognition that normative power can also 'empower' action, it implies that it is not simply repressive compared to the regulatory pillar, but instead involves a

'…large measure of self-evaluation: heightened remorse and/or effects on self-respect'. The normative understanding of institutionalised practices recognises that norms and values can become internalised or 'imposed upon others' (Scott, 2008b: 56). Despite this recognition of the internalisation process, it is not expanded upon in terms of what this means for individuals' subjectivity in terms of self-discipline and how this can lead to the shaping of identities (Foucault, 1977). Foucault (1977) would argue that normative mechanisms exercise disciplinary power by providing a norm against which we measure ourselves and others. For example, professional associations, discussed in chapter 6, provide a norm of conduct which seeks to monitor, regulate and individualise members in order that they become enterprising subjects. Associations act as 'experts' (Rose, 1999) who play the role of a 'cypher' (du Gay, 1996: 63) by communicating government rationalities to member organizations through the enterprise discourse; this aims to define and limit conduct in line with what is considered 'normal' and desirable. Professional bodies such as trade associations therefore contribute to not only conformity, productivity and efficiency, but also reconstitute the subjectivity of their members. The state is using these alternative devices to transform subjects into compliant and enterprising individuals through encouraging self-regulation.

The Cultural-Cognitive Pillar

This pillar introduces the cultural-cognitive elements of institutions which institutionalists and anthropologists like Geertz (1973), Berger and Luckman (1967) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have drawn attention to. Scott (2008b) recognises that the cultural-cognitive pillar is one of the distinguishing features of new-institutionalism (see Table 1) and it recognises that social reality involves a collection of meaning systems which are employed to enhance

understanding of on-going social interaction. This relates back to Weber (1947) who emphasised that actions are only social when meaning can be attached to the behaviour. Institutional theorists, such as Scott (2008b) recognise that culture can vary in its institutionalisation as there is not total consensus amongst actors and situations can be interpreted differently.

The cultural-cognitive pillar sees conformance as occurring because '…other types of behaviour are inconceivable; routines are followed because they are taken for granted as 'the way we do things' (Scott, 2008b: 58). Conformance is therefore not the result of obligations or controlling strategies, but instead by common acceptance of templates which guide and direct behaviour. This resonates with DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) notion of 'mimetic' isomorphism as cultural frameworks can be replicated, especially in situations of uncertainty. As the empirical chapters in this thesis will identify, complying with a cultural model often occurs through disciplinary power which acts as a means by which to measure and judge individuals' behaviour, thus instigating a homogenising and normalising effect (Foucault, 1977). This departs from Institutional Theory's perception of homogenisation as only occurring due to the exercise of repressive power.

Despite the seminal work of theorists such as DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Scott (2008a/b) and their emphasis on isomorphism, other scholars recognised that organizations operate in fields which are also divergent, contradictory and fragmented. For example, Barley and Tolbert (1997) combine Institutional Theory and structuration theory to explore how organizations are created, shaped and altered by individuals. The notion of a 'script', defined

as '…behavioural regularities instead of mental models or plans' (Barley and Tolbert, 1997: 98), is used to identify patterns of social interaction that shape institutional principles. This enables one to understand how actors' interpretations of those actions lead to the reproduction or modification of organizations which acknowledges that change and stability are both possible. Friedland and Alford (1991) argue that organizations are situated and influenced by wider societal contexts such as the economy and the state. The different institutional logics governing these realms provided a catalyst for change and conflict to emerge. The notion of institutional logics is explored below.

Recent work on Institutional Logics

The concept of institutional logics refers broadly to '…symbolic systems, ways of ordering reality, and thereby rendering experience of time and space meaningful' (Friedland and Alford, 1991: 243). Underpinning this is the extent to which logics enable the identification of which organizational practices are deemed appropriate at any given time and which actions should be avoided (Greenwood et al, 2009). Friedland and Alford's (1991) early depiction of logics was revised by Thornton (2002) who argued that they could be classified into six sectors: the market, the corporation, the professions, the state, the family and religions (Thornton 2002). Thornton (2002: 83) asserts that:

> At the organizational level, ambiguity and cognitive limitations hinder the ability of individuals and organizations to attend to all aspects of their environments…Institutional logics help to remedy this problem by focussing the attention of organizational actors on a limited set of issues and solutions that are consistent with the prevailing logic.

As seen from this extract, institutional logics appear to be a means of reinforcing the status quo as they '…determine which answers and solutions are the focus of management's

attention' (Thornton, 2002: 83). Where power is concerned, it can be argued that changes in logics '…are likely to be viewed as advancing the interests of some types of organizational participants and undercutting those of others' (Scott, 2008b: 202). This means that logics define the norms and values which structure the ways in which actors perceive their situation and in turn come to understand how decisions and outcomes are formulated. Individuals considered 'powerful' use institutional logics to determine and influence which issues are important in an organization and by changing the logics, they can determine which organizational strategies and structures are to dominate (Thornton, 2002). For example, Thornton (2002: 82) demonstrates how a change in institutional logics in higher educational publishing resulted in the industry shifting from an emphasis on publishing as a profession, to one in which '…managers of formal hierarchies paid increasing attention to market forces'.

In relation to this thesis, the concept of institutional logics can be critically analysed by arguing that it reinforces the position on power which institutional theorists have adopted. Power is perceived as being exercised by imposing particular logics of action on to other individuals who are expected to conform to them. When a shift to a new logic occurs (the spread of enterprise), it is those organizations or individuals who fail to give it prominence or to embody it fully who will be considered deviant (Thornton, 2002). This approach to power is at odds with Foucault's (1977) conceptualisation, as logics are not only used to determine action, but individuals can also influence the institutional logics by redefining it and using it to their own advantage. That said, Levy and Scully (2007: 5) draw our attention to how Institutional Theory attempts to acknowledge the productive concept of power, even though the references to it are minimal. They argue that organizations reproduce themselves '…by

establishing routines, disciplining deviance, and constructing agents' identities and interests' (Levy and Scully, 2007: 5). The reference to *'constructing agents' identities and interests'* reflects a productive conception of power as it suggests that individuals are shaped into subjects through their internationalisation of norms which (re) constitutes their subjectivity and identity.

Institutional work - where are all the individuals?

Lawrence et al (2011: 52) argue that Institutional Theory has traditionally provided a macro view on organizations and examines large-scale social and economic changes, without taking into account the 'lived experience' of actors involved in this process. Shifting the focus to discuss 'institutional work' which explores how actors work at '…creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions' (ibid: 52) enables researchers to directly explore the motivations and behaviours behind individuals' actions which provides greater depth and understanding of the processes of institutionalisation. A text that is widely acknowledged in relation to new Institutional Theory, but which sees the relationship between individuals and institutions as more intimately connected, is Berger and Luckmann's (1967) *Social Construction of Reality.* They argued that:

> Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors…any such typification is an institution. What must be stressed is the reciprocity of institutional typifications and the typicality of not only the actions but also the actors in institutions (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 72).

Berger and Luckmann (1967) go on to state that institutions can control human conduct and direct it in any way perceived as theoretically possible or desirable. In relation to new institutionalism, despite its usefulness, the focus on the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) reinforces how Institutional Theory fails to acknowledge the ways in

which these practices exercise power (Cooper et al, 2008). Hence, Berger and Luckmann (1967) do not discuss how actors have more or less ability than their counterparts to impose and constrain the actions of others through habitualized social processes.

Cooper et al (2008) argue that it is the emphasis Berger and Luckmann (1967) place on terms such as 'outside of himself' and 'facticity' which draw attention to how the process of institutionalisation neglects power. This can be improved through using Foucault's (1977) theory of power which, when combined with the language of enterprise (responsibility, risk, autonomy), show how individuals become shaped as responsible, autonomous and self-regulating, whilst at the same time, fulfilling government rationalities (Rose, 1999). When applied to Institutional Theory, it demonstrates how individuals can be institutionalised through isomorphic pressures which exercise productive power through homogenising subjects.

This is supported by Hasselbadh and Kallinkos (2000: 701) who stated that '…institututionalization is sustained and given meaning and direction through its capacity to constitute discursive forms of actorhood'. In other words, institutionalisation exists and is possible through individuals' identification with the practices that it reproduces. This adds valuable insight into how Institutional Theory can be advanced by introducing a concept of power as productive.

The study of institutional work is an attempt to include what Marti and Mair (2009 cited in Lawrence et al, 2011: 56) have referred to as the 'powerless, disenfranchised, and under-

resourced…'. Willmott (2011) argues that Lawrence et al's (2011: 56) attempt to recognise that individuals can '…step out of established roles…to transform the conditions under which they live and work', is a promising move. The reference to 'they' as 'powerless' does however imply a possessive notion of power which is hard to reconcile with the claim that 'disenfranchised' individuals are doing important 'institutional work' (Willmott, 2011: 70). Only a relational concept of power can recognise that individuals are not 'powerless' but able to 'emancipate themselves through the building of alternative institutional arrangements' (Lawrence et al, 2011: 57).

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Foucault's (1977) work on power can be used to advance and criticise Institutional Theory. Drawing on existing scholarship, the chapter provided an historical insight into Institutional Theory which enabled me to analyse how it has traditionally failed to provide a critical understanding of power. The emphasis placed on the three isomorphic pressures (coercive, normative and mimetic) originating from the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggests that organizations become more similar to each other due to the exercise of power which leads them to enhance their legitimacy, or minimise uncertainty. This implies that power is primarily exercised by those in positions of authority. As discussed in Chapter 2, some critical theorists, especially those from The Frankfurt School, have also taken this perspective on power to suggest that it is repressive and dominating (i.e. Marcuse, 1964).

Foucault (1977), by contrast, analyses power as being productive and relational. It is exercised amongst individuals within a social relationship which also has the effect of normalising conduct and (re)constituting subjectivity. Using Foucault (1977) enables me to explore how the three isomorphic pressures exercise disciplinary power that has the effect of normalising conduct. As will be explored in subsequent empirical chapters, each of the isomorphic pressures transfers the enterprise discourse within the passive fire protection industry which leads subjects to embrace, resist or manipulate it. The enterprise discourse shapes subjectivity and conduct through establishing a 'truth' regime which institutionalises and defines ways of behaving. This can result in individuals becoming homogenised and normalised as they are measured and ranked against set criteria. Such a view departs from DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) focus on organizations becoming homogenised simply due to legitimacy seeking.

The following chapter will focus on the methodological features of this thesis relating to the collection, analysis and representation of the data. It will also discuss issues relating to paradigm (in) commensurability which relates back to the last two chapters.

The effects of methodological approaches

and researcher engagement

Introduction

This chapter considers the methodological features of this thesis relating to the collection and analysis of the empirical data. Firstly, the philosophical standpoint regarding epistemology and ontology will be identified, before considering the chosen theoretical framework. While it is often acknowledged that multiple techniques can be applied across paradigms, Symon and Cassell (1998: 3) argue that there is interplay between paradigms and the choice of methodology used. This becomes a key point of discussion for this chapter which is then followed by details of the respondents, data collection and analysis. The final section will consider one's role as a researcher in order to acknowledge the influence this has on the research.

Philosophical Standpoint

Epistemology is concerned with the grounds of knowledge and the rights to the beliefs we have (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 5; Bryman, 2004: 11). In order to contextualise the standpoint taken in this research, it is worth making the distinction between 'positivism' and 'anti-positivism'. Positivism emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century and it is concerned with how the natural sciences can be used to advance human life; any other form of knowledge was perceived as outdated and unreliable. Positivism can be traced to the intellectual work of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and Rene Descartes (1596-1650) who were influential figures in search of a means to defeat scepticism and provide a new certainty for

knowledge of the world. Bacon argued for the authority of experience, experiment, induction and painstaking observation to provide a reliable basis for scientific ideas (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997). Descartes, in comparison, argued for the certainty of mathematics to analyse the laws of nature (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997). Embodied within both of these theorists' work is the assumption that the natural and human world share the same features and can therefore be studied using the same methods. This implies that positivism only consists of two forms of knowledge: empirical and logical. The former is related to the natural sciences, whereas the latter was dominated by mathematics. Knowledge can be tested and verified using empirical experience which aims to acquire concrete 'facts' (Silverman, 1985: 159); the question then remains as to whether positivism can be used to study 'meanings' within social science research. For instance, positivism may be appropriate to study the moon, stars or chemical compounds, but can it similarly be used to study individual opinion, emotions or morality? It is these types of questions which Hughes and Sharrock (1997: 30) argue need to be answered '…before positivism could successfully claim that the human world, like the physical, operated according to natural laws which could be discovered by a scientific method taken from the natural sciences'.

Positivism derives from the position that social sciences must endeavour to emulate the natural sciences and ensure objectivity by implementing a neutral 'observation language' (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997: 43). This 'language' allows a scientist to describe their direct experience of the phenomena in question, and then assess whether it is 'true' or 'false'. The problem is that the language used is solely based on how things appear or are observed. Hence no recognition is given to emotional, ideological or theoretical preconceptions, and this ignores the influence

of human emotions and subjective experience. In contrast, Ghoshal (2005) argued that organizational research should be about making a contribution and building a better world for the future. He stated that adhering to the scientific, objective approach, and the analysis and use of narrow questions can result in obscuring a fuller understanding of human emotions and purpose.

Ethnomethodologists, such as Garfinkel, argue that the avoidance of subjectivity is undesirable as researchers are never just passive observers in the research process. The outcome of the interaction with respondents is directly mediated by researchers' presence. What we 'see' is bound by the interaction between ourselves and what we study. Methodologically, positivists argue that it is possible to be scientific by following a set procedure which can be applied to interviews, which will be discussed below. This is in contrast to interpretive sociologists who argue that sociology cannot be based on objective accounts only; it is concerned more with how subjects interact with one another and how they view the social world through their own taken-for-granted assumptions.

Applying a positivist perspective to research methodology, such as interviews, suggests that the material and data acquired can lead to 'facts' about the world and the society being studied. When the facts are perceived as incorrect, remedies, checks and tests are made in order to acquire a truer account and a more '…complete picture of how things stand' (Silverman, 1985: 159). Johnson and Duberley (2003: 1283) classify the positivist's approach as reflecting an 'objectivist epistemology'. The researcher adopting a positivist stance aims to engage in 'methodological reflexivity' which means that the methodology is only deployed as

a 'research tool' to achieve a form of objective inquiry (ibid: 1284). Positivists aim to ensure that validity is maintained and based on the truth and accuracy of the description or measurement (Taylor et al, 2004). Data that is valid arguably provides a true picture of something which can be verified. Positivists would argue that this is the aim of interviews which is to generate data that can be distinguished independently from the researcher, interviewer and the setting (Silverman, 1985). Validity is enhanced by using standardised questions and a structured protocol. As Selltiz et al (1964 cited in Silverman, 1985: 160) have claimed, there are a set of 'rules and taboos' that researchers should follow such as asking each question precisely as it is worded and as it appears on the schedule, and avoiding any impromptu explanations or questions. This aims to limit the 'inaccuracy' of the information provided and increase the control over the data collected (Silverman, 1985). Triangulation is particularly used amongst researchers who aim to assess and acquire valid data as it '…serves as a cross-check for validity' (Taylor et al, 2004: 632). This reinforces the positivist position that methods are used to correct data which has deviated from the expected outcome. In this research, I have replaced the concept of triangulation with crystallization because it is less deterministic and seeks to acquire in-depth insights from respondents, rather than being concerned with ensuring that the information provided is 'correct'.

Although positivists attempt to eliminate the subjectivity of individual behaviour within an interview situation (i.e the presence of interviewer bias), this is also applicable to interpretive researchers. For instance, Interpretivists argue that surveys and questionnaires come in between the researcher and researched, meaning that one cannot directly engage with others' social worlds. This supports a positivist argument because they argue that material is distorted

when researchers are left to influence the research process. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, cited in Silverman, 1985: 156) state that naturalistic settings are 'untouched by human hands' and can convey the neutrality and representativeness which fit with positivist connotations. Relating this to the use of unstructured interviews, it can be argued that they aim to minimise interviewer bias in order that respondents' answers or actions are not affected by the researcher. This also implies that despite their aim of acquiring a full account of the topic under investigation by engaging with respondents, researchers are also concerned about eliminating anything which may interfere with the data. Ironically, this resonates with positivism in terms of seeking to reach an objective account. Despite these similarities, an anti-positivist approach still seems to be more appealing to me because I do not want to be restricted by standardised procedures or interview protocol. Instead, I wanted an interrelationship between the researcher and respondent to develop during the time that I spent engaging with individuals in the passive fire industry.

'Anti-positivism' enables one to study the social sciences from the 'inside' (Jermier, 1998: 240) to generate an understanding from the perspective of the individuals who participate in the research. Anti-positivism is multi-faceted which implies that there is no one 'correct' way of undertaking social science research. It is characterised by a pluralistic approach regarding the methodology used which resides within the interpretivist paradigm. This avoids treating organizations as entities which can be 'black boxed' whose inputs and outputs are controlled with scientific methods (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008: 23). The researcher participating in the daily life of the organization attempts to decipher meaning and enhance understanding, 'rather

than [*be*] a mere mirror which accurately reflects what is out there' (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008: 23).

In contrast to epistemology, ontology considers whether social reality is external to the individual, or whether it is socially constructed through individual interpretations and actions. The former is classified as a 'realist' view of ontology (Johnson and Duberley, 2003: 1282) which assumes that social and natural reality has an independent existence prior to human cognition, whereas the latter is a 'subjective' view of ontology that assumes that reality is an output of human cognitive processes (ibid). When realist ontology is combined with subjective epistemology, it can result in 'epistemic reflexivity' (ibid: 1288). This means that management research cannot be carried out independently of researchers' own sense of self because '…a researcher's own social location affects the forms and outcomes of research...' (ibid: 1289). A key implication is that no-one can step outside of their epistemological and ontological commitments because researchers are required to question their taken-for-granted assumptions, and acknowledge the influence they have on the research process (ibid). Undertaking epistemic reflexivity means that recognition is also given to multiple voices and perspectives which aim to avoid the researcher appearing as '…an autonomous, objective, assessor' (ibid: 1295). The emphasis is on facilitating respondents' ability to comprehend their situation in new ways by encouraging individuals to reflect and develop transformative strategies which '…are practically adequate for coping with and resolving [their] own problems' (ibid: 1292). Epistemic reflexivity resonates with the approach that I have adopted in this thesis; I have attempted to acknowledge my presence in the research site and critically

interrogate my own practices to recognise how they may have impacted on the outcomes of the research.

Development of the thesis

The development and construction of this thesis did not follow an ordered sequence of events which can be neatly captured along a trajectory of carefully planned and scheduled processes. Instead, it entailed a continuous process of reviewing, amending and analysing the data collected, as well as returning to transcriptions and fieldnotes in order to acquire insights into the dialectical relationship between the empirical work and the theoretical literature.

A series of events led to the construction of this thesis. Having completed an MRes at Keele University which finished in early September 2008, work began almost immediately. I had undertaken some preliminary interviews; decided on some initial research questions and the outline of the topic to be studied. The MRes provided a useful background into philosophy, methodology and research design which proved invaluable throughout this thesis. I decided early on that the empirical data collection and analysis would be guided by an inductive process (pg 130) and so my attention turned to acquiring the necessary contacts to enable me to commence with the interviews and observations. This began at the beginning of January 2009 when I gained ethical clearance. The fieldwork was conducted in parallel with transcribing the interviews and typing up the fieldnotes, as well as gathering relevant theoretical literature. The first draft of this methodology chapter was also started in the middle of January 2009 and I have continued working on it until August 2011.

Early draft chapters of a literature review and two empirical chapters commenced in September 2009. As my empirical insights gained in depth I consolidated them into thematic sections and then developed them into chapters which were continually amended and refined. The process of analysis was continuous as ideas unfolded and during 2010-2011, I wrote and re-wrote various sections of the thesis as my understanding of the empirical and theoretical material advanced.

Theoretical Perspective – Paradigms and (In) Commensurability

My thoughts on epistemology and ontology led to a consideration of the theoretical paradigm which this research could be based upon. Burrell and Morgan's *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* (1979) drew my attention to four main paradigms – Functionalism, Interpretivism, Radical Structuralism and Radical Humanism. These exist in a matrix which is distinguished along a continuum ranging from the 'sociology of radical change' to the 'sociology of regulation' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 32). There is a dualism as the former is concerned with coercion, conflict and disintegration, whilst the latter emphasises consensus, reciprocity and co-operation within society. This enables one to identify each paradigm's characteristics relating to ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 32). As the thesis progressed, I felt that there was an opportunity to use a multi-paradigm approach, which would include the use of the Interpretivist and Radical Humanist paradigm.

The Interpretivist paradigm seeks to understand the world as it is and explanations for human affairs are based on the extent to which practices are cohesive, orderly and stable (Burrell and

Morgan, 1979). Conflict and the exercise of power are played down by the Interpretivist paradigm as the preference for theorists adopting this approach is to focus on the interpretation of the status quo (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This perspective resonates with the traditional accounts of Institutional Theory which has provided a mainstream, non-critical account of how organizations become similar. For example, theorists such as DiMaggio and Powell (1983) discuss isomorphic pressures as forces which promote consensus and similarity amongst organizations, with little recognition of underlying power relations.

The benefits of using a multi-paradigm approach are evident when the limitations of Institutional Theory and the Interpretivist paradigm can be minimised by combining it with Critical Theory.

In contrast to Interpretivism, Radical Humanism recognises the potential for individuals to be released from the constraints of societal structures that prevent them from achieving their full potential (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The focus from a Radical Humanist perspective is one of conflict, power and the possibility of emancipation (ibid). This resonates with Foucault's (1977) notion of productive power which sees power as being exercised to create self-regulating subjects. Power is evident in all social relationships, and through its exercise, it shapes individual subjectivity which encourages conformity based on the internalisation of norms and expectations of conduct. This also relates to Foucault's (1977) relational understanding of power because power is exercised amongst individuals in a social relationship, rather than being seen as emanating from a single source of authority. Viewing power in this way attends to the possibility of emancipation because by recognising the

potential for individuals to exercise power and engage in resistance, their ability to free themselves from the constraints of a power relationship and the status quo becomes more possible.

The combination of Interpretivism and Radical Humanism has therefore enabled me to address the limitations of traditional accounts of Institutional Theory, and in the process, to question and challenge the status quo. This multi-paradigm approach supports paradigm (in) commensurability, which will form the basis of the following section.

Paradigm (in) commensurability

The use of Critical Theory, in the form of Foucault (1977), as a means of critically analysing Institutional Theory challenges Burrell and Morgan's (1979) model which insists on paradigm incommensurability. This argues that different paradigms theorize about the social world in unique ways and therefore are mutually exclusive. Burrell and Morgan (1979) discuss paradigms as existing on either the 'order-conflict' or 'radical change-regulation' continuum. It is argued that:

> …a synthesis [*between paradigms*] is not possible, since in their form [*paradigms*] are contradictory, being based on at least one set of meta-theoretical assumptions. They represent alternatives…in the sense that one cannot operate in more than one paradigm at any given time, since in accepting the assumptions of one, we defy the assumptions of all the others (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 25).

Proponents of different paradigms speak completely different languages and by maintaining the exclusivity of the paradigms, it was initially argued that this would ensure that they were not colonised by functionalist orthodoxy (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Theorists have critically

reflected on this and have argued that it can constrain analysis by preventing any insights being gathered which deviate from the paradigmatic guidelines (Willmott, 1990).

Willmott (1993a: 682) argues that there is a distinct and definite need to move beyond the confines of the model provided by Burrell and Morgan (1979). It results in a dualism between subjectivity and objectivity which implies that there is a single and coherent approach to analysing organizational forms or practices. Remaining so narrowly focused can result in placing:

> …(unnecessary) constraints upon theory development, but it is very doubtful whether, as a strategic device, it can cut much ice with those who are disinclined to accept its assumptions, or are determined to defy its demands (Willmott, 1993: 683).

As a means of criticising Burrell and Morgan (1979), Willmott (1993a: 686) drew on Kuhn (1970) and his discussion of theory development to argue that paradigms are constantly reflecting 'continuity and overlap', especially during the shift from 'normal' to 'revolutionary' science. Kuhn (1970 cited in Willmott, 1993a) highlights how new paradigms do not just emerge by themselves but they stem from those that existed prior to them. It is only by reflecting critically on previous paradigms and noting their anomalies, that one can understand theory development. This means that 'contradictions…stimulate critical reflection upon the plausibility of the assumptions underpinning established paradigms of knowledge' (Willmott, 1993a: 688).

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) insistence on the separation of objectivity and subjectivity renders them unable to account for practices such as those evident in Burawoy's (1979) study of 'manufacturing consent'. By participating in shop floor games which aimed to increase

bonuses, workers reinforced the rules which were controlling their conduct. The games reduced boredom and fatigue, but by undertaking such practices, workers were 'willing accomplices' in their own exploitation (Burawoy, 1985: 10 cited in Willmott, 1993a: 694). This illustrates how the objective aspects of work (capitalist rules and regulations) are also a subjective process, and as Willmott (1990: 53) notes: '…what other analysts routinely conceptualize as a determining constraint upon human action is theorized as sets of rules and resources drawn upon by actors in the reproduction and transformation of social worlds'.

This reinforces the importance of combining paradigms and it is supported by Kelemen and Rumens (2008: 32) who argue that '…the pursuit of multi-paradigm research ensures the preservation and legitimisation of points of view that may otherwise be perceived as being marginal or suppressed by the dominant orthodoxy'. If organizational research is to be 'ethical' it is arguably even more important to combine paradigms as it encourages a multiplicity of voices, many of which will be in opposition to the positivist conventional social science approach (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008).

More importantly, multi-paradigm inquiry enables researchers to constantly question and reflect upon their epistemological and ontological standpoints. This is especially the case when researchers study in an environment which is progressively becoming more fluid, uncertain and contradictory. With this in mind, I felt that applying a single paradigm to this research would be unduly restrictive as employing both Radical Humanism (Critical Theory) and Interpretivism (Institutional Theory) enabled me to develop a deeper understanding of the data and also to use the former to criticise the latter. The necessity to understand phenomena

from a wider range of perspectives raises researchers' 'paradigm consciousness' as it "…provides theoretical richness, choice and opportunity" (Lewis and Kelemen, 2002: 260). One is able to gain insights by considering their research through opposing and differing lenses. Schultz and Hatch (1996: 55) support this and advocate for multi-paradigm research as it encourages the researcher to move back and forth between paradigms, allowing them to hold and explore multiple views and communicate with others to improve practice.

Other theorists (i.e. Jackson and Carter, 1991) have strongly defended paradigm incommensurability as they suggest that the concept has emancipatory value. By asserting the integrity of non-functionalist forms of analysis and combining paradigms, it emancipates research from 'the necessity for interminable justifications of different ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches' (Jackson and Carter, 1991: 110). Jackson and Carter (1991) criticise those who challenge or deny incommensurability on the basis that they have misunderstood that Burrell and Morgan's (1979) model does not propose unity, but difference. They argue that 'Competing paradigms constitute for each other an Otherness which gives each paradigm its specific identity' (Jackson and Carter, 1991: 123). In relation to this research, I argue that combining Interpretivism and Radical Humanism is beneficial from the point of view of emancipatory practices because combining them enables me to consider what Alvesson and Willmott (1992: 446) refer to as 'micro-emancipation'. This term does not imply a 'change' associated with emancipation as discussed by the Frankfurt School theorists (i.e. Marcuse, Horkheimer) whose theory is grounded in the need for revolutionary change. Nevertheless, the term 'micro-emancipation' (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992: 446) points to the benefits which can accrue from posing questions and instigating debate amongst respondents

which may prompt them to challenge existing practices that are currently constraining their human potential. Micro-emancipation involves searching for 'loopholes' (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992: 446) in the exercise of power arising from managerial and organizational practices. This recognises that power is not a possession, but can be exercised in ambiguous and contradictory ways. Combining Interpretivism and Radical Humanism addresses the limitations of the latter approach with its preoccupation of management power, and instead recognises that emancipation is possible because power is always exercised upon a subject which is capable of resisting. As Foucault (1979: 95) stated, 'points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network'.

The approach towards paradigm incommensurability adopted in this thesis follows the work of Weaver and Gioia (1994), who suggest that a dialogue between paradigms is not only possible, but essential. Drawing on Giddens' structuration theory, they argue that engaging in multi-paradigm enquiry suggests that paradigms have certain issues in common, and to ignore this would be to imply that it is different phenomena one is studying, rather than multi-faceted ones (Hassard and Kelemen, 2002). They also critique Jackson and Carter (1991: 17) by arguing that if they are suggesting that 'meaningful communication is not possible' across paradigms then how can they be seen as contradictory in the first place? If the meanings acquired and expressed in paradigms differ and are so distinct, then there could only ever be the *appearance* of contradiction (Weaver and Gioia, 1994: 571; emphasis in original) as the topic of enquiry and meanings provided would not be constant or compatible.

Methodology

Research Access

Gaining access to research respondents was relatively easy, as I had already established a number of relevant contacts having undertaken the MRes. The contacts were first acquired through an individual I knew who had worked in the passive fire industry. Having been introduced to individuals, I was able to continue networking and this meant that there were a suitable number of individuals who could be called upon to provide information; I proceeded to expand on these initial contacts throughout the empirical research. In order to select interviewees, I used one key respondent that had been spoken to previously as this would increase the likelihood of gaining access to other individuals. This approach could be described as a 'snowball' sample (Bryman, 2004: 100) as I relied on respondents suggesting other individuals with whom I could engage. This also provided them with the opportunity to inform each other about their experience of meeting me, including my personality, style and approach. Individuals could also reassure each other about confidentiality and anonymity where the interviews were concerned.

The key respondent with whom I instigated the contact (Derek, chairman, trade federation; pseudonym) was aware of the research objectives and having explained the type of access that was required and the type of people that I would hope to interview, he proceeded to provide assistance where necessary. It was suggested early on in the research that I attend a trade federation meeting which he chaired; this proved to be essential as I acquired contact with ten individuals who represented different organizations within the industry. On attending the meeting as an observer, I was introduced to the other individuals present who approached me

afterwards asking questions about my research and what it entailed. I used this opportunity to discuss with them the nature of the thesis and in hindsight I believe that having the ability to do this face-to-face resolved many future access problems. I was able to answer questions and provide an insight into the research which would have been more difficult through other forms of communication, such as email, where clarity and understanding is not always achievable.

As my aim was to begin my empirical work within the first year of my PhD, I decided to embark on it immediately having had such a positive response. I used the days following the meeting to get in contact with potential respondents and all of them agreed to participate; I arranged a suitable meeting place and time, as well as informing them of the estimated interview time required. Apart from three individuals who I spoke to prior to this thesis commencing, the respondents were unknown to me. Where the collation of theoretical insights was concerned, I had already acquired some preliminary ideas, particularly regarding Institutional Theory, which derived from my MRes dissertation. I took the approach that research '…is the work of an alert mind' (Weick, 2007: 16); that is a mind that is open, but not empty. I entered the fieldwork having been guided and directed by at least some initial frames of reference, which I knew could be added and amended, as the empirical data gathering and literature review developed.

This research can be seen as an industry 'case study'; a term which Punch (2005: 144) described as the procedure in which '…one case (or perhaps a small number of cases) will be studied in detail…to develop as full an understanding of that case as possible'. Yin (1993: 3)

provides some compelling insights into the case study method, defining it as a 'method of choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context'. There are a number of different case study approaches which can be applied in a research study. Yin (1993: 5) identified the following: 'single or multiple-case studies' and 'exploratory, descriptive or explanatory' cases.

For the purpose of this research, I argue for what can be termed an 'exploratory' case study; this consists of undertaking data collection prior to the final decision regarding the research questions (Yin, 1993). A pilot study is conducted to provide an initial framework of analysis, both empirically and theoretically. This is what occurred when I undertook some preliminary research during my MRes as it enabled me to gain access to the industry but also helped to clarify my methodology having conducted an initial set of interviews and observations which all proved beneficial when I began the follow up research for the PhD.

Respondents who participated

I explored four different levels in the passive fire industry (Government, trade federations, trade associations, manufacturers) as I felt that this would provide an in-depth picture of the regulatory formation process, rather than focusing on only one level or group of individuals. This was however problematic as it was difficult to establish contact with individuals from each level and not everyone attended the meetings regularly. It was dependent on their availability and the necessity of being present. That said, I was present at more than fifteen federation and trade association meetings where I undertook non-participant observation; these meetings consisted of around twenty five to thirty members who worked for manufacturers

and contractors. By attending, I was then able to gain access to people who willingly said they would be interviewed.

I knew prior to interviewing the selected respondents that they would be invaluable to the research as not only would they provide material that I could utilise, but they also had the opportunity to gain interesting insights which could be related back to the industry sector. Initially, there was some doubt in my mind about whether it would be feasible to gain access to government policy writers, who by virtue of the role they play in the regulatory process, may have been sceptical of my objectives and therefore unwilling to participate. I decided to approach one of the individuals responsible for policy writing having been informed of his presence at the initial trade federation meeting I attended. He subsequently agreed to participate, but I later discovered that this was a rare occurrence. In a joking manner, he said: '*you were lucky to have been at the same meeting as me [most students] tend to get fairly short responses…we usually tell them what to read!'* (Simon, policy writer).

I was mindful of the fact that the individuals chosen should in all cases be actively involved in the propagation of regulations, as well as being subject to them. I therefore purposefully chose to focus on a variety of influential respondents by seeking access not only to individuals working as 'regulators' but also those in organizations who were subject to the regulatory formation process; such as manufacturers. Many of the individuals with whom I began the interviews could be considered 'key' influential individuals and be described in their totality as 'captains of industry'. This ranged from the Chairman of the European Technical Committee on regulatory standards, to a consultant who worked for a manufacturer. Speaking

to the senior individuals within a company led me to their colleagues and counterparts in different sectors of the industry whom they felt would be able to provide assistance. By attending a range of meetings, numerous other contacts were made and access was then gained to those lower down the hierarchy.

As the research progressed, I also decided to contact individuals who others in the industry referred to as 'cowboys' due to their non-compliance. This took shape during the second year of the thesis and although I had completed my original fieldwork, returning to explore this different avenue enhanced the depth of my understanding and knowledge. I began discussing this idea with Derek (chairman, trade federation). He introduced me to a consultant (Daniel) whose role involved exploring why passive fire protection contractors refused to be third party certificated, despite the industry's voluntary recommendation.

Following this, I spoke to contractors who provided stories which implied that their counterparts were corrupt, and how this was making it difficult for them to compete. Thankfully, I did not have any significant difficulties gaining access to these individuals but it did take a while to convince respondents that I was independent from the passive fire industry and not working on their behalf. Derek warned me in an email about the potential problems I may face prior to conducting the interviews. He said *'you'll have to be careful how you explain why certain companies are on your 'random' list'.* He indicated that it might be difficult to justify what my objectives were, without implying that I was researching solely to discover individuals who were non-compliant. I was also aware of the ethical implications of not deceiving respondents. To avoid this, I presented the interviews as a discussion based on

respondents' understanding of regulatory expectations, and how they perceived the voluntary requirements impacted on them. This often led them to discuss their compliance practices and their thoughts on third party certification, why individuals cheated in the industry, and their perceptions on the current voluntary regulations.

Data Collection and the Crystallisation of Methods

The main method of data collection was semi-structured interviews supplemented by non-participant observation and documentary analysis. By adopting a variety of methods, I felt that it would enable me to engage in what Geertz (1973) called 'thick description'. Geertz (1973) originally applied this to anthropology and used it to distinguish the action of winking from a social gesture such as a twitch. It was argued that one must move beyond the action to the social understanding of the 'winking' as a gesture. This involves considering the state of mind of the winker, their audience and how they construe the meaning of the winking action itself. In Geertz's (1973) terms, 'thin' description is the wink, whereas 'thick' description would be the meaning behind the winking and its symbolic understanding between communicators.

The use of multiple methods has traditionally been captured using the term 'triangulation' (Mason, 1994: 104; Bryman, 2004: 454) which suggests that using more than one approach provides researchers with a more comprehensive and detailed account of the empirical data. Although I accept the usage of this term, I also acknowledge that it can imply the acquisition of precise knowledge and certainty of results which has positivist connotations (Silverman, 1985). This suggests that the knowledge of human life can be acquired through a scientific

approach and that the studying of human phenomena can be reduced to material facts. The methods used in such research imply the possible cross-examination and validation of the material being analysed. Viewed from this positivist perspective, it suggests that there is a 'right' answer and that research can eventually become validated against set criteria. This is in contrast to 'crystallization' (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2008: 478) which indicates a more fluid and transparent technique to data collection and analysis. It includes:

> …symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations…Crystals grow, change, alter…Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract with themselves, creating different colors, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2008: 478).

Using the metaphor of crystallization rather than triangulation provides a neat conceptualisation of the ways in which research data can be understood, analysed and presented in ways which demonstrate their 'refracted' status (Richardson and St Pierre, 2008: 478). Crystallisation also captured my journey which began when I commenced the research through to the stage where it was near completion. My thoughts and ideas, although disparate at first, began to crystallize as I began to see the linkages and connections between different theoretical standpoints and my empirical data; writing each draft of a chapter and receiving feedback on it contributed significantly to the crystallization process. The aim was to minimise ambiguity and confusion, rather than seeking a single truth during the research. Data interpretation is always partial and influenced to a great extent by the researcher/s undertaking it.

This is also applicable regarding 'representation' (Clifford, 2004: 384) which is the process of transferring and transforming collected data into a written format for readers. Atkinson (2004)

argues that conveying what our informants have told us inescapably involves textual methods such as punctuation and type-setting in order to make the data readable and accessible. By intervening in this way the speech of informants becomes less 'authentic' (Atkinson, 2004: 389) as it is mediated through the researchers' presuppositions because 'What *reads* like spontaneously natural speech is a highly conventionalized reconstruction of representation' (Atkinson, 2004: 392; emphasis in original). In other words, researchers change the character of informants through the use of textual conventions. Reflecting on my use of the transcripts and the representation of the data through written text, I have tried to convey my respondents' words, pauses, hesitations and even body language as near as possible to what occurred at the time when I was with them. That said, I acknowledge that 'reported experiences' (Atkinson, 2004: 394) will always be the result of others interpretations, be that the researcher or the reader. The information acquired and presented in a written format did not just involve the consumption of information provided to me by respondents. Instead, I had to interpret and then present the data in a format which conveyed their stories, whilst knowing that readers would also recreate and interpret them in their own way.

Positivists would argue that this is why they use standardised procedures as it avoids any interference from the researcher. The representation of data also excludes the researcher's voice as it is only the facts which are important. Where this research is concerned, it is through the representation of the data acquired, that ideas and thoughts crystallized and applying this approach to the use of interviews, observations and documentary analysis, enabled me to explore the research field from a multiplicity of perspectives. The aim was to provide multiple 'insider' views on the working practices of corporate life (Adler and Adler, 1994: 425).

Conducting empirical research enables one to '*grapple with a puzzle*' in a variety of different ways (Willis, 2000: 113). This helps us to remain surprised and challenged regarding the fieldwork experience and the data collection process. Willis (2000: 113) captures this wholeheartedly:

> You cannot be surprised unless you thought that you knew, or assumed, something already, which is overturned, or perhaps strengthened, or positively diverted, or fulfilled in unexpectedly elegant ways

When considering the methods employed in this research, firstly interviews can be said to be a qualitative method of investigation and are encapsulated within 'ideographic' research (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 6; Lincoln and Guba, 2000: 33) which enables the studying of social phenomena "…*through the lived experiences of those who live it*" (Thomas and Linstead, 2002: 76; emphasis in original). The utilisation of interviews enabled respondents to express in their own words their experiences, thoughts and feelings of working in the industry, rather than individuals being seen as just repositories of knowledge (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). In this sense, 'the interview is a pipeline for transmitting knowledge' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 113) and it enabled me to research in a way which led to a '…direct concern with experience as it is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone'' (Sherman and Webb cited in Blaxter et al, 2001: 64).

For each interview I prepared a prompt sheet which acted as an initial framework of questions (an example copy is provided in Appendix 1). This encapsulates the semi-structured approach because it combines clearly defined topics with flexibility and openness (Bryman, 2004: 320; Kvale, 1996: 124). One of the advantages of undertaking a semi-structured approach was that it enabled me to explore a range of topics which I had decided on prior to the interviews, but

they were general enough to encourage the interviewee to explore alternative avenues of inquiry that they deemed to be of value or interest (Bryman, 2004: 320). The strength of the interview method is that it enables the researcher to acquire an insight into a range of experiences and opinions which may not have been possible through direct observation alone. That said, interviews consist of an interrelationship between the researcher and the respondents which as Fontana and Frey (2008: 144) argue is a negotiated and contextualised relationship; researchers 'are not invisible neutral entities'. This is supported by Alvesson (2003: 19) who stated that interviews involve an:

> …interplay between two people, with their gender, ages, professional background, [*and*]…personal appearances…[*which*] puts heavy imprints on the accounts produced

Holstein and Gubrium (1995) question the accuracy of using interviews because they cannot be considered to be a representation of what actually occurs, but rather contextualised and reconstructed at the time of the interview. Nonetheless, this does point us to the ways in which individuals begin to make sense of their experiences and how they understand and inform others of the practices within which they engage. This can also be related back to the notion of 'representation' when interview material is transferred to the page (Clifford, 2004; Atkinson, 2004). Although researchers may try to portray informants who 'speak for themselves' (Atkinson, 2004: 390) by integrating direct verbatim quotes and conversations, these are always dependent on the writer's and reader's interpretations. The fluidity and precision of writing fails to convey the actual way that the informant spoke, paused or changed the subject. It is also difficult to represent accents and dialects into written text, thus resulting in a loss of affinity between writer, reader and informant (Atkinson, 2004).

All of the formal interviews were recorded after I had assured respondents that the information they provided would remain strictly confidential and anonymous, with their names and those of their companies being replaced with pseudonyms. I requested a two hour interview per respondent but this varied in length from one hour to three hours. Most of the interviews lasted for two hours. In almost all cases, the interviews were preceded by and concluded with an informal conversation which at times lasted for approximately one hour; these were particularly useful as respondents clarified and expanded on issues especially once the tape-recorder had been switched off. These conversations were interesting symbolic features, not only because the information that they revealed was 'off tape' but also because they represented a juxtaposition of 'public' and 'private' information. On the one hand, respondents were willing to openly discuss issues 'in public' when the tape-recorder was playing, but on the other hand, they had 'private' information which they did not want recorded. This supports the earlier argument that there is not an undeniable truth to be gained but rather the material acquired reflects the provision of information discussed by respondents at the time. There are inevitably going to be different and conflicting stories depending on what is communicated at a certain point in time and the instances of 'non-disclosure' which occurred after the Dictaphone was turned off were still significant to respondents; but they only felt comfortable expressing it if they knew that it would be 'silent' to the outside world.

I scheduled one interview per day apart from on one occasion when I undertook four closely followed by each other. This had not been planned but after interviewing three individuals in a laboratory, it was suggested that someone else may provide an additional strand to the research. I welcomed this and although I did not know it at the time, this particular individual

provided a new dimension to the research. The number of interviews undertaken on this day, however, not only left little time to make notes and reflect on the discussions, but it also meant that I was unable to extend the interviews beyond the allocated time requested. Additionally, my need to concentrate intently could have contributed to a lapse of attentiveness which may have impacted on the interviews, especially those towards the end of the day.

All of the formal interviews normally occurred at each respondents' place of work but on a few occasions I arranged to meet the individuals elsewhere. This was expressed as a preference as it would allow them to talk more openly outside the confines of their office, whilst on other occasions, it was because they were not in work on the day of the interview and hence another location was preferable. I interviewed thirty eight people formally and often followed these up with additional impromptu discussions (see table in Appendix 2). This amassed over fifty hours of interview material and over one hundred pages of transcripts. Whilst the majority of the interviews were all formally arranged, there were opportunities which arose which enabled me to conduct informal interviews. This was possible when an interview was delayed or cancelled as it enabled me to talk to individuals who were walking around the vicinity or who passed me as I sat and observed.

Interview Structure

The interviews were structured into three main sections. I began the interviews by explaining to respondents how I had become interested in the field of research and outlined my reasons for undertaking it; I also explained how they were able to contribute to the study. The decision to begin in this way stemmed from the ESRC's ethical guidance which states that

'…research staff and subjects must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved'[7]. I also completed an ethical consent form which outlined the research topic, methods, and ethical considerations arising from the proposed research. It was at this point that I also ensured that respondents were aware that anything they discussed would not be disclosed to a third party and that the interview transcripts and Dictaphone would be stored in a secure place. Following this, I aimed to acquire general background information from respondents about their job role/s. This enabled me to gain some insight into the context in which they were working, thus providing greater depth to the data collected. I also felt that asking questions which initially were based on their occupation would *build trust* between the interviewees and myself, and result in the establishment of a positive relationship which was sustainable throughout all of the interviews.

The notion of 'trust' is a necessary and essential condition for cooperative engagement between individuals, groups and organizations (Jones and George, 1998). In the interviews, I argue that 'companion trust' was being established which is a term coined by Newell and Swan (2000: 1295) to describe trust based on judgements of goodwill and a moral obligation that both parties will be open and honest. This form of trust enhances communication and may eventually provide the basis of friendship. At the beginning of an interview when both parties are unknown to each other, there is a sense of uncertainty and risk as particularly the interviewee is unaware of what is expected and may feel vulnerable. By therefore encouraging respondents to discuss their background and job role I hoped to minimise uncertainty and reduce any uncomfortable feelings.

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[7] http://www.esrc.co.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC_Re_Ethics_Frame_tem6-11291.pdf.

The second area focused on exploring the prevalence of institutional forces in the form of coercive, normative and mimetic isomorphism. Although questions were not directly asked about these, they became apparent as respondents discussed the lack of mandatory regulation and the role of bodies such as trade associations. For example, individuals expressed concerns about the lack of government intervention and how there was a sense of uncertainty within the industry. This indicated a lack of coercive isomorphism. The same can be said of trade associations as their normative role was explained and became evident through observations. It consisted of educating members about the standards within the industry through the use of documentation, advice and regulatory guidance. In discussing these issues, it was also linked to the infiltration and presence of an enterprise discourse (du Gay and Salaman, 1992; du Gay, 1996). Individuals referred to terms such as 'autonomous'; 'choice'; 'responsibility' and 'risk-taking', all of which resonate with the enterprise discourse (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). The notion of self-discipline also arose, particularly in terms of how it could be used to resist and challenge the discursive practices evident within the industry (see chapter 6).

Links were also acknowledged between Institutional Theory and Foucault's (1977) understanding of relational and productive power (see chapter 2). Viewing power as relational means that it is not one-dimensional, emanating from a single sovereign individual, in the sense that 'A' imposes their will upon 'B' (Lukes, 1974; 2005). Instead, it is concerned with how power flows and is exercised in everyday life between people and institutions which presupposes freedom in that it encourages people to behave appropriately by regulating themselves; they internalise norms and values which lead to what has been defined as

desirable conduct (Foucault, 1982). Talking to individuals about how they comprehended, interpreted and sought to respond to the institutional forces of the wider environment pointed to productive power as individuals' subjectivity was reconstituted and they were encouraged to engage in self-discipline. Depending on the interviewee, I also explored what they felt their role was in relation to the improvement of regulatory standards. For instance, when speaking to individuals who worked for Aqua-Tilt (see chapter 7), I was informed about the internal working culture and its influence in relation to the lack of enforcement administered by the government. This indicated how organizational discourses contribute to the formation of subjectivity and the establishment of meaning which individuals give to their own motives for working at the company.

The third section of the interviews drew the discussion to a close by asking respondents to reflect on the situation regarding regulatory requirements. I wanted them to consider the potential for improvements to occur within the current regulatory environment, and the extent to which they felt that organizations had a sufficient input into standard formation/change. This led to discussions around issues of control in terms of what mechanisms could be implemented to enhance the lack of government enforcement. The focus was also placed on updates regarding changing legislative policies, including how any changes were implemented and their effects.

When I conducted the initial set of interviews, I was aware in hindsight how I may have directed respondents to answer questions which I had pre-planned. It is worth noting, however, that as I became more confident I abandoned my questions and instead allowed respondents to

talk freely regarding the topics which they felt were relevant. I then asked questions which stemmed from these discussions in order to acquire more specific information.

Non-Participant Observation

In addition to the interviews, I undertook non-participant observation of numerous trade federation and trade association meetings. I tried to attend the meetings only once I had interviewed as many respondents as possible who I believed would be present; this enabled them to acquire information about the research and provide permission for me to attend. Due to the ethics governing the research, I made it clear to respondents that they could refuse my presence if they felt uncomfortable at any time. I also provided them with the 'right to reply' which meant that they were able to comment on my observations and ask for amendments to be made to the fieldnotes if necessary. Despite this, none of the respondents expressed any concerns about my presence, nor did they ever seem particularly interested in the notes that I made and they never read them. When noting down my observations, I did not do it covertly and, as many of the other attendees were also actively note-making, I could do this without raising any undue attention. That said, there were a few occasions when the intensity with which I was noting down my observations led people to jokingly comment: *'can you do the minutes for the next meeting, you seem to catch everything?'* (comments taken from fieldnotes)

The observations were of considerable value as they provided insights which supplemented and added rich, valuable depth to the interview material. Gaining access to over twenty meetings in total (see table in Appendix 2), including trade association and federation

meetings, enhanced my knowledge and understanding of the interactions between different levels within the industry (i.e. between Government policy writers and trade federations). The meetings tended to last for two hours and took place in a variety of different locations. A more in depth discussion on location is provided in Chapter 6, but for the purposes of this chapter, it can be said that they ranged from government buildings in London, to Army Barracks in the South East of England. The atmosphere in each trade meeting was different, depending not only on the location, but also due to the attendees present. This was exemplified in meetings which involved the presence of a government regulator which created a hierarchical and 'civilised' discussion compared to contractor meetings run by trade associations which were cynical and loud. I was warned of the distinction between the meetings prior to attending when Josh (marketing manager, manufacturer), who had been an attendee at both said *'these aren't like the federation meeting, the contractors are a rowdy bunch and they swear a lot too'* (comments from fieldnotes). These clear demarcations between the meetings drew my attention to the work of Strauss (1993) who discussed 'social worlds'. These are defined as:

> …groups with shared commitments to certain activities, sharing resources of many kinds to achieve their goals, and building shared ideologies about how to go about their business (Clarke, 1991 cited in Strauss, 1993: 212).

This indicated to me the significance of the different meetings with their varying objectives, goals, clear gender divisions (there were only two females in a contractor meeting out of a total of twenty present) and they all were spatially distinct as they took place at different physical sites around the country. Whilst it could be argued that the meetings would have relatively little, if any connection to each other, and hence their boundaries may appear to be rigid and stabilised, in fact I found the opposite. In line with Strauss (1993), I argue that each

'social world' transverses one another as they collaborate and interact with a wider industry 'world' where representatives of each meeting can submit their opinions and suggestions. The social worlds of the meetings would not exist without the wider industry and vice versa. Individuals within each meeting debate, challenge and agree with each other, for the very reason that in doing so they can contribute to the industry practices which becomes a collective objective for all of them. This helps one understand the conflictual, tension ridden and interactive nature of social worlds and acknowledges that they 'are not social units of 'social structures' but a recognizable form of collective action' (Strauss, 1993: 223).

Viewed through the lens of 'social worlds', the observations enabled me to become immersed for a short period of time in:

> …people's daily lives…watching what happens, listening to what is said [*in order to*] throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 1).

After the formal meetings finished, they were often followed by lunch. Being invited to attend these lunch gatherings provided me with an additional opportunity to engage respondents about the issues arising from the research, but in a setting which was less formal than the original meeting room. I took this as another chance to observe and take note of the conversations which took place between respondents. This often involved passing judgements and opinions about the meeting content, as well as discussing the other attendees and expressing criticisms about issues which they disagreed with. Trying to acquire such data in the setting of a formal interview or even immediately following the meeting would have been difficult due to concerns individuals may have had, about being overheard.

These insights were comparable to other meetings such as marketing meetings and technical meetings which only consisted of approximately eleven members and took place in locations ranging from pubs to conference rooms. The focus in marketing meetings was placed on the corporate brand of the trade association, compared to technical meetings which contained complex information which those at the fringes of technical awareness would have found difficult to understand. It was at the latter set of meetings where I was often guided by members of the group who drew diagrams and made notes in an attempt to enhance my understanding. Despite my ignorance and lack of knowledge surrounding the complex discussions, some respondents perceived me to be more knowledgeable than I was with questions being asked about how I was able to follow the agenda and discussion when my attendance had been so short-lived. Other respondents even believed that I had a fire engineering degree which would be essential in '*helping them to interpret complex government documents'* (comment taken from fieldnotes).

What I found particularly interesting about the observations was the 'unspoken' language of attendees which, at times, highlighted their thoughts even though they expressed very little verbally. For example, disinterested individuals were seen resting their heads on their hands, looking out of the window, using their mobile phone, or talking to their colleagues sitting next to them. I also examined peripheral events which took place whilst the formal meeting was occurring, such as subtle disputes between individuals, the ways in which people dressed, looked at one another, talked and responded to myself and others, as well as the room layout. The observations I undertook also went beyond the formal confines of any meeting room and

stretched as far as guided factory tours, the opportunity to watch a fire test in a laboratory and attend a one day visit to a building site in London. These situations were invaluable as I saw first-hand the practices which had previously only been explained to me by respondents'.

Documentary Analysis

In addition to the interviews and observations, I also undertook documentary analysis of trade association websites and government reports, especially those related to Regulatory Reform Orders and Regulatory Impact Assessments. I found it particularly helpful to acquire a familiarity with 'Approved Document B'; a fire safety guidance document for Building Regulations which outlines the expected requirements and practical suggestions as to how regulations can be met within everyday work practices. Most importantly were the government documents relating to 'enterprise' which consisted of the Egan Report (1998) and the Latham Report (1994). These enabled the exploration of the enterprise discourse and how it infiltrated into the industry, especially through government White Papers (see chapter 5).

Familiarity with these policy documents was essential when it came to interviewing respondents as the majority referred to them and I was therefore able to engage coherently with them. I also researched the companies and trade associations which enabled me to discuss the more specific issues that affected each one. By adopting this method alongside the interviews and observations, I felt that it was slightly less intrusive as it did not involve speaking directly to respondents and was instead based more on my own interpretation of the documents. It has been noted elsewhere that documentary analysis provides the opportunity to acquire rich and detailed data whilst avoiding 'interviewer bias' (Moser and Kalton, 1971:

379). This occurs when due to the presence of a researcher, respondents may feel pressured towards answering an interview question in a way which would please the interviewer (Moser and Kalton, 1971). This relates back to positivists' objective of minimising researcher involvement to ensure valid data. This 'bias' can however also be applied to the analysis of documentary evidence because this also entails researchers imposing their own views and opinions on the data in order to interpret it. It is unlikely that two researchers with the same piece of documentary evidence will reach the same conclusive outcome about its value or content.

Ethical issues involved in research

Ethical frameworks have become commonplace for researchers in order to ensure that their work is conducted on the basis of informed consent, confidentiality and often coupled with this is the assurance of anonymity, as identified by the British Sociological Association (BSA, 2002). This becomes evident when faced with submitting one's project to University Ethics Committees to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to protect respondents. Ethical frameworks also protect researchers from being exploited or put at risk, particularly in dangerous or violent research sites (Lee, 1995) and adopting an ethical approach to research also lends credibility and legitimacy to the project. This can be referred to as the 'traditionalist' approach to conducting research and is supported by Bell and Bryman (2007) who argue that following ethical guidelines helps to develop a mutually reciprocal and supportive relationship between researchers and researched. They suggest that it is unlikely that researchers, with their limited ethical training, will be able to regulate their own behaviour

and monitor what is 'right or wrong' in a given situation. Having a set of procedures to follow is deemed safer and more appropriate for all parties (Bell and Bryman, 2007).

Ethical requirements have been challenged on the basis of their suitability. As Bauman (1993) argues, the determinacy of ethical behaviour has gradually moved from the individual to the organization where moral codes and regulated practices are predetermined by formalised rules. From the view of Faubion (2009) and Hamilton (2009), it is acknowledged that ethics has been at the forefront of research projects for the past several decades but the methods employed to acquire things such as informed consent often have no relationship to *what* or *who* the researcher will encounter in the field. In relation to a consent form, Faubion (2009: 146) stated that: 'The dotted line itself is in fact often far more hindrance to the process of conducting fieldwork than the mark of due diligence for the subject's welfare than it is supposed to be'. This is supported by Sin (2005) who argues that complying with ethical requirements such as ensuring that consent forms are signed does not guarantee that the research will run smoothly. A consent form does not mean that respondents will proceed with the interview, or that they will not challenge the integrity of the researcher's claims for confidentiality and anonymity (Sin, 2005).

The inability to predict in advance what will occur during a research project that is more subject to fluctuation than ethical procedures suggest, is in line with a radical perspective. The reason being that 'being ethical is not something that can be measured against a checklist of 'rights and wrongs'' (Ferdinand et al, 2007: 520). This is especially prevalent when researchers find themselves in a situation where ethical issues have arisen which were not

planned for prior to their research commencing. For instance, during 1995-2006, Geoff Pearson undertook covert participant observation into football hooligans (ibid). He received sensitive information about the names of hooligans and the site where violence and disorder would take place. With this information, a dilemma arose; should the information be passed on to the police to protect members of the public or should the researcher maintain the trust he had developed with his 'risky' football supporters? In this instance, non-disclosure was decided upon as a moral obligation was felt towards the research respondents. This demonstrates the complexity of operating in a research site where ethical issues may arise that had not been planned for, and it also indicates that researchers are not simply '…*impartial observers* whose role in the research process is to do no more than provide knowledge about social behaviour…' (Ferdinand et al, 2007: 532; emphasis in original).

Whilst I did not face such ethical dilemmas, the research I undertook did raise issues which can specifically be related to the work of authors such as Murphy and Dingwall (2007) and Wray-Bliss (2003, 2004). They argue that research has the potential to employ surveillance techniques which reduce respondents to mere passive subjects for the purposes of analysis, description and representation. Researchers stand outside the research site and look in as detached observers which can increase the risk of treating unethically those whom we study. As Bauman (1993) recognises, ethical issues are 'situated dilemmas' influenced by the situation in which they are located and are not reducible to restrictive and constrained codes of practice. This thesis draws heavily on the notions of regulation and control and I did not want to be in a position wherein I was regulating and reporting on selected aspects of my respondents' activities and views, and hence treating them as 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1977:

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138). This would fail to acknowledge my own influence in the research process and ignore the diversity of research respondents and their own experiences of participating. By ignoring this, it would imply that they can all be judged against 'normalising' (Foucault, 1977) criteria and that their stories and the meanings they apply to their lives were only useful for the purposes of analysis and classification (Murphy and Dingwall, 2007).

Research is also based on how researchers engage with respondents and in doing so how they are represented as subjects. Wray-Bliss (2003) provides a compelling argument into a critical approach of the power relations between researched 'subordinate' and researcher's 'superior' positions and how this is bound up with ethical implications. The stance taken here is Foucauldian, which considers how individual subjects are 'made up' (Wray-Bliss, 2003: 308). Using Foucault, it can be argued that subject positions may be the result of the unintended effect of 'normal' research processes. This spreads as far as the discourse used, as it can have the tendency to include or exclude certain lives as worthy of study simply by reproducing particular 'expert' positions, or by viewing the researched in ways they cannot view themselves (Wray-Bliss, 2003). I acknowledge that despite my good intentions, I may also have participated in such a process. Throughout the analysis of the research data, it was inevitable that I would focus on some issues and not others, thereby excluding some individuals' words or phrases. As Clifford (2004: 386) argues in relation to representing collated data in a written format: '…all constructed truths are made possible by powerful 'lies' of exclusion and rhetoric'.

In order to illustrate this, Wray-Bliss (2003) analysed one interview transcript which highlighted the ways in which ethical issues arising out of the way research is conducted and disseminated often leads to the unexpected reinforcement of power relations. For example, starting a tape recorder at the point when a researcher begins questioning the respondent masks the existence, absence and content of any notion of informed consent (Wray-Bliss, 2003). This indicates where researchers' priorities lie; that of acquiring the answers, not the consent of participation. Such practices suggest that the creation of a subject position is already being established as through the answering of questions, researchers can reframe words and interpret statements in ways which are not always accurate. Wray-Bliss (2003: 315; emphasis in the original) argued that given his desire to 'produce intelligible CMS research I *needed* the subject of a reluctant or resistant worker'. The result of this was that the answers provided by the research subject were read and interpreted in a way which resonated with his aim of providing a critical perspective on the individuals' perception of the workplace. Arguably, this demonstrates that the researcher is exercising their power to dominate their respondents and report on instances which support their research objectives. Respondents can, however, also exercise power over researchers. Many respondents ask pressing questions about one's academic background and the purpose of the research. Taking a Foucauldian view, research relations therefore always involve the exercise of power by both researched and researcher. As Wray-Bliss (2003: 321) summarises:

> Perhaps by further exploring how researchers come to constitute themselves as CMS (or other) academics within particular self-authorizing micro-research practices…we can start to better understand, and avoid, the painful puzzle of how an academic discipline with strong anti-oppressive/emancipatory commitments can textually reproduce its superiority over and distance from those whom it purports to represent.

Wray-Bliss (2004) also argues that research tends to be one sided as it allows only academics the 'right to respond', whilst research subjects are highlighted in texts depending on their ability to illustrate the author's chosen interpretation of the empirical data. They have less opportunity for self-representation and involvement in the construction of knowledge. To overcome this and enhance ethical awareness, Wray-Bliss (2004: 113) argues that the right to a voice should extend to include the non-academic research subjects which may help to produce 'better' critical research. Writing about respondents and their struggles may enhance their public voice, particularly if researchers write in a way which enables respondents to read, understand and respond to it. As Parker (2002 cited in Wray-Bliss, 2004: 113) stated:

> Can any academic who is seriously concerned with grand words like 'emancipation' and 'justice' afford to ignore issues of readership and effect? What is the point of being a revolutionary, or even a reformist, if no one can hear you?

Whilst this research does endorse the requirements of Keele University's ethical review board in terms of confidentiality and anonymity, I have tried to counteract the extent to which I may appear as an external assessor for my research respondents. I have made an effort to include my own self within the analysis of the data by revealing assumptions, thoughts and feelings in order to provide a sense of 'being there' (Van Maanen, 1988). I wanted to acknowledge my presence throughout the research which would hopefully prevent an objective reality being portrayed which implies the 'truth' or 'facts' of the event, similar to that advocated by positivist researchers (May, 1993: 71).

By acknowledging our own presence in the research we conduct, draws attention to the existence of 'emotions' and Whiteman (2010) raises the interesting, but difficult subject about

how management scholars may study situations which evoke powerful emotions, yet as researchers we often avoid including them in our work. As Mohrman (2010: 346) acknowledges 'We strive to remove our emotions, political agendas, and biases through the pristine methodology we try to employ – as if our work is somehow privileged and as if we produce truth about "them", our subjects'. Toward this end, I concur with researchers who acknowledge the importance of recognising those situations which not only break our hearts, but also warm them (Dutton and Morhart, 2010). During my research, the engagements I had with individuals raised emotions as I began to empathise and recognise the trials and tribulations, and the expressed hopelessness which individuals faced on a daily basis. It was also 'heart warming' (Dutton and Morhart, 2010) to be perceived as someone who could provide an avenue through which these concerns/anxieties were able to be openly expressed. This is discussed more in a later section of this chapter.

Data Analysis

All research is characterised by being either 'deductive' or 'inductive' (Bryman, 2004: 8). The former reflects a process of analysis which begins with an already formulated theory and on the basis of this a hypothesis is established (Seale, 1999: 23). Comparably, under induction the data is collected first to establish whether a theory is viable in the conditions identified (Seale, 1999: 23). Although I approached this research with a theoretical paradigm in mind, I was aware that in the process of data collection one's perception can change. Prior to undertaking the research, I was informed by the literature based around Critical Theory and Institutional Theory. This influenced what I focused on to a greater extent whilst conducting the research and during the analysis process. For instance, I was interested in issues of power,

particularly from a Foucauldian perspective. This may not have arisen if I had explored alternative literature. Despite being guided by particular conceptual approaches, I have still continued to enhance my understanding and explore the relevance of different theories throughout this research. I therefore did not feel restricted to a particular framework and I argue that the stance I took was still amenable to an inductive approach, but unlike the traditional view which states that qualitative data would '…'emerge' by itself from such 'in-depth' exposure to the field' (Silverman, 2005: 78), I concur with Ezzamel and Willmott's (2008: 200) stance on data analysis. They argue that research data emerges from a struggle to '…interrogate' (but not 'test')…theoretical themes in relation to the empirical data' (Ezzamel and Willmott, 2008: 200). The account analysed is not embedded and emergent from the data as this implies that it is only the interpretation, and not the generation of data which is theory-laden (Ezzamel and Willmott, 2008: 200). Instead, data is always being generated through an '…ongoing interpretation of meaning' (Suddaby, 2006: 633 cited in Ezzamel and Willmott, 2008: 200) as subjects participate in social practices and in the process, construct reality.

The analysis of the empirical data began in earnest almost immediately after I had completed my first interview. I listened back to the day's recordings and drafted an outline of the discussion and the responses that I had acquired; it often strangely felt as if I was listening to someone else's conversation as much of the information appeared new to me. While this process was a valuable exercise in highlighting the main themes which had arisen, it also brought to the fore my own style of interviewing which enabled me to review and amend my approach in time for the following interviews. The more interviews that I undertook, the clearer I became of the need to allow individuals to explore more of their own thoughts and

feelings in a way that was not constrained by the interview structure. I therefore became less concerned about them exploring avenues which I had deemed were the most essential for the research.

Having listened to all of the interviews, I then embarked on the time-consuming exercise of transcribing them verbatim. This was a daunting experience and it often took longer that I had originally anticipated, but I decided from the beginning that an interview transcription would be completed before I proceeded to interview another respondent. This worked effectively as not only did it ensure that all of the transcriptions were kept up to date, but it also enabled the material acquired to be used in the planning of the interviews that followed. The transcriptions also enabled me to focus on the specificities of each word and utterance that both respondents and I provided which enabled me to reflect more in depth on the emotionality prevalent within the interviews. Whilst transcribing, I became more aware of not only 'what' was said but also 'how' it was said, and noting this down proved essential when analysing the comments that were made. Related to this, I was also able to recall the body language alongside the words being expressed; this added another level of analysis as I listened to the conversations.

By reading over the transcriptions many times, marking and isolating passages, quotes and comments that appeared interesting, it revealed similarities and contrasts in the data that could then be compared. This provided the starting point for the next set of interviews and was an effective way to develop and explore the emerging themes without causing a premature closure to the data collection process. When collating the data, my aim was to represent as many different levels involved in the research as possible. I felt that by doing this it would

provide an interesting and insightful means by which to explore the different perceptions, impacts, constraints and responses which emerged. This was more difficult in the case of the government as there were fewer individuals involved in the research at this level. Despite this, the depth of data that was provided made it possible to do justice to this process of analysis.

Analysing the data was a continual iterative and fluid process. It involved not only reflecting on the fieldwork, but supplementing it with reading literature to acquire further knowledge and understanding of the theory, as well as writing down initial thoughts and ideas which formed draft chapters. I concentrated on comparative thematic responses which provided insights into isomorphic pressure, enterprise discourse and subsequent cultural practices and sensemaking. Whilst having knowledge of these areas prior to the research commencing, the majority of them were reinforced to a greater extent at the stage of looking over the transcripts. This enabled me to place emphasis on those areas which indicated attitudes, concerns or opinions that appeared supportive or contradictory of each other across the different levels of regulatory formation and amongst the individuals that participated in the research.

Strauss and Corbin (1997) observed that making comparisons encourages researchers to challenge existing conventions whilst freeing themselves from considering how things 'ought' to be. It was important to engage in continual questioning and this was something that took place throughout the analysis process. I constantly tried to answer the questions which were raised through the empirical data. By critically questioning what had been discussed, this enabled me to consider the reasons behind why individuals had described events or situations

that they had experienced in similar or divergent ways. For instance, listening to the view of a government regulator who argued for minimum regulatory enforcement was considerably different to the opinion presented by a representative of a manufacturer. The latter argued that having insufficient input from the government meant that fire safety was being compromised which left them operating in a market where non-compliant organizations were able to circumvent requirements. From these opposing viewpoints came stories which although stemming from different people and about different events, began to coalesce around a common pattern of meaning.

Story telling

Gabriel (1998: 136) noted that stories are '…emotionally and symbolically charged narratives; they do not present information or facts about 'events', but they enrich, enhance and infuse facts with meaning'. Gabriel (1998: 136) suggested that researchers who utilise this technique are best to temporarily sacrifice their concern for data that is reliable, accurate and objective, for instead, one must focus on the meanings and emotions presented by respondents. I decided to maintain and analyse the discussions provided by each individual in the 'story' format as I believed this would allow me, as far as possible, to highlight their own 'voice' and allow them to speak in their own words. As Gabriel (1998) notes, the truth of the material does not lie in the accuracy of the story, but in the meaning that the story-teller places on it and it is this that I have attempted to maintain as the focal point of the analysis process. Story-telling has become a focal research approach because humans are 'immersed in narrative' (Sandelowski, 1991: 162) which occurs as individuals try to make sense of their past, present and future. Researchers who utilise stories and analyse interview transcripts in this way are

not in search of the 'truth' but 'rather how experience is endowed with meaning' (Sandelowski, 1991: 165). This goes as far as using stories to uncover accounts of organizational power relations, change processes and emotions (Brown et al, 2009).

'Story-telling' became not only a means by which to acquire the feelings and emotions of the research respondents but also was closely tied to my own experiences as a PhD student. The development of this thesis was not a single-handed project but involved discussing and telling my 'research story' to others, thus making it a reciprocal, collective experience. The ideas and thoughts on my fieldwork data and the theories being drawn upon, changed throughout as I discussed them with my supervisors, fellow PhD students, friends and family members. The first conference I presented at was Dilemmas in 2009 where I received a range of comments, questions and useful feedback from the audience which enabled me to view my work through a different lens and explore alternative avenues of inquiry. I also presented at EGOS (Lisbon, July 2010) and the Work, Organization and Ethnography conference (September 2010). Again, I acquired useful comments, suggestions for literature, and questions to reflect upon.

As this thesis progressed and I began to discuss it with various people, it was inevitable that some data would have to be left out and unexplored. As Stanley (1990) comments, there are infinite descriptions of the same phenomenon which means that both quantitative and qualitative analyses are inherently incomplete. Therefore, I decided to utilise those findings and theoretical standpoints which provided an in-depth story of the issues that the respondents had experienced. I do however acknowledge that my interpretation of the data and its

representation is only one possible means of understanding and illustrating the themes which have emerged, and hence the project can never be seen as final or complete in its own right.

Recognising the limits of objectivity, reliability and generalisability

During the analysis stage I acknowledged the limits of this research in terms of it being objective and generalizable. Firstly, it is recognised that both qualitative and quantitative research are not able to produce a 'neutral' and objective account because the researcher's presence can affect and influence the discussions and interpretations that take place (Coffey, 1999). The idea that subjectivity can and should be eliminated is supported by positivist researchers (i.e. Donaldson, 1998) who argue that quantitative research enables the acquisition of objective facts and the control of researcher effects, through the use of standardised procedures (Silverman, 1985). Qualitative research demonstrates that it is difficult to eliminate entirely the subjective fears, anxieties or prejudices from researchers' minds which all have the capacity to change the desired objective outcome (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). It is also likely that each researcher will bring a different perspective to the research and change the field site and engagements that occur in some way by virtue of their presence which reinforces the need for one to be reflective (Rosen, 1991; Chia, 1996). My own insights into this process will be discussed in more depth in the following section.

Where generalisability is concerned, I cannot claim that the research findings are applicable to other settings because they are the outcome of my time spent in one specific industry sector. Siggelkow (2007), however, provides a compelling argument that a single case study approach can be used in variable ways to contribute to enhancing and extending future research insights,

despite their specificity. This was seen in terms of the lack of critical understanding within Institutional Theory, which provides the main contribution from this thesis.

Additionally, the adoption of a critical theoretical framework in the analysis of Institutional Theory will allow a 'theoretical' generalisation to occur (Payne and Williams, 2005: 299). Relating this back to the definition Yin (1993) gave of an 'exploratory' case study, it can be argued that the research findings would be theoretically generalisable to other studies using Institutional Theory in different industries or empirical sites. Fresh theoretical insights would further our understanding and add to our knowledge of the institutional pressures which exercise power and the interrelationship between institutional pressures, the enterprise discourse and subjectification. This would enable 'theory building' (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007) as it requires researchers to justify with clarity how their approach can contribute to existing scholarship (see chapter 3). Throughout the data gathering and analysis, I was mindful of the prerequisites for engaging in theory building and ensured that I fulfilled as many as possible of Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) suggestions. These included avoiding reliance solely on interviews in an attempt to avoid 'bias', drawing on stories and quotations alongside theory and also being able to justify that the case studied was chosen because it was distinct and revelatory (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007: 27-29). The latter requirement is however questionable as it is not possible to determine in advance whether a case can be 'revelatory'. In terms of the contribution to theory which this research provides, the focus is placed on engaging in a critical analysis of Institutional Theory's approach to power, particularly as the three forces of isomorphism have traditionally not been viewed from a critical perspective.

Subscribing to a Foucauldian view of power has enabled this research to explore and analyse how institutional forces are not just repressive, but also productive of subjectivity.

The Presence of the Researcher

Until fairly recently there has been limited emphasis and recognition placed on the personal nature of fieldwork, as the researchers' 'self' is neglected in methodological textbooks and taught courses (Coffey, 1999 :1). Textbooks account for the principles and practices of research experiences but rarely capture the complexity of forming relationships with the researched. Bell and Newby (1977: 14-15) have argued that there has always been a divergence between 'textbook recipes' (Oakley, 1981: 30) and what actually happens in the field. They claim that:

> It is not only that the normative textbooks on fieldwork do not tell their readers something to the effect that 'to observe you need to be adopted in some on-going pattern of social relationships'…but also that data in the final monograph are published about which we have no idea or why they were collected

It is important that researchers become more aware of how their position in the field and the relationships they have with the researched, can affect the findings gathered (Gill and McClean, 2002). By reflecting and acknowledging the experiences that I went through it has helped me to gain an insight into how other respondents, particularly women, may have felt and why researchers' feelings can be seen as 'tools for analysis' (Kleinmann and Kopp, 1993: 52).

As the length of time spent in the field increased and I attended progressively more meetings, I gradually began to feel more fully immersed with the respondents and it seemed that my

presence was accepted and taken-for-granted. This relates back to the establishment of 'companion trust' (Newell and Swan, 2000: 1295) which led to the development of effective communication through the relationships I acquired with respondents. I began to receive the same documentation as other attendees, including 'weekly notes' which were traditionally reserved for trade association members only. I was placed on the attendance list without requesting it, and was even asked on some occasions to participate and contribute to the discussions occurring. Throughout these occasions I realised that researchers have an effect on the research in a way which is neatly captured by Irvine and Gaffikin (2006: 129):

> Like the pebble thrown into the pool, which causes ripples right out to the boundaries of that pool, the observer dives into organizational life, and affects it in unanticipated ways.

The researcher becomes part of the research project with values and norms that influence what is observed and spoken about. This requires a degree of 'reflexivity' (Willis, 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) which can be defined as 'thoughtful, conscious self-awareness' (Finlay, 2002: 532) which entails the process through which the ethnographer '…constructs interpretations of his or her experience in the field and then questions how those interpretations came about' (Hertz, 1997 cited in Finlay, 2002: 532). This requires recognising the influence of one's own background, appearance and subjectivity. These situations make reflexivity more paramount as researchers begin to turn the reflective process back upon themselves (Cunliffe, 2003; Lumsden, 2009). Research becomes inter-subjective, constructed by all of the research participants, including the researcher (Cunliffe, 2003: 992). In essence, it could be said that reflexivity:

> …'unsettles' representations as we are actively engaged in constructing meaning and social realities as we interact with others and talk about our experience (Cunliffe, 2003: 985).

In relation to the importance of reflexivity, this thesis raised many questions, not all of them theoretical. One question which remained at the back of my mind was *'how am I being perceived by respondents?'*. As Shaffir and Stebbins (1991: 77) commented,

> …field research requires some measure of role playing and acting. In order to be granted access to the research setting and to secure the cooperation of his or her hosts, the researcher learns to present a particular image of himself or herself.

The perception of my own role and sense of self may not have been the same as that held by those with whom I engaged. The identity bestowed on me by others is something that I will never be entirely sure of. There were often times in the interviews and in informal conversations when people made reference to my role, with some stating: '*I really hope you can do something to improve our current situation*' and '*When you speak to the government, ask them what they're doing about this policy*' (recorded in fieldnotes). Additionally, in an email correspondence with Derek (chairman, trade federation), where we discussed the possibility of me gaining access to the 'cowboys' in the industry, he made it quite clear that any findings I acquired would be helpful for the industry too. He stated: *'Your idea of talking to the 'bad guys' is very interesting and their attitude would be helpful both to your project and to the rest of us…the results of any such survey by someone seen to be independent would be very interesting…'.* Derek's reference to the *'rest of us'* and '*someone seen as independent'* indicates a distance between myself and the industry which implied that I was being defined by respondents as someone who existed in a managerial or a quasi-consultancy role. The aim of which would be to improve issues within the industry. This is not in line with the traditional Critical Theory approach to instigating 'change' which focuses on promoting individuals' consciousness in order to result in emancipatory change. Nonetheless, I argue that having someone to discuss problems and concerns with may help to instigate a small amount

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of critical reflection amongst respondents, which could help them to reflect on the situation that they were faced with. This arguably comes closer to a 'micro-emancipatory' (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992: 446) process which involved searching or identifying limitations in current practices (such as the lack of regulation by the government) and then implementing mechanisms by which to improve them. Even encouraging respondents to engage with suspicion, resistance or critical analysis are all emancipatory practices, however small their intended outcome may be (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). This relates back to the value of combining Interpretivism and Radical Humanism as a means to instigate a form of emancipatory 'change'.

The process of defining my role was also reinforced in the meetings when I received a 'nudge' from individuals sitting next to me who asked whether I had caught the previous comment as it was important. This indicated that people were constantly constructing their own view of what my role was and began assuming what information would be of use to me. These situations were interesting and while I felt comfortable having been accepted by respondents, I agree with Reinharz (1997: 8) that:

> Each gate ha[s] to be unlocked with its own "key"; each way of entering the community formed my selves. The reward of getting through each invisible "gate" was the sense of having proved myself….

I draw on this notion of an 'invisible gate' as it felt that every time I met someone new and discussed my research, I had to [*re*] present myself to eliminate any barriers, encourage their involvement and acceptance about who I was and what I intended to achieve. This suggests that it is not just one's personal attributes or approach to a situation which determines entry to

a research site. Instead it is often dependent on the perceptions that others have of us which influences our experiences. As Bulmer (1988: 153 cited in May, 1993: 93) recognised:

> Members of organizations become adept at judging the personalities of those with whom they work closely, and the same applies to researchers with whom they come into contact

This captures the problem of taking for granted the initial successful access that one may acquire as it can very rapidly be reversed. On several occasions, once individuals became more knowledgeable about my research it led some of them to begin acting as 'gatekeepers' who appeared to take it upon themselves to decide on my behalf which meetings would be useful (or not). This resulted in some access being denied and when it was deemed that the agenda items and discussion would be 'too sensitive', my presence was refused. When these instances did arise and because they were quite rare, I often perceived them as a personal inadequacy. I began to reflect that maybe I had approached the situation incorrectly and at the time could not understand why these exceptional occasions occurred when everything else had been running so smoothly. As I tried to understand, I reflected on how the movement from feelings of elation at being accepted and gaining access to all levels within the research, to being prevented from some meetings and discussion groups, actually told me a lot about the internal working practices of the industry. It drew my attention to how 'outsiders' were treated and this led me to reflect on the theoretical conceptualisation and explanations concerning the situated power dynamics within the industry. By noting which sections and levels of the industry into which my access was prevented, I was able to ascertain how different individuals acted and were acted upon by others which became enlightening data as it enhanced my knowledge about the industry's political environment and the existence of power relations.

A Process of Reflection

The approach I took towards this research was that I was an appreciative student who not only had an academic interest in the research topic, but was also genuinely committed to learning more about the industry and the people with whom I engaged. I aimed to view critically the practices and situations that I was informed about and observed throughout my time in the industry and during the data collection. Having had limited knowledge about the construction industry when this thesis began, it is now interesting to be able to reflect retrospectively on how much my understanding has been enhanced. This includes both the wider issues that impact on the industry, but also the more complex technicalities that individuals have to deal with on a daily basis. It often felt as if I was on a journey from being a complete outsider, not known by anyone, to someone who respondents remarked they had '*known for years*' (comment from fieldnotes).

When this thesis began, I had initially considered whether I would be able to provide a contribution, seen in the stance of critical ethnography, as being able to 'make a difference' through emancipatory change (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). As discussed in chapter 2, emancipation is only one aspect of Critical Theory. I did not realistically believe that I was going to raise individuals' consciousness of the practices which they were engaging in to stimulate critical reflection and enhance change. I knew that there was little I could offer in terms of obvious value and due to practical and time constraints my influence in the industry was going to be minimal.

Due to this I had reservations, as there was no real compelling reason as to why anybody should agree to be involved. Initially, I felt that it may dissuade individuals from participating especially when it appeared that they were giving up their time and providing information, but getting little in return. I felt that if I managed to persuade them to participate, when they realised that their involvement was not going to produce the possible expected change they had anticipated, it may result in a disengagement and refusal to contribute further. Clark (2008) raised this problem through the term 'research fatigue' to encapsulate how respondents become tired with the research process when they perceive that their involvement has no effect on changing an outcome. In relation to his own study, Clark (2008: 959) stated: 'people had given their voice with an expectation of impact, only to be disappointed or even alienated by the process when no discernable change was experienced'. This replicates my on-going concerns that respondents who were advocating for improvements in regulatory policy, may have become less willing to continue participating if they felt that their contribution was not going to lead to enhanced regulation. The so called 'cowboys' in the industry did not necessarily agree with this, so their perception of my intervention within the industry may have been associated with interference, rather than improvement. That said, I worked on the assumption that having requested the involvement of the majority of respondents through a face-to-face conversation, it would have been easier for them to decline from participating. This may have not been the case had they been asked by somebody else, for example their boss.

I felt that the positive responses that I received from respondents indicated that a number of reciprocal relationships were established and that no-one had been 'forced' to participate.

They had agreed or volunteered to be involved having been given the opportunity to decline from participating. No respondent, apart from one, refused to have the discussion tape-recorded. In this one-off instance, the interviewee expressed concerns that what he would say would be '*incoherent waffle'*. Although this does not appear to be a justifiable reason for not wanting the interview recorded, I was not in the position to question the reasons why. We undertook the interview without the Dictaphone and I made copious notes on what was said. It proved to be a very insightful interview with the majority of the time being taken up on discussions surrounding pictures of a building site reflecting non-compliance and the lack of government inspection.

Having conducted the interviews, I recall that on frequent occasions, people expressed how much they had valued the opportunity to discuss their concerns about the issues the research entailed. The interviews highlighted people's own ways of thinking and feeling and enabled them to consider their working practices in a different light. It was also interesting to note that opinions were expressed which they did not communicate openly to others; this was evident on a number of occasions as individuals spoke in quiet tones to ensure they were not overheard. A comment made by one female respondent is particularly memorable. After three hours of discussing the research, Denise, (consultant, trade association) stated: *'thank you for making me feel as if what I had to say was important'*. Although this could have been interpreted as simply a polite ending to the interview, I met her at subsequent trade association meetings where she reinforced how valuable she had found our discussion as it enabled her to express concerns to someone who would listen. I perceived this as a 'heart warming moment' (Dutton and Morhart, 2010: 343) as it demonstrated to me the relevance of my presence for

the individual's professional and personal flourishing. It reminded me to be reflective of the reasons why I was undertaking the research and it enabled me to derive meaning for my own experience as a researcher.

Overall, the interviews appeared to be a cathartic process for both male and female respondents. I remember vividly after a lengthy and revealing discussion with one male respondent, he commented: *'Once we've found someone who will listen, we don't want to let them go'.* This was reinforced by Derek (trade federation chairman) who informed me in an email correspondence *'...as you have realised, once these guys meet you, you will get their cooperation'.* This sense of attachment which people portrayed was reinforced at the end of a yearly meeting when I was approached with the question of *'You're not neglecting us are you? You are going to come back to these meetings in the New Year, aren't you?'* A similar statement was also made by another male respondent who thought that I could usefully contribute to the industry and he said: *'We just want someone to care about us'* and *'It's worrying me saying all these things, but I feel as if I've known you for ages'.* These moments of exchange were touching and while I am not suggesting that I became a confidante, I was surprised by the extent to which I was being perceived as someone who, even for a short period of time, could make people feel as if they were valued.

I was surprised at these occurrences and the ease with which respondents revealed their thoughts and opinions to me. Research has been conducted on the influence of gender in interviews, particularly when both the researcher and respondents are female (Oakley, 1981). Denzin (1989: 116) noted that 'gender filters knowledge' meaning that the sex of the

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respondent and researcher can make a difference to the interview, especially if it takes place within the confines of a patriarchal system where masculine identities are distinguished from feminine ones. Warren (1988) noted that female researchers may be at an advantage because they are perceived as invisible and harmless which may encourage respondents, of both sexes, to be more willing to disclose information. This became evident when Daniel (consultant) who was assisting me in arranging interviews with contractors said: *'not wanting to be disrespectful but the very fact that you're a woman will mean he'll talk to you. He's a difficult contractor, he's a hairy arsed chauvinist, but as soon as he sees you I know he'll talk. You would get through to him…'.* This comment reinforces the stereotypical view of women in terms of their relative weakness and vulnerability, and highlights the asymmetrical and hierarchical power relations between male informants and female researchers (Easterday et al, 1982; Lumsden, 2009). I was placed in a position of inferiority compared to the contractor I would be speaking to, who could use the interview to reinforce his masculinity.

Having spoken to the individual who Daniel was referencing, I did find that he spoke to me very openly, despite first impressions indicating that he was slightly arrogant and rude. The contractor even admitted to the dishonesty which was occurring in the industry as well as the extent to which his own company had to cheat on occasions. Whether this information would have been provided to a male researcher is something that I will never know. It can be assumed, however, that being a young female placed me in an advantageous position as their possible perception of me as 'safe' or 'unknowledgeable', enabled the data to be more readily collated.

In addition, the openness of the women being interviewed was also interesting and could be attributed to their structural position within the industry. Their absence is tangible which makes it particularly likely that they would have welcomed the opportunity to talk to a sympathetic listener. Their minority presence in the industry seemed to result in them lacking the ability to engage with other women, and hence it was less about the interview method, but more about my presence that made these respondents willing to discuss issues with me. Oakley (1981: 49) said there is 'no intimacy without reciprocity' which acknowledges the recognition of the researcher's shared experiences of the social situation and the accomplishment of the interview amongst the two individuals involved. Humour was often shared when the women regaled stories to me about their male counterparts who they referred to as *'childish'* and who were *'more concerned with playing computer games than getting things right'*.

The distinction between themselves and the male dominance within the industry led Denise (consultant) to provide me with a comic strip indicating the stereotypical differences between 'male and female computer specialists' which she claimed replicated what was occurring in the passive fire industry. It was a sheet of A4 paper with a picture of a man and a woman with descriptions and arrows pointing to them which indicated how the same behaviour by both individuals could be interpreted in distinctive ways. For example, a women who demonstrated 'assertiveness' would be redefined as being 'aggressive', compared to an 'aggressive' man who was a 'firm decision maker' and therefore suitable for the job. This artefact was significantly interesting in highlighting perceptions of female and male characteristics, and

although I did not pursue the gendered nature of the industry, it added valuable depth to the knowledge already acquired.

All of the conversations I had with respondents made me feel in an awkward position of being both 'stranger' and 'friend' (Powdermaker, 1966). What had begun as a one sided request on my behalf to enter into their world for the purposes of research, turned into a series of mutual interactions where we all shared ideas, thoughts and concerns (Dutton and Morhart, 2010). Talking to individuals, attending meetings regularly, and accompanying them to informal gatherings had made me appreciate their daily pressures, as well as enjoy the discussions and banter that was shared (Van Maanen, 1988). This also seemed to validate their actions when they sought my opinion or approval and at times, I felt like a sounding board by those who viewed me as a potential ally. I constantly felt that my role had been defined as someone who had taken an interest in the industry, and could therefore usefully contribute to improvements being made. From the beginning of the research, I had made it clear to individuals that the study was specifically being undertaken as part of a PhD project. There were often questions raised about what I was hoping to do on completing it, and whether working in the fire protection industry was an option I had considered. I remained ambiguous about what my future may entail, but in hindsight this probably encouraged respondents to take an even more of an active role in suggesting what route would be suitable.

The definition of my role and the desire for individuals to have someone to 'listen' to them, was something that they lacked in their everyday work. At every level of the industry (trade federation, trade association, manufacturers and contractors), the opportunities to articulate

opinions or suggestions appeared to be minimal. Voices were suppressed and kept silent by those who deemed them to be inappropriate dissenters to what had already been established as the status quo. This not only revolved around issues of regulation but also about the significance of passive fire protection as a whole; there was a lack of importance attributed to the industry, and despite the emotion that it instigated amongst the respondents, they felt that the government would not take them seriously. Individuals were therefore experiencing challenges to their identity as employees, but this was inextricably tied to the lack of significance attributed to their occupation.

Conclusion

In concluding this methodology chapter and having reflected on my experiences 'in the field', I hope to have come some way in portraying the respondents' 'quiet desperation' (Ferdinand et al, 2007: 538) by being able to represent an account of their experiences. I was constantly thinking about what decision I would take if I were in their situation and how this could then subsequently be integrated into the research and analysed from a critical perspective. It made me more aware of how there is always an interrelationship between respondents' activities and our own thoughts as researchers. By considering them as interrelated, it can bring greater awareness to the research at hand whilst at the same time drawing attention to the daily experiences which individuals face who work in the industry.

The following chapter is the first empirical chapter and it discusses the infiltration of the enterprise discourse through examining government White Papers. The enterprise discourse is explored using Foucault's perspective on power as a means to analyse how the discursive

framework is not just 'coercive', but exercises productive power as it reconstitutes individuals as enterprising subjects.

Coercive Isomorphism? Releasing Enterprise in the Construction Industry: A Neglected Field

Introduction

This is the first empirical chapter of the thesis and it provides a contextual account of the enterprise discourse within the passive fire protection industry. The chapter uses government White Papers in order to explore the spread of the enterprise discourse as a form of disciplinary power. This contributes to our critical understanding of coercive isomorphism. The government White Papers are legislative documents implemented by the state and viewed from the perspective of institutional theorists, they are a coercive source of power as they specify particular actions and standards to ensure conformity (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). This chapter will argue that viewing power as solely 'coercive' can be critiqued by using Foucault's (1977, 1982) insights into power. Foucault (1977) advocates that power circulates throughout the entire social body and constructs human subjects through its ability to act as a 'rule of conduct' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 629) that encourages individuals to govern themselves (Rose, 1989).

The enterprise discourse emanating through the White Papers reasserts the need for individualism, self-regulation and personal responsibility. These qualities are involved with 'character reform' (Heelas, 1991: 72) and the enterprise discourse is productive as it is capable 'of addressing the totality of human behaviour, and thus, of envisaging a coherent, purely economic method of programming the totality of governmental action' (Gordon, 1991: 43 cited in du Gay, 1996: 57). The dispersal of the enterprise discourse through the government White Papers can therefore be used to critique Institutional Theory by demonstrating that

power can be 'non-coercive' as it does not simply repress and dominate, but transforms individuals into enterprising subjects.

I have chosen to focus on the White Papers which were published during the Thatcher Conservative government (1979-1997) where enterprise and deregulatory reform projects could be said to have originated, but also on more recent publications which have occurred in the post-Thatcher era. Exploring and analysing the enterprise discourse since 1979 drew my attention to how the Pre-Thatcher era was represented in terms of state intervention, bureaucracy, regulation, control and compliance. In comparison, post Thatcherism involves references more in line with enterprise, such as a market logic, competition, managerial autonomy and efficiency. Despite the changes in government, much of the discourse has remained the same. In this chapter, where appropriate, acknowledgement is also given to how some of the White Papers discuss the impact of enterprise on a variety of sectors, not just those concerned with the fire protection industry. These have been included to support and further contextualise the argument being provided.

The chapter will also consider how the construction industry has continually neglected what other sectors have identified as their 'customers' as they have tended to focus primarily on the employer supply chain. This has meant that the next employer in the contractual line is considered at the expense of improvements in service delivery for the end user. Enterprising initiatives such as greater customer focus and efficiency gains through increased competition have been at odds with the construction industry (Bresnen and Marshall, 2000). Whereas most customer service sectors have consolidated capital goods with a few major suppliers and

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customers, passive fire protection remains highly independent, and dominated by organizations and clients with a low level of interdependency (AMA Research, 2007). The predominant focus on building projects results in a lack of inter-organizational relationships which impairs the long-term development of what could be seen as 'external' customer relationships (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). That is those clients in other organizations or industries, who receive products and services from the fire protection industry. In comparison, 'internal' customers (ibid: 621) become the main focus, as these are individuals within the same industry or organization, treating each other as customers through the supply chain.

Analysis of White Papers

The Future of Building Control in England and Wales (1981)

One of the first documents which affected the fire safety authorities and fire protection industry, as well as demonstrating the initial reduction of regulations and promotion of enterprise qualities, is a White Paper referred to as 'The Future of Building Control in England and Wales' (1981). This was the first Parliamentary document which the Thatcher Conservative government introduced to enhance the effectiveness of businesses in the building industry who were encouraged to be independent, flexible and responsible entities. The 1981 White Paper set out proposals to eliminate what were deemed to be outdated regulations. It was stated at the beginning of the White Paper that:

…the system is more cumbersome and bureaucratic than it need be; and…the present detailed form of the Regulations is inflexible for many purposes, inhibits innovation and imposes unnecessary costs (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 4).

This quote refers to the scope of the regulations covering the range of buildings from 'the smallest and simplest to the largest and most complicated' (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 5). The detailed designs had to be used by every builder and professional in the construction industry and the same information was expected to be understood by individuals at all levels of technical competence. The regulations were viewed as complex, inflexible and difficult to understand. Due to this, Building Regulations became central to the government's agenda; they were re-examined to identify what could be simplified (The Future of Building Control, 1981).

A discussion in 1979 by the then Secretary of State for the Environment indicated that four main proposals would be implemented which would provide new arrangements for building control. These were as follows: 'maximum self-regulation'; 'minimum government interference'; 'total self-financing' and 'simplicity in operation' (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 4). These new proposals reflect the language of enterprise, particularly the first two requirements (maximum self-regulation and minimum government interference). This involved revising the Building Regulations to minimise functional requirements and encourage greater self-regulation (The Future of Building Control, 1981). The aim was to give the 'construction industry and building professions a new freedom to regulate their own affairs' (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 16). This suggests moves towards the creation of an 'enterprising subject' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992) who self-regulates through internalising enterprising qualities (professionalism, independence, efficiency) as their own. This also advances our critical understanding of coercive isomorphism as conformance with state driven requirements is not just due to the exercise of dominating and repressive power.

Institutional Theory regards the exercise of power as coercive, which is evident when DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 150) state that homogenisation '…results from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations…'. This view does not fit with the voluntary legislation in the passive fire industry. That said, even if the legislation in the 1981 White Paper was mandatory, viewing it through a Foucauldian lens provides an alternative understanding as power can be seen as productive. Individuals become homogenised and conform as they regulate their own behaviour by being measured and judged against discursive criteria which they and others define as desirable.

In addition to the above four proposals stemming from the White Paper (1981), the possibilities for change included the 'exemption of local authorities and other public bodies from formal control' as well as 'certification of plans and construction by approved private persons, as an optional alternative to local authority control' (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 4). The aim of the government was to establish a system of building and regulatory control which accommodated both small and large businesses which ensured 'greater flexibility' (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 5). This originated from the Fire Precautions Act 1971 which acknowledged the importance of consulting with fire authorities on high risk buildings such as hotels and larger shops. Although these buildings were the main priority, the same could not be said about smaller buildings which accommodated fewer individuals and posed a less severe fire risk. Flexibility would reduce the level of inspection and resource burden on small organizations, and the commitment to enterprise reflects a reduction in regulatory control whilst encouraging self-discipline within the industry.

'The Future of Building Control' (1981) White Paper emphasises that rather than attempting to regulate all premises which operate under the umbrella of health and safety requirements, there should be some which gain exemption. One of the main reasons was to ensure that building regulations were simplified without compromising the health and safety of premises. This is now a debatable assertion. In chapters 6 and 7, I draw on material to suggest that the passive fire industry is questioning the effectiveness of self-regulation and enterprise as a means to ensure conformance. Individuals express concern that this approach threatens life and building safety as without external enforcement, the monitoring of fire safety has become more complex due to a lack of knowledge and accountability.   As a result, organizations can avoid conformance as they operate outside the confines of any formal monitoring. It was however stated in the White Paper that exemption for some buildings would be effective:

The Government think that this would be a useful option, simplifying building control for users, and allowing authorities to allocate resources more flexibly between plan checking and inspection of work on site (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 7).

Alongside simplifying and enhancing flexibility of building regulations, is the commitment to self certification, which indicates progressive moves towards self-regulation and individual accountability; two objectives which are consistent with the enterprise discourse. Individuals were encouraged to regulate their conduct and become more responsible for health and safety which relinquished their dependency on the state and local authority. Such practices became a 'technology of the self' (Foucault, 1988: 18) as individuals internalised the required objectives for desirable conduct and regulated themselves in accordance with them. The government's aim of reforming building control, was to encourage self regulation through the exercise of disciplinary power. It was stated that:

...local delegation was welcomed as the key to speedy resolution of problems, but submissions emphasised the importance of consistency in the way the Regulations were interpreted; similarly, procedures were wanted which would combine simplicity, flexibility, and informality with authoritativeness (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 13).

Such proposals aimed to reduce bureaucratic procedures associated with external bodies, leaving compliance to voluntary mechanisms. Compliance is deemed possible, through the participation individuals have with the enterprise discourse which leads them to internalise norms and values and regulate their conduct, thus becoming self-disciplined. Individuals are homogenised and normalised (Foucault, 1977) as they are measured against an established 'norm' of conduct to ensure consistency and predictability of behaviour.

Whilst self-regulation was presented as an alternative to local authority control, the latter still remained responsible for enforcement. The Future of Building Control (1981) White Paper acknowledged that 'private certification is not simply a matter of transferring functions and responsibilities presently shouldered by local authorities to individuals: the inherent differences between the two must be recognised' (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 8). Local authorities had the statutory function to enforce building regulations in the area in which they were located and bring prosecutions or remove construction works if deemed non-compliant (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 9). It was not considered viable to simply transfer control for certification and monitoring to the individual, which meant that '...certifiers could be given powers to take over the functions of checking plans of proposed works, and inspecting subsequent work on site. Local authorities must, however, remain responsible for taking any enforcement action that may be necessary' (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 9). The power of the local authority indicates that in line with the reforms of

the Thatcher Conservative government, it became necessary to establish a means of control which not only enabled individuals to demonstrate self-discipline, but also ensure that government was still present through an enforcement regime. This reflects 'government at a distance' (Rose, 1999: 49) as local authorities defined the criteria for compliance, whilst forging alliances with 'free' individuals by encouraging them to internalise the norms and values as their own.

The spread of the enterprise discourse through the White Papers, can be seen as a 'regime of truth' (Rose, 1999: 29) which individuals in the passive fire industry accept as common knowledge. Self-regulation is not in opposition to the political aspirations and objectives of government, but they are directly intertwined; enterprise attempts to fabricate individuals into self-responsible, autonomous and initiative seeking subjects (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). This 'productive' exercise of power, indicates how Foucault (1977) can advance Institutional Theory because homogenisation through isomorphic pressures is not just due to the constraint of coercion, but the spread of enterprise seeks to 'produce' individuals who embrace work as a personal project.

The White Paper The (Future of Building Control 1981) indicates the major changes which the Thatcher Conservative government initiated. The paper states that: 'some of the changes will require legislation; others can be made in advance of any new statute. The government propose to press ahead without delay to give exemption and relief for minor works…They intend to get fresh legislation ready as soon as possible to enable private certification of building work to start" (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 16). The gradual introduction

of private certification and the use of inspectors were viewed as less stringent enforcement strategies. This links back to the Thatcherite commitment to creating an autonomous and self-regulatory environment within organizations, as it would supplement much of the earlier work undertaken by the local authority. This would place the onus on the individual responsible for the building to ensure that certification was in place. The private certification which was deemed to be an essential development stemming from this White Paper is evident in Part II of the Building Act (1984), where the proposals came to fruition. This Act consolidated nearly all of the previous legislation up to 1984 regarding building control, whilst also suggesting proposals for optional privatisation, streamlining of services, and the redrafting of the building regulations.

There was a shift in emphasis from relying on the local authority as the main decision making body, to encouraging the active involvement of inspectors. The White Paper illustrates this through references to the enterprise discourse such as the commitment to flexibility, devolved responsibility, simplicity and the reduction of regulatory burdens. The role of the White Paper and the future of Building Regulations under the Conservative government are stated in the following lengthy quote:

> …the major changes…will bring about significant improvements in the control of building operations. They will increase the clarity of the Regulations and make them more readily useable…they will enable local authorities to simplify their procedures; and they will reduce the commitment of public resources, both locally and nationally, to this function. At the same time, they will *preserve the high standards of safety* in buildings we have come to enjoy in this country, and they will enable control standards more easily to keep abreast of new developments… (The Future of Building Control, 1981: 16; emphasis added).

One can question whether '*high standards of safety*' will be possible in a climate of deregulation. Where minimal control is in place standards may decline, especially as voluntary compliance and a lack of enforcement, means that organizations in the passive fire industry face minimal coercive pressures to comply and can actively choose to engage in non-compliance. A critical understanding of power, would suggest that the creation of an obedient and conforming subject, is not the only result of complying with state driven proposals. Individuals may simultaneously exercise power to achieve their objectives, which challenge government's original intentions of creating 'enterprising subjects' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992) as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Lifting the Burden (1984/1985)

The 'Lifting the Burden' (1984/1985) White Paper, is broad in scope as it identifies the prevalence of enterprise in various sectors. In relation to its economic policy, the concern is not only about reducing inflation, but also offering real incentives for enterprise which can help to generate jobs. It argued that:

> It is the growth of enterprise, the efforts of millions of our people engaged in the creation and development of businesses large and small that is the real driving force of the economy. This paper is about one important aspect of helping enterprise to grow – by reducing burdens imposed on business by administrative and legislative regulation (Lifting the Burden, 1984/85: 1).

This encapsulates the moves towards deregulation under the Thatcher Conservative government, who aimed to free markets and increase competition. To achieve this, it involved the '*lifting of administrative and legislative burdens which take time, energy and resources from fundamental business activity*' (Lifting the Burden, 1984/85: 1). Organizations were expected to operate more efficiently, with '*more choice, better services, lower prices, greater*

international competitiveness, freedom from bureaucratic control and the clear potential to increase employment' (Lifting the Burden, 1984/85: 2). This discourse sought to reform the industry along the lines of enterprise, with the intention of 'producing' individuals who self-regulate, without the need for government intervention. The enterprise discourse was also significant in relation to fire precautions; a sector which was one of the most *'significant requirements for which the Home Office are responsible…'* (Lifting the Burden, 1984/1985: 27). It was perceived that information should be simple, easy to understand, supported by approved evidence, whilst also focusing more directly on *'avoiding unnecessarily severe requirements on low risk premises but consistently catching and improving high risk premises'* (Lifting the Burden, 1984/1985: 28). Fire precautions would entail *'consulting on a new system of control to replace the certification requirements of the Fire Precautions Act 1971; greater responsibility would be placed on owners/occupiers to meet safety standards…'* (Lifting the Burden, 1984/1985: 9). This emphasises the subsequent effects which deregulation had on the construction industry, particularly related to fire certification and the elimination of constraints with regards to building regulations. Since the publication of the 1981 White Paper (The Future of Building Control in England and Wales, 1981), the Thatcher government was engaged in a significant overhaul of building control practices *'with the aim of simplifying the procedures, providing the option of private certification and removing unnecessary regulations'* (Lifting the Burden, 1984/1985: 15). A shift occurred from local authority control and certification of fire safety, to a system of approved inspectors who were responsible for inspection. As the White Paper stated, *'The bulk of the building regulations will be reduced from over 300 pages at present to some 30 pages'* (Lifting the Burden, 1984/1985: 16).

The Thatcher era appears to have consisted of the gradual reduction of bureaucratic and procedural burdens, through minimising complex, costly and restrictive, written documents. Where fire safety and fire precautions were concerned, this was deemed achievable as high risk organizations would become the main focus, especially if they *'increased risk to personal safety'* (Lifting the Burden, 1984/1985: 16). Alternatively, the most effective technique was to ensure that *'regulations should be reduced to the minimum required to secure their essential function, which is the preservation of public health and safety'* (Lifting the Burden, 1984/1985: 16).   One of the driving forces behind the minimisation of regulatory constraints, is determined by the market mechanism as the White Paper states: *'[if] ...the operation of the market can be relied upon to ensure that acceptable standards are maintained, there is no case for regulation'* (Lifting the Burden, 1984/1985: 16). This reinforces the government's focus at the time on ways in which compliance, best practice and high standards of performance can be determined through self-regulation by encouraging simplified and fewer regulations which would impact on businesses. It highlights the progressive evolution of the enterprise discourse since 1979. By tracing the proposals evident in this White Paper, it would appear that the main advancements that have been made are related to introducing exemptions where regulatory compliance was unnecessary, and a more direct focus on self-certification or voluntary compliance, in other words, enterprise (Lifting the Burden, 1984/1985). These were the main tangible implications that stemmed from the White Paper and, they were not significantly different to the previous proposals evident in 'The Future of Building Control' (1981), the only variance was in the realm of making the enterprise discourse more explicit by focusing on numerous sectors of the economy as illustrative examples.   From this White Paper, there is no indication of it culminating in any significant legislative Act but instead it

was followed by the publication of another government document which was referred to as 'Building Businesses…Not Barriers' (1985/1986). This added to the continuing promotion of Thatcher's enterprising initiatives.

The above discussion suggests that 'coercion', originating from state driven proposals is not the only means of producing compliant, homogenised subjects. Compliance is the result of the exercise of disciplinary power through discourse which encourages the internalisation of enterprising norms/values.

'Building Businesses…Not Barriers' (1985/1986)

'Building Businesses…Not Barriers' (1985/1986) provides the foundation for establishing and creating an 'enterprise economy…by cutting 'red tape'…' (1985/1986: iv). The White Paper outlines the proposals in place for achieving an economy which involves 'better regulation'. Comparisons are made between the UK and the USA which is perceived as a more entrepreneurial society where:

> …individuals are far less restricted if they wish to work for themselves, to start a new business, or to employ people. They enjoy a freedom from regulations foreign to most Europeans (Building Businesses, Not Barriers, 1985/1986: 1).

It is against this background, which the paper argues that in order to achieve an enterprise economy in the UK, regulatory burdens have to be amended to ensure that they are 'not out of proportion with their benefits' (Building Businesses, Not Barriers, 1985/1986: 1). The main objective is that regulations should be fewer in number, but more effective in terms of what businesses and practices they seek to cover. The notion of 'freeing enterprise' (1985/1986: 2)

is deemed to be possible only when there is a decline in state control. The following quote encapsulates the government's approach to reducing interventionist procedures and encouraging innovation, growth and competitiveness:

> Regulations and licences tend to build up cosy industry insulated from outside competition. The difficulty and costs of entry may be high for new firms and the stimulus of competition may be lacking. Indeed that explains why some firms take a relaxed attitude to regulations: they may even benefit from an entrenched position. But new growth is stifled and the consumer suffers. So lack of concern within an uncompetitive industry is no sign that all is well. *State control breeds corpulent firms* (Building Businesses, Not Barriers, 1985/1986: 2; emphasis added).

The above quote is indicative of the Thatcher Conservative government's aim of creating self-regulating individuals; it evokes seductive images of how a failure to do so, would lead to firms which were *corpulent*. This implies that deregulation and voluntary compliance is the only desirable approach. Kanter (1990: 556 cited in du Gay, 2000: 86) argued that organizations 'must either move away from bureaucratic guarantees to (post) entrepreneurial flexibility or…stagnate, thereby cancelling by default any commitments they have made'. Moe (1994: 114 cited in du Gay, 2000: 137) stated: 'Those who question this paradigm [*enterprise*] are not merely incorrect, they have no place in the government of the future'. This reinforces the prevalence of the enterprise discourse and indicates that regulatory reforms were gradually changing with moves towards more flexible and self-responsible practices. It also reinforces Thatcher's support of the market logic, which emphasises devolved power, operative efficiency and a lack of state intervention (Ezzamel et al, 2007). Yet, the elevation of empowerment and choice does not mean that hierarchical or bureaucratic practices are eliminated (Fournier and Grey, 1999).

Relating this to Foucault's (1977) understanding of power, it can be said that individuals are shaped and regulated as objects of knowledge, whose identity is reconceptualised through the changing forms of governing social life. Government attempts to shape subjectivity through the infiltration of the enterprise discourse through White Papers, as the discourse prioritises the need for self-regulating and responsible individuals, which structures the way people 'think, make decisions and act in organizations' (du Gay, 1996: 57). Institutional theorists would see legislative documents as coercive because it is a '…response to real or anticipated pressure from actors in their environment' (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 664). Power can also be productive (Foucault, 1977; 1988), as the enterprise discourse constitutes subjects who internalise the desirable norms and values as their own.

Despite the advocated benefit of encouraging an enterprising economy which would enhance autonomy through limited state intervention, it is this same objective which the passive fire industry is arguing should be amended as they continuously search for more mandatory control. I discuss this issue in subsequent empirical chapters which highlight the competing tensions created by self-regulation; some sectors of the industry believe that it should be replaced with a more stringent regulatory approach. This is deemed more appropriate as it would minimise the fire risk created by the current lack of intervention. Viewing enterprise as the most appropriate system to achieve one's goals fails to take into account that "…while 'economic efficiency' might be improved in the shorter-term, the longer-term costs associated with this apparent improvement may well include antipathy to corruption, fairness, probity and reliability in the treatment of cases and other forms of conduct that were taken somewhat for granted under traditional arrangements" (du Gay, 2000: 94-95).

Throughout the White Paper, 'Building Businesses…Not Barriers', the emphasis is on either abolishing regulation altogether or replacing it with a voluntary code of practice. These initiatives were viewed as developments on the initial proposals outlined in the previous 'Lifting the Burden' White Paper (1984/1985) where it was stated that:

> The proposals in 'Lifting the Burden' have been achieved…Better regulation will continue to protect our society, help enterprise flourish and business grow (Building Barriers, Not Barriers, 1985/1986: 4).

In relation to fire protection, the 'proposals' were the following:

1) Consultation on a new system of control to replace the certification requirements of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 - this would place responsibility and onus onto an owner/occupier.

2) Clearer advice to be given to fire authorities to ensure consistency and minimise compliance costs (Building Businesses, Not Barriers, 1985/1985: 9).

3) Certain dwellings to be made exempt from control, private certification utilised and building occupiers to be consulted to ensure they can take the appropriate steps to assess the fire risk within their premises.

The changes to fire prevention and certification which culminated in the White Papers were reinforced in an inquiry which identified the causes and consequences of the Bradford City Football Club fire (1985). These new proposals were evident in the 'Popplewell Inquiry' undertaken by Lord Popplewell, whose aim was to improve fire safety regulations, by suggesting that legislation should be more flexible in order to cater for sports grounds where fire risk, structural failure and crowd control were not all present at once (Building Businesses, Not Barriers, 1985/1986: 52). The debate surrounding the changes to the documentation and wording is discussed below. In response to the Popplewell Inquiry, suggestions for

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improvement were all related to deregulation and the introduction of enterprise for all businesses. For instance, Mr Laird who was the Principal Officer of health and safety in Leeds, employed under the Health and Safety Executive, attended the football ground and identified that there had been a failure of compliance. He argued that devolving responsibility to building/premise occupiers was the most effective means of minimising dependency. Mr Laird stated:

> …if, every time they [*health and safety executive*] found some litter lying about which might constitute a fire hazard, they had to notify the Fire Authority, they would never get any work done; it was really a matter for the occupier to be responsible for his own good housekeeping (Popplewell Report, 1985/1986: 24).

The problematic issues which were raised in the Popplewell Inquiry, both legislatively and practically, covered items such as sport ground layout and the material used for stadium seating, as well as the provision of fire extinguishers and proper communication devices. The Bradford fire highlighted the lack of mandatory compliance which in 2011 remains the central concern for the passive fire industry. For instance, Sir Ken Knight, the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor, produced a report on the tragic fire at Lakanal House, Camberwell (2009). He highlighted that the passive fire protection products used in the building were 'an area for consideration' as questions were raised over whether they had been installed correctly as the fire spread was deemed extensive and 'unusual' (Knight, 2009: 11). The recommendation was that the focus should remain on ensuring that the products are '…installed by suitably competent people who fully recognise the significance of the fire safety measures being installed' (Knight, 2009: 11).

Interestingly, Lord Popplewell questioned whether self-regulation would be a sufficient mechanism to replace legislation where fire safety was concerned. He said in relation to the proposed changes:

> It would, of course, be for consideration as and when the Consultative Document is implemented, whether the self-compliance scheme (as I have called it) would be sufficient to deal with the risk of fire at a sports ground or stadium…I have to take account that at grounds or stadia not designated under the Safety of Sports Ground Act 1975…unless they are subject to adequate statutory control…unacceptable risks may remain (Popplewell Report, 1985/1986: 22).

According to the Inquiry, the Home Office in 1976 published the 'Green Guide' which recommended measures for improving safety at existing football grounds. One of the particular suggestions regarding the regulation of fire safety is indicated in the following quote:

> A common feature in the construction of stands which is a fire risk is the provision of voids under the seating. These voids become the resting place for paper, cartons and other combustible materials which can be ignited, unnoticed, by a carelessly discarded cigarette end. Wherever possible such spaces should be excluded but where they exist they should be sealed off so that paper etc cannot find its way into them (Popplewell Report 1984/1985: 10).

The potential risk of items being ignited was found to be the main cause of the Bradford fire. The Green Guide identified improvements which could have been made in order to ensure safety: such as 'sufficient exits'; 'evacuation time'; and the clearing of 'combustible waste' (Popplewell Report 1984/1985: 10). Institutional theorists (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008b) would view these proposals as coercive because they are '…in the form of legislation…a mandatory duty to develop corporate strategies, review functions and set targets' (Ashworth et al, 2005: 11). The legislation was perceived as providing direct suggestions and rules which were expected to be implemented in order to improve health and

safety and raise the standard of fire safety in stadiums. From an Institutional Theory perspective, legislation exercises '…interorganizational power and [*means*] that organizations' actions can be constrained by the actions of other, more powerful units (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 665). The guide however, was not complied with and the reasons behind this non-compliance, were largely absent from any of the reports which I have referenced. That said, in the Popplewell Report of 1985/1986, it was acknowledged that the guide:

> …should continue to be voluntary and not form a statutory code; but it is important that all of those concerned with sports grounds should read and understand the contents, and apply the lessons relevant to their own sports grounds (Popplewell Report, 1985/1986: 28).

With the emphasis on its voluntary nature, it is possible that the Green Guide was not complied with simply because there was no mandatory expectation to do so. This is supported by one statement in an earlier summary report by Lord Popplewell, which simply read: 'Had the Green Guide been complied with this tragedy would not have occurred' (Popplewell Report, 1984/1985: 10). This indicates that although institutional theorists would have viewed the Guide as exercising a coercive, constraining practice as it involved the '…exertion of pressure as a mechanism leading to institutional homogenisation…' (Beckert, 2010: 153), it was purely voluntary. Using Foucault (1977), it can be argued that the Green Guide was supposed to have acted as a form of disciplinary power, as it would encourage individuals to conform through the exercise of power which led to the internalisation of desirable conduct, thus leading to self-regulation.

Such voluntary proposals reinforce the self-regulating capacities of individuals who identified themselves with the goals and aspirations of the enterprise discourse. Conformance to such requirements was not coercive in the sense that Institutional Theory argues because power can be exercised productively as it shapes subjectivities and identities (du Gay, 1996). Enterprise seeks to define what is normal and standardises behaviour; this gets transferred across institutional sites, and in doing so, leads to homogenisation. Yet, this does not happen in the passive fire industry because individuals can exercise power to use enterprise to their own advantage by 'choosing' to engage in non-conformance.

The Popplewell Inquiry demonstrates some of the tangible consequences of the Thatcher government's approach to deregulating through enterprise. This continual emphasis since 1979 on a market-orientated and managerialist logic, has culminated in an increase in voluntary codes of practice. As seen above, this could have contributed to an increase in fires and a decline in safety standards. Elliot and Smith (2006) undertook a longitudinal study of the evolution of regulation regarding safety management within the UK soccer industry. Drawing on Gouldner's (1954) study of the 'patterns of industrial bureaucracy' it was found that during the time of the Bradford Fire, perceptions of fire safety had shifted towards a coercive or 'punishment-centred' approach. This meant that some stadiums were closed and regulations changed as a direct result of this fire, but minimal regulatory enforcement was still in place:

Whilst enforcement is likely to achieve conformity with written standards, it is less likely to achieve the culture change that is required within the industry (Elliot and Smith, 2006: 304).

Elliot and Smith (2006: 312) indicate that the 'lack of pressure from regulators' led to the inability to substantially change attitudes which resulted in insufficient knowledge dissemination regarding the importance of safety standards. Fires were infrequent and questions were raised over the necessity of implementing preventive measures. In a deregulated environment, safety management was left to individuals who had insufficient training and support (Elliot and Smith, 2006). If the tension between the spread of the enterprise discourse and the practical effects of this at the level of the industry were already acknowledged by the Popplewell Report, it is questionable why these very same problems are still on-going at the time of this research (2008-2011).

A recommendation stemming from the Popplewell Inquiry was that sports grounds which were not governed by safety certificates should, with the support of the fire authorities, provide fire fighting equipment and in a high risk situation should also take immediate action which may involve an inspection (Popplewell report, 1984/1985: 17). The person responsible for the premises should 'achieve and maintain reasonable standards of fire safety…Thus the present fire certification process would be replaced by a system requiring the occupier to comply with the requirements…by a specified date' (1985/1986: 21). Despite these proposals for improvements they were all in retrospect. It is only once a tragedy happens, that regulatory changes are implemented to ensure that they are preventable in the future. Even in the summary statement of the Popplewell Report, it was stated that:

> the lack of safety precautions at sports grounds disclosed in evidence to me, [*means that*] it would in my view be a mistake to leave to sports grounds' management the discretion of 'self compliance' (Popplewell Report, 1985/1986: 21).

This quote seems to reflect a contradiction because the promotion of enterprise initiatives such as flexibility and efficiency were put into place, only to then be questioned as lacking in sufficient control.

The White Paper and the Popplewell Inquiry both came before Parliament and gave rise to the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act (1987) which focuses direct attention on providing greater statutory powers to fire authorities, especially concerning the administration of a fire certificate, or the amendment of an existing one. The Act reflects a continuation of the enterprise discourse by indicating that greater responsibility should be placed on building occupiers to ensure fire safety. Sections of the Fire Precautions Act (1971) were amended to allow more autonomy for fire authorities when issuing fire certificates. The proposals made by the Popplewell Inquiry led to further consultative documents outlining the government's report on new fire precautions legislation, 'designed to maintain and, where necessary, improve fire safety standards while at the same time reducing the burden on premises presenting a low risk' (Popplewell Report, 1985/1986: 52).

'Releasing Enterprise' (1987/88)

The spread of the enterprise discourse continued throughout the 1980s and is evident in the White Paper implemented during the years of 1987-1988, referred to as 'Releasing Enterprising'. The White Paper acknowledged that the Thatcher government at the time aimed to '…increase the wealth of the nation. That means freeing people to make the fullest use of their talents to produce the goods and services demanded in the Europe of the 21st Century' (Cm 512: i). Too much intervention from the centre 'stifles enterprise, discourages innovation,

and removes incentives' (Releasing Enterprise, 1987/1988: i). Encapsulating the aim of the

White Paper is the following statement:

> Our aim is to ease the bureaucratic pressures on business, especially small businesses. This White Paper records the Government's most recent achievements. The benefits are for us all. Where more efficient government saves costs for business, it is the *customer* who enjoys lower prices…together they show what we are doing through *deregulation* to achieve our aim of *releasing enterprise* (Releasing Enterprise, 1987/1988 i; emphasis added).

This quote frames the changes to be made in terms of *'releasing enterprise'* through

'deregulation' which results in lower prices for *'customers'.* This is deemed possible through

the enterprise discourse, which seeks to create and shape attitudes and aspirations that result in

a better employee being the same thing as a better self (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). The three

most essential reform objectives which the White Paper set out were: 'better regulation' which

involved:

> being better informed about the costs and making better use of that information improving and streamlining essential requirements; ensuring that any thresholds are so devised to enable growing firms to take them in their stride (Releasing Enterprise, 1987/1988: ii).

The second objective was based on 'better relationships' which created an:

> ..awareness and understanding of the needs of business and enterprise through wider experience, better training and more involvement of people from outside; opening channels of communication and bringing business into the decision-making process… (Releasing Enterprise, 1987/1988: ii).

The third objective was to enable the principles to be more directly focused towards creating a

'better service' which ensured that:

> …the Government perform their functions speedily and effectively so that business is not hampered by delays or poor decisions (Releasing Enterprise, 1987/1988: ii).

These objectives are all sprinkled with the language of enterprise which pervades the modernisation and review of traditional and outdated regulations governing hazardous substances and the use of more flexible and simpler controls (Releasing Enterprise, 1987/1988). In particular, it was stated that:

> The Department of the Environment (DoE) has many responsibilities which affect business. These include…the construction industry (including building regulations); local government and housing. They range from areas where regulations can be simplified and streamlined to those where systems of control are essential to safeguard human life and the environment (Releasing Enterprise, 1987/1988: 15).

This was supported by references to the decline in complexity surrounding compliance procedures which would:

> …make them simpler in form and more flexible in operation, have been widely welcomed. Stage two of the review is now being undertaken covering technical aspects of the Regulations. The aim is to ensure that the legal requirements are easy to understand and do not go beyond what is clearly necessary, particularly for health and safety reasons, and that the guidance provided on methods of compliance is clear, simple and accurate (Releasing Enterprise, 1987/1988: 17).

There was also a consideration of the changes surrounding building regulations and fire certification procedures and their implementation. Although the 'Releasing Enterprise' White Paper was published in 1987-1988, it was set against a backdrop of the earlier publications. Prior to 1985, enterprise initiatives were largely focused on commercial and industrial requirements and the extension of the model of the free market into various sectors of the industry (Morris, 1991). Since 1985, a more direct focus has been placed on individualism through the enterprise discourse as individuals were encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their own goals (Morris, 1991).

The Act which the above White Papers culminated in, was the 'Deregulation and Contracting out Act' (1994), which was introduced under the Major Government (1990-1997) and has been viewed as "…the most ambitious initiative during the Conservative Government of the 1980s and 1990s" (Ambler and Chittenden, 2007: 14). The main aim was to provide:

> …a mechanism to change primary legislation for the purpose of removing or reducing burdens on businesses or others, provided that necessary protection is not removed…To amend or repeal legislation…which imposes a burden and in doing so to set up a new regulatory system which is less burdensome than the existing regime (Ambler and Chittenden, 2007: 13).

Within this specific Act, there was the opportunity to repeal any regulations which were deemed too burdensome; this was encapsulated in the following quote: "By common consent, statutory codes are more burdensome than voluntary ones and we should be looking to self-regulation before legal regulation" (Ambler and Chittenden, 2007: 18).

To summarise, the previous section has focused on White Papers which were progressively implemented during 1979-1997. Proposals were related to the introduction and subsequent enhancement of voluntary codes of practice, flexible working procedures and increased efficiency. These aimed to increase autonomy as local authority certification declined, so individuals became directly responsible for an organization's risk assessment and fire protection. These proposals reflect the discursive effects of enterprise whereby subjects are reconstituted as enterprising in that they are cultivated as responsible, autonomous and self-regulating (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). This strategy, when applied to the passive fire industry, 'individualises' and 'normalises' (Foucault, 1977) and subsequently has created a division amongst those who conform, and those who do not. On the one hand, individuals who

comply argue for more statutory control, whilst on the other hand, their non-compliant counterparts attempt to use the opportunities for 'choice' which enterprise provides them with, to avoid expensive compliance costs. This advances our understanding of coercive isomorphism from an Institutional Theory perspective because power is not just a '…pressure[s] to bring an organization's structure in line with the demands of powerful alters…' (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 670), but can be exercised relationally amongst individuals. This means that the latter group do not exist outside of enterprise, but instead use the discourse to engage in opportunistic behaviour by using the qualities to their own advantage (see chapter 6). The very same tensions can also be said of the Egan Report (1998) which will be discussed below. This demonstrates that despite the change in government from Conservative to Labour, much of the discourse and policy objectives remained the same.

The Egan Report (1998)

The introduction of the Egan Report (DETR, 1998) 'Rethinking Construction' which was implemented under Tony Blair's government (1997-2007) reinforced the enterprise discourse in the construction industry. This suggests that few moves have been made to implement a significantly different approach to regulatory reform since the Thatcher Conservative government.

The Egan report suggested that utilising lean production techniques would enhance productivity and efficiency in an industry that had begun to progressively decline in effectiveness. This report focused on five key areas: committed leadership; the customer; integrated process and team around the product; a quality driven agenda and commitment to

people (Egan Report DETR, 1998). These will be explored below and it is interesting to note that the Egan Report is the first time when the notion of the 'customer' is truly acknowledged. Firstly, committed leadership involves management being directed towards an agenda which involves improvement and commitment to a cultural change aimed at *"...believing and being totally committed to driving forward an agenda for improvement and communicating the required cultural and operational changes throughout the whole of the industry"* (Egan Report DETR, 1998: 13). In the passive fire protection industry, contractors and some project managers were unwilling to improve efficiency, particularly if there is poor or partial installation (May, 2007). Improvements to this became part of the holistic approach which the Egan Report (DETR 1998) attempted by stating: *"...no part of the industry can escape this requirement: it affects constructors, suppliers and designers alike [but] we have yet to see widespread evidence of the burning commitment to raise quality and efficiency which we believe is necessary"* (Egan Report, DETR 1998: 13).

Secondly, a focus on the needs of the customer involves considering what choices of client they utilise. This is captured by the Egan Report (DETR 1998: 13): *"...in the best companies, the customer drives everything. These companies provide precisely what the end customer needs, when the customer needs it and at a price that reflects the products' value to the customer".* This resonates with the enterprise discourse where meeting the demands of the 'sovereign' consumer has become the overriding imperative (Keat, 1991: 3). Organizations are radically restructured in order to meet consumer demand and through the language of the customer, managers can justify the changes being implemented. The problem in construction is that the 'customer' is difficult to define: *"...the construction industry tends not to think*

about the customer (either the client or the consumer) but more about the next employer in the contractual chain. Companies do very little systematic research on what the end-user actually wants…" (Egan Report, DETR 1998: 13).

Thirdly, integrating the process and team around the product heightens awareness of customers' needs by establishing a set of sequential steps to follow with the aim of building up long term relationships with clients (Egan Report DETR, 1998). This is achievable in companies which *"…do not fragment their operations – they work back from the customer's needs and focus on the product and the value it delivers to the customer. The process and production team are integrated to deliver value to the customer efficiently and eliminate waste in all its forms"* (Egan Report, DETR 1998: 13). The problematic issue being that the construction industry have not traditionally tended to operate in that way because they are *"…typically dealing with the project process as a series of sequential and largely separate operations undertaken by individual designers, constructors and suppliers who have no stake in the long term success of the product and no commitment to it"* (Egan Report, DETR 1998: 13).

The fourth driver was quality and involved the principles normally associated with TQM (Hill, 1991) and BPR approaches (Hammer and Champy, 1993) which advocate for right first time practices and innovation (Hill, 1991). A quality driven agenda was paramount to the Egan Report (DETR 1998: 14) which aimed to try and *'break the vicious circle of poor service and low client expectations by delivering real quality'*. TQM has also been heralded as important in redefining the relationship between workers and customers; workers become each other's

'internal' customers (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 621). This has added new technologies of surveillance through one's peers which becomes an exercise in self-discipline. Individuals are opened up to scrutiny as they experience a normalising gaze (Townley, 1998), as they rank and measure themselves and others.

There was also a focus on *"...innovating for the benefit of the client and stripping out waste, whether it be in design, materials or construction on site"* (Egan Report, DETR 1998: 14). The commitment to such instrumental management techniques is a key point made in the Egan Report (DETR. 1998: 22), which gave unequivocal backing to these principles:

> We are impressed by the dramatic success being achieved by leading companies that are implementing the principles of 'lean thinking' and we believe that the concept holds much promise for construction

'Lean thinking' is based on the transformation which has been implemented in other industries such as car manufacturing which is famously known for its 'lean production' and 'just in time' techniques (Jørgensen and Emmitt, 2008). Organizations adopting these practices are seen to enhance efficiency and more readily meet the needs of the customer; thereby fulfilling the requirements of the enterprise discourse.

The final driver was commitment to people, which was concerned with improving training and development, to encourage everybody involved in construction to ensure improvement (Egan Report DETR, 1998). This involved *"...a commitment to training and development of committed and highly capable managers and supervisors. It also means respect for all participants in the process...[because]...In the Task Force's view, much of construction does not yet recognise that its people is its greatest asset and treat them as such"* (Egan Report,

DETR 1998: 14). Enterprise seeks to cultivate subjects who will develop their self-regulating capacities for involvement and ownership through training and development. This governs people through their 'soul' (Rose, 1998), as their aspirations are channelled into the search for customer responsiveness, success and organizational development.

Despite the enterprising qualities evident in the Egan Report (DETR, 1998), they were not adopted wholeheartedly. The Egan Report was reviewed in 2008, which highlighted that there has been little evidence of any improvements being made, with only 15% of companies meeting the initial objectives established ten years previously (McMeeken, 2008). The Constructing Excellence Task Force[8] found that criticisms regarding the report lay with the lack of involvement from the government due to their limited enforcement and monitoring of existing legislation. A survey conducted by BIW Technologies (2008) (a software provider to the property/construction sector) stated that:

> Government bodies were blamed as the main laggards and criticised for talking too much about the issues, producing a wide array of documents, but not taking enough decisive action[9]

When clients were asked what government could do to improve the practices within the construction industry, sixty percent thought that 'existing legislation or commitments should be enforced more strongly, rather than more new laws passed'[10]. This suggests that bureaucratic regulation is not always perceived as an imposition. By criticising the regulation-bound and form-filling practices that bureaucracy instigates, there is a tendency to forget what it actually enables us to achieve. In the passive fire industry more enforcement could lead to

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[8]http://www.constructingexcellence.org.uk/membership/strategicreview/headlines_from_the_online_survey.pdf
[9] http://www.biwtech.com/cp_root/h/Media_Centre/Egan__Survey_shows_progress/445/
[10] http://www.biwtech.com/cp_root/h/Media_Centre/Egan__Survey_shows_progress/445/

safer buildings, improvements in life safety, and a higher level of compliance/competence/accountability which would minimise the existence of an uneven playing field.

Enterprise in the Fire and Rescue Service (2003)

The Egan Report (1998), subsumed under the Labour government further supports the existence of the enterprise discourse, but also the problems associated with the continual focus on self-regulatory practices. It is evident that few changes have occurred despite the changes in government. The fire and rescue service in 2003 considered how structural and managerial changes would enable a new approach to management, which focused greater attention on customers and institutional reform. The White Paper titled 'Our Fire and Rescue Service (2003)' has a foreword by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, who offered an outline of the initial objectives:

> This White Paper sets out our vision for the fire and rescue service of the future, how we intend to deliver that vision and make the service more efficient and effective, and how we provide public safety. It includes proposals for changes in the structure of the service; in the institutions of the service; and in the working practices and procedures of all those who work in the service…We will establish a new statutory framework which will place a responsibility on the service to plan for, and respond to, a new range of emergencies on the basis of risk assessment and management (Our Fire and Rescue Service, 2003: 6-7).

The emphasis in this White Paper is based on national, regional and local changes, as it was perceived that the current arrangements for the fire service were inefficient and cumbersome. In the summary of the White Paper, it states 'Government has given too little strategic direction and yet has been involved in operations to a remarkable level of detail' (Our Fire and Rescue Service, 2003: 7). This suggests a contradiction between deregulation and regulation.

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Government intervene in some aspects of the fire service which they feel are in need of monitoring, but leave other sections to self regulate. This tension culminated in establishing regional objectives and targets, but with responsibility transferred to senior fire service managers who had 'managerial independence to deliver the authorities' plans as effectively as possible' (Our Fire and Rescue Service, 2003: 8).

The commitment to devolving and delegating to local level management, was also at the heart of the Blair Labour government, with the assurance that engaging in such practices would enable the public to benefit from 'high standards of service, flexibility and choice' (Our Fire and Rescue Service, 2003: 10). These propositions indicate the pervasiveness of the enterprise discourse. The fire and rescue service sought to be improved, restructured and managed more efficiently to improve its customers' needs. Customers began governing employees' practices through surveys and feedback which exercised power as they created a gaze of visibility (Townley, 1998). This led to the regulation of individuals' behaviour, as they became self-disciplined in line with customer's expectations.

Enterprise and fire safety – a perfect combination?

The proposals expressed throughout the fire service White Paper, indicate that customers should receive higher quality service and, as a result, fire related incidents should decline. That said, despite a reduction in deaths since 1979 when the Conservative Thatcher government was in power, there had been an increase in injuries from 7,600 in 1979 to 14,800 in 2001 (Our Fire and Rescue Service, 2003: 12). The overall cost of fire to the economy was estimated to be around £7 billion in 2003. This relates back to the debatable assertion with

regards to whether deregulation results in improved fire safety. These figures seem to suggest that it does not, as declines in regulation have also resulted in a decline in safety and an increase in fire related incidents. This indicates flaws and limitations in the enterprise discourse. The intended outcomes regarding efficiency, quality and effectiveness, compared with what actually occurs in the industry, are in conflict. du Gay (2000: 87) critically argued that 'The idea…that the enormous and comparatively sudden changes in administrative culture that have taken place in the UK in recent years have improved efficiency, effectiveness, economy and public accountability with no adverse consequences of any kind…simply beggars belief'.

Individuals in the passive fire industry have been left to govern their own practices through self-discipline, but without sufficient accountability or evidence that self-discipline improves compliance. Indeed, it could promote 'fears of the 'fox guarding the henhouse'' (Cox, 2004: 28 cited in Short and Toffel, 2008: 46). Leaving the industry to self-regulate can result in insufficient and unsafe practices because despite enterprise intending to be used to enhance standards and quality, the reliance on self-regulation does not ensure conformance. A memorable quote from one respondent, Derek (trade federation chairman) in relation to the reliance on self-regulatory practices is:

> …in a state described as a nanny state, nanny took away the fire guard, you left it to the children to decide whether it was dangerous.

This is indicative of the problems that respondents in the industry have expressed in terms of relying on self-regulation to govern the industry. Derek is implying that any protection (fire guard) against dangerous practices (fires) has been removed and this has left individuals who

are lacking in knowledge (children) to make decisions about their practices which leaves them in a state of uncertainty and is more likely to lead to accidents. Short and Toffel (2008) found that after a course of mandatory inspection, organizations were more likely to self-disclose violations. The overall stringency of the inspection regime would deter organizations from engaging in non-compliance, and self-disclosure may result in a greater commitment to compliance.

Within the fire services White Paper, it was recognised that the local level could not be left to function solely by itself, but that it required a framework which meant that 'from time to time, the government does need to set parameters about how things should be done…" (Our Fire and Rescue Service, 2003: 30). This challenges the Thatcherite notion of 'laissez-faire' which has characterised many of the policy proposals so far. Despite advocating a decline in state intervention, the government still monitors practices when deemed necessary. Enterprise is therefore disseminated through a 'translation device' (Miller and Rose, 1992: 24) as government proposals for compliance become inscribed through technologies such as self-assessment, league tables and quality objectives. This acts as a normalising function (Foucault, 1977) as the conduct of individuals within the fire industry is directed towards ends which others view as desirable, hence leading to standardised and homogenised conduct.

In summary, the Egan Report (DETR 1998) and the White Paper 'Our Fire and Rescue Service' (2003) provide evidence post Thatcher to indicate that the enterprise discourse is still in existence in the fire protection industry. The emphasis remains on self-regulation and minimal state intervention, along with recommended proposals relating to improvements in

efficiency, quality and service. This is particularly in relation to the 'customer' which was not acknowledged at all prior to 1997. It has however become clearer in more recent policy documents and is possibly due to the previous poor quality practices which took place in construction, leading to a concern around safety. This on-going debate highlights that meeting the requirements of a specific customer is often wrought with difficulty and remains contentious. Additionally, the exclusive focus on just one customer is not applicable to the enterprise literature where the concept is defined on a much wider scale. This is evident through the notion of the 'internal customer', which means that customers are not exclusively external members of the public or other stakeholders, but also individuals within departments who become each other's customers (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 621). The adoption of TQM (total quality management) has led quality to be defined in terms of conformance to the requirements of the customer, but this includes the practices occurring between individual workers (Hill, 1991). This creates a powerful and necessary pressure – 'the pressure to satisfy the customer' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 621). The value placed on the customer through the enterprise discourse is recreated within the organization (du Gay and Salaman, 1992) which establishes a mindset whereby commitment to provide quality and excellence amongst close working individuals, will have the subsequent result of spreading it to external customers (du Gay and Salaman, 1992).

The above discussion has highlighted how advances can be made to our understanding of coercive isomorphism, because homogenisation and conformity are not solely due to coercion which is exercised '…by the external power holder…' (Beckert, 2010: 153). Instead, it stems from the exercise of disciplinary power through the isomorphic pressure and the

internalisation and self-disciplining of conduct in line with enterprising qualities. The requirements and expectations stemming from customers also exercise a visible gaze to enhance self-discipline.

"The same but different": The continuation of the enterprise discourse across successive governments

Having explored the content of the White Papers both during and after the Thatcher Conservative government, one can begin to question whether the implementation of the enterprise discourse has resulted in any significant improvements being made. This is particularly important because there appears to be a 'policy convergence' (Painter, 1999: 95) between the two administrative eras with Tony Blair's (1997-2010) government representing more of a continuation, rather than something distinctively different from the Conservative government.

This continuity is symptomatic of what occurred across all governments who were in office since 1979. Changes were suggested which would mean a shift in bureaucratic, hierarchical forms of control through to post-bureaucratic and networking methods of governance (Painter, 1999). Networks were indicative of New Labour's commitment to openly consult and engage with those subject to the reforms rather than sustain an 'arm's length' approach. A statement from an official in the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) in reference to the Labour government implied that: 'the present government is much more open, inclusive and accommodating. This discernible increase in consultation is through choice not necessity' (Official cited in Hay and Richards, 2000: 5). The network approach to governing

encapsulates enterprising qualities. Networking exudes notions of flexibility, efficiency and responsiveness and this fits in neatly with subsequent arguments, which indicate that vertical and horizontal means of governing and regulating can exist in parallel (Hay and Richards, 2000). Relating this back to the passive fire industry, it can be said that rather than the government directly monitoring and regulating the activities of organizations, there is now more of a reliance on other bodies such as trade associations and certification laboratories.

The on-going shift towards flexibility and choice is reflected in the Regulatory Reform Orders (2001/2006) whose specific role was to 'enable provision to be made for the purpose of reforming legislation which has the effect of imposing burdens affecting persons in the carrying on of an activity and to enable codes of practice to be made with respect to the enforcement of restrictions, requirements and conditions' (RRO, 2005 guidance notes). This resonates with the 2006 Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act, where organizations were encouraged to submit their proposals regarding how they aimed to simplify regulation and reduce burdens (Ambler and Chittenden, 2007). Interestingly, both of these reforms were instigated under Tony Blair's government to minimise direct intervention and encourage, in line with the former proposals, the enhancement of flexibility and responsibility for local businesses and engage managers directly. Whilst the discourse captures the notion of deregulation, as Ambler and Chittenden (2007: 19) state 'Both were more in the nature of revision rather than deregulation…The habit is so ingrained that their approach even to deregulate is still to achieve it by regulation'. The nature in which such policies are established and then implemented, means that much of what they achieve is reflexive of 'déjà vu' than deregulation; that is "…government will cite the low volume and quality of responses

as evidence that there is not really a deregulatory problem' (Ambler and Chittenden, 2007: 21). Even though we have moved from a Conservative government to a Labour government and now to a coalition during 2010, much of the discourse surrounding (de) regulation has remained the same.

The lack of significant divergence from former policies under the Conservative government is argued by Painter (1999: 95), to suggest that 'Some elements of UK public management reform had the consequence, if anything, of making bureaucratic characteristics more pronounced'. This was evident with the continuous and progressive introduction of performance management, formalisation and surveillance strategies (Painter, 1999). Despite this continuation of bureaucracy in other sectors, it has not remained in the passive fire industry. For instance, the introduction of voluntary compliance which aimed to save government expenditure by £53 million (HM Government, 2008: 5) has created a number of difficulties for organizations, ranging from increased cost, insecurity and a lack of knowledge, as well as continuing fire risks.

As a result of this, during 2010 the passive fire industry began working closely with the Communities and Local Government department (CLG) to draft proposals on how to assess the competence of those undertaking risk assessments. In an letter written by Derek (Chairman, trade federation) for one of the industry's public relations magazines (Summer 2010) it was stated that *'...a survey of internet offers of such a service showed that only 8% of parties involved were members of any scheme – and many had no qualifications whatsoever!'*. Another disconcerting finding was that the government building where many of our meetings

were held, and where the government policy writer for building regulations was employed, was also found to have been in breach of thirteen out of fifteen articles relating to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005. Individuals attempted to conceal this but unfortunately for them persons unknown acquired the story and published it in an on-line web magazine. All of these examples demonstrate the problem of transferring the cost and burdensome procedures of training the occupier and providing them with sufficient information to undertake a fire risk assessment. The enterprise discourse, with its emphasis on autonomy and flexibility meant that in practice requirements were being transferred to the organizations subject to such regimes. It is not surprising that the industry is now facing subsequent problems, especially as companies have the option to opt out through non-compliance, whilst others face the difficulty of attempting to enforce compliance through advocating increased regulation.

These issues can be contextualised within the coalition government in 2010, when the Conservatives led by David Cameron, and the Liberal Democrats led by Nick Clegg, joined in partnership. During their first few months in office they published a document called 'our programme for government' which was described in the foreword as one step towards building a '…free, fair and responsible society…'.[11] The objective advocated in the paper is to:

> …disperse power more widely in Britain today; to recognise that we will only make progress if we help people to come together to make life better[12]

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[11] http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/files/2010/05/coalition-programme.pdf
[12] http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/files/2010/05/coalition-programme.pdf

The reduction in regulatory burdens is argued to be a progressive advancement over previous governments who '…assumed that the only way to make things better is to centralise'[13]. This is replaced by '…an emphatic end to the bureaucracy, top-down control and centralisation that has so far diminished our [*society*]…'. The discourse used in these documents focuses on reducing regulatory burdens to enhance choice and autonomy to the British economy and businesses. Enterprise is central to these reforms, especially as the values include transparency, decentralising power and empowering citizens (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). An initiative referred to as *'Your Freedom'* has also been established, which is a forum available to the public to express their suggestions on which laws should be amended and eradicated. It is stated as:

> …[*giving*] you the chance to tell us which laws and regulations you think we should get rid of. Your feedback will inform government policy and some of your proposals could end up making it into bills we bring before Parliament to change the law.[14]

This initiative is a technology of the self (Foucault, 1988: 18) as citizens are encouraged to utilise the enterprising initiatives of being responsible and autonomous by submitting proposals and suggestions, whilst reinforcing the rationales of government. This enhances our understanding of coercive isomorphism as discussed by institutional theorists (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Ashworth et al, 2005; Scott, 2008b) who argue that coercion is '…exerted by government, regulatory or other agencies to adopt the structures or systems which they favour' (Ashworth et al, 2005: 3-4). Alternatively, power can be viewed as a means by which subjects are reconstituted through discourse as '…autonomous, productive individuals whose sense of self-worth and virtue…[*is*]…inextricably linked to the success of the company for which they

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[13] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/david-cameron/7884681/David-Cameron-and-Nick-Clegg-Well-transform-Britain-by-giving-power-away.html
[14] http://yourfreedom.hmg.gov.uk/

work' (du Gay, 1996: 148). Lord Young was asked to review the Health and Safety laws and argued that in line with enterprise, the rules and regulations in place up to 2010 were bound up in bureaucracy. He argued that Britain has a 'compensation culture' which '…is more than a lottery ticket, this is a lottery where you win as you enter'.[15] This is referenced in the context of individuals being driven to sue others whenever anything goes wrong. Lord Young argues that improvements will involve '…getting rid of unnecessary restrictions, the red tape that harms enterprise and protects no-one. It is about restoring an enterprise economy so we can pay our way in the world again. It is about creating the conditions to encourage self-employment, small firms, new start-ups, the enterprise that is the very bedrock of any successful economy'[16]

The elimination of bureaucratic constraints of the past was part of the original Thatcher Conservative government's (1979) proposals and has been continued by successive governments. This objective is still very much at the heart of the Coalition government, suggesting that little has changed as the same objectives are still being sought. The most recent White Paper on the Fire and Rescue Service (2003) and the proposals ranging from Egan (DETR 1998) through to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005) reflects enterprising initiatives and still reinforces the notion that the discourse has not changed significantly. Tracing the subsequent reform practices which have been in place post-Thatcher, draws our attention to the ways in which the enterprise discourse does not

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[15]http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2010/10/Lord_Young_Ending_Labours_Health_and_Safety_culture.aspx
[16]http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2010/10/Lord_Young_Ending_Labours_Health_and_Safety_culture.aspx

necessarily fit so neatly in practice, particularly in the construction industry, where the focus on the 'customer' has been neglected.

Ambiguity regarding the customer – who are they?

Whilst the enterprise discourse emphasises the notions of the customer (internal and external) within the public sector, including health and education, the same cannot be said when applied to the construction industry. The customer is a neglected feature within the passive fire protection industry which has focused more directly on the employer supply chain, that is the next employer in line whom an organization has contact with. It can be argued, that the reluctance by successive governments to implement mandatory regulation of the industry due to its reliance on self-regulation, has subsequently created the space for opportunism to occur in relation to the enterprise discourse.

The attempt to transfer the discourse of enterprise to the passive fire protection industry has highlighted a number of problems. The question that springs to mind is 'who is the customer in the passive fire protection industry?' Whilst the customer is at the forefront of enhancing quality, excellence and value in other commercial organizations, this is not so easily applied to this industry. Opinion appears divided as to the existence and definition of the 'sovereign consumer' (Heelas, 1991: 74): they are either contractors who have the ability to exercise choice in whom they purchase the required passive fire protection product from, or they are seen as the end-user of the building, such as the public. This draws attention to the notion of the 'internal customer' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 621) which will be discussed below.

The lack of clarity as to who the customer is becomes more evident as unlike other products, passive fire protection is not purchased for direct use. It is perceived instead as a small part of the final construction product (the building) in which it is installed and exists as part of a convoluted supply chain between the initial buyer and the final installer. In comparison, Womack and Jones (1996: 16 cited in Jørgensen and Emmitt, 2008: 386) were able to state clearly who the 'end customer' was and in doing so, also identified that 'value' in a product or service is:

> …only meaningful when expressed in terms of a specific product (a good or a service, and often both at once) which meets the [end] customer's needs at a specific price at a specific time

The definition of the customer in relation to lean production appears to indicate that there is only one customer to whom value and efficiency is directed towards (Ohno, 1988). This lack of sensitivity forms the basis of Jørgensen and Emmitt's (2008) paper where they argue that the practical application of lean production from manufacturing to construction results in it being 'lost in transition'. Ambiguity surrounds the definition of certain terms making it difficult to engage in focused debate or generalise findings (Jørgensen and Emmitt, 2008). That said, Green and May (2005 cited in Jørgensen and Emmitt, 2008) having undertaken empirical work in the construction industry and engaged with the authors of the Egan Report (DETR, 1998), suggest that three models represent the practical adoption of lean production in construction. The first model is referred to as 'waste elimination', which encompasses the notion that 'leanness' has been absorbed into the current 'industry recipe' (Green and May, 2005: 508). This suggests that it is included as an additional process to what has been in place previously. The second model is 'partnering' which was based on trying to foster strong

working partnerships and the development of networks between different industry groups. It was considered to minimise conflict, especially between contractors and sub-contractors, with the latter often utilising their bargaining power to drive down costs at the expense of insufficient and poor quality workmanship; this has been evident in the passive fire industry.

The evidence to support this is illustrated through a discussion I had with a site inspector, Ken, who provided me with an insight into the lack of appropriate passive fire installation in public buildings. This was demonstrated through numerous photos which had been taken on site and uploaded onto a laptop. Ken said that he took the photos because *'you can't argue with them, can you?'*. He used them as evidence in court to prove that the inspection and installation of products had been insufficient. The photos showed a multitude of problems which Ken had identified, ranging from the use of aluminium foil to cover up poor workmanship such as holes in cavity walls, through to missing hinges and screws in fire door panels which should act as a form of compartmentalisation to prevent fire spread. Ken stated that *'lots of people think that they can do this stuff, I mean lots of us can hang a door and put partitions up, it might be part of D.I.Y but not when it comes down to fire protection'*.

The third model representing leanness in construction, is that of 'structuring the context' which has a much stronger emphasis on how projects are delivered to clients (Green and May, 2005: 509). It was argued that in order for leanness to be implemented effectively, all parts of the construction process had to be integrated together simultaneously, but at the same time, focus also had to be placed on encouraging 'innovation' and 'competitiveness' (Green and May, 2005: 509). This model was deemed to be 'much more optimistic in terms of its vision

for the future' (Green and May, 2005: 509) Despite these attempts to conceptualise what is meant by 'lean construction', there remains an elusiveness about it, as it is subject to multiple interpretations from varying constituents as it is socially constructed. The commitment to continue with its implementation, does however stem from the legitimacy of it which originated from the Egan Report (1998) and its endorsement by a succession of government bodies (Green and May, 2005: 509).

The extent to which such a profoundly market-orientated doctrine is effective, and has been displayed in practice among organizations in the industry, is open to debate. The industry is demonstrating a counter-discourse to enterprise because as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, individuals can use the enterprising qualities to engage in non-conformance. This tension can be seen as a form of 'resistance through distance' (Collinson, 1994: 25) which is defined as 'the way in which subordinates try to escape or avoid the demands of authority and to 'distance' themselves, either physically and/or symbolically from the organization and its prevailing power structure' (ibid). In the passive fire industry, those who seek to escape from the pressure to conform to enterprising practices and separate themselves from self-regulatory practices are causing challenges for the industry. The construction sector becomes divided into those who seek to comply voluntarily and those who avoid such practices at all costs. The latter of these groups are also being opportunistic with their behaviour as they know that few consequences will result from them displaying inappropriate behaviour.

One means of improving this situation is the utilisation of the 'competent persons scheme' (CLG, 2009) and the introduction of 'CSCS' cards which stands for 'Construction Skills

Certification Scheme'. This is an initiative introduced by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)[17] in 1995 which is a body whose purpose is to encourage the adequate training of individuals working in the construction industry. CSCS cards were adopted as a means by which to increase quality and excellence; they were being increasingly demanded by employers and clients to demonstrate the competence of contractors, installers and clients (CSCS, 2009). This could be viewed as a coercive pressure to homogenise the industry, especially as an Institutional Theory perspective would see the CSCS cards as a '…pressure to conform to the cultural expectations of the larger society' (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 657).

The utilization of these CSCS cards was supported by the Labour Government in 2010 and administered through the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) and its document 'Common Minimum Standards for the Procurement of Built Environments in the Public Sector' (2006). It states that governmental clients:

> …are to include a contract clause requiring that all members of the supply teams who are workers or a regular visitor to a construction site are registered on the CSCS scheme (2006: 6).

Rather than viewing conformance to the scheme as a coercive force, an alternative understanding is that it involves the dispersal of the enterprise discourse and the exercise of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) as the attempt was to 'produce' individualized subjects who were made more accountable. By cultivating individuals as 'competent' with certification to prove it, the notion of self-regulation is enhanced as subjects are encouraged to work independently without the need for stringent external inspection (Foucault, 1977). The CSCS card reinforces the visible gaze within the industry, indicating that an individual/organization

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[17] http://www.citbcareersni.org.uk/?tabindex=1&tabid=936

can be assessed by others, such as potential 'customers' who would judge organizations on the basis of their employees' competence (Townley, 1998).

The schemes continue to be part of a government mandate to encourage employers to ensure that their workforce is competent and responsible in the tasks they undertake. This creates a pressure towards uniformity as all organizations would be likely to adopt similar practices in order to be viewed as credible and legitimate. Whilst institutionalists would suggest that this process *constrains* behaviour, pressuring organizations towards homogenization (Scott, 2008b; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; emphasis added), viewed from a Foucauldian lens, it indicates the improvements of skills and conduct which produce an 'enterprising' individual. The CSCS card scheme enrolls individuals who become self-disciplined and responsible as they invest in training and development and enhance their self-knowledge through informed choices (Fournier, 1998). It is productive of subjectivity, as it shapes individuals' identity in line with government objectives, directed towards enhancing responsibility and autonomy.

Throughout this chapter, I have sought to contribute to a critical understanding of coercive isomorphism by arguing that the power exercised through state driven proposals which are evident in government White Papers is not necessarily repressive but instead they exercise productive power. This involves individuals' internalisation and participation with the language of enterprise, whereby they regulate their own behaviour as they see the qualities and values as their own (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). In the process, this encourages homogenisation as individuals are measured, judged and ranked against standardised criteria which normalises conduct to ensure compliance. This discussion has also drawn attention to

how enterprise does not always result in conformance, but that its qualities can be used to challenge government objectives. This is discussed in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

The discussion throughout this chapter has focused on the infiltration of the enterprise discourse through government White Papers. It has demonstrated that there have been moves progressively from the initial implementation of the enterprise discourse during the Thatcher government and this has continued under Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and the more recent coalition government. Despite changes in government, there is no evidence to suggest that significantly different practices or policies have been implemented. Indeed, what is evident is the continual reinforcement of 'what has gone before' leading one to argue that the enterprise discourse has become deeply engrained and embedded with the rubric of successive government departments. Drawing on Foucault (1977) this chapter has sought to advance and enrich understanding of coercive isomorphism by arguing that despite institutional theorists viewing power as coercive and as originating from '…a powerful external actor who is able to enforce a new institutional design' (Beckert, 2010: 153), this does not fit with the legislation in the passive fire protection industry, which is voluntary. I have used Foucault (1977) to argue that power is not simply repressive, but also productive and this indicates how the enterprise discourse becomes a way of shaping subjectivity and normalising individuals against set criteria. This challenges the assumption that isomorphic pressures are only ever coercive and constraining.

Drawing upon White Papers from a range of different time periods is useful in articulating how progressive moves towards more recent government proposals has led to the reinforcement of one aspect of the enterprising discourse; that of the 'customer'. Yet in the construction industry the achievement of this goal is problematic. This stems directly from the notion of the 'customer', which has never really been defined within the passive fire industry because it has been deemed more valuable to focus on those who are considered to be next in the supply chain. Ironically, this has resulted in self-regulation being adopted as a means to challenge the enterprise discourse.

The following empirical chapter will discuss the specific role of trade associations, which from an Institutional Theory perspective, are bodies that exercise normative isomorphism. Using a Foucauldian lens, I argue that trade associations do not just transfer norms and values to their members in order that they enhance their legitimacy and become homogenised, but that normative isomorphism also exercises a form of disciplinary power. This encourages members to invoke varying degrees of compliance, ranging from complete adherence, to superficial practices. Within the context of deregulation, enterprise can therefore become a counter-productive strategy as trade association members can use the 'norm' (Foucault, 1977) of enterprise to engage in non-compliance and negligent practices.

<u>Normative Isomorphism: The role of trade associations in</u>

<u>normalising (un) desirable practice.</u>

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the role of trade associations and contextualise it within a deregulatory environment which dates back to the Conservative Thatcher government of the early 1980s. I intersperse interview extracts alongside vignettes from non-participant observations of annual general meetings and informal gatherings undertaken by trade associations. The account leads on from the previous empirical chapter which discussed and analysed government White Papers in order to explore the spread of the enterprise discourse.

In this chapter I analyse how trade associations institutionalise their members' behaviour, which from the standpoint of institutional theory, suggests a 'normative' isomorphic pressure (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Members are encouraged to display similar and desirable behavioural traits in order to remain legitimate, but also to be viewed as compliant by customers and other industry bodies. I draw upon a Foucauldian lens to critique and advance Institutional Theory by providing an alternative understanding of power which is to see normative isomorphism as exercising power in a productive way. Whilst on the one hand, the exercise of productive power may instigate conformance through complete adherence to the associations' norms and values, on the other hand, members may also engage in superficial practices. For example, by some members seeking to actively improve fire safety within the industry, whilst others appearing to only do so in order to gain legitimacy. In examining these issues, I draw attention to how trade associations may actively contribute to institutionalising

and normalising 'undesirable' practice which results from the associations' need to sustain membership, hence their reluctance to discipline non-compliant members.

Trade Associations: Their Role

The passive fire industry consists of a number of different levels which consist of 'umbrella' bodies such as trade federations and trade associations. The former represent the views of the industry to government, whilst trade associations consist predominantly of members who are manufacturers and sub-contractors and these join associations to acquire the necessary advice and guidance in an attempt to enhance their compliance (Trade Association Forum, 2006)[18]. A diagram to demonstrate the interrelationship between these levels was provided in the introductory chapter to this thesis (see p 4).

There is a direct interrelationship between the different bodies within the industry and when attending meetings, it is not uncommon for representatives from different sectors of the industry to be present. This reflects the 'network' approach to governing (Hay and Richards, 2000). Networking is related to the normative connections between different bodies which enable the transference of information and expertise (Hay and Richards, 2000; Greenaway et al, 2007). Trade associations operate as conduits, situated between the industry and the government. The transference of the enterprise discourse involves a multi-layered approach to governing, whereby regulation of the passive fire industry occurs through trade bodies and certification laboratories who act as 'translators' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 181). Government objectives are then transferred to individuals who embody such requirements as their own.

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[18] http://www.taforum.org/showarticle.pl?id=51;n=100

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DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that normative isomorphism stems primarily from professionalization. As discussed in Chapter 3 (p75), professionalization can involve two main sources; formal education and trade associations. Trade associations act as vehicles for the diffusion of professional behaviour (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and can exert a powerful homogenizing force as their members are encouraged to adopt similar behavioural traits. Through their attendance at trade association meetings, and by participating in workshops and reading trade magazines, individuals experience 'occupational socialization' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 72) which exerts a normative influence towards similarity. Hemphill (1992: 917) argued that trade associations are essential to members because they encourage '…product standardization, industry certification programs, price reporting…dissemination, and customer relations…".

In this chapter, I discuss how trade associations have been viewed by institutional theorists as bodies which '…play an important role in strengthening regulative institutions by providing the state with the expertise in…strengthening the enforcement mechanisms' (Kshetri and Dholakia, 2009: 226). Some researchers have even implied that trade associations represent an alternative to the coercive state (Vinogradova, 2006; Walzner, 1993). Trade associations are seen as exercising power to create similarity amongst their members which enhances their legitimacy, but this also reduces uncertainty as members are provided with the same information as their counterparts. This similarity also makes it easier for individuals to be hired by other organizations within the same industry because '…inter-hiring…encourages isomorphism since the job specification…displays remarkable similarity across organizations' (Wilson and McKiernan, 2011: 461). Individuals share the same attributes, making them

virtually indistinguishable. This, however, is only one perspective on the role of trade associations. I argue that using Foucault's (1977) understanding of power provides an alternative perspective because it enables us to view trade associations as not exercising power to only enhance legitimacy amongst its members, or to determine appropriate conduct, but as a means of reconstituting individuals' subjectivity as they are encouraged to be self-disciplined and enterprising subjects. Normative isomorphism does not exercise power over passive individuals who simply conform to trade associations' expectations, but instead, individuals can also exercise power to redefine and rearticulate the 'norm' for their own benefit.

From a Foucauldian position on power, the interrelationship between different bodies in the industry enables the exercise of disciplinary power which seeks to ensure the conformity and desirable conduct of individuals. Power is exercised productively to create subjects who self-regulate as they internalise the norms/values as their own. Although the government speaks of autonomy, it still secures compliance through encouraging self-discipline. Prior to engaging in this discussion, I will outline the geographical location of the trade associations within the industry as this will shed light on who is present at meetings and what is discussed. Whilst the main focus of this chapter will be on trade associations, acknowledgement will also be given to trade federations where appropriate.

Location of trade associations and their attendees

I had an initial insight into where the trade meetings were held when I was invited as an attendee to a trade federation gathering at a location in London. On arrival at the building, I was impressed at its sheer size and glass exterior which conveyed openness and transparency.

Entering through a set of revolving doors, I arrived in a large open plan space with a set of soft comfortable chairs located alongside the right hand side wall where televisions were displaying news clippings and financial information. There were also multiple plugs and easy to access Internet provision, which enabled individuals to check their emails or look through documents prior to a meeting. On the opposite wall was a long desk where five individuals sat who were responsible for registering attendees as well as giving them security badges and ensuring that the person they had come to see was notified of their arrival.

At the end of this desk were two men dressed in dark business suits, and holding onto a tray which reminded me of the containers you put personal belongings in prior to an airport security search. After meeting my fellow attendees, our bags and coats were searched and scanned before we entered through sliding doors into the main building. On entering the next section of the building, we all squeezed into a tightly packed lift and made our way to the third floor. We were met and guided to a large room by our host, Simon (pseudonym), a government regulator and policy writer, responsible for writing the building regulations in the passive fire industry. The room contained a long wooden desk with chairs and on the far side were large windows which overlooked the entrance foyer. This fascinated some people who walked over to the windows and peered down. Mark, CEO of a trade association, commented that this *'allows us a good vantage point, we can observe the late arrivals.'* (comment taken from fieldnotes).

The room was light and airy and located at the end of the table was a trolley of refreshments which individuals entering the room quickly made their way to. I recall that there was an

atmosphere of confusion and disorganization which characterised the meeting. Individuals struggled into the room with heavy briefcases and stacks of paper. Others wheeled small laptop bags behind them whilst carrying two other bags on their shoulders, before commenting how difficult it had been to negotiate the London Underground with so much baggage. It was a frantic process as decisions could not be made as to where to sit and people bumped into each other as they crossed the room and started to unpack their belongings, only to find there was not a plug for their laptop so they had to move again. I was brought in as an active participant, as I tried to indicate where the best location was to sit and ended up moving myself to allow individuals to take my place. Humour was also a significant feature, and Ian (representative of manufacturer) who was sitting next to me, climbed under the table in order to plug his laptop in. Others had not seen him do this so when he emerged it created a sea of raucous laughter. Someone sitting opposite him saw him emerging from under the table and said *'have you been down there all night?!'.* Others began to laugh and Ian remained kneeling on the floor, holding onto the table edge and peering over the top. He chuckled, shook his head in a jocular manner before replying in a feigned, well-spoken voice, '*oh yes, it's a good sleeping area down there, but I do feel bedraggled!'* As my research progressed and I began to attend more of the meetings held by the trade federation, these comedy moments were clearly common amongst the members who attended and often filled the time spent waiting for others to arrive.

When the meeting commenced, it was with a clear sense of formality, which may have been due to the presence of Simon, the regulator. This became apparent when Simon stood at the front of the room, raised his arms above his heads and waving them to get others' attention

said *'attention everyone, the regulator is speaking!'*. People looked at each other and some openly humoured him saying *'whoooo, here we go!'*. Aside from these instances of joking, the manner in which these meetings were conducted led some individuals to feel that they had to present a *'united front'* and that Simon's presence often *'kept a lid on any unrest'* (comments from fieldnotes).

Not all the meetings were in such grand a location. The physical location seemed to symbolise which group of attendees would be present and, in some instances, this was reflected through their manner and approach to the meeting. One meeting held by a trade association, took place in an Army Barracks. When I was informed of where I should meet other attendees, I was told to *'make sure you bring your passport as sometimes the officers will question you and want proof of your residence'*. As I made my way onto the Army ground I was confronted with red brick houses on the left hand side and a continuous flow of military vehicles. When I reached the first official barrier, an army guard who was manning the entrance approached me and asked where I was going. I replied that I was attending the trade association meeting and told him the name of the building. He smiled and said *'yes, of course, no problem at all'*. The barrier rose, and as I drove through, the building I was looking for was on the left hand side situated behind tall trees and hidden from the adjoining road.

On entering the building, a signing in book was located on a small desk, alongside magazines about 'army life'. Another attendee arrived shortly afterwards and we made our way to the meeting room. On the way, we walked through a long dingy corridor which had bright paintings on both walls that added colour to the dull and austere surroundings. At the end of

the corridor we climbed steep stairs to the second floor where we were welcomed by the secretary who directed us to the room where the meeting would take place. The room was dreary with insufficient lighting which meant that even though it was early on a summer morning, all of the lights were on. There was a shade missing from the ceiling light which Ian, who had also attended the trade federation meeting discussed earlier, noticed and later in the day commented: *'next time can you at least invest in a light shade, it makes me feel like the poor relation coming to these meetings!'* As Ian was an attendee at both the trade federation and the trade association meeting it was interesting to notice how he compared the aesthetic difference between locations. Hierarchical difference was also evident between the meetings. The London based federation meeting where Simon was present, appeared more important in status; there was a security presence and it was the building where government policy writers met to discuss issues relating to building regulations. The location was also where the concerns, issues and aspirations were raised from other meetings.

Power relations exercised within the meetings made individuals visible in terms of their status and presence and they could be ranked, assessed and classified accordingly (Foucault, 1977). The way in which the meetings were conducted reflected their importance. For example, there were no representatives from manufacturing organizations, and certainly no contractors at any of the trade federation meetings. This distinction was reinforced when respondents who did not attend, but found out that I had, commented by saying: *'my god, you get everywhere. You get access to more of these meetings than we do'.*

As more people arrived at the meeting held at the Army Barracks, what appeared to be a ritualistic process took place; this involved finding a seat, greeting colleagues, getting coffee, and then resuming their conversation. Many people had also experienced difficulties gaining entrance past the army check point and this provided a point of discussion as people entered the room and relayed and compared the problems they had just experienced. Some had been asked for ID, some had their cars searched, and Will, the Chief Executive of the trade association even had a mirror slid under his car, as well as having his briefcase searched. Will arrived after the meeting had already begun and looking flustered he stood in the doorway until others saw him. He then said *'hi guys, so sorry I'm late, just got caught by those buggers at the check point'.* People laughed and muttered a few words of empathy. He caught my eye, smiled and took a seat next to me. As the others continued with the meeting and Will unpacked his notepad and laptop, he leant across to me and whispered *'how are you, did you get in here alright?'.* I whispered back saying *'yes thanks, no problem at all, they just let me straight through'.* Will looked astonished, chuckled, and then whispered back, saying *'what a bloody cheek, I come here every day, they should know me by now!'*.

Being present at trade federation and trade association meetings was an invaluable means to acquire data on how different levels of the industry interacted with each other. The trade association meeting held at the Army Barracks, seemed to encourage individuals to openly express concerns and discrepancies regarding what they perceived were regulatory issues and complaints about the government. They did not appear to be so open in the presence of Simon, the regulator. Individuals instead were self-disciplined and seemed to refrain from raising any topics which could have been seen as creating tension. This was especially because they were

relying on Simon for policy updates and regulatory information. Creating conflict would not have helped their cause. The next section critically explores the exercise of productive power through normative isomorphism and interlinks this to the infiltration of the enterprise discourse.

A critical analysis of normative isomorphic pressure within trade associations

Almost all of the interviewees expressed that one of the main aims of trade associations is to provide a similar message to all its members, whether this is communicated in the form of committee meetings or the prerequisite of belonging to a certification scheme. John (retired technical officer of a trade association) who had spent a lot of time working with associations said that:

> …I think associations tend to bind people together on a common cause…and get everybody working to the same standard, to the same requirements wherever they are…

From an Institutional Theory perspective, John's quote indicates that members are experiencing the effects of normative isomorphism because being a member of a trade association encourages people '…to approach problems in much the same way and socialization reinforces these behaviours' (Wilson and McKiernan, 2011: 461). This encourages homogenisation because members increase their legitimacy and are then seen as credible which encourages others to trade with them. Viewed through the lens of Foucault (1977), however, normative isomorphism does not only enhance legitimacy for members, but it is a process whereby power is used to encourage self-discipline as individuals' conduct is measured against a criterion of desirable behaviour. Kieran (global consultant, manufacturer) argues that:

> …it [*membership*] legitimises the industry because everybody that is part of the industry gets a spin-off….and that has driven [*the associations*] to have a distinct and definite role to lead which means setting standards, setting best practice, encouraging members to *live up to the criteria*…

Kieran's mention of '*living up to the criteria*' suggests from an Institutional Theory perspective that members conform to the associations' norms and informal rules in an attempt to ensure they are meeting 'best practice' guidelines which enhances their legitimacy and image. The suggestion that associations *'have a distinct and definite role to lead'* implies that associations are powerful mechanisms to influence and determine members' behaviour. Wilson and McKiernan (2011: 461), point out that normative pressures from professional bodies '…impose standards, rules and values…[*which*]…reinforce normative expectations'. This implies a possessive notion of power which Institutional Theory has traditionally adopted. From a Foucauldian perspective, I argue that Kieran's quote can also be interpreting as suggesting that members participate in, and are reconstituted by disciplinary power which renders them governable as they are measured against a 'norm' (Foucault, 1977). This was supported by Mark (CEO of a trade association) when he explained why he thought members joined:

> I think they [*members*] regard it as a badge of legitimacy…you will find that a lot of members will put the badge, the logo on their paperwork, their product literature and vans and things. They are quite proud to be a member and I think it does show something if you are a member of a trade association, showing you are [*a*] respectable, credible organization.

Mark suggests that when members gain a 'badge' it demonstrates they are competent and able to espouse quality. DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 72) would argue that members are experiencing the normative control exercised by the association as the 'badge' is a powerful, visual mechanism which indicates '…a commonly recognized hierarchy of status…' and

suggests conformity to normative standards. Such practices maintain '…the status quo of what is considered to be…'good'…' (Wilson and McKiernan, 2011: 460). The 'badge', however, is not simply repressive, but also illustrates productive power (Foucault, 1977), because power is being exercised to create subjects who show that they are *'credible and legitimate'*. It confirms their identity and reinforces the knowledge they and others have of their capacities to be effective and efficient organizations. This also reinforces the links between power/knowledge because in order to govern a domain of reality, it must first be rendered knowable which then allows for the exercise of power (Foucault, 1977). By defining and knowing what constitutes a 'high quality' or 'compliant' organization, enables behaviour to be predictable and governable. Using Foucault (1977), I argue that the 'norm' exercises disciplinary power as individuals' conduct is measured against a standardised ideal. Whilst the productive exercise of power can rank and classify individuals, thus securing their identity and reducing uncertainty, it can also make people vulnerable. Attempts to define one's identity can '…weigh heavily on people as they strive to meet superhuman standards of human conduct…This is because the real or imagined demands of others invariably exceed the capacity of ordinary human beings to meet them' (Knights and Willmott, 1999: 72). Members are encouraged to establish a credible identity which becomes part of a socialisation process in which desirable behaviour attributes are transferred. In doing so, compliance encourages homogeneity through a disciplinary gaze as members become visible to their peers who assess, judge and rank themselves and others in the industry (Foucault, 1977).

Mark (CEO) stated that the role of trade associations is like a *'simultaneous translator'* because *'Government speaks in one language, business speaks in another and they don't quite understand each other…what I do is I sit in between and I explain what one side means to the*

other…the same way a simultaneous translator listens to a conversation and relays it back and forth'. The reference to a 'translator' resonates with what Rose and Miller (1992: 181) refer to as 'translation' techniques. This explains how policies, requirements and rationalities of government, are transferred to influence the conduct of behaviour operating at different locales. Rose (1999: 49) refers to this as 'government at a distance' and trade associations fulfil this role as they link the political aspirations and strategies of experts, with individuals' desire to be autonomous and self-regulating. Trade associations therefore reflect the ways in which the enterprise discourse is disseminated as they provide the mechanism for government rationalities to percolate down to their members. Translation is of course, imperfect in practice, as the links can be fragile and distorted (Rose, 1999). This is seen when individuals attempt to challenge the enterprise discourse in favour of arguing that more control should be exercised by the government, or they use the enterprising qualities to engage in non-conformance. This will be discussed throughout this chapter.

Dan (business development manager, manufacturer) recalled that his organization's presence in a trade association meeting involved *'introducing a correctness and a comfort factor that things are being done right'* (comments from fieldnotes). From a Foucauldian perspective, *'introducing a correctness'* suggests that individuals are being judged and monitored against desirable norms and values, which have been established in order to normalise and homogenise members (Foucault, 1977). Trade associations aim to *'define what compliance looked like'* (comment from fieldnotes) which leads to the propagation of a standard 'model' of how organizations should be run. Institutional theorists (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Love and Cebon, 2008; Scott, 2008b) would argue that management typically select templates created by others, as it provides them with a sense of security as they receive ready-made

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recipes to work from. Wedlin (2007: 24 cited in Wilson and McKiernan, 2011: 462) argued that 'templates' can provide strong isomorphic forces '…which helps define 'belongingness to a group' and which is specific about measures for competition and comparison'. An alternative understanding of the 'model' or 'template' that trade associations provide, is how it operates as a form of disciplinary power, and as Townley (1998: 198) states:

> The continuous process of measuring products and services against standards or leaders is a disciplinary process of examination, standardization and normalization. Establishing benchmarked performance criteria…permits ranking…a disciplinary matrix of taxinomia and mathesis which allows for governance at a distance.

Disciplinary power through benchmarking and professionalization became apparent at an annual general meeting which I was invited to attend. The meeting was held by a trade association at a prestigious location in London. The event was organised and funded by the trade association, and individuals from disparate sections of the industry met to discuss issues or concerns which affected them, such as changes to testing regimes or amendments to Building Regulations. It also enabled government representatives from various bodies such as Local Authority Building Control (LABC) to attend; this is a body that is responsible for improving standards and quality in construction as well as inspecting buildings.[19]

On entering the large open plan meeting room there were six rows of twenty chairs facing the front and two large overhead projector screens. Situated between the two screens was a podium where people had gathered. Some individuals were frantically going over their presentations prior to the meeting commencing and jokes were shared with one individual who was working as a managing director for one of the manufacturers. He had only arrived back from his holiday aboard the previous evening and was asked whether he had '*planned the*

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[19] http://www.labc.uk.com/buildingregs

presentation on the plane' and someone commented, *'you look so tired, rather you than me doing this talk'.*

After about half an hour, when other attendees had arrived, greeted their colleagues and taken a seat, the presentations began with the first one being conducted by a female chief executive. She walked confidently to the podium, put her papers down on the table behind and then checked her slideshow was working before proceeding to welcome the audience. Most of the attendees knew her from previous meetings but she clapped her hands and said '*Hello guys, I'm Anna, Chief Executive from Collective Edge. First things first, can you guys at the back see me over there?* She pointed to the people sitting at the back of the room who replied '*yes, we can thanks'.* Anna continued, '*I'm not going to stand behind this podium and direct my speech as if I'm Tony Blair, you wouldn't want that and I'm married to a military man so I always feel as if I have to stand to attention; I'm not going to do that today'.* She stood upright at this point and put her hand to her head and saluted. This was met with laughter and applause.

Anna began the presentation by dimming the room lights, so we were all sitting in semi-darkness before the first slide appeared on the screen; it seemed to capture the audience's attention by providing a focal point. The slide's background was black and the bottom right hand corner had a selected number of jobs based around construction such as *'technician, contractor, director, manager, site operative, builder'.* These had been set to periodically flick in and out of view and when they did they were the only words that filled the screen, the others were blanked out. This was accompanied by pictures of construction buildings which

also periodically flicked on and off the screen. Throughout, a male voice filled the room indicating what the slide showed and where the building was located. The combination of these techniques provided a potent imagery and captured people's attention, evident in the ways they were leaning forward in their seats and nodding. As the last picture of a construction site was shown, the voice said *'what do you see?'* This question lingered in the room as everyone sat in silence. The silence was broken when about thirty seconds later, Anna stated:

> this slide always makes me feel passionate about the job we all do, and it makes me feel good working in the construction industry; it should have the same effect on you too. We all know what improvements have to be made and all of you in this room have the qualities which will help this industry be a success. Remember, *it's about drive, initiative, responsibility and commitment.*

Individuals were encouraged to become enterprising subjects by being the best they could be, to become who they want to be, and to maximise their potential. This is reflected when Anna reminded the audience that *'it's about drive, initiative, responsibility and commitment'.* The importance attributed to the industry and the commitment that individuals should have to improve standards and quality was evoked in this presentation. Anna is a charismatic speaker and she conveyed a sense of unity and compassion which was directed towards achieving objectives and goals to improve fire safety. Anna acted as an 'expert' who governed at a distance (Rose, 1999). Her voice became privileged in that she portrayed herself as having the knowledge and standards of professionalism, including the provision of advice and support to motivate the audience to regulate themselves according to the enterprising, moral codes within the industry (Rose, 1999). Anna's rendition of what it meant to be a 'professional' made her appear authentic; professionalism became a disciplinary mechanism which routinizes

behaviour and controls appropriate standards of conduct (Fournier, 1998). This provides an alternative understanding to institutional theorists who have argued that '…normative pressures can be exerted by dominant actors… (Mizurchi and Fein, 1999: 663).

By understanding themselves as 'professionals', individuals in the passive fire industry are to become inscribed into a body of knowledge where they are autonomous subjects responsible for their own conduct (Miller and Rose, 1990). Professionalism was '…previously legitimated by the State with reference to professional organization and training, but now [*it is*] increasingly defined in market and managerialist terms' (Dent, 2006: 453).

Through Anna's exercise of disciplinary power, she encouraged people to endorse a value system and redefine their subjectivity by associating enterprising qualities with their own values and personal characteristics (Foucault, 1977). This process reinforces the importance of self-regulation to the individuals present as 'the properties of a disciplinary regime, it's norms and values…[merge]…with and becomes attributes of persons themselves' (Rose, 1989: 188). This could lead to the establishment of what Pidgeon and O'Leary (2000) define as a 'safety culture'. This is '…the set of assumptions, and their associated practices, which permit beliefs about dangers and safety to be constructed' (Pidgeon and O'Leary, 2000: 18). Members create and recreate behaviours which appear natural and unquestionable in relation to their perceived assumptions about danger, risk and safety.

Garud (2008: 1061) acknowledged the important role of conferences and large meeting gatherings as they can 'link participants together in a collective performance' and such events

establish a framework of what 'ought to be done' (McInerney, 2008 cited in Oliver and Montgomery, 2008: 1148). By collectively constructing an understanding about how the industry should change and what challenges existed, it meant that individuals were minimising the extent to which they talked at cross-purposes (Oliver and Montgomery, 2008: 1149). This is underpinned by power relations that ensure appropriate standards of performance, codes of practice and behaviour are internalised (Foucault, 1977). Individuals become self-governing, as they see no distinction between their own objectives and those of enterprise which are advocated by the government. This encourages individuals to use their initiative and responsibility, thereby also internalising norms with the aim of improving fire safety.

Outside of Anna's presentation, the exercise of disciplinary power to create homogenisation was also seen at a tangible level. This was particularly evident regarding copies of documentation, newsletters and policy updates. There are also a number of 'colour books', published by trade associations which define the standards relating to certain products that manufacturers produce and sell. The underlying purpose of these books was described by respondents as ensuring that organizations can '*be seen*' as legitimate and credible by others. As Will (CEO, trade association) explained, *'you will get people in that book who will take an extremely dim view of another manufacturer who is not in there…the reason for that document is one of uniformity and education and making certain that when people specify, they do it correctly'*. On the one hand, from an Institutional Theory perspective, Will is indicating that the trade association booklets are a means of exercising power to ensure conformity and legitimacy. Sanctions will be implemented if members divert from the expected requirements as others use the booklets to judge their behaviour, especially because 'The exchange of

information among professionals helps contribute to a commonly recognized hierarchy…trade associations provide other arenas in which center organizations are recognized and their personnel given substantive or ceremonial influence' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 72). This implies that power is a possession of certain individuals who can pressure others towards desirable conduct. On the other hand, using Foucault (1977), I argue that the 'colour booklets' demonstrate the exercise of productive power as they have the potential to 'produce' an 'enterprising self' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992) who understands the need for conformance to safety requirements and will be rewarded for complying (Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1998; 1999). Homogeneity is therefore possible as productive power encourages members to conform to the same criteria. The differences amongst members exist only in so far as they deviate from the 'norm'. But even with these documents in place, there is no guarantee that organizations will comply because organizations can appear compliant, but when practices are observed, the opposite is evident. This reinforces how power is not only repressive but can lead to resistance; as Foucault (1980: 142) states: 'there are no relations of power without resistances'.

By exercising disciplinary power and judging people against established standards, despite them being voluntary, creates a 'unitary scale of goodness' (Grey, 2010: 688). McCabe (2007: 245) notes that '…such judgements exert a normalizing influence upon us, for conformance holds out the promise of material rewards and existential security'. This is supported by Sauder and Espeland (2009: 73) who note, in line with a Foucauldian concept of power, that rankings are seductive as well as coercive and this creates '…a single norm for excellence…Ranking pressures become internalized and change behaviour by imposing a metric of comparison…'. This is evident when individuals began to challenge and question the

practices of others when they felt that standards and quality needed improving. Ben (technical director, trade association) highlighted this when he said *'...if they are a member of a trade association then you know the [other] trade association members will also patrol the streets and they can make an impact too on whether the company is operating in a good way or not'.* Ashworth et al (2005: 4) assert from an Institutional Theory perspective that such practices '…capture the ways in which organizations are expected to conform to standards of professionalism and to adopt systems and techniques considered to be legitimate by relevant professional groupings'.

An alternative way to analyse this is to argue that individuals not only conform because they want to appear legitimate, but in doing so, they also seek to gain peer acceptance and through the exercise of disciplinary power, they can be reminded of what is laudable and unacceptable behaviour (McKinlay and Taylor, 1998). This is particularly important when formal mandatory regulation is absent. Disciplinary power is exercised to define standards that individuals classify themselves and others against, thus enhancing self-discipline. The spread of the enterprise discourse also implies that one does not need external enforcement, as individuals become self-regulating.

In addition to trade associations, certification laboratories are also involved in exercising disciplinary power, as they advertise and provide names of organizations via the trade association that they know are non-compliant or who have continuously submitted faulty products to test. By bringing to light those members who are non-compliant, it enables others to observe them. Individuals are made visible and governable as trade associations encourage a form of 'confession' (Townley, 1998: 200), as members are expected to disclose their

practices which results in individuals highlighting their faults in the presence of others. 'Confession' is not always effective however, especially as the testing laboratory does not always publicise non-compliant organizations. This irritated members of a meeting in which I was present. Daniel (consultant) was appalled when he realised that the testing laboratory only inspected a small number of companies and products:

> the third party accreditation scheme [*set up by the testing laboratory*] means that companies are able to sign up to it and then work is subject to inspection…so, you know, you think 'brilliant' but if they're lucky they inspect one in twenty projects and when they do inspect, they're only there a few hours and ladders can be put up by people to prevent inspectors from going to certain places and so it's completely useless

Following on from Daniel, Richard (health and safety officer) argued that without being able to know who was non-compliant, and with minimal inspection being undertaken, it meant that the system was *'...a tick-box to a prequel, it doesn't get done, people tick the box but it doesn't mean anything'*. Others supported this by commenting that *'It's all about life safety and people should open up and make others aware'*. At the same time, concerns were being expressed that by highlighting non-compliance within the industry, there was a risk that companies would damage their own reputation. As Grabsoky (1995: 349) argued 'Merely by dramatizing certain aspects of risk, or of the possible consequences of non-compliance, such messages can advertise the behaviour in question, bringing it to the attention of those who would otherwise be oblivious…'.

The challenge of identifying faults in the industry was reiterated in meetings where individuals drew attention to the need for caution when reporting non-compliance. For example, in an informal conversation with Nigel (contractor), it was stated that *'you have to be careful with*

the message regarding false claims and the incorrect installation of passive fire protection; there is a tendency for it to come and bite you on your bum'. Having bad publicity disseminated about the industry may encourage organizations to avoid using passive fire protection, and in turn risk the level of fire related incidents. For instance, if reports are published which demonstrate that buildings containing passive fire products have been destroyed, and lives have been lost, then faith in the desirability of the product will decline and will be less likely to be used.

'If you don't agree then I want to know why'

Throughout the time I spent undertaking my research, there were trade association meetings where it appeared that members were powerless to disagree with the discussions and decisions which had been made, as they would be perceived as being a 'dissenting' member. Disciplinary power exercised through normative isomorphism was evident when discussions based on the agenda became a means by which to exclusively prevent others from contributing. Individuals were monitored and their actions and speech were regulated against a norm (Foucault, 1977). In technically specific and complex meetings, some individuals were unable to fully contribute, either due to their lack of knowledge or because of how the chairman of the trade association framed his questions. Ben, a technical director and chairman of the trade association, was talking about a recent amendment to a document and stated in a stern manner *'if there isn't agreement from all of you in this room, then I want to know why'.* The response from the members was to actively agree, muttering statements such as *'yes, that's fine'; 'I agree'; 'no problem'.* Ben then said in a more pleasant tone, *'good, at least we've got that sorted'.* It could be argued that Ben was exercising what Foucault (1988: 18)

called 'technologies of power', which are exercised in an attempt to dominate, prevent and determine behaviour. Alternatively, 'technologies of the self' (ibid: 18) could be used to explain the situation as power relations infiltrate the meeting by virtue of individuals having acquired and internalised desirable ways of behaving, thus suggesting it is productive and relational. Individuals such as Ben became 'experts of conduct' (Rose, 1999: 76) as they defined the 'norm' (Foucault, 1977) of acceptable behaviour. Ben's subjectivity has been shaped by his participation in power relations which has stemmed from his engagement with the enterprise discourse.

Being a member of a trade association may involve '…a process within which they [members] willingly submit themselves to…authority rather than become active participants…' (Dent, 2006: 458). This can be seen in the above meeting where it is unlikely that anybody would have felt comfortable disagreeing with the assertion that the document was incorrect, or that changes should have been made. It can be said that:

> Such omnipresent power brings all thoughts, beliefs, actions, morals and desires of individuals towards a norm that is acceptable. People who diverge from the norm face social pressure to conform, standardise and normalise (Shanker et al, 2006: 1017).

Rather than anybody challenging Ben and raising their concerns, in this instance, they became 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1977: 135). Individuals were responsive to the demands of others which minimised deviant behaviour. These disciplinary sanctions were 'corrective' (Foucault, 1977: 179) in that they reinforced conformity so that if anybody did seek to challenge others' decisions, they would have been marginalised. This indicates that normative isomorphism does not result in homogenisation solely due to '…the definition and promulgation of normative rules about organizational and professional behaviour' (DiMaggio and Powell,

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1991: 71), but the similarity stems from the exercise of disciplinary power as individuals are governed through regimes of normality and self-discipline. Normalising practices do not however guarantee that neutral, value-free negotiations and transactions will take place because they can result in the appearance of "…a policy process that is opaque and lacking in accountability" (Greenaway et al, 2007: 720). This was evident in another meeting, where a member questioned the integrity of a decision that had just been made about the legislative demands which a policy was going to have on their business. The individual from the affected organization said *'I know the point you're making but this is going to affect us…',* they were then interrupted by another member who said *'we need to move on, and that point is not really relevant'.* The individual who had just been prevented from contributing looked dismayed, but simply said *'I'll just shut up then'.*.

The individual who said *'we need to move on'* and indicated that the point was *'not really relevant'* was exercising power which prevented any controversial comments being raised. This resonates with Lukes (1974; 2005) second dimension of power which involves the unobservable behaviour used to keep issues off the agenda. This reinforces the effects of normalisation as it functions as part of the 'self-steering' mechanisms of individuals (Miller and Rose, 1990: 18) in order to prevent others from participating. Although these practices suggest a repressive and dominating regime of power, it does not discount the ability for the so-called 'powerless' to also have the capacity to exercise power. The reason why this may not occur can be attributed to individuals having taken for granted the situation they face which renders them unlikely to question it (Jacques, 1996).

Defining individuals as dissenters not only makes them feel uncomfortable, but also indicates to others that they should avoid replicating similar behaviour. What had been defined as 'inappropriate' was therefore never allowed to reach the public domain. In Knights and McCabe's (1999: 218) paper, a similar process occurred during the implementation of a 'Quality Partnership' which was a problem-solving forum used to address divisional and functional organizational problems. This avoided any discussion based on power or structural issues, and through the normalising process of problem solving, members were '…diverted to discussing less threatening problems such as communication' (Knights and McCabe, 1999: 218).

Similarly, in this research, the exercise of disciplinary power led some individuals to agree to issues which they were not wholeheartedly supportive of. This not only occurred in trade association meetings but also in trade federation meetings. Ironically, the individuals who prevented their own members from contributing, began to complain when they received the same treatment by others. After one trade federation meeting, I was approached by Will (CEO of trade association) who expressed his annoyance at not being able to put his point of view across. He said that when he recalls the decisions that have been made by the federation to his own trade association members, they often say to him, *'why did you agree to that, are you mad?'*. The reply he gives them is: *'you have to agree sometimes, whether you like it or not, because if you don't agree then nothing goes forward'* (informal chat with Will). The pressure to agree to something which had already been decided upon implies that homogenisation is the result of an exercise of power as individuals feel obliged to fulfil requirements which have already been decided on as the status quo. Viewed from an Institutional Theory perspective,

this suggests that members exercise power that is exercised unilaterally due to the '…
dissemination of ideas through social networks, in which members…directly influence those
of another' (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 679). The lack of transparency and openness within
some trade association meetings, was raised briefly in a discussion with Glen (senior manager,
certification laboratory), who was not entirely supportive of the role of trade associations:

> …a lot of small companies will leave trade associations…they'll say "Well I'm paying
> my money but I'm not actually getting very much out of it" and when I go and ask them
> to do something, they ask me to shut up type of thing (chuckles) so urrm, it tends to be
> an *elite* that dominates…

The presence of an 'elite' was exemplified in many of the meetings and they appeared to
comprise of a group of individuals who had been long-standing members and self selected into
the group. The 'elite' would close off avenues of negotiation which other individuals may
have taken. I can recall that in one meeting, a representative of a manufacturer was clearly
refusing to contribute to the discussions, but was making copious notes, whilst leaning back in
his chair and looking out of the window. He rapidly left the meeting when it was completed
without engaging further with any other members. The following morning we all received an
antagonistic email which the individual had asked his boss to send, challenging the integrity of
the minutes and the comments that had been raised. This demonstrates the extent to which
members can utilise the meetings to their own advantage, creating a situation which both
exercises and produces power, whilst creating space for resistance (Foucault, 1982). This
instance was described in an informal discussion with one trade association member who said:
*'the lack of transparency is seen when people turn up, don't say anything, then go away and
say 'so and so said that, and so and so said this'* (comment from fieldnotes). Here, the elitist
nature of the trade association creates a mechanism by which even in the absence of all

members, there is still the opportunity for others to pass on information which will be used to shape the policy process. Despite this, those in positions of authority are only rendered 'powerful' whilst in the context of a social relationship; this reinforces Foucault's (1977) notion of relational power.

Trade Associations and the enterprise discourse

Trade associations are actively involved in the spread of the enterprise discourse and the associated exercise of disciplinary power through encouraging self-regulation amongst their members. Self-regulation appears to be '*entirely normal and proper'* (Khan et al, 2007: 1071; emphasis added) especially as it is the main objective exercised by successive governments in the UK who have promoted it as an effective strategy to improve quality, efficiency and productivity. When applied to the passive fire industry, enterprise is being challenged. Compliant individuals who self-regulate are constantly searching for more control and attempt to transfer their advice and support in order to improve standards within the industry, whilst their non-compliant counterparts use enterprise initiatives (choice, autonomy) to avoid conformity. This was discussed by Daniel (consultant):

> …you have to work on…employing people who are principled, you know, who don't cheat each other, work honourably with each other and then you can do things on trust. You can work on the assumption that your colleagues are…intelligent, *self-disciplined* and know what they're doing. But the challenge we've got in the fire industry is that there is no trust because it's consequently been blown apart by a large minority who are scandalous

Daniel's reference to '*self-disciplined'* individuals illustrates productive power (Foucault, 1977) as the enterprise discourse seeks to transform individuals into subjects who are committed and motivated to improve performance. The challenge is that governing through

enterprise lacks accountability and enforcement; a significant concern, particularly in an industry that aims to increase life safety and building stability. Rivera and de Leon (2004) studied a 'Sustainable Slopes Program', a voluntary initiative which was meant to enhance the performance ratings of ski areas. Critics of the scheme claimed it was involved in 'green-washing' because of its lack of specific environmental performance standards or third party oversight (Rivera and de Leon, 2004: 419). Trade associations hid inappropriate practices and provided an industry-wide reputation of conformance, whilst preventing scrutiny from environmentalists. Rivera and de Leon, (2004) argue that if mandatory legislation was more effectively implemented alongside the voluntary mechanism, then 'free-riding' behaviour and non-compliance would be minimised.

'Free-riding' is evident in the passive fire industry because not all manufacturers and contractors are members of trade associations. Ben (technical director, trade association) confirmed this by saying *'...third party certification is a condition of membership but we probably only represent about twenty five percent of installers…so there's seventy five percent who are completely unregulated and doing their own thing, and if you like responsible for on-going chaos'.* As Hemphill (1992: 918) argued '…trade associations appear to hold out little promise of being transformed into vehicles for self-regulation. The fear is too entrenched that industry self-regulation, however plausible its initial rationale, will eventually degenerate into industry protectionism'. Gulbrandsen (2008: 577) supports this by saying "…when actors cannot or will not implement radical on-the-ground changes…to meet ideas and expectations…decisions can be taken, systems invented, and routines developed to justify or conceal behaviour rather than changing behaviour".

The search for mandatory control

Despite the exercise of disciplinary power and the attempt to encourage individuals to self-regulate, respondents expressed to me their commitment to implementing a model in the industry which is based on the CORGI model (Council of Registered Gas Installers)[20]. CORGI was established as a result of a gas explosion in 1968 in Ronan Point, a twenty two storey apartment block in Canning Town, London (CORGI, 2009). The explosion was attributed to unsafe gas works in one apartment and this tragedy led to a new commitment to prevent similar accidents, and as a result, CORGI was established in 1970. In a similar way to the voluntary certification and compliance processes within the passive fire protection industry, registration with CORGI was initially voluntary. Gas installers were encouraged to gain support and advice on standards and the most effective means by which to comply with legislation, but this was not a mandatory requirement (CORGI, 2009). The turning point was in 1991 when the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) changed legislation in the United Kingdom which meant that individuals working in gas work were required by law to be a member of the scheme. The mandatory adoption of certificated gas installers is the model which the research respondents with whom I engaged, used as a comparison with their need to self-regulate. As Derek (chairman, trade federation) stated in an email to me:

> Corgi gas installation is the best example of what we would like to see but all we have is a recommendation, not a requirement….

This was reinforced by Kevin, a senior manager at a certification laboratory who explained:

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[20] http://www.trustcorgi.com/AboutCorgi/CORGIHistory/Pages/Home.aspx

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> …we thought installer schemes were what we needed and the model we put forward was around the CORGI scheme, you've probably heard of the CORGI scheme, the gas, the Council of Registered Gas Installers. You have to use a CORGI installer and that is legally binding, unlike our certification schemes which are voluntary…

Both of these quotes demonstrate how individuals expressed their subjectivity and identity as compliant members of the industry. By using examples which were present elsewhere, they try and justify that it is possible for unsafe practices (gas fitting, fires) to be regulated more stringently. In the passive fire industry this was not the case, which meant that individuals continued to question why they were making so much effort to instigate improvements. This was discussed by Denise (trade association consultant) who worked progressively to tackle the lack of understanding and knowledge experienced by small and medium manufacturers. She was discouraged that organizations who aimed to improve their standards and ensure they were compliant, were basically '*wasting their money*'. Denise stated in a forceful but despondent tone that:

> …the costs would be justifiable and far more acceptable if the enforcement was there which meant you got a payback, a benefit for your investment. But because the enforcement isn't there because of this free choice which is offered in an uneducated market which is driven by the lowest tender…all the investment you do for compliance with standards and regulations is basically pissing in the wind because you don't get a market advantage…

Denise exercises self-discipline around the notion of conformity. This demonstrates the productive effects of power as one interpretation could be that her participation in trade associations has encouraged her to internalise enterprising qualities and provided her with the knowledge of what is deemed 'right'. Denise is defined by others as *'compliant and responsible'*. These attributes could be the result of her internalising norms and values which govern her conduct, or alternatively, she may be someone who has always acted appropriately.

Nevertheless, she is still being normalised against desirable criteria (Foucault, 1977). Her exposure to the normative and professional norms originating out of her membership of trade associations, contribute to her being an enterprising, self-regulating individual who 'calculates *about* itself, and that works *upon* itself in order to better itself' (Rose, 1998: 154; emphasis in original). Denise has imbibed norms and values that simultaneously resonate with the political, enterprising aspirations of the government. This is reinforced through a discussion I had with another trade association member, Anita (consultant) who says:

> …I'm not at the coalface these days but I do see myself, if you like, as the honest broker. I don't know, I hesitate to say above it, but I tell it how it is whether people like the information I'm giving them or not. I will also tell them the best ways of achieving what they want to achieve; I do moan at Government from time to time…and I represent back to industry my best understanding of what the regulations and standards are…so I interpret to my industry what they should be doing…

Whilst Anita is disciplining others through transferring acceptable standards and codes of behaviour, she is also disciplining herself. Her subjectivity is defined in the way she sees herself: *'I'm an irritant. You're someone who is telling a company that is set in going in a certain direction what it has to do…you're an absolute irritant'.* By *'moaning at government',* Anita can express her frustration at the lack of mandatory intervention, but at the same time, it makes her duty bound to use the information acquired to monitor the behaviour of her counterparts and encourage the internalisation of enterprising qualities. McCabe (2000) recognised that individuals who enrol others to comply with procedural and bureaucratic principles are also identifying with it themselves. Managers have to convince themselves of the discursive attributes associated with enterprise, and in doing so, they secure their sense of self and gain meaning from it (McCabe, 2000). As Foucault (1980: 119) stated

'power…traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourses'.

Becoming 'too enterprising': the (un)intended consequences of self-regulation

Without statutory legislation in place, there is the risk of opportunistic behaviour occurring as a result of how trade associations transfer information, monitor practices or negotiate action (King and Lenox, 2000: 703). Despite the exercise of disciplinary power, individuals can still fail to internalise the enterprise qualities, or use them to their own advantage. Certainly for Foucault (1979: 95-6), "Resistance is integral to power. The existence of power relationships depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance which are present everywhere in the power network". A number of respondents indicated that trade associations and certification laboratories refused to discipline their members and this contributes to our understanding of the mutually constitutive relationship of power/resistance. As Anita (consultant) stated:

> …the worst that's going to happen to you is you might get kicked out of one of these schemes…but they [*trade association/certification laboratory*] want to make money and therefore they're not going to kick people out without giving them every chance to continue to pay money. Like the trade association is only going to discipline members so far, they're going to do everything they can to keep them in the association because they need their money...

Having reflected on this discussion with Anita, and some of her counterparts, it became apparent that trade associations can contribute to reinforcing non-compliance by leaving room for discretion. For example, trade associations enable their members to engage in practices such as submitting faulty products to a testing laboratory, or implying that they have standards in place which do not exist. The qualities of enterprise, such as choice, responsibility and autonomy were being used to fulfil the requirements of an enterprising self, but at the same

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time, individuals were projecting them in ways that were at odds with the intentions of government. 'Enterprise' was exercised in various ways '…some of which openly challenge the narrow definition of enterprise put forward by government…' (Bridgman, 2007: 487). Denise (consultant) reinforced this by implying that the government's aim of creating a standard level of conformance was not always fulfilled by those in the industry. She stated the following (said sarcastically)

> If you're a company selling high value quality products it will be adopted into your ethos because your ethos is susceptible to adopting these ideas. If you're lower down the pecking order, you're the stack it high, sell it cheap…you will adopt the glitz of it in so far as it serves your purpose, but the ethos won't be there. *Superficially it looks like there is some similarity* going on with all the compliance but once you dig a bit deeper, then you start to see the differences. It looks like yes ninety nine percent of all door closures sold in the UK are CE[21] marked, isn't that wonderful. That means, does it, that ninety nine percent of them are all at the same level, erm, no! Some of those CE marks are not worth the paper they're written on.

Denise's reference to *'it looks like there is this similarity'* reinforces the perceived homogeneity stemming from the exercise of normative isomorphism which Wilson and McKiernan (2011: 458) explain as occurring because '…organizations and their managers are both influenced and constrained by normative pressures…such pressures are considered 'legitimate' by senior managers [*and*] then organizational action becomes aligned with its institutional environment' (ibid). DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 73) would argue that the similarity which Denise is making reference to could potentially '…make it easier for organizations to transact with other organizations, to attract career-minded staff, to be acknowledged as legitimate and reputable…'. The implication is that power is exercised unilaterally and there is no challenge to the norms of the association because members will

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[21] CE marking is a manufacturer's declaration on a product which indicates that the product complies with the requirements of the European health, safety and environmental protection legislation. It is required in order that goods can be moved freely within the EU.

comply in order to conform and be similar with their counterparts   An alternative interpretation from Foucault (1977) is that, normative isomorphism can also exercise relational power because, as Denise implies, individual members can use the enterprise discourse in alternative ways to those originally intended, demonstrating that they are not merely responsive to it, but actively involved in exercising power.   As will be discussed below, individuals drew on the discourse of 'denial' and used it to promote their 'preferred self' (Cutcher, 2009: 283).

Although I am not suggesting that trade associations were encouraging non-compliance intentionally, their lack of intervention was questioned by members. It was raised in a conversation I had with Ken (site inspector) when I questioned him about trade associations. He looked dubious, smiled and then said *'to be perfectly honest I don't believe they are effective'*. He also said that even if their documents are *'word perfect'* this did not mean that their members' practices reflected it. Ken referred to trade association members as *'badge collectors'*. Members were simply in the scheme to acquire a legitimate logo which would encourage others to trade with them. This suggests that the enterprise quality of 'choice' is being used by organizations to *'choose'* not to comply and therefore they take advantage of the self-regulatory scheme.

Ken stated that *'until regulations are mandatory or changed, we have to treat people as stupid'* which implies that it is only through mandatory regulation that compliance and standards would improve. The commitment to self-regulation, and the implication that replacing command and control with enterprise is beneficial, becomes somewhat questionable.

We can see that in the passive fire industry, enterprise qualities alone will not ensure regulatory compliance because they can be resisted through non-compliance. Conformance is not secured through 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988: 18), which involve individuals monitoring and regulating their own conduct, as they need to be used in conjunction with 'technologies of power' which '…submit them [*individuals*] to certain ends or domination, an objectivising of the subject…' (Foucault, 1988: 18).

In the passive fire industry a reliance on 'technologies of the self' means a division in the industry is created between those who participate with a discourse of 'morality' compared to their counterparts who the moralists define as being 'in denial'. The former of these would be representative of those members who were actively attempting to improve not only their own practices, but also that of others; an example of this would be 'Aqua-Tilt' (see chapter 7). In comparison, the discourse of 'denial' reflects organizations that have opted out or, it could be argued, have adopted the enterprise discourse as a 'resource' in order to exercise their power in opposition to government objectives. Rather than applying enterprise qualities towards ensuring conformance, individuals used them for their own interests which included 'choosing' to save money by refusing to submit products for testing. The use of enterprise for one's own benefit resonates with Rosenthal's (2004: 612; emphasis in original) findings that bureaucratic, normative and cultural techniques designed by management were adopted by front-line workers to exercise their own control and '…in turn be deployed…to control *management* behaviour'.

The combination of the morality and denial discourses resonate with Vaara et al's (2006) work who studied the discursive strategies used in the media coverage of a pulp and paper sector merger. The five discourses identified were: (1) normalization (2) authorization, (3) rationalization, (4) moralization and (5) narrativization. For instance, moralization resonates with the 'moral' discourse identified in the passive fire industry as companies who complied with the enterprising qualities were deemed legitimate and undertaking practices which were defined as 'right'. Individuals may argue that their compliance stems from a 'humanistic moralization' which includes a 'moral duty' (Vaara et al, 2006: 801) to ensure passive fire protection is installed correctly as it saves lives and improves building safety. A 'rationalization' discourse might usefully fit in with those embracing a discourse of 'denial' who argue that the financial output for conformance to voluntary regulations was not viable.

These competing discourses were highlighted when I spoke to Derek (chairman, trade federation). I asked him why organizations decide to become members of trade associations and their reasons for complying. This intended to shed light on what the underlying reasons were for the different organizational responses within the industry. Derek replied in a harsh manner by saying *'why can't they do it because they know its right? I mean not to put too much of a finer point on it but that's why I do it…because it's right'.* In the face of voluntary compliance and uncertainty, Derek secures his sense of self through comparing it with others who do not comply. Derek's subjectivity is influenced by the engagement he has with the 'generalized other' or 'with a society' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 153) and this influences his outlook and world view. He is not only reflecting the exercise of productive power as his subjectivity has been forged through the power relations he has experienced, but he also

begins questioning the behaviour of others. This is in a similar stance to Daniel (consultant) who justified his approach:

> …it's all coming from a point of correctness and the thing is it's the right thing to do because its life and limb and duty of care and all the rest of it. You can sway people that way…if you say what you know to be right from a point of principle then you cannot defeat a principle…people might attack it for a while and try and cheat but they know they're wrong, they know in here [*touching his heart*] they're wrong and therefore you can always defeat them ultimately if you're willing to do what needs to be done.

Daniel's approach is influenced by his aim to improve industry standards through a drive to raise quality and performance based on protecting '*life and limb'.* He was a bubbly, enthusiastic and humorous individual, but came across as despondent and frustrated regarding the state of the industry. Daniel's subjectivity is reconstituted using a 'principled' approach which saturates his entire thinking. His notion of '*you cannot defeat a principle'* suggests that there are no grounds from which to challenge his approach and hence others should replicate it. Daniel and Derek's response could be seen as evidence of a '…common exposure to a set of socially constructed…similar worldviews' (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 679) which indicates the existence of normative isomorphic pressure. Taking a more critical perspective, it can also be argued that from a Foucauldian view, subjectivity is shaped by their participation with the power relations and the internalisation of enterprising qualities. Both individuals appear to be more than just an 'enterprising self' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992) because they are driven by a moral discourse which is linked to the commitment they have to improve fire safety and minimise the loss of life. This distinguishes them from the 'cowboys', who would view government intervention as an unnecessary imposition as it prevents them from engaging in non-compliance. As Daniel confirmed:

> …some of these other guys, quite big companies, they know what they're doing and so it's a form of conscious corporate crime in a way because what they're doing is putting

up a structure which is not safe…and they know they're doing it. They like to switch off from the thought that if that building ever went up, people would die in it…[*they would say*] 'yeah we've put something up and it'll be ok', you know, it's scandalous really, it amounts to a form of felony

He continued:

…they currently survive on the basis that they give themselves an unfair advantage by cheating, therefore *[through legislation]* you're removing the advantages that they've got which *differentiates them* and enables them to win contracts…I believe they would prefer the status quo because they can criminally make money and survive by working improperly

From Daniel's quote we can argue that in an enterprise environment, the norm becomes a mechanism from which to judge and rank individuals' conduct and conformance (Foucault, 1977). In the situation of non-conformance it also 'differentiates' those who do not comply. Interestingly, as Daniel indicates, when organizations are differentiated in the passive fire industry, this does not result in them facing social pressure or exercising self-discipline to move closer to the norm. Instead, in Daniel's opinion, they use the norm to engage in non-conformance. Differentiating themselves, rather than working collectively with the rest of the industry, provides them with an advantage as they challenge the norm of enterprise. This contributes to our understanding of how normative isomorphic pressure does not just lead to the legitimacy of trade association members, through the exercise of repressive power '…which thereby contribute[s] to more homogeneous perspectives on regulative problems and appropriate solutions for them' (Beckert, 2010: 156), but involves '…codes of disciplinary individuality' (Foucault, 1977: 189) as individuals are measured and standardised against set criteria. In comparison, Cutcher (2009) found that front-line service workers in credit unions resisted the discourse of enterprise which '…privileges ideas of competitiveness and individuality over the traditional credit union values of cooperativeness and mutuality' (ibid:

278). Resistance drew on a 'discourse of mutuality' (ibid: 283) which was associated with solidarity, friendship and a sense of community. Enterprise sought to separate and distinguish individuals which encouraged them to resist by drawing on each other for support. In the passive fire industry, those who capitalised on enterprise did the opposite – they wanted to operate independently in order to reap the benefits of non-compliance and in turn redefine enterprise to gain an advantage (Rosenthal, 2004).

The lack of conformance shown by some organizations suggests that unless legislation is introduced, they are unlikely to adopt any moral or ethical sentiments as they are driven by self-interest. Through non-compliance, individuals are still drawing on enterprise qualities, including choice and autonomy. We can see that although discourse 'transmits and produces power; it reinforces it' (Foucault, 1979: 101); this is not just in a unidirectional way, because it 'also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it' (Foucault, 1979: 101). The disparate discourses both draw on the same discursive framework of enterprise which reinforces the argument that power is not held as a possession by the government, but instead, it can be exercised amongst individuals who choose to draw on qualities and use them to their own advantage, regardless of what the original intended objectives were. As McCabe (2007: 255) notes, '…when power individualises and separates people from one another…In the right conditions, it can also result in '…bolstering employees' resolve to resist…'.

All of these factors contribute to trade association members acting in ways which challenge the self-regulatory enterprising objectives. An example of this is during a conversation I had

with Jim (project development manager, manufacturer). He appeared to be one of the compliant members of the trade association, referring to himself as being *'whiter than white'*. He informed me that his compliance record was *'transparent',* particularly as Jim believed that the product his organization was manufacturing was difficult to install incorrectly. I acquired a different perspective when I agreed to go on a guided factory tour, which I thought would reveal first hand whether what he said in terms of being compliant was demonstrated in practice.

As I entered the factory floor my attention was drawn to notices about the requirement to wear a florescent jacket, hard hat and steel capped boots. When I asked Jim about this he did not seem too concerned but eventually went to find me a florescent jacket. Regarding the other equipment he just looked at me, smirked and said *'I know we should really do it, but sod that, there's no inspectors here today'.* This comment reflected a 'mock bureaucracy' (Gouldner, 1954) as informal norms within the organization were overriding external compliance regimes. As long as individuals knew they would not get caught they preferred to comply symbolically as this would minimise both effort and cost. They demonstrated that they had the intention, but at the same time avoided actively complying. This resonates with Meyer and Rowan (1977) who argued that organizational practices can appear to be rational and in conformance with formal structures, but the result may actually be that institutionalised techniques and policies are adopted ceremonially. A process of symbolic conformance occurs whereby the actual practice is decoupled from formal procedures, thereby acting as a bridging mechanism between the informal and formal systems (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

A Foucauldian analysis would suggest that such practices discussed above indicate that even though trade associations exercise disciplinary and normalising power, their members can also exercise power. For instance, members may display the association's logo and mission statement (which is a symbolic illustration of being a conforming organization and being normalised) whilst in practice they avoid fulfilling the requirements which complement such visual artefacts. Jim was an example of how a member of a trade association who experienced the disciplinary power relations to conform was still not displaying the appropriate practices. Jim knew what was expected of him, but he preferred to exercise power to circumvent requirements.

Non-compliant individuals still participate in the enterprise discourse as they draw on its qualities to make it relevant and useful for their own objectives (Fournier, 1998). I argue that this can have the unintended consequence of normalising non-compliance. Perrow (1999) studied 'normal' accidents which were inevitable events caused by the complexity and close coupling of an organizational system. Within the passive fire industry, self-regulation through enterprise and the voluntary membership of trade associations, all contribute to the assumption that non-compliance is acceptable. This is a feature of how the enterprise discourse operates in the passive fire industry because the exercise of power through individuals' self-regulation, enables them to use it to their own advantage. Vaughan (1999: 293) recognised that 'The regulatory environment…contributes to accidents when subject to power-dependence relations that undermine…effective monitoring, investigating, and sanctioning of producers and users…'. This indicates the challenge associated with minimal state intervention because it results in insufficient control and the absence of mandatory legislation.

"It's time for this industry to stop accepting lip service"

Referring back to the earlier discussion regarding Jim's (project development manager, manufacturer) lack of compliant behaviour, it is interesting that in a follow up interview, he complained about the role of trade associations. He implied that they needed more 'teeth' to ensure compliance; he stated: *"they [associations] don't have any teeth behind [them], they won't say 'you must do this'. The government think that the market will govern itself...but without any clear direction from someone, how do individuals know what they're doing?"* Jim's quote suggests that the shift envisaged by management gurus who suggest that hierarchical governance should be replaced with productive, empowering ones, such as enterprise (Peters and Waterman, 1982), is not always an effective or desirable objective. Jim emphasised that the lack of mandatory control is just a means by which the government relinquish their responsibility. He stated: *"...deregulation doesn't work in our industry...whilst government would very much like and is quite happy to devolve power downwards there is then responsibility too, you know with that power goes responsibility, it's not their problem anymore..."*. This quote reflects the principles of an enterprise discourse which advocates that building occupiers should take more responsibility for compliance and be self-regulating, but also of the problems which are caused by doing so. Jim used an example of previous ferry disasters to demonstrate his views on the lack of regulation:

> …you can pull away from the dock, whether or not there are regulations to tell you what to do with your doors, you can pull away from the dock with them open forever and no-one will say a thing. That's what drives our industry, *mayhem, disaster and death* because no-one makes the final move until there's an accident…there's not enough regulation and not enough control in place…

This highlights the limitations of a voluntary code of practice and the consequential effects that a lack of mandatory compliance can have. Mike (President of Fire and Life Safety) at an

industry event I attended at the House of Lords which was organised by a trade association, reinforced this:

> Perhaps the biggest challenges that we as an industry face today are 'apathy, ignorance and denial'. We have been told many times in the last few weeks that unlike Environment, Fire has no priority on the political agenda, not just from the current government but by all political parties. You will of course hear all of the 'required' sound bites calling for action or the call for an enquiry from our politicians following the tragedy of a major fire. But when the dust settles is there really any action that manifests itself into a tangible reality?

During this speech, people nodded and made notes on paper or serviettes. A few even physically moved their chairs or leant forwards to see the reaction of the two government ministers who had attended the lunch gathering. A delegate sitting next to me whispered *'Look over there, (pointing at the government Ministers), I love seeing them squirm!'*. I turned to look in the Ministers' direction, one was sitting with his head down and avoiding eye contact with the company representatives on his table, and the other was fidgeting and wringing his hands, but kept his eyes straight ahead at the speaker. After silence was restored in the room following a few mutters of agreement and subsequent discussions by people, the presenter continued. He compared fire protection with the safety expectations of new cars in terms of us assuming that certain things will be in place. It was stated:

> Would you ask yourself the question, 'I assume they put some brakes in it' or 'is this steering wheel connected correctly' or perhaps more importantly 'will my family be safe in this vehicle?'. If you think that way about a car why should the same rules not apply to the fire protection measures installed in a building? All the risks are the same, get it wrong and you run the risk of killing or seriously injuring its occupants or at best ruining the lives of those who depend on it.

The quote suggests that it is not enough to assume that passive fire protection will be installed correctly by arguing that self-regulation and responsibility will lead to individuals'

internalisation of norms to increase quality and efficiency. The lack of government intervention or the existence of 'technologies of power' (Foucault, 1988: 18) is on-going as even with a new coalition government in office during 2010, the proposal regarding Health and Safety was to reduce the 'growth of compensation culture'.[22] Lord Young who was a Cabinet Minister under Margaret Thatcher said that some rules were 'absolute nonsense' and speaking in December 2009, the now Prime Minister David Cameron stated that the UK had become 'saturated' by health and safety laws.[23] This implies a need for less bureaucracy and a continual commitment to a 'lighter touch' approach (UKAS, 2004: 1) which resonates with the reconstitution of individuals who will fulfil such requirements by being 'self-regulating, autonomous [*and*] productive…' (du Gay, 1996: 148).

For me, the most enlightening aspect from the above presentation was adapted from Lord Mandelson's discussion when he won the Foot in the Mouth Award from the Plain Speaking Campaign. It was stated that:

> Perhaps we need not more people looking round more corners at fire but the same people looking round more corners more thoroughly at fire to avoid large losses in the future

This quote filled the room with a feeling of motivation and energy. People nodded, muttered to their colleagues and smiled in agreement. I also felt that it provided an insight into the enduring problems in the industry. As the speaker made clear: *"It is time for this industry to stop accepting lip service and to demand a little more respect and support in the objectives and aspirations that we would like to see achieved for the benefit and safety of all concerned".* The problem being that such enterprising requirements were underpinned by government's

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[22] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/politics/10304770.htm
[23] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/politics.10304770.htm

lack of intervention, which was due to them not regarding fire as sufficiently important to regulate. As Simon (government policy writer) expressed, in an interview, in a harsh tone:

> Whatever industry we're talking about, they're all the same. You've obviously been speaking to the passive fire industry and they think passive fire is fundamentally important to the life of the universe and more important than all the other stuff. Well, *that is what they sell*. They then go on and moan about how building inspectors aren't competent to inspect and it just comes back to the level of quality. You'll never get one hundred percent compliance with anything, and let's face it most buildings don't catch fire…

Simon implies that it is the commercial intent with regards to selling their products which is the main reason for the passive fire industry's commitment to improving fire safety. This influences their subjectivity because their answers and responses are based on supporting and reinforcing the importance of passive fire because that is their career and livelihood, after all '*that is what they sell'*.

Despite this, feelings of agitation were expressed as compliant sectors of the industry believe that the government should exercise more responsibility to provide the necessary regulatory support required. But as Simon (government policy writer) explained to me:

> There is a million and one things that we could make…more thoroughly inspect or regulate but that doesn't, well, that all comes at a price. Somebody is going to come and look at something and then somebody's got to pay them…why would you put all that resource into something which is quite a *small problem*?

Although one can understand that the government are concerned with the cost involved in regulating, this is an inadequate argument from the perspective of those who defined themselves as compliant in the industry. Daniel (consultant) expressed his thoughts after he heard the explanation for the government's lack of intervention:

…[*government*] won't tackle the underlying challenges until there is a major loss of life because of systemic failure in fire protection…I remember saying 'that's a shocking thing to say'. So the argument was that you needed a multi-rise building like a hotel or something to go up with a massive loss of life which would then be followed immediately by legislation'. My logic is why not say 'ok assume that would happen and we'll have legislation anyway to try and prevent it' because why wait to have a disaster, it's gonna come, but let's prevent it by legislating first to pre-empt it, or at least making membership of trade bodies mandatory…

This is supported by data in Chapter 5, where fire related incidents have continued to increase and have been doing from the time the Thatcher Conservative government came into power. The compliant sectors of the industry therefore continue to argue that with such evidence available, how does the government justify not placing fire safety on a higher level of importance? As Daniel makes clear, if the membership of trade associations were mandatory then it could be one step towards enhancing compliance in the industry. Whilst membership remains voluntary, organizations continue to use the association to hide from view their inappropriate practices, which in turn leads to non-compliance. This adds to our critical understanding of the exercise of power through normative isomorphism which is perceived by institutional theorists as being exercised to ensure that individuals '…learn the cognitive and normative frames that shape their perspectives on regulative goals and the likely means to achieve them' (Beckert, 2010: 156). An alternative, Foucauldian perspective indicates how power leads to the reconstitution of subjectivity as individuals' identities are shaped and created through their participation with the enterprise discourse. Individuals are standardised and ranked against established criteria which results in self-regulation through the internalisation of enterprising attributes of choice, autonomy and responsibility. In comparison, the 'cowboys' appear to use the normalising function of trade associations to engage in non-conformance by using the enterprising qualities for their own benefit. The

cowboys become opportunistic and exercise their 'autonomy', but not in the direction intended by government. Power through the enterprise discourse, can therefore result in unintended and contradictory outcomes, as individuals promote a discourse of 'denial' and refuse to become the 'enterprising self' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992) which was the government's intention.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the role of trade associations within the context of a deregulated enterprising environment. Attention has been paid to identifying and highlighting the ways in which trade associations are meant to be a vehicle for instigating normative isomorphic pressure. From an Institutional Theory perspective, trade associations exercise normative isomorphism by encouraging similarity amongst their members through the spread of norms and values, via documentation, committee meetings and participation in workshops (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Using insights from the empirical data, I have sought to advance Institutional Theory's perception of normative isomorphism by taking a critical approach to power and exploring it through the lens of Foucault (1977). This alternative interpretation seeks to enrich our understanding of how trade associations exercise not only coercive, but also disciplinary power through providing a criterion of truth, which members are judged and ranked against; this encourages self-regulation as individuals internalise the desirable qualities which secures their identity and shapes their subjectivity. Trade associations govern 'at a distance' (Rose, 1999: 45) and relational power is exercised, because participating in the discourse of enterprise and existing within the disciplinary power relations, enables members to rearticulate enterprise for their own ends.

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Such practices have implications for individual organizations that compensate for their non-compliant counterparts and unilaterally try and improve the standards within the industry. This creates a discourse of 'morality' and is the focus of the next empirical chapter which takes a critical approach to mimetic isomorphism and discusses how it exercises disciplinary power to encourage the adoption of desirable practices through the replication of a 'model' organization. The chapter will explore the approach adopted by one global manufacturer (Aqua-Tilt), who exercises disciplinary power through an enterprise culture in an attempt to improve standards throughout the entire industry. The difference being that whereas enterprise is challenged by trade association members, when applied to Aqua-Tilt's culture, it appears to become a 'regulatory filler' which bridges the gap between the government's hands-off approach and the aim of enhancing regulation and conformance within the industry.

Introduction

This final empirical chapter provides an insight into the culture of one organization, referred to as 'Aqua-Tilt' (pseudonym) which is a manufacturer in the passive fire protection industry. I focus on the culture of Aqua-Tilt because it appears to have been adopted as a 'model' which other organizations seek to replicate. From an Institutional Theory perspective, this implies the exercise of strong mimetic isomorphic forces which leads to imitation because models '…are interpreted as attractive institutional solutions to the problems being faced' (Beckert, 2010: 155). There is limited discussion of how power is exercised through mimetic isomorphism, but DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 70) argue that copying demonstrates '…the pressure felt by the organization to provide the programs and services offered by other organizations'. Contrary to Institutional Theory, I seek to enrich understanding by using a Foucauldian perspective to argue that mimetic isomorphism is not simply about homogenisation, but can also be the result of the exercise of disciplinary power. Aqua-Tilt acts as a 'model' or benchmark, which standardises and normalises the conduct of other organizations in the industry. The 'normalizing' (Foucault, 1977) pressure to create an enterprising and homogenised workforce, is also explored through the practices that the culture initiates. I examine how the enterprise culture became a means of filling the vacuum created by successive government's commitment to voluntary regulation. I refer to Aqua-Tilt's culture as a 'regulatory filler' because employees and external stakeholders can draw on it to guide their daily practices. This is possible when employees engage with the enterprise discourse which

reconstitutes their subjectivity, giving them the illusion of choice, despite them regulating their conduct through exercising self-discipline.

The chapter draws upon ethnographic insights using interviews and non-participant observation, to provide a detailed account of the 'lived experience' (Thomas and Linstead, 2002: 76) of employees. The focus will be on describing and analysing the culture of Aqua-Tilt with emphasis being placed on three thematic themes which emerged whilst conducting the research. These included training and development; artefacts and décor, and customer sovereignty. These cultural practices will enable me to explore how the culture communicates the discourse of enterprise and exercises disciplinary power. Using the insights gained from my findings, I argue the following points. They are numbered below for the purposes of clarity.

1. The enterprise culture is a disciplinary mechanism to enhance employees' compliance to internal organizational objectives. Subjectivity is reconstituted as individuals' identity is shaped in relation to the changing perceptions surrounding safety and compliance within the industry which indicates a discourse of 'morality'. I aim to advance our understanding of how power has traditionally been viewed by institutional theorists as a means through which organizations are homogenised due to their attempt to minimise uncertainty. DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 69) state that this leads to mimetic isomorphism especially '…when an organization faces a problem with ambiguous causes or unclear solutions…'.

2. Attention will also be given to how 'unmanaged spaces' (Bolton and Boyd, 2003: 297) reflect employees' attempts to 'distance' (Collinson, 1994) themselves from the homogenising disciplinary pressure.

3. Mimetic isomorphism becomes a 'visible gaze' (Townley, 1998) which sheds light on how homogenisation is bound up with the exercise of disciplinary power, as individuals become enterprising subjects.

Structure and Location of Aqua-Tilt

Aqua-Tilt is a global manufacturer which has its United Kingdom headquarters located in the North of England. It is involved in international sales operating in over 120 countries and is known in the passive fire industry for its capacity to produce and sell a range of components, supplies and parts for the construction industry. The products include tools used for drilling and demolition, diamond coring and cutting, measuring, fire-stopping and screw fastening. Aqua-Tilt was established in 1941 by two brothers who founded the first factory in Liechtenstein (Leadership Document, 2008). After World War Two, the organization became directly involved in international sales. During the 1970s, the organization consisted of 420 employees and had sales worth €27.3million (Leadership document, 2008: 1). This growth continued until 1980 when, despite four plants having been built around the world which constituted the hub of Aqua-Tilt, sales stagnated at €817.6 million (Leadership Document, 2008: 1). Changes were then implemented in cost structure and sales, but the first culture development process was introduced in 1984, when the Chairman of the organization introduced cultural seminars which were applied worldwide and to all hierarchical levels. It was stated that:

Employees and the company culture are not soft strategy-elements, but key drivers of the company's success – one of the biggest secrets of our success (Chairman's comments in company magazine cited in Leadership document, 2008: 7).

The first 'Strategy' policy was instigated in 1987 which was intended to unify marketing and sales procedures around the globe. This continued even when a new CEO was employed in 1994 which was the first time a non-family member headed the corporation. Despite success with the initial strategy, a revision of the policy was required with a direct focus on customer satisfaction and 'excellence'. This echoes the work of Peters and Waterman (1982) and their book *'In Search of Excellence'.* They studied what they perceived as 'excellent' companies whose cultures consist of 'stick to the knitting' and being 'hands on' (Peters and Waterman, 1982: 15). Within Aqua-Tilt, relationships with customers were at the heart of this new initiative. Increased quality and effective marketing was also core to enabling Aqua-Tilt to become the market leader (Leadership document, 2008). As a result, in 2003, 'Culture Journey' workshops were introduced which were intended to establish a more direct link between individual behaviour and their contribution to the team and the organization's success (Leadership document, 2008: 7). This interrelationship between individuals and the organization resonates with the enterprise discourse as people are supposed to believe that they have control over their own lives and can become a better person, at the same time as contributing to the success of the organization (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). Individuals are expected to internalise the values of enterprise (quality, excellence, flexibility) and adopt them as their own, in order to direct them unequivocally towards working methods that will enhance the organization's productivity.

Aqua-Tilt consists of two main levels which are responsible for initiating, maintaining and monitoring the culture. Firstly, an Executive Board which claims to work as a 'real team rather than a group of separate individuals' (Leadership document, 2008: 3). Its members have grown with the culture, as traditionally any successors have been recruited from 'within', as this ensures that they are *'already familiar with the culture* (Leadership document, 2008: 3) and they would be known by the employees; an important strategy to ensure the continuance of the core values. The *'familiarity'* employees have with the culture prevents alternative standpoints from emerging by reinforcing the allegiance to the corporate value system. Recruiting individuals from 'within' who are knowledgeable and have demonstrated (perceived) acceptance of the norms, means they can communicate them to newcomers. It reinforces the authority of the values as previous employees become a 'sacred canopy' (Berger, 1973) by reducing the doubt and insecurity new employees have when faced with complex, burdensome and competing value systems. Scholarly work on Institutional Theory suggests that individuals prescribe to existing practices because they '…become used to working in alignment with these institutional forces…and begin to take them for granted' (Mahalingam and Levitt, 2007: 523). When explaining the replication of practices through mimetic isomorphism, institutional theorists have either ignored power, or have perceived it as a means to '…constrain [*individuals*] behaviour (Zucker, 1991: 84). This implies a propertied notion of power, which fails to take into account how conformance and homogenisation can also be due to the exercise of productive power (Foucault, 1977).

As Willmott (1993b: 536) stated 'Individuals become seduced by the idea that organizational membership could be (more) pleasurable, fulfilling and exciting if only (unwarranted)

scepticism about the reality and/or value of the norms of the corporate culture were suspended'. The Executive Board therefore remains responsible for three core areas within the organization: corporate strategy, the recruitment and selection planning for the thirty key positions in the company, and the corporate culture (Leadership document, 2008: 4).

The next level, the Executive Management Group, consists of sixteen managers who are responsible for developing and monitoring regional goals within the organization. They, like other employees are expected to participate in various 'team camps' which aim to constitute them as team members. The Management *Group* was subsequently renamed the Executive Management *Team* in 2005 after the completion of a team camp event, which initiated a process of transition. Members of the original Executive Board were near retirement and the training provided to the newly recruited individuals, was in order that they would internalise the desirable values and norms to sustain Aqua-Tilt's culture. As the Chairman stated in one of the organization's magazines:

> The transition was nothing revolutionary. Spectacular [performance] was simply the smoothness of the transition

The culture of Aqua-Tilt consists of four main 'teams'. These are the 'Strategic Sherpa Team' which is responsible for leading and reinforcing the global development process of the culture journey; 'Culture Journey Sherpa Team' which facilitates development sessions with other teams regarding the culture, and consults with leadership teams on implementing phrases and aligning the improvement of structures and processes; 'Leadership Sherpa Team' is responsible for coaching misaligned issues and demonstrating Aqua-Tilt leadership, and 'Team Member Sherpa Team' is expected to take self-responsibility to learn and apply

experiences from the culture journey sessions to their working practices. The latter two groups are both situated at Aqua-Tilt UK headquarters. The 'leadership' group is involved in reconstituting individuals' subjectivity by aligning them with the cultural norms and values. Through mechanisms such as team camps, the leadership group seeks to 'delineate, normalize and instrumentalize the conduct of persons in order to achieve the ends they postulate as desirable' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 626). The 'Team Member Sherpa Team' consist of employees who are subject to the culture and are expected to share the experience with customers when applicable.

Identifying the cultural structure draws attention to Smircich's (1983) work which provided seminal insights into the significance of the concept of culture. For instance, culture is a 'root metaphor' (Smircich, 1983: 347) which views organizations as the outcome of human consciousness and as symbolically existing as systems of shared meaning. Culture is something that an organization 'is', rather than something that it 'has' (Smircich, 1981 cited in Smircich, 1983: 347) which acknowledges the subjective experiences of organizational members.

Squirrels, beavers and flocks of geese: the antecedents of Aqua-Tilt's culture
In order to contextualise and understand Aqua-Tilt's culture, it is important to consider its historical antecedents which are articulated in a book titled 'Gung Ho', written by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles (1998). The former is also a co-author of the managerial book 'One Minute Manager' (1990). Gung Ho is translated from Chinese meaning 'working together'; it outlines an approach to managing organizations based on three key principles.

These will be discussed below. The Gung Ho story is based on the working practices of a wise Indian Grandfather who served in World War One and the principles involve watching the behaviour of animals; particularly squirrels; beavers and geese. The grandfather aimed to teach 'Gung Ho' to his grandchild who became the advocate of it in his own organization and he is the central character in Ken Blanchard's book.

Before identifying the key principles of Gung Ho, it is important to note that the book by Blanchard and Bowles (1998) was chosen by the original director of organizational development at Aqua-Tilt - Mr McDaniels. When Mr McDaniels arrived at the company in 1995 he decided to build company morale and turn the focus away from profit and towards improving employee happiness (Leadership document, 2008). Mr McDaniels had acquired an interest in Blanchard's work after attending a training session at Blanchard's global headquarters in San Diego. Ken Blanchard provided the attendees with an advanced copy of 'Gung Ho' and this led Mr McDaniels to implement the approach at Aqua-Tilt.

The story written by Ken Blanchard is portrayed through the narrative of a journey, told in the first person by Peggy, a manager of a failing department in an American organization. It is given three months to improve productivity, before the plant is closed, resulting in mass redundancies. Peggy established a close relationship with Andy, an operational manager of the 'Finishing Department' in the same organization who already had Gung Ho in place. Readers are informed of how Peggy joins Andy early every Saturday morning to spend three hours learning the Gung Ho culture. Their adventures of sitting in a log cabin watching squirrels, observing beavers from the branch of a tree, and canoeing in a lake to learn the

practices of geese all become part of the story. The first principle of Gung Ho stems from the 'Spirit of the Squirrel', as it reflects an animal which does 'worthwhile' work as it collects food during the winter months in order to survive. Andy explained to Peggy that this metaphor meant recognising that:

> First, the work has to be understood as important. Second, it has to lead to a well-understood and shared goal. Third, values have to guide all plans, decisions, and actions. Put all these together and you've got worthwhile work. In short, Spirit of the Squirrel (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 29).

The extract resonates with the importance attributed to Aqua-Tilt employees' understanding of their core cultural value of 'We do worthwhile work'. This is articulated in the team camp guide, which is distributed to all new recruits. It is a small red book of one hundred and fifty pages and contains very little text as most of the information is displayed in symbols, diagrams and tables. The 'worthwhile work' principle is followed by a quote which says: 'If you choose the work you love to do; you will never work another day in your life' (Team camp guide, 2004: 17). An entire section of the team camp guide is devoted to emphasising 'worthwhile work' and employees are encouraged to consider how they spend their time in the organization by undertaking a variety of tasks, such as plotting their responses into one of the four quadrants of the Focus-Energy matrix' (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1

<u>The Focus-Energy Matrix (Team camp guide, 2004: 22-23).</u>

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High  ↑ ┌──────────┬──────────┐
        │          │          │
        │          │          │
        │          │          │
        ├──────────┼──────────┤
        │          │          │
        │          │          │
        │          │          │
FOCUS  Low └──────────┴──────────┘
           ──────────────────────→
           Low                 High
           ENERGY
```
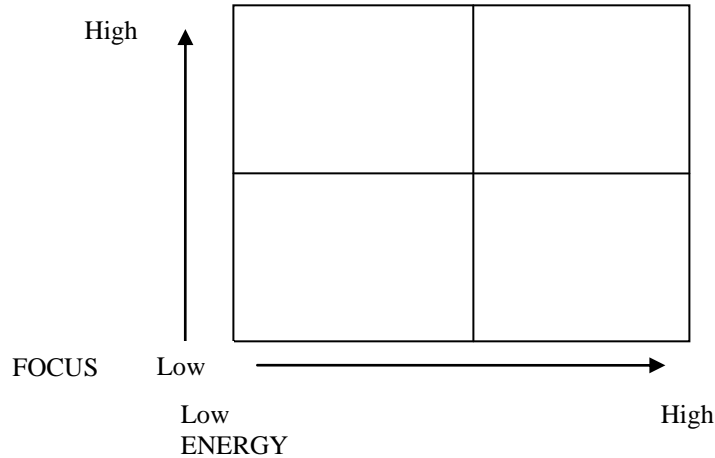
The 'focus-energy matrix' (Team camp guide, 2004: 22-23) is used by Aqua-Tilt managers to classify individuals' behaviour. This targets employee subjectivity as it challenges their sense of self, especially as the quadrant distinguishes those who spend too much time performing routine tasks, and failing to take initiative to improve overall organizational performance (Team camp guide, 2004: 22). Individuals are expected to be in the 'high focus, high energy' quadrant which is referred to as 'purposefulness'. They were clear about 'intentions and goals, demonstrated willpower; felt personally responsible for tasks and broadened their influence to make it meaningful in relation to the company's goals' (Team camp guide, 2004: 23). This is compared to 'procrastinators' who were low on both focus and energy and spent their time performing routine tasks such as attending meetings and making phone calls, but failed to engage in strategy orientated initiatives (Team camp guide, 2004: 22). Managers utilised the matrix to encourage employees to:

> Reflect on your last team meeting; allocate the percentage of time you spent on activities in each of the four quadrants…

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This was followed by the question of '*What do you need to do differently?'*. Employees' subjectivity can be shaped in line with desired expectations existing from the matrix which acted as a disciplinary and normalizing device (Foucault, 1977). It distinguished successful employees from their counterparts who were not seen as conforming to the standardised requirements. From an Institutional Theory perspective, the adoption of such practices which are in line with the matrix and indicate desirable qualities can lead to the replication of behaviour by others as individuals strive to be seen as successful. This is a key feature of mimetic isomorphism because as Beckert (2010: 158) states, '…imitation…becomes a protective shield for the [*individual*] in case of failure'. He or she has done 'what others would have done' in that situation'. This account suggests that similarity in practice is the result of individuals wanting to be seen as successful as their counterparts, but fails to take into consideration how individuals may be conforming due to the exercise of productive power which ranks and 'normalises' their conduct (Foucault, 1977). Such classificatory systems constitute methods of recording, measuring and enhancing knowledge of employees as they allow for the '…elimination of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation…[*in order*]…to establish presences and absences' (Foucault, 1977: 143).

The matrix encouraged individuals to reflect on their behavioural traits. They had to choose from words such as 'flexibility'; 'cleverness'; 'compassionate' and 'sincerity' and indicate how these personal characteristics would ensure the achievement of both the organization and team objectives. Individuals had to align themselves to Aqua-Tilt which reflects the influence of Gung Ho where such practices are said to make 'the world a better place' (Blanchard and

Bowles, 1998: 29). This became apparent throughout the discussions I had with respondents who commented that their jobs were '*making a difference*' by '*saving lives*'. This reflects a discourse of 'morality' which Aqua-Tilt sought to create by shaping subjectivities in line with the 'worthwhile work' principle. Talking to Sarah, corporate social responsibility officer (Aqua-Tilt), who reflected on the 'worthwhile work' value, she stated: *'The worthwhile work principle really does matter to us and you know it's fundamental to our business and sort of symbolises every little thing we do'.* Sarah's identity is tied to fulfilling the value of 'worthwhile work' and she expressed how it was a fundamental requirement of the organization because it *'symbolises every little thing we do'.* The value makes her accountable as it is a disciplinary device to ensure that employees become enrolled into the corporate subjectivity. This is explored in greater depth throughout this chapter.

The second principle of Gung Ho which Peggy learns involves observing the work of beavers. The 'Way of the Beaver' consisted of 'drive and energy' (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 74) as each beaver is said to take self-responsibility for their work; this supports how individuals should be 'in control of achieving the goal' (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 76). The notion of self-responsibility links to the enterprise discourse as employees were encouraged to be autonomous, whilst fulfilling managers' objectives. As a result, managers:

> …define the playing field and the rules of the game. You decide who plays what position. Then you have to get off the field and let the players move the ball (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 79).

This quote suggests that management defined the territory in which employees worked as they set the acceptable criteria and guidelines. The implication that managers then 'have to get off the field' suggests that there are benefits of nurturing autonomy and self-responsibility as

employees begin to adopt and display the acquired skills. One is only autonomous and self-responsible, however, in relation to a prescribed role (McCabe, 2008).

Additionally, managers used a 'DISC' (dominance, influence, conscientiousness and steadiness) scale to indicate behavioural tendencies (Team camp guide, 2004: 82). Each employee was encouraged, through training and development sessions to share their strengths and weaknesses and indicate which specific attributes could be modified to improve team, organization and customer effectiveness. Questions such as *'What are the implications for you if you were to live as if you cannot change your patterns of behaviour?'* (Team camp guide, 2004: 84) were used to encourage self-reflection and instigate change. Establishing qualities that mark out successful staff, compared to those who may exhibit weaknesses, becomes a basis from which to exercise productive power in an attempt to cultivate homogenised and 'enterprising subjects' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). This advances our understanding of mimetic isomorphism because institutional theorists may analyse the use of the DISC scheme as a means of encouraging imitation in order to enhance legitimacy, without any recognition of its underlying exercise of power. For example, Mahalingam and Levitt (2007: 523) argue that individuals are '…constrained and directed…to behave in certain regular…homogeneous ways'. From an Institutional Theory perspective, this implies that individuals would exhibit similar types of behaviour because they experience the pressures associated with mimetic isomorphism. Such a view fails to consider how power is also productive because the DISC mechanism can be a managerial attempt to reconstitute employees' subjectivity.

The final principle of Gung Ho involved Peggy observing the behaviour of geese. Andy informed Peggy that 'The Gift of the Goose brings enthusiasm to Spirit of the Squirrel and Way of the Beaver' (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 129). The importance of the behaviour which the geese portrayed was found in the honking sound they made as they flew with each other. Peggy was told that: 'They are cheering each other on. Just listen to them' (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 133). It was not just the lead goose in the formation that was making the noise, but all of them. In Aqua-Tilt, the geese indicate the importance of teamwork and that it does not just have to be management cheering and encouraging their employees, but team members can support each other too (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998).

The metaphor of the geese was reinforced in an edition of the organization's quarterly magazine 'Filter' (Summer, 2009). It stated that: *'Geese show us that teamwork and hard work aren't enough on their own. You need to form a team that can accomplish objectives by working together. An effective team will always find ways to combine strengths and weaknesses, just as the geese do'.* Teamwork was also present in the team camp guide, articulated in the statement 'We encourage each other and recognize results', followed by a quote which said *'Rain and sun are to the flower as praise and encouragement are to the human spirit'.* These thought-provoking sayings were interspersed throughout the team camp guide and encouraged employees to reflect on their meaning and as a result instigate appropriate behaviour according to the cultural values. Teamwork was explicitly linked to Aqua-Tilt's reward and recognition scheme 'World Aqua' which will be discussed in a later section (pg 271).

Why Gung Ho?

The original decision to utilise Gung Ho occurred when the president and Chief Executive of Aqua-Tilt International decided that the company worldwide was experiencing high turnover and a decline in profitable growth. The President decided that to rectify the problem, he would eliminate all executive parking spaces, create focused customer satisfaction surveys and implement culture change. The company director of organizational development, referred to earlier as 'Mr McDaniels' who initiated the Gung Ho approach, stated at the time of its implementation: 'Gung Ho the company and we'll see a turnaround' (Ken Blanchard press release on client's results). As I was unable to ask Mr McDaniels directly as to why he had chosen this cultural approach (rather than for example BPR), I can only surmise that it was because of his exposure to it having worked closely with the authors of the book. In a press release, Mr McDaniels expressed that 'Gung Ho provides the cultural context necessary to make other training programs work' (Ken Blanchard press release on client's results). Gung Ho was a building block for other initiatives, but it took two years to fully implement it in the American Headquarters of the company, before it was rolled out across the other one hundred and two Aqua-Tilt sites worldwide. Gung Ho continued to be used until 2003 when the 'Culture Journey' took over.

Before analysing the culture in more detail, it is worth firstly noting that Aqua-Tilt's enterprising culture is not a stand-alone practice and far from original. It was not produced and implemented solely from the initiatives originating from Aqua-Tilt's founders, but instead drew on the work of gurus and other relevant literature. Throughout the team camp guide, references are made to management gurus, including Stephen Covey et al (1994) and Peter

Drucker (1973). Aqua-Tilt managers 'found inspiration' (Team camp guide, 2004: 150) from them which suggests that mimetic copying exists on a much broader spectrum than possibly first thought by institutional theorists who only discussed it as existing amongst organizations in the same 'field'. DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 64-65) identify a 'field' as '…those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers…regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products'.

For example, the sale of Blanchard's books worldwide exceeds eighteen million copies. This quantifies the extent of mimetic isomorphism and indicates that it is not just Aqua-Tilt managers who purchased the book and utilised the approach. Replicating others was therefore not just a process which was used to minimise uncertainty, but it became a means of benchmarking which exercised a normalising function (Foucault, 1977; Townley, 1998). The exercise of mimetic isomorphism is reinforced in the leadership document where it is stated that Aqua-Tilt has introduced 'globally standardized processes' which leads them to believe that '…'steal with pride' is much better than 'reinvent the wheel'' (Leadership document, 2008: 13). This is particularly because 'In situations in which a clear course of action is unavailable, organizational leaders may decide that the best response is to mimic a peer that they perceive to be successful' (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 657). Aqua-Tilt managers have been influenced by the gurus' work and the practices demonstrated by other organizations; this indicates that they are participating in the discursive practices of the culture in the same way as employees are, rather than simply exercising power over others.

The adoption of such cultural techniques suggests mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) occurs because the culture provides shared meanings of social reality and can become a '…stabilizing influence that [*is*] both internalized and imposed by others' (Scott, 2008b: 56). Whilst this implies that mimetic copying involves the exercise of power which leads to the adoption of belief systems and cultural frameworks, the exercise of power to achieve this is not always a constraining force, but can also be relational and productive (Foucault, 1977). This enriches our understanding of how homogenisation is instigated by the exercise of disciplinary power which leads to normalisation (Foucault, 1977) as other companies measure their practices against a criterion of success; in this case, Aqua-Tilt. As Foucault (1977: 183; emphasis in original) stated: 'The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*'. This provides an alternative interpretation to DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) perception of mimetic isomorphism, as Foucault (1977) can be used to analyse how isomorphism also exercises productive power to create enterprising subjects through the spread of discourse which leads to the homogenisation of employees and the standardisation of conduct.

The following section will explore how productive power (Foucault, 1982) is exercised through an enterprising culture to reconstitute individuals' subjectivity, and how this enriches our understanding of mimetic isomorphism from an Institutional Theory perspective. I then discuss how the exercise of productive power is used to fill the regulatory gap created by successive government's lack of intervention.

"Going the extra mile" – Creating the Enterprising Individual

As I entered through the reception's automatic sliding doors at Aqua-Tilt, the enterprise discourse was clearly evident in front of me. The mission statement and core values were displayed in the organization's colour scheme, on a wall behind the desk. The mission statement indicated that:

> We passionately create enthusiastic customers and build a better future! (Team camp guide, 2004: 21)

The use of the term 'passionately' is a strong indication that rhetorically, the company is making a connection between its purpose and what employees are expected to fulfil, especially at the level of their team. Employees are enrolled with a belief that they can actively contribute to a 'better future', which is achievable when they fulfil the objectives and norms of the organization which not only reflects a discourse of enterprise, but is also one which is associated with 'morality'. The emphasis on 'we' suggests that everyone at Aqua-Tilt is involved in this process, but this masks how the objectives and requirements are exercised by senior management, who aim to reconstitute the subjectivity of employees.

Reference to the customer was supplemented with the core values of 'integrity'; 'teamwork'; 'courage' and 'commitment'; all of which were alongside the mission statement, on the wall behind the reception desk. As you face the desk, behind you are soft leather chairs separated by a small glass table which holds the latest product catalogues and in-house company magazine 'Filter'. The documents are laid out in the shape of a fan with each one slightly overlapping the other and directly adjacent on the left hand side wall are 'excellence' awards

presented to the organization relating to customer service, delivery speed and consistency. These artefacts made the reception area into an exhibition suite where all visitors were exposed to the brand and the image of the organization. The consistency of the visual display of enterprising qualities continued throughout the building where small tables with soft leather comfy chairs were dotted around the different floors which were used as waiting areas. Each table had a copy of '*Filter'* and a display of the values and mission statement. Inside *Filter* were stories of individuals who had fulfilled the values; these provided an indication to others of what they could do to equally be rewarded. For example, there were short commentaries providing tantalising examples of employees who had demonstrated enterprise, or as management put it '*commitment'* by pursuing a customer's problem with efficiency. This was also described as the *courage* to deal with an issue, even if the nature of it was complex, or out of the employee's normal range of skills and ability. The replication of practices by other employees which had been rewarded and were clearly deemed successful would be a reflection of mimetic isomorphism, because as DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 64) argue, '…individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead…to homogeneity in structure, culture and output'. This indicates Institutional Theory's commitment to power as repressive, rather than something which is exercised relationally amongst individuals in a power relationship.

If employees displayed similar attributes to their counterparts who appeared in *Filter*, then there would be more likelihood that their reputation would be enhanced and their actions rewarded. The behavioural traits which are replicated are also consistent with the values of Aqua-Tilt and indicate the subjectivity that employees were required to foster, due to the

exercise of productive power (Foucault, 1977). As Bergström and Knights (2006: 355) made

clear 'Only by examining organizational discourses in action so to speak; that is, in the

immediate contexts of their production and reproduction can we see how human agency and

organizational discourses interact'. This is seen in Aqua-Tilt's Annual Report (2006: 14)

which states:

> Aqua-Tilt aims to recruit the best possible employees, people who are prepared to give
> their all and develop beyond what is actually required of them

This demonstrates the discourse of enterprise as it indicates the importance of recruiting

individuals who are productive, self-motivated and whose contribution will add value to the

organization (du Gay, 1996). The goal being to '…have many entrepreneurs within the

company, mature employees who exercise entrepreneurial thought and action and who are

independent and responsible' (Press Release, 'Enterprise for Health'). This signifies the type

of employee that management aims to create and the attempt to (re)define subjectivity if they

are to become, and remain, Aqua-Tilt employees.

Recruitment involves making sure 'you get the right people on the bus in the right seat, doing

the right things right for Aqua-Tilt' (Corporate Review, 2008: 14). Ensuring the most

appropriate people were employed, using the mission statement as a starting point was clearly

evident in job adverts, such as those displayed on the organization's website. Each job

advertised, began with a paragraph outlining the mission statement and the core values. This

was followed by a short description of the job's responsibilities, titled *'Your Responsibilities',*

before a *'Your Profile'* section which outlined the necessary skills expected. These often

included '*good communication, presentation and negotiation'* skills and the need to be

'*enthusiastic, proactive and self-reliant*'. The language used is reminiscent of an enterprise

discourse. The close connection between the values and mission statement is due to the values

being the vehicle through which the mission statement will be achievable.

Through the use of the mission statement and core values, the selection of employees became

possible and as the Human Resource Director stated in a recent press release (February, 2009):

> …our brand represents premium and quality; therefore our people are the foundation of our brand. We recruit on our core values of integrity, courage, teamwork and commitment.

We can see the articulation of the enterprise discourse associated with Aqua-Tilt's recruitment

process. This was reinforced by Hannah, a newly recruited sales coordinator, who was aware

of how the values matched employees to their desired job and that it was an essential part of

the selection process. She stated in a confident tone that:

> I know the HR department are heavily involved in recruitment and I think [*if*] you start at that point and *look for values in the individuals…before they come into the organization,* there must be a really small chance that you get somebody that comes in that maybe it doesn't sit quite right with, and they *don't end up believing in it*…

Hannah's subjectivity is influenced by the disciplinary effects of the organization's culture,

even prior to her being employed. Individuals regulate their identity in line with the

organization and the requirements that managers stipulate. The exercise of power is

disciplinary, as through the interviews, individuals were required to 'confess' (Collinson,

2003: 535) and expose their own qualities as a pre-condition for even being considered for

employment. Only employing individuals who '*believe*' in the values illustrates that the

interviews used normalising criteria from which employees would be observed and measured against (Foucault, 1977). These desired qualities cannot be trained; they have to already be part of the individual. This supports Callaghan and Thompson (2002) who found that companies aim deliberately to recruit and mould individuals who already have the 'correct' attitude on entry.

Prospective employees were carefully assessed during their interviews by being asked to provide examples of situations they had experienced which showed their utilisation of Aqua-Tilt's values. For instance, Sarah (corporate social responsibility officer) reflected back to her interview and explained '...*in my interview I was asked to describe situations which showed the core values, so where I showed courage, teamwork, commitment...I used some examples from my previous job...'*. By assessing employees in this way, it was possible to clarify and reinforce the organization's values and individuals' behaviour prior to employment. Clearly, this helps to redefine subjectivity in line with ensuring that individuals working in the organization will become enterprising subjects. This led to an individual-organization fit, whereby individuals could align themselves with the organization and use it as a 'mirror' to reflect their own identity and vice versa (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991: 551). The notion of the 'mirror' suggests that mimetic isomorphic pressure is likely because employees will adopt practices which demonstrate that they are suitable for employment and can be viewed as reliable. DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 69) state that homogenisation through copying arises because modelling '...is a response to uncertainty' which leads to replication to ensure desirable conduct. As Scott and Lane (2000:48) stated, organizational and individual identity is explicitly intertwined, as constructed organizational images not only enhance individuals'

identity, but also contribute to organizational goal attainment. The alignment between individuals and organizations implies that 'Individuals thus assume…the subjectivities made available to them in organizations as their 'own', and these can become the basis for more active consent processes…' (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009: 358-359).

Respondents muttered in informal discussions that an individual would find out very quickly if they were not '*the right type of person for Aqua-Tilt*' as they would find it *'uncomfortable working here'* (notes made form informal discussion). From a Foucauldian perspective, the classification of employees on the basis of whether they were 'right' reinforces how enterprise involves ordering and measuring against an established standard (Fournier, 1998). This marginalises those who do not fulfil required attributes, thereby individualising and dividing employees (Foucault, 1977). Employees were operating on the front stage (Goffman, 1967) in terms of being held responsible, accountable and encouraged to be customer focused; they knew that their work was valued and that they were representing Aqua-Tilt by doing so. Employees were aware of what their contribution was resulting in, particularly with regards to being 'close to the customer' which is central to enterprise (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). This discursive ordering of individuals was reinforced through the core values discussed below which communicated the enterprise discourse.

Aqua-Tilt's core values

'Integrity' involved 'walking the talk'. Individuals were required to be 'authentic, consistent and predictable' both inside and outside the company (Team camp guide, 2004). Individuals were aligned with '*the core purpose and core values*' and this encouraged them to *'be*

accountable for your actions and their consequences' (Team camp guide, 2004). This led to self-discipline and is illustrative of an attempt to make individuals responsible for their actions as well as to become representatives of Aqua-Tilt; this was essential whether they were at the Head office or at an industry event alongside their competitors. Integrity was also considered important in terms of promoting morality which was concerned with improved standards and saving lives. As Bob (team leader) explained: *'...the integrity value, well, it means that if we knew someone was doing something that didn't meet the requirements and we came across an installation that wasn't correct then we would have to say something, we'd have to say 'that's not safe', it's part of our culture to get it right...'.*

The core value of 'courage' seeks to produce an individual who can 'take purposeful risks by thinking outside the box and leaving the circle of habits' (Team camp guide, 2004: 29). At face value this suggests that risk taking is deemed important and every opportunity was viewed as a challenge which would encourage individuals to confront the 'brutal facts' (Team camp guide, 2004: 29) of personal and organizational development. A 3x2m mirror was used in one of the activities on the training and development team camps. Employees had to look at themselves in the mirror and question their behaviour in terms of how it affected their own success and that of the organization. From the perspective of Institutional Theory, encouraging employees to analyse their own behaviour could be interpreted as a way for them to clarify and acknowledge that they were conducting themselves in an acceptable manner. As DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 69) state '…these "innovations" [*are adopted*] to enhance their legitimacy, to demonstrate that they are at least trying to improve…'. If individuals realised that their behaviour did not match their counterparts, then it would mean that they may experience the pressure of mimetic isomorphism because they would want to be seen as

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successful and credible. An alternative interpretation is that the modelling is not only due to uncertainty, but because disciplinary power is exercised to shape individuals' subjectivity and conduct. Management reconstituted individuals' subjectivity by requiring them to change in line with the organizational requirements. Power was exercised to 'produce' employees who were 'made up' (Hacking, 1986 cited in du Gay, 1996: 54) to fit with the attributes of the cultural programme. Disciplinary power became 'corrective' (Foucault, 1977: 179) as it reduced gaps between those who were, and those who were not, conforming to desirable conduct. It can be said that 'Discipline, then, may be seen as the necessary price that we pay for realizing our desires, for achieving certain aesthetic values and meeting certain stylistic criteria' (Foucault, 1986: 10-11). This advances our understanding of mimetic isomorphism because it goes beyond DiMaggio and Powell's (1991: 69) reference to uncertainty when they state that '…when goals are ambiguous, or when the environment creates symbolic uncertainty, organizations [*individuals*] may model themselves on other organizations [*individuals*]'. As is evident in Aqua-Tilt, the modelling is not simply due to uncertainty, but because power is exercised to shape individuals' subjectivity and conduct.

Conformance to organizational requirements became an essential process by which to also fulfil the value of 'commitment' by being 'responsible and accountable' (Team camp guide, 2004). This encouraged employees to create 'Aqua-Tilt fans' by demonstrating persistence when creating relationships with customers. Employees told stories about how they had to deal with rude customers or complaints which they were not always knowledgeable about. Employees became self-regulating in response to the situation, but also took risks in deciding on outcomes and making decisions which were often not initially obvious. As enterprising

subjects, employees were expected to '*go the extra mile*' (Kim, sales co-ordinator) whilst being held accountable for their actions. It encourages self-discipline but is also repressive as 'commitment' equates to work intensification and the need to give more of oneself to Aqua-Tilt and its customers. This enterprising demand legitimizes greater productivity and is reflective of Gung Ho and the 'Way of the Beaver'. Management encourage self-responsibility and initiative, yet they still establish the territory in which employees act by providing objectives, goals and continual monitoring (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 93).

The 'teamwork' value aimed to 'build an environment of open communication and feedback, sharing of ideas and best practice' (Team camp guide, 2004: 30) whilst creating '*a high performing team in a way that builds and sustains morale and productivity*' (Team camp guide, 2004:30). Team working became most evident through a reward and recognition scheme, referred to as 'World Aqua' (pseudonym). There was a 'Spontaneous Award' which was able to '*boost morale and make employees feel valuable and worthwhile*' and '*provide an opportunity for internal customers to recognise one another*' (Reward and Recognition Scheme, 2009). The award was based on rewarding individual team members who contributed something unique to the daily working environment such as '*making others smile', 'being helpful*' or '*contributing significantly to the achievement of goals*' (fieldnotes from an informal discussion). The individual would be nominated by their peers and provided with tickets which were accumulated and then used to purchase gifts such as a laptop bag, rucksack, drinks container or a watch. This illustrates how cultural reward systems elucidate the importance of replicating others due to the pressures associated with mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) which leads to a homogenising performance, as it is only by

doing so, that one will be rewarded. However, the 'enterprise self' is homogenised through the discourse of enterprise and this illustrates how mimetic isomorphism can lead to uniformity as a consequence of power and the regulation of behaviour amongst peers, which generates self-discipline.

Many of the individuals commented that the reward scheme enabled them to acknowledge each other laterally across the organization, rather than recognition being only hierarchical. This supports the notion that power is not only exercised in a top down manner (du Gay, 1996), but is also relational, as it is exercised amongst individuals, and is also productive of subjectivity. The scheme was deemed successful because it was based on tickets rather than monetary outlays, which some perceived would have destroyed teamwork, as individuals would compete against each other in order to benefit. The enterprising self can therefore be repressive of teamwork because rather than promoting collective working, it stifles it as individuals become concerned with achieving more than their colleagues, rather than actively sharing knowledge and support. As Bob, a team leader explained in a dubious and cynical tone:

> ...friendly competition is ok but then that doesn't usually involve lots of financial reward. It you introduce money to award teams…say a thousand pounds for the winner then they won't be so keen on helping each other…then they would be looking for ways to cheat and out do each other as individuals, even within the team…

Team work ensured that everyone's work was standardised, but this was not just because they mimetically copied each other to enhance their legitimacy, as traditional accounts of Institutional Theory would suggest. Instead, peer-based rewards masked the exercise of disciplinary power which further individualized employees, particularly because teamwork led

individuals to monitor themselves against others with the motto of trying to 'catch team members doing the right things' (Team camp guide, 2004: 123). Individuals' subjectivity is redefined in relation to the self-disciplining effects of the reward system, as they were forced to conform by being held personally accountable for their performance. Individuals did not discuss with me, nor did I find any information about the penalties for non-conformance, only the rewards to be gained for participating with enterprise.

The team working value resonates with Gung Ho where it 'challenged everyone in the plant to catch other people doing something right' (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 160). The working mentality in Aqua-Tilt fostered a subjectivity of *'never being able to do things half-heartedly'* (informal conversation with an employee) and although employees expressed pride and favoured the ability to recognise the work of their colleagues, it was also disheartening for individuals who never got nominated for an award. In the language of enterprise, such power individualizes employees by 'making it possible to measure gaps' (Foucault, 1977: 184 cited in McCabe, 2008: 376) and hence power is productive as it shapes how individuals should behave, for example, by working effectively to meet team objectives. It is also 'repressive' however, as it marginalises those who are unable to achieve the same outcome.

The individualising effects of power were exemplified when walking past the multiple open plan offices. Looking in through the open doors directed my attention to employees' desks where it became clear that successful individuals could use the gifts to distinguish themselves from others by displaying the rewards which became symbolic of the value and gratitude that others had for them. One of the items that I saw were plug-in speakers which were attached to

employees' computers and were the result of them receiving five tickets; this meant that five people had nominated them for the reward. The significance of the gifts was also due to the branded products being unable to be purchased outside the organization; this reinforced the importance attached to Aqua-Tilt's culture and the means by which it reconstituted employees. The reward scheme could simply be seen by institutional theorists, as a means by which employees sought to gain peer acceptance by replicating their counterparts who were being recognised for undertaking desirable behaviour (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Beckert (2010: 157) acknowledges that mimetically copying occurs when '…actors react to uncertainty with regard to the effect of institutional rules'. This implies that power is a possession which is exercised and can be used to encourage conformance, but little emphasis is placed on explaining how these actions are also driven by disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977). Willmott (1993b: 534) stated that '…corporate culture programmes are designed to deny or frustrate the development of conditions in which critical reflection is fostered. They commend the homogenization of norms and values within organizations'. A commodification of subjectivity occurred as every aspect of employees' lives within Aqua-Tilt was judged, assessed and rewarded in line with enterprise. A similar exercise of power can be applied to the wider macro environment because Aqua-Tilt does not exist as a stand-alone organization but is engaged in power relations as they replicate the work of gurus, literature and best practice guidelines originating from other organizations.

The 'value' of having values

It is not only employees who had to engage in training to learn about the cultural values, but there were team leaders' training sessions as well. When the sessions were initially explained

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to me, I was sceptical whether the individuals were joking. Having collated similar insights

from a variety of individuals, I began to realise that these activities did occur. For example,

one team leader who attended the training explained to me that they '*all involve drama and*

dressing up'. Reflecting on the latest workshop, Bob said:

> …it got to the evening session and then we all dressed up as penguins and started (chuckling) using this analogy of change through 'Our Iceberg is Melting' which is a book that was written which just uses the metaphor of melting ice and penguins to talk about the situation…there are some things that if they're changing and if your iceberg is melting you need to do something about it and the different characters were played by penguins to dramatise it…so we didn't like the drama but there we are again putting it in a different way, so we do like drama really…(laughing)

The reference to the book 'Our Iceberg is Melting' is particularly valuable as having read the

book, I realise the salient connection that it has to Aqua-Tilt's culture. The book, by John

Kotter and Holger Rathgeber (2006), is based on a fable. The fable is about a penguin colony

in Antarctica and it begins with an explanation of how a curious penguin discovers an iceberg

is melting which could have a potentially devastating threat to the colony, but no-one listens to

him. The fable is simple, yet powerful. It involves the penguins' resistance to change, their

heroic actions and the obstacles they face. The book provides individuals with methods that

they can use in their own organizations to plan a better future and to communicate a new

vision (Kotter and Rathgeber, 2006). In relation to Aqua-Tilt it became a normative cultural

technique used in the team leaders training session to reconstitute subjectivity. The values

used in the fable such as 'pulling together a team to guide the needed change' (ibid: 55) and

'creating and communicating the vision' and 'empowering others' (ibid: 69-81) resonates with

the values and practices of Aqua-Tilt. It also draws attention as to why drama is used so

extensively in Aqua-Tilt as it can facilitate communication and make discussions of complex

issues less difficult, confusing or threatening. Such cultural mechanisms enact disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977), as it cultivates empowered, creative and productive individuals which fit with the regime of enterprise (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). The fable is a 'technology of the self' (Foucault, 1988: 18) whereby individuals conduct themselves in line with appropriate behaviour to acquire wisdom.

The team leaders' training also involved cultivating what came to be known as the 'team spirit' and often when running a team building or training session, the leaders would dress up as an Indian father or as a fox. The reference to the Indian father relates back to Gung Ho. The Indian Father is used to *'see how the teams are doing and where people are on the journey'* (comments from fieldnotes). Explaining the culture to me, Bob appears to be describing it from the perspective of a third party, but I later find out he is actually talking about himself:

> …he's [*fox*] made of real stuff you know so its dead animal skin and some people don't like it, you know he's got a stuffed fox on his head…some people don't like it because it's furry. But removing that away from it, I mean it's just a fox. It's at least manmade, although I think he might have some ears on his head (laughing) (Bob, team leader)

This was made clearer when speaking to Sarah who said:

> …I think it's clever how they've done it and you do see people thinking 'gosh' when Bob does put some of his stuff on…you think 'what is he wearing that for' but it's what is actually said and how people actually engage with it [*that*] is what you kind of take away from them…it's a clever way to help you remember things with these characters and stuff because you do remember when Bob jumps out wearing a fox outfit! (laughing)

All of these practices had the intention of reinforcing the values of Aqua-Tilt but some employees were reluctant to endorse them because of the techniques used. For instance,

seeing their team leader dressed up as a fox may lead them to ridicule the process and perceive it as a joke, rather than take it seriously.

One event which was used to reinforce the values was recalled by three individuals who took it in turns to stand on a six foot wooden pole and fall backwards into the arms of their colleagues below. This aimed to improve trust relationships between teams and encourage them to rely on each other for support which could be replicated within their job roles. Employees expressed their concerns at participating in the task, especially about their fear of not being caught by their colleagues. Kim, who commented on her body weight throughout the interview, reflected back to the event, and laughing said:

> …six foot may not sound high but when you're up on the sixth step that means your head is eleven foot off the ground…me, being a big girl, I didn't want to do it. But my team told me to let me eyes follow the ceiling and I would just fall back, and so I did it, and they caught me!

Such events also began and ended with a *'team cheer'* (notes from informal discussion) where employees all huddled together, put their hands in the centre of the circle and cheered. This resonates with the 'team cheer' articulated in Gung Ho when Andy explained that 'Our old habit was to shuffle into work unsure of what was going on but knowing survival meant head down and keep quiet. Now our new habit is huddle and the cheer' (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 110).

Other practices to reinforce the values included making a video of 'University Challenge' where teams classified themselves into what one employee termed the *'cool ones and the geeks'* (comments from fieldnotes). The event was videoed so it could be replayed later and

employees said that they made adverts of Aqua-Tilt so that it '*looked like a real TV show'* and they used it to promote the organization's products. Unfortunately, despite requesting access to this video it was not made available. I was informed that it was held at the training and development headquarters and therefore could not be provided to me.

Working as a team in making the TV programme reinforced the values of *teamwork* and *commitment* as individuals were expected to work together but also remain motivated and show tenacity towards the task. This reinforced the enterprise discourse, which reflected '…the way that knowledge is institutionalised, shaping social practices and setting new practices in play' (du Gay, 1996: 43). Self-responsibility and accountability were enhanced as individuals were encouraged to achieve objectives which reinforce quality, commitment and loyalty to the organization. This relates back to Foucault (1977) whereby power is embedded and exercised in social practices and discourse which seeks to transform subjects into self-disciplined individuals.

All of the team camp activities were undertaken in order to foster an awareness of the organization's values and principles in the minds of employees. Seen from an Institutional Theory perspective, individuals experienced a mimetic pressure to participate because of the '…expectation of achieving superior results after existing [*practices*] are adopted' (Beckert, 2010: 155). This implies that power was exercised unilaterally because by failing to imitate others, may lead to '…social sanctions such as isolation or ridicule from other group members' (Mahalingam and Levitt, 2007: 525). The team camp activities also specified a way in which to collectively communicate the cultural expectations and encourage all

employees to '*think outside the box*' (comment from fieldnotes). This term was used by a Partnership facilitator in Knights and McCabe's (1999: 207) article to suggest that employees should think laterally, whilst implying that there were 'no limits to authority'. Within Aqua-Tilt, 'thinking outside the box' was related more specifically to taking risks and challenging the status quo, referenced in the team camp guide as the 'circle of habits' (Team camp guide, 2004: 29).

Power is not, however, the preserve of management who determine the conduct of individuals and dominate their actions. Instead, power relations are dynamic because discursive power is reproduced and sustained through subjects' own adoption and participation within it. Employees were encouraged to self-regulate by being autonomous, but this was always measured against the qualities associated with the enterprise discourse, stimulating the demand for excellent customer service and performance. As McCabe (2008: 71) stated 'The only 'outstanding' performance that the 'makers' had in mind…was a repetitive one'. They wanted everyone acting according to set criteria which promoted standardisation and similarity.

Conformity to the exercise of disciplinary power is reflected in Kim's comment, when she implies that she felt there was an expectation to be actively involved in all activities, along with her peers. She stated:

> In these team events we do, *you have to participate*; you can't just sit there, you have to contribute. It's not just about revealing things, but it's about team work, supporting others and this helps you to bring that back into the work you do at company level. It helps you work together on a daily basis

Kim's subjectivity is reconstituted by the engagement she has with both repressive and productive forms of power (Foucault, 1988). On the one hand, Kim is making the point that the team camp activities exercise 'repressive' power because they are not only directly related to communicating the organizational values of Aqua-Tilt to employees, but also there is an expectation that everyone will be involved. Her reference to *'you have to participate'* suggests that she was powerless to challenge the norms of Aqua-Tilt and was forced to comply. The self-disciplinary effects of this regime suggest that employees see themselves as 'victims' (Gabriel, 1995 cited in McCabe, 2004: 842) who have no choice but to participate. On the other hand, by participating, Kim and her colleagues are experiencing the effects of 'productive' power because they are being shaped and reconstituted into team players. That said, Foucault (1980: 142) recognised that resistance is part of the exercise of power and as will be seen in a later section of this chapter, employees do resist by using the corporate values to their own advantage.

The exercise of power through mimetic isomorphism is evident in the ways that Aqua-Tilt draws heavily on the earlier influence of Gung Ho. By drawing on a prominent culture which is already in place and which appears to be successful is a means by which Aqua-Tilt can ensure its practices are viewed as successful and credible. Lamertz and Heugens (2009: 1262), drawing on an Institutional Theory perspective, state that prominent firms, or in this case, cultures '…become the object of mimicry…and may exert a disproportionate influence on the adoption of…standards'. The reference to *'disproportionate influence'* reinforces how such practices are perceived as involving the exercise of power which is dominating as it directs and determines conduct (ibid). This neglects how power can also be exercised in a productive

way. Aqua-Tilt is not only providing a 'model' for other organizations to copy, but it is also copying the practices of its counterparts and the work of gurus. Aqua-Tilt's founders acquired the relevant information from discussing ideas and drawing on material which had already been produced by management gurus, such as Ken Blanchard. This also reflects a normative pressure, particularly because the culture is communicated through written materials, spoken dialogue or practical demonstrations. As Kondra and Hirst (2009: 51) note 'Culture becomes taken-for-granted with a 'meeting of minds'' and where Aqua-Tilt is concerned, this can be seen with the integration and utilisation of the principles associated with Gung Ho.

Enterprising…at the hands of management control?

The majority of employees discussed the team camp guide and the internal cultural events at Aqua-Tilt in a positive way. Descriptions included how such practices meant '*having a bit of a laugh*' and '*being really good fun*'. Bob (team leader) however expressed to me that sometimes the activities made people feel awkward and uncomfortable as employees were required to behave within the confinements of Aqua-Tilt's cultural boundaries. This was demonstrated when the managing director was forced to massage someone's hand and arm in order to develop positive relationships with his employees and colleagues. Hardly able to explain the situation due to laughing, I have selected the following lengthy quote by Bob to illustrate what he meant:

> …you know it gets a bit touchy feely [*in the team camps*] and so we get new people together and we talk about this idea of teamwork, what does it mean and everybody knows what it means…one of the key things is doing things for each other…helping each other out. Right, so then I say what we're going to do is massage the person's shoulders in front of you [*showing me as if he is massaging*] so we all have a bit of a laugh because you can't do it without laughing (chuckling). So we get them to massage each other's shoulders and so that's the first step towards teamwork, innit? But you know, I remember our MD, this big macho type (laughing) we did this session on one of

the camps of hand and arm massage. You can imagine that massaging male to female was fine, but massaging male to male (laughing), yeah, well, he wasn't too happy about that, not too happy about doing that at all! I had to tell him to remember *one of our values is courage*, so *what have you got to lose*, it's only us in the room…

This extract reflects the relationship between cultural values, gender and performativity. Drawing on the work of Butler (1993), it can be argued that gender is 'performed' through continuous repetition of actions which regulate and sustain our membership of groups. Cultural techniques can compel and repel particular ways of performing gender (Hancock and Tyler, 2007) and in the process, bring into effect 'an idealized, gendered subjectivity' (ibid: 514). Gagliardi (1996) argued that employees' bodies act as material signifiers whereby organizational reality is perceived through the intimacy of the senses, rather than through the use of cognitive faculties.

We can see from the extract that a particular type of gender performance is displayed using a technique (hand and arm massage) that would be associated with feminine attributes involving touch, intimacy and emotion. The reminder to the MD that there's '*nothing to lose*' meant he would have found it difficult to refuse to participate. Refusal would also demonstrate his lack of commitment to the organization as the value system 'produced' (Foucault, 1980) enterprising individuals who saw no conflict between their interests and those of Aqua-Tilt.

The cultural activities are underpinned by autonomy, choice and freedom, but when it comes to implementation the opposite is often evident. As Alvesson and Willmott (2002) argue, managerial techniques can mobilise employee identity through a range of cultural media which results in:

…not only instrumental compliance but also increased, serial identification with corporate values, albeit that such 'buy-in' is conditional upon their compatibility with other sources of identity formation and affirmation (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002: 622).

And as Salaman and Storey (2008: 317) note:

It [*enterprise*] is a mechanism for achieving the desired consequences of power, 'at a distance', mediated through the self-regulating capacities of individuals and organizations acting enterprisingly

Employees therefore continue to be regulated, even if it is the result of self-discipline. Peters and Waterman (1982: 321) however, argue that there is no contradiction between control and the achievement of autonomy. Organizations can be both 'loose and tight' meaning that if all members are encouraged to be enterprising then cost, efficiency, autonomy and quality 'become words that belong on the same side of the coin' (Peters and Waterman, 1982: 321).

Disciplinary power through enterprise increases conformance as individuals participate and engage with norms which leads to self-discipline. This can be related to a quote from George Orwell's (1949) *Nineteen Eighty Four* which stated that 'asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in the bed…there is no escape' (Orwell, 1949: 29). This is not to imply that power is totalizing, but that the enterprising attributes within Aqua-Tilt became part of employees' identity and working life.

Forced control or self-control?

Whilst the core values appealed to the enhancement of self-responsibility and promoted freedom, there were on-going forms of monitoring experienced by Aqua-Tilt's employees. For example, the tour of the call centre's customer service department highlighted that

performance targets and surveillance of individuals were pervasive, with a screen showing digital green head phones on the screen above each team's work table. This indicated how many calls were waiting to be answered and how long each employee had spent on the phone. Although the calls had to be dealt with efficiently in order to increase customer satisfaction, this had to be undertaken in the shortest possible time in order that other customers were not left waiting. While this approach to performance monitoring was at the level of the team, the headquarters in Lichtenstein had recently implemented a global computer system which produced the 'norm' (Foucault, 1977) against which individuals were rated. I questioned Ronnie (team leader) on the extent to which he thought 'control' was evident in Aqua-Tilt. He hesitated a lot whilst answering but finally said:

> Well, there are, urrm [*hesitated*] yes, I suppose there are. Yes, we've got this pressure to perform and we are controlled in GB by the global computer systems which gives you the ability to have lots of control

He continued:

> …we have a global system which gives you lots of control so our boss sitting in [*headquarters*] can see what Jimmy did yesterday, during his day, can look at the number of calls he made, who he went to see, and what he said…

Ronnie was not keen to discuss the control aspects evident in Aqua-Tilt; this was especially so as he had spent a large part of the interview and follow up impromptu chats telling me about how much the culture increased autonomy and flexibility for employees. For example, he stated in earlier discussions that: *'it's all based on self-responsibility, we want people to be open and honest and not be controlled; the ideal world would be just living by the values'*. Ronnie's subjectivity was based on what he believed characterised Aqua-Tilt and it involved values such as 'empowerment', 'freedom' and 'autonomy'; not surprisingly they were the

corporate values. From his reply above, it indicates that despite these values, control was still present. Although Ronnie tried to redirect this by placing the blame on the global computer system, this is still part of Aqua-Tilt's operations and does not minimise its impact on employees. Following Foucault (1979: 181), the targets and global computer system organized individuals into a hierarchy which meant that 'The distribution according to ranks or grade has a double role: it marks gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes; but it also punishes and rewards'. This is an inherent aspect of enterprise because although it advocates autonomy, this only occurs through individuals self-regulating their conduct. As Hannah (sales co-ordinator), explained in an informal discussion, the monitoring resulted in:

measuring yourself against yourself but also alongside other people doing the same job

Hannah regulates her own performance having internalised required standards of behaviour, but in doing so, also judges herself against others. This reflects mimetic isomorphism as it indicates that employees would respond to the need to be viewed as successful and conforming, by replicating their peers' behaviour. As Scott (2008b: 57) points out, 'Actors who align themselves with prevailing [*practices*] are likely to feel competent and connected, whereas those who are at odds are regarded, at best, as "clueless", and at worst, as "crazy". This reinforces the traditional view taken by institutional theorists (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008b) who would perceive Hannah's replication of others as illustrative of her reducing uncertainty and ensuring that she is performing successfully. This account has failed to recognise, however, how the measuring of ones' behaviour also demonstrates how performance is tied to employees' identity in terms of how they represented and accounted for

their sense of self. The use of measurement tactics and the on-going forms of individualised or collective surveillance (whether they are core competency frameworks which exist as part of training and development, or the global computer system itself) all indicate that disciplinary power is exercised through the enterprise discourse. This is similar to the information Panopticon (Zuboff, 1988), because individuals' behaviour is matched against set criteria. Foucault (1977: 200) stated that 'He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication'. That is to say, individuals are placed in a position of visibility which seeks to guarantee order and 'assures the automatic functioning of power' (Foucault, 1977: 201). Power individualises (Foucault, 1977) by separating and marking individuals out from one another. Employees are brought under the gaze of the organization which makes them disciplined and knowable. Viewing the enterprise discourse in this way also extends the range of control, as it moves from being behaviourally related to that which is based on attitudes, values and self-conceptions (Fournier, 1998). This enriches our understanding of mimetic isomorphism because power is productive of subjectivity, as it creates individuals who are self-actualising and entrepreneurial and reinforces how despite government's objectives of enhancing choice and autonomy, control is still evident as individuals regulate themselves through the internalisation of enterprising qualities (Heelas, 1991).

Not all employees discussed the organizational norms and values in the same way. When I prompted Pauline (marketing manager) to discuss what it felt like working within the boundaries of the culture, she replied saying '*I never think of it as working within set parameters, it doesn't ever feel like that you know, it doesn't feel like a restriction, it's just a*

sensible way of dealing with issues I suppose' (laughs). There was limited recognition that the culture is repressive or constraining, which resonates with the Gung Ho culture, where one of the employees working in the successful 'Finishing Department' stated that *'It's not hard work when you're enjoying it. I used to work hard at my last job but I've been here five years and it doesn't seem like hard work at all'* (Blanchard and Bowles, 1998: 112). Reconstituting subjectivity was evident through individuals' immersion into Aqua-Tilt's enterprising discourse, particularly when they described the organization in line with their own feelings and preferences (Bergström and Knights, 2006). Melanie (export manager) was one of many employees who told me how her enthusiasm was at an all time high: *'I've been at Aqua-Tilt for fourteen years and to still have such enthusiasm now shows something. I sometimes feel I'm living my life by it and there is a feeling of being empowered; I love it here'.*

Melanie was very bubbly and motivated and this came across when she discussed the culture with me. I met her at venues outside of Aqua-Tilt and not once did her enthusiasm about the company wane. This is exactly the kind of attitude that Aqua-Tilt were attempting to promote. Collinson's (2003: 536) classificatory system would describe Melanie as a 'conformist self' whereby she had shaped her own identity wholly in line with the cultural values and was conforming to what was expected by the organization, thus reconstituting her subjectivity. Kim (sales co-ordinator) reinforced this when she said:

> People have said to me that *'you are Aqua-Tilt'* as you represent fully the company's values. I think that once you embody it, you begin to love it… (discussion from fieldnotes).

The reference to *'you are Aqua-Tilt'* suggests that Kim could be a clone of the company. She endorses its norms and values which, from a Foucauldian lens suggests that disciplinary power

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has reconstituted her subjectivity as a committed, self-disciplined individual who internalises acceptable standards of behaviour (Foucault, 1977). In Kim's case, being referred to in this way by others, reassured her that she was working effectively and that her actions in support of the company were being recognised. The pressure to sustain this identity however, can increase uncertainty and insecurity as Kim would always be searching for constant affirmation. She began to question her conduct when a customer referred to her as a *'Rottweiler'* and her response was *'that's not who I am, that's not how I wanted to be perceived'*.

In contrast to the emphasis on autonomy, I was informed that due to the lack of trust that management had in their employees, there were plans to implement tracking devices in employees' cars to deal with the insufficient private mileage which they were paying back to the company. Having asked Martin (sales director) about the concept of 'freedom' that was referred to so extensively throughout the team camp guide, it was expressed that:

> ...*freedom is good*, sales people generally have quite a lot of freedom generally, don't they? But […] you know (chuckling)…apart from the fact that errm…we may put trackers in their car, but that's another battle (whispered)

The reference to *'freedom is good'* can be related to Willmott's (1993b) article *'Strength is Ignorance, Slavery is Freedom'*. He borrows Orwell's (1949) notion of 'doublethink' to argue that despite the appeal for autonomy, it is constrained due to the monocultural conditions which prevent competing values and interests. Willmott (1993b) illuminates the dark side of this process by demonstrating how culture can be subjugating and totalitarian. This resonates with the practices of Aqua-Tilt as 'Far from lifting or diluting management control, corporate culturalism promotes its extension through the design of value systems and the management of

the symbolic and emotional aspects of organizational membership' (Willmott, 1993b: 541).

Freedom in Aqua-Tilt is supplemented with on-going forms of control which ensure that the '…practical autonomy of employees is dedicated to the realization of core corporate values…' (Willmott, 1993b: 528). This indicates that homogenization can occur due to the exercise of productive power whereby individuals are encouraged to internalize norms and values which resonates with those of the organization; this is a different understanding compared to institutional theorists who argue that '…the driving force behind mimetic isomorphism is the legitimation that an institutional [*practice*] finds within an organizational field' (Beckert, 2010: 158). This reinforces how institutional theorists have tended to remain committed to the view that mimetic isomorphism is driven simply by the need to enhance legitimacy, which neglects how it can also be the result of exercising power to create self-regulating subjects.

"We're just having some fun": 'Resistance through Distance' (Collinson, 1994)

The majority of Aqua-Tilt employees seemed to embrace the cultural framework, despite recognising that established practices were at times circumvented. During my visits to Aqua-Tilt, camaraderie existed amongst employees and stories were recalled of numerous events which took place inside and outside the organization which indicated that individuals were able to challenge the norms and values of Aqua-Tilt. The enterprise discourse is not to be viewed in a totalising way, which is how Fournier and Grey (1999: 117) discussed much of du Gay's writings (1992, 1996), implying that he 'fail[ed] to account, or even allow, for resistance or alternatives to enterprise'. Instead, enterprise can be seen as one discourse among many and Storey et al (2005) examines workers' responses to the enterprise discourse. They found that individuals '…did not merely absorb passively the discourses and practices to

which they were exposed' (Storey et al, 2005: 1050) but instead adopted some enterprising strategies, whilst criticising others.

At Aqua-Tilt, resistance was most evident where the reward and recognition scheme 'World Aqua' was concerned. Employees did not always fulfil the requirements of the scheme as they often decided to reward everyone in their team, rather than just those individuals who deserved it. Ross (sales co-ordinator) described to me:

> …integrity is the golden one really you know… if we're sitting round in our team (looking at the table)…well there's eight of us and we say look at these [*World Aqua*] tickets, we've all got four each…now the idea is that you give them to people that have done something for you ok, but we could sit round here and say look, you give me your four, I'll give you my four…I know there will be some teams that do that..

Ross indicated the resistance that employees showed to the reward scheme but also how they were breaking a number of the cultural values; particularly 'integrity' and 'commitment'. Although teamwork was demonstrated, it was not applied in line with the norm which senior management would have desired. On the one hand, individuals' resistance could minimise the uncomfortable feeling which occurred when some individuals were rewarded more regularly than their peers. This also reduced favouritism as it ensured that individuals who were disliked by others, but deserved recognition, were still nominated. On the other hand, this demonstrates that resistance can be subtle and does not have to be overt or organised.

Willmott (1993b) borrowed Berger and Luckmann's (1967) notion of 'cool alternation' to explain how employees can subjectively 'distance' themselves from the roles they play, which gives them a feeling of being outside the demands of the organization. Fleming and Spicer (2003: 167) support this by stating: '…when the dis-identification process is enacted it can

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establish an alluring 'breathing space' where people feel untrammelled by the subjective demands of the organization, but which ironically permits them to behave as an efficient and meticulous member of [*the*] team...' This is demonstrated in the example above with the rewarding of tickets to team members; employees are resisting Aqua-Tilt's norms and values by circumventing requirements, but at the same time, reinforcing the values by acting in a manner which management had deemed appropriate (i.e. rewarding tickets to team members).

Enterprise is not implemented coherently and accepted by all employees, it is instead mediated by individuals' own interests and priorities (Salaman and Storey, 2008). This indicates that disciplinary power can be resisted and this challenges the perceived strength of mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 1991; Radaelli, 2000; Ashworth et al, 2005; Wilson and McKiernan, 2011) because similarity and conformance is not always the resulting outcome. Power is not only coercive, but also can be exercised relationally amongst individuals. For instance, employees may resist and exercise power as a result of a lack of 'cultural fit' which can be used to justify inappropriate behaviour at corporate events which took place outside of Aqua-Tilt. In one particular situation involving a Christmas dinner party, individuals were provided with free drinks for the first hour. This resulted in as much alcohol being consumed as possible by some individuals resulting in fighting amongst them, who were then perceived by senior management as '*violent*' and '*uncontrollable*'. The above accords to Orwell's (1949) discussion of Oceania where individuals socialized into the corporate culture are '...expected to have no private emotions and no respites from enthusiasm . . . the speculations which might possibly induce a sceptical or rebellious attitude are killed in advance by his early-acquired inner discipline' (Orwell, 1949: 220).

The moves towards so called 'invisible' resistance is discussed by Fleming and Sewell (2002) who adopted the concept of 'Švejkism' to articulate the more nuanced means of employee opposition which occur in contemporary workplaces. Individuals aimed to balance their needs with those of the organization through 'disengagement' (Fleming and Sewell, 2002). They adopted practices such as irony and cynicism which resulted in 'the fantasy of a hierarchy turned upside down' (Fleming and Sewell, 2002: 865). The enterprise discourse and the requirement for employees to 'buy into' (Fournier, 1998: 62) and pursue various enterprising attributes, were challenged by those individuals who sought to distance themselves from the corporate values. The distribution of the 'spontaneous award' to everyone within the team, rather than to those who had performed well, can be viewed through the lens of these alternative modes of resistance. Rather than rejecting outright the organizational value of *'thanking each other'*, viewed through the lens of the Švejkism (Fleming and Sewell, 2002) employees rewarded 'thanks' to each other in a way which ridiculed the system. This meant that individuals undermined the authority of the process as they were subverting and challenging the established norm, which was based on rewarding only those individuals who deserved it. Resistance is rarely discussed by institutional theorists who appear to assume that isomorphism is not something which can be challenged. Organizations are reluctant to change, particularly because homogenisation provides them with the security that they are undertaking practices which are legitimate and credible. DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 65) argue that 'Organizations may change their goals or develop new practices, and new organizations enter the field. But in the long run, organizational actors…construct themselves an environment that constrains their ability to change…'. This further reinforces how power from an Institutional

Theory perspective is seen as a constraint which is exercised in order to maintain homogenisation.

Leading on from this, was also a situation that occurred on my second visit to Aqua-Tilt when I was introduced to five male computer specialists who shared an open plan office. The office consisted of multiple desks located apart from each other and they were surrounded by a ring of other independent offices where the employees had initially worked before being asked to move into the main room. One individual commented that in the past they could '*have some fun'* and one of them laughed, saying *'it's not very good in this big office, you can't fall asleep now!'* (comments from fieldnotes). The individual concerned said that he used to cover his office door with a poster and pull the phone out of the wall in order to '*gain back some free time'* , which he said enabled him to catch up on his sleep. This was now not possible, as departmental managers would be able to enter the open plan office without warning, which meant that individuals were more likely to get caught if they were not working. Despite the cultural values being communicated to all employees in order to instigate loyalty and homogenise the workforce, mimetically copying others does not automatically result in conformance. This demonstrates that power is not only exercised coercively, but is relational, as it occurs amongst and between individuals (Foucault, 1977).

From the informal discussions I had with individuals, a lot of emphasis was placed on '*teamwork pranks'* which became a core feature of working at Aqua-Tilt. These were commonplace at corporate events, particularly when they were directed at top managers and others who employees were not fond of. For example, on one occasion an individual

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responsible for arranging the seating plan at a large dinner gathering run by Aqua-Tilt, rearranged the name labels so that they created a '*naughty table*' (comments from fieldnotes). This consisted of employees who aimed to create what was described as '*mischief and banter throughout the evening*' (comments from fieldnotes). These examples show that despite the pervasiveness and attempts to create a clear alignment between individuals and the organizational culture, there was the potential for employees to create 'unmanaged spaces' (Bolton and Boyd, 2003: 297) with humour often being a central feature. Collinson (1988) discussed how humour was used on the shop floor of a factory as a form of resistance, which enabled individuals to separate themselves from their monotonous working practices. It also secured a masculine identity which reinforced their sense of distance from management. In a similar way, the male employees at Aqua-Tilt were able to challenge the cultural norms and values by engaging in 'mischief and banter' and although not openly expressed, it can be predicted that humour was also a means of illustrating one's acceptance into the group. Those who did not conform may have faced ridicule and exclusion.

These instances of resistance can be related to Collinson's (1994) notion of 'resistance through distance' as employees separated themselves from the pervasiveness of the culture. This advances our understanding of institutional theory because in the context of mimetic isomorphism, it demonstrates how individuals attempted to differentiate themselves or create a divergence from what was essentially a homogenising practice, which inhibited alternative forms of action. When a situation arose where specific organizational frameworks and guidelines were more relaxed, transient moments of individuality became possible. Individuals

could be argued to have subverted conventional boundaries of acceptable behaviour, thus challenging the homogenising pressure which the cultural framework created.

'If we don't do it then no-one else will': fulfilling the 'lighter touch' gap

Having provided an insight into Aqua-Tilt's culture, it is important to contextualise it within the wider macro environment. This recognises the relationship between regulatory policies which enhances our understanding of how the culture can fulfil a potential gap which has been left void by government. Respondents with whom I engaged and those deemed as compliant within the passive fire industry, perceive that the UK government has taken a 'lighter touch' approach towards regulation (UKAS, 2004: 1). This has left a vacuum, because government is refusing to take responsibility for ensuring compliance, which suggests that they expect other mechanisms to fulfil this gap. This raises many interesting questions, such as what these mechanisms are, what their role is and what effect they have on the overall regulatory framework. Applying this to Aqua-Tilt, it could be argued that its culture is fulfilling the regulatory gap, created by deregulation.

Although other forms of control exist, such as trade associations and certification laboratories, these bodies do not exercise mandatory control. As discussed in Chapter 6, it is not compulsory for organizations to either be a member of a trade body or to test their products at a third party certification laboratory. There remains a significant lack of enforcement and this was an on-going point of discussion amongst the research respondents. I began to reflect on the discussions I had with individuals in Aqua-Tilt and the observations that I had undertaken, and considered whether fulfilling the 'lighter touch' vacuum lies at the heart of the

organization's culture. This is reinforced by an underlying 'moral' discourse as Aqua-Tilt employees were encouraged to enact an identity which led them to be committed to higher standards of safety. As Hannah (sales co-ordinator) explained to me:

> Aqua-Tilt has kind of trained so many companies within the industry…these companies are then able to have compliance just by potentially using our products. We've been heavily involved in educating the industry and we want to make a difference. I think it comes from this self-responsibility we have for things, and you know, we have quite a big influence in the construction industry, especially educating customers…

Hannah indicates that Aqua-Tilt are so heavily involved in training their customers that it creates an osmosis effect which enables best practice procedures to be transferred and spread to different institutional sites. Institutional theorists would analyse this as evidence of mimetic isomorphism because 'best practice' models are replicated by customers which leads to a process of 'policy transfer' (Radaelli, 2000: 26) where "…knowledge about policies in one setting is used to establish similar arrangements in another". From a Foucauldian perspective, Hannah's quote can also be indicative of her engaging in a process of 'self-responsibility' which is one of the enterprising principles of Aqua-Tilt. Disciplinary power is exercised through the cultural norms and values which reconstitute employees' subjectivity whereby they are required to take responsibility by using their initiative. Aqua-Tilt employees appeared to see themselves as 'elites' which also became a basis for self-discipline and promoted a sense of autonomy. Like Kunda's (1992: 91) high tech workers, this led individuals 'to invest heavily not only their time and effort, but also their thoughts, feelings and conceptions of themselves'. This not only reinforced the importance of employees' jobs in terms of contributing to improving life safety and building stability, but maintained their commitment to ensuring objectives were fulfilled, even in situations of uncertainty. This became apparent when discussing aspects of the team camp guide provided to new recruits. Near to the front of

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the book was a diagram of a compass which had the core values inside it, pointing towards 'North'. When I asked Ross (sales co-ordinator) to explain the reason for this, he replied:

> …[*when*] you have nothing to navigate by, a compass tells you where North is. And we think when we are in a difficult situation, a lonely situation…we have to rely on that compass. Who are we? What do we believe? Do we believe we are doing the right thing for the right reason?...And sometimes that's all we have

This was supported by Kim (sales co-ordinator) who stated:

> …it's about direction…we use it when we're lost. If you have a compass it will tell you which way to go so if you're not quite sure what to do you just go back to the values…so you say well what shall I do in this situation? For example courage, you know, do I need courage to do this…well yes sometimes you do, if [*you're*] going to be the type that has a go at things…

This links to Stephen Covey et al, and his book 'First Things First' (1994) which involves improving time management and principled leadership based on a set of 'true-north' principles and values. Covey et al (1994) argue that basic values such as justice, honesty, integrity and trust should always be present, just like 'north' on a compass. This builds a culture whereby everybody executes effective work based around a desirable vision. Senior managers at Aqua-Tilt adopted the compass to achieve similar objectives promoted by Covey. This replication not only produces homogenized practices, as DiMaggio and Powell (1983) would claim, but it also places organizations in a visible disciplinary gaze as it aims to be a 'model' which others can replicate. It creates a normalizing judgement (Foucault, 1977) as other organizations and individuals measure themselves against Aqua-Tilt. The use of the compass enhanced understanding of the interrelationships between the culture and the lack of government intervention at the macro level (see Diagram 2).

Diagram 2

Employees referred to the compass and the associated core values as helping to *'put them back on the straight and narrow'*. The value of *courage,* for example, was used to deal with complex decisions which customers may have posed. In a state of uncertainty, produced by deregulation and a lack of mandatory control, employees drew on knowledge, support and guidance to ensure that they were conducting themselves in an appropriate manner. Institutional theorists, such as DiMaggio and Powell (1983), would argue that this indicates the spread of mimetic isomorphism as the uncertainty created by deregulation leads organizations to copy what appears to be desirable conduct and reduces the extent to which they have to think about how best to approach a situation; copying others is arguably an easier option. DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 75) argue that '…participants find it easier to mimic other organizations than to make decisions on the basis of systematic analyses of goals since such analyses would prove painful or disruptive'. Beckert (2010: 155) supports this by noting that 'One factor contributing to the attraction of institutional imitation is that imitation circumvents at least some of the learning costs associated with the design of new institutional

rules'. These quotes suggest that mimetic isomorphism, from an Institutional Theory perspective, leads to the replication of templates or models to ensure successful working practices are maintained. The exercise of power in this process appears to involve individuals being '…pulled toward the same institutional models' (Beckert, 2010: 157) which suggests that power is perceived as constraining or dominating, rather than productive and relational.

The sense of annoyance about the lack of statutory regulation from government was common place, particularly among the compliant sectors of the industry. Individuals acted like passionate practitioners who perceived themselves as '*life savers*' with Elaine (trade association consultant) explaining that individuals with whom she worked and had helped to train, saw themselves in this light:

> …they got absolutely sold on the idea that they were making life safety equipment, that they were as important as blood donors, life guards on the beach. They were doing something that affected life safety and they became the best inspectors of their own line. They would reject stuff that might otherwise have just been 'oh well it's alright' they became really hot on everything to do with the production line

The importance of ensuring the correct installation and manufacturing of passive fire protection was essential because it made a significant contribution to life and safety (see chapter 1). The commitment to statutory regulation was however not shared by the non-compliant sectors of the industry. This reinforces how mimetic isomorphism does not always lead to homogenisation because the 'cowboys' purposefully do not replicate the behaviour of their counterparts, but instead, engage in deviant practices which distinguish them. This also lends support to how a Foucauldian lens can enrich our understanding of mimic isomorphism because it points to how power exists relationally amongst different individuals in a power

relationship, rather than simply being imposed from a single source of authority. Implementing regulation would remove the 'cowboys' and destroy their business as inspection would be more effective and widespread. This approach would not be a favourable strategy to those sectors of the industry that were exercising a discourse of 'denial' and wanted to cheat. Their livelihood is based on the ability to win projects at a cheap price (see chapter 6). As Philip (contractor) explained:

> It's not a good industry but it's all because it's not regulated. Get legislation and get regulation and I think it would literally go overnight because the cowboys couldn't do what they are doing. They'd be out of business over night but until that happens, it's just going to go round and round

While an insight into the macro level stage of analysis drew attention to these debates, by focusing on the micro analysis it recognises how individuals used their self-discipline to instigate control where none was present at the macro level. I am not implying that Aqua-Tilt consciously implemented the culture to ensure compliance within the industry, but now that it is in place, it appears that the culture is being drawn upon to contribute to improving and enhancing regulatory control. Macro problems, such as deregulation can be 'pulled down' to the level of the individual, meaning that government can be interpreted, analysed and then an outcome can be pursued (Powell and Colyvas, 2008: 282). This illustrates 'government at a distance' (Rose, 1999: 49) as government rationalities and objectives are translated into the desires of individuals and government relies on self-disciplined individuals who have internalised and adopted the values as their own.

The culture provided Aqua-Tilt and its employees with an in-built philosophy, driven by specific norms and values, which entailed a focus on '*doing things right'* (comments from

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informal discussion). When I asked a group of individuals whether '*doing things right'* also constituted being *honest*, one replied stating: '*it's not about honesty, it's the way Aqua-Tilt is run'*. Any practices which reflected suitable behaviour and desirable attitudes towards performance and safety, appeared to be explicitly bound up with the culture of the organization. The significance of this was that it was reinforced through the training and development programmes, and the culture journey promoted the values, purpose and mission of the organization. The culture was also directly focused on ensuring that legislative requirements were fulfilled correctly amongst customers.

Making customers comply: the role of Aqua-Tilt in encouraging compliance

Customer focus can be read as an instrumental objective because by ensuring that customers are compliant and receiving the necessary support and advice from Aqua-Tilt, they are more likely to continue purchasing products, thus improving Aqua-Tilt's sales, but the example provided below and the explanation that I received from respondents indicated that there was more than a 'revenue-seeking' aim underlying their decisions. From an Institutional Theory perspective, the replication of Aqua-Tilt by its customers, suggests the existence of mimetic isomorphism because 'Organizations tend to model themselves after similar organizations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 70). As Gary, (fire engineer), explained:

> Part of our job is about educating…it's not just educating about Aqua-Tilt products though, it's about educating to *do it right*. So you know it's not just saying 'buy Aqua-Tilt, buy Aqua-Tilt' (chuckles), we'll always be saying 'use third party approved products, use third party approved installers' because by us saying that we're helping to raise the standard bar in the industry.

The emphasis that Gary places on *'doing it right'* is similar to that stated by other respondents, in terms of attempting to improve procedures for the good of the industry.

Joe (fire engineer) acknowledged that although improving the reputation and enhancing the sales of the company were important, this is alongside a genuine concern with checking and advising other companies in the industry. Joe reinforced this when he argued that Aqua-tilt had a significant involvement in improving the wider macro environment. He stated:

> …there's no other company that's bigger than us. So our role in GB, we try and…make sure we're doing everything right and that everything is as it should be. We try and sort of drive the market forward.

Gary supported this:

> …there's not really a huge amount out there [*advice*], there's no marketing campaigns, there's nothing that really drives people...there's nothing to educate people out there, so if manufacturers aren't doing it or the laboratories aren't doing it, well, trade bodies aren't doing it, nobody's doing it…There's a feeling in Aqua-Tilt that it's kind of us that have got to try and drive these things forward coz nobody else is going to… you know Government are not gonna drive things along they'll just kind of let things go as they have been doing…

Both of these quotes reflect the lack of faith that Aqua-Tilt employees have in the government's approach to deregulation and enforcement. Both Gary and Joe are aware of how little support and advice is available to companies who are expected to comply. In the second quote, Gary even points to the insufficient use of trade bodies and certification laboratories who themselves are unable to effectively improve standards and safety for the benefit of the industry. This resonates with what was discussed in Chapter 6 in terms of organizations using enterprising qualities to their own advantage by participating in what compliant members of

the industry referred to as the discourse of 'denial'. Aqua-Tilt decided to develop guidance for their customers which ranged from what tools to use, to advice on how to calculate complex 'daily vibration exposure' equations in an attempt to improve health and safety. The replication of practices by Aqua-Tilt's customers supports DiMaggio and Powell's (1991: 69-70) argument that '…the wider the population of personnel employed by, or customers served by, an organization, the stronger the pressure felt [*to copy*]…other organizations'. The explanation of mimetic isomorphism from an Institutional Theory perspective neglects how copying is also due to the exercise of disciplinary power which renders customers as self-disciplining subjects and this provides an alternative lens through which to explore how homogenisation occurs.

Aqua-Tilt prides itself on being 'close to the customer' (du Gay and Salaman, 1992) which Peters and Waterman (1982: 32) recognised as being 'the most stringent means of self-discipline'. They argued that 'If one is paying attention to what the customer is saying, being blown in the wind by the customer's demands, one may be sure he (sic) is sailing a tight ship' (1982: 32). This can also be related to improved productivity and efficiency as focusing on the customer – be that internal or external, means that customers' demands are met, quality is improved and a 'win-win' situation is achievable (du Gay and Salaman, 1992: 624). From a Foucauldian perspective, when customers replicate the practices of Aqua-Tilt it can be argued that it reflects a process whereby they are judged against the 'norm' and their behaviour standardised as the power being exercised through mimetic copying can lead to homogenisation. This advances our understanding of the account provided by institutional theorists such as DiMaggio and Powell (1991:69), who point out that the 'model'

organization, '…may be unaware of the modelling or may have no desire to be copied; it merely serves as a convenient source of practices that the borrowing organization may use'. This view fails to acknowledge that the 'model' is the result of an exercise of power which individualises and normalises organizations which fall within its 'visible gaze' (Townley, 1998).

Trained sales employees act as intermediaries to explain and provide much sought after advice and support to ensure that the customers understand what is required of them. Melanie (export manager) stated the following:

> …Aqua-Tilt are so close to the customer, that we can see how these products are working and ask for feedback and do customer acceptance tests…what is going to help [*them*] to be productive in what he wants to achieve and to comply with the legislation so we tested all of our products on job type situations. This ensures that they're able to have compliance, not just by using the same tools, but by us educating them about how it all works…we've helped them to select the right drill bit and to make sure they're not increasing the vibration level. It all comes down to the final detail but *we want to make a difference in the industry…* (emphasis added)

At one level Melanie's quote relates back to the customer-orientated mission statement which reinforces the importance of ensuring that the customer is a core focus within the organization. Employees said that they felt embarrassed when they saw the incorrect installation of passive fire products or the inappropriate usage of tools. As Joe (fire engineer) explained: *'it can be embarrassing for us sometimes, we go in trying to help people and advise them, but then we look up at the building on site and cringe; we can point at things and say 'that's not been done right'.*

If an incorrect fitting or unsafe instalment was found by Aqua-Tilt employees, emphasis would turn to the culture to ensure it was corrected. The most memorable comment was made by Kim (sales co-ordinator) who in an informal discussion said *'they're (Government) leaving it to people who have a conscience and Aqua-Tilt has a conscience; I'm working to save lives, that's why I'm doing it properly'.* Kim's reference to *'they're leaving it to people who have a conscience'* implies that employees had begun to establish a direct link between Aqua-Tilt and improved standards/compliance. Employees often expressed things such as '*the culture and values becomes a guide, if we don't know where to turn, we refer back to the values'.* Aqua-Tilt's values were a source of guidance, as well as a means of encouraging others to adopt it through exercising power. Hannah (sales co-ordinator) reinforced this:

> The Government sets policy but they don't implement. Implementation is the problem, that's where I think there is a gap. There are not enough inspections, there are problems with enforcement. Our culture is what drives it…

The role of Aqua-Tilt's culture in improving the standards of the industry is evident in this quote. I also asked Daniel (consultant) whether he thought that an enterprising organizational culture was able to fill a gap left by government. His response was enlightening:

> Yes, I think it's a response, the only response actually that you can do because the government, you know, they're not providing the legislation. You know what else can companies do? If you don't do anything then you're letting anarchy take place and the industry…loses any reputation for quality so it's probably self-destructive at that point…

This was reinforced by Paul (director, manufacturer) who is a customer of Aqua-Tilt and had replicated their cultural approach, suggesting mimetic isomorphism. From an Institutional Theory approach, Paul has adopted an approach which was '…not only perceived as

successful and morally adequate but also reduced the decision load with regard to selecting *which* institutional design was suitable…' (Beckert, 2010: 155; emphasis in original). This suggests that Aqua-Tilt was replicated because of its perceived success in the industry. Paul implied that if organizations were forced to adopt and comply with a cultural framework like Aqua-Tilt's then it would improve compliance:

> That's what we've got here in passive fire…systems are applicable to some companies and not to others so you try and get that culture [*pointing to the culture book of Aqua-Tilt*] filtered through…but Government ought to say it is mandatory because then everybody would be working to something like this [*pointing to the culture booklet*]

Paul is indicating that due to the lack of intervention by the government, a cultural approach such as that of Aqua-Tilt's, would be a suitable substitute. Viewed from the perspective of Institutional Theory, Aqua-Tilt's influence within the industry as a 'model' would be seen by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) as indicating that they have the potential to reduce uncertainty because they are mimicked by other organizations as a convenient way of ensuring legitimacy. No recognition is given to how this process can also be due to the exercise of power. An alternative understanding is that Aqua-Tilt has used its culture to exercise disciplinary power in an attempt to improve the lack of enforcement instigated from the government. Understood from a Foucauldian lens, replication can be seen as being due to the exercise of relational and productive power, as replicating Aqua-Tilt's culture leads to a benchmarking process. Organizations experienced a visible gaze (Townley, 1998) as they wanted to be seen as successful, but in the process their conduct was standardised, measured and normalised. When describing the process of adoption, Paul stated:

> …Aqua-Tilt are very good…I've tapped into them and extracted ideas and then brought them in here. I've read all their management ideas and it's changed my thinking, I've picked out bits that are relevant to us…when they come in and talk to us I now know that [*we*] really are aligned…we can identify with them

Whilst Paul's quote could be analysed from the perspective of institutional theorists in terms of him replicating the practices of Aqua-Tilt as they are viewed as more successful, this neglects how his subjectivity is reconstituted. Paul's thinking has changed by engaging with the literature and practices associated with Aqua-Tilt, which he then uses to improve his organization. During Paul's interview, I was shown paper documents which illustrated the culture and a 'core competency' framework which was exactly the same as Aqua-Tilt's. The notion of 'core competencies' was central to Prahalad and Hamel's paper (1990) who discussed them as central to organizations who aim to be successful when competing in the global market place. Competencies are the 'collective learning…how to coordinate diverse production skills and integrate multiple streams of technology' (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990: 4), as well as being '…the glue that binds existing businesses' (ibid: 5). Core competencies distinguish companies from one another as they make it difficult for competitors to imitate, which increases their customer base and market share. When applied to Aqua-Tilt, core competencies become a 'component of individuality' (Townley, 1998: 201). The competencies, such as the knowledge of developing high quality passive fire protection products and readily accepting responsibility for one's actions, are also linked to self-assessment, as they measure and judge individuals and organizations against a normalised ideal. 'Technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988: 18) are also part of this competency framework, as they render individuals visible and make their practices knowable which enable more effective management. For example, the culture could be seen as the linchpin between achieving a desirable customer base and ultimately developing a proliferation of high quality end products. As Nigel (contractor) explained: *'Commercially we thought part of having a*

close link with a company that was as big and professional as Aqua-Tilt would be a big seller...'

Sharing a business relationship with Aqua-Tilt illustrated to customers that Nigel's contracting firm was reputable. Arguably, if they were not, Aqua-Tilt would not be trading with them. This demonstrates the exercise of disciplinary power between firms in the industry, as they are expected to enact appropriate conduct in order to remain working alongside Aqua-Tilt. Individuals acquired knowledge about their own abilities and where improvements could be made and as Rose (1989: 116) puts it, the new doctrine of management has 'chimed with cultural images of self-motivated individuality . . . they were attractive to the individuals concerned, for they promised them a better self'.

Conclusion

This final empirical chapter has sought to analyse the cultural practices which are occurring inside one organization in the passive fire industry. I have indicated the antecedents of the culture which stemmed from the adoption of Gung Ho, a cultural approach which originated from reading and implementing the work of Ken Blanchard (1990), as well as Peter Drucker (1954) and Peters and Waterman (1982) who are all well known management gurus. This cultural replication was important because it expands Institutional Theory's traditional definition of mimetic isomorphism as only existing amongst organizations in the same industry. This chapter has indicated that Aqua-Tilt is located within a much broader framework of analysis. It is not only other companies in the passive fire industry replicating the work of Aqua-Tilt, but the company itself is also drawing on gurus, and replicating the

best practice of other organizations; this demonstrates the exercise of disciplinary power through mimetic isomorphism within the industry.

I have sought to enrich understanding of mimetic isomorphism by taking a Foucauldian perspective and I have acknowledged that rather than viewing mimetic pressure as simply copying each other to reduce uncertainty and to create homogenisation, it can be understood as a means through which power is exercised. Conformance occurs as individuals participate in power relations and internalise norms and values which reconstitute subjectivity, leading to self-discipline. Individuals were driven by a sense of 'morality' which existed alongside the discursive framework of enterprise. Through the cultural training and development practices, individuals' subjectivity was reconstituted in an attempt to enhance their commitment to improving standards and safety in the industry.

This chapter has advanced understanding of Institutional Theory by pointing to how culture could be used to bridge the gap between macro level practices and micro initiatives, particularly when macro government intervention has been minimal. Particular attention was paid to how the lighter-touch approach (UKAS, 2004) left Aqua-Tilt drawing on their cultural framework as a way in which to not only reconstitute and discipline their employees, but at the same time, encourage 'best practice' to be adopted by others who use them as a benchmark. Homogeneity is therefore not simply the result of uncertainty or insecurity, but also due to individuals' participation or challenge to an enterprise discursive framework. Aqua-Tilt's enterprising model complements the government's rationale of shifting responsibility to the industry, yet, the ability to exercise 'choice' by being an 'enterprising subject' (du Gay and

Salaman, 1992) provides space for opportunistic behaviour and minimises the extent of compliance.

The following chapter forms the conclusion of this thesis which reasserts the main contributing themes which have been discussed in each chapter. It offers some insight into the limitations which occurred, and suggests proposals for advancing the research if it were to be conducted again.

Conclusion

Introduction

In this thesis I have contributed to the critique and advancement of Institutional Theory by using a critical understanding of power and exploring how it is exercised through isomorphic pressures in the passive fire protection industry. This concluding chapter represents an opportunity to stress the contributions made in the thesis, and will suggest, with hindsight, some of the ways I could have extended or improved the research. In what follows, I summarise the main insights of the thesis. Apart from theoretical contributions to knowledge, the contributions made in this thesis are also empirical as they provide insights into an industry which has been absent from academic research: the passive fire protection industry. I also examine the implications of the findings for our understanding of the ways in which power is exercised through isomorphic pressures, highlighting how the findings can act as a critique of previous studies within Institutional Theory which have neglected power, or which have tended to conceptualise power in a way that fails to see it as productive and relational. That said, it has not been my intention to advocate for the abandonment of Institutional Theory, but instead to offer an alternative lens through which to view power. In doing so, the thesis encourages closer attention to be paid to how power is enacted and the ways in which individuals and organizations become homogenised, as managers and government attempt to induce conformity.

I will endeavour to 'stand back' from the research and consider retrospectively, what has been discussed, analysed and discovered. This thesis, like any other, was not a mechanical process requiring me to follow a prescribed path of deciding on a theoretical approach, applying it to

the empirical data and then writing up the findings. Decisions on how to structure the thesis, and which theories and data to use fluctuated constantly. I found constructing and undertaking this thesis an enlightening experience, which enabled me to explore a range of theoretical approaches and to engage with literature that I had never been previously exposed to. When I embarked upon this research, I was aware of Institutional Theory, having read some relevant literature, and when I discovered that it enabled me to explain the initial data I was accumulating during my fieldwork, I believed that it would provide the theoretical framework which I required. At the same time, I was also acquiring information from written documents and observations through my empirical research which pointed towards the emergence of an 'enterprise discourse' that aims to reinvent employees as responsible, autonomous, self-regulating and customer-focused (du Gay and Salaman, 1992). It was only when I returned to the 'field' and listened back to the previously recorded interviews, that I realised there was an underlying emphasis on power that originated from respondents' discussions. This fascinated me and I began to associate enterprise with the exercise of power through isomorphism, as a means to shape and define conduct. The synergy and conflict which was emerging between Institutional Theory, enterprise and power was thought-provoking and I knew that there had not been any academic studies which had attempted to link these theoretical frameworks together. I continued to pursue my interest in these avenues of inquiry and returning to the Institutional Theory literature helped me to identify how I could make a contribution to scholarship in terms of how to think about power theoretically, and how to study it empirically. I realised that remaining with my initial decision to use Institutional Theory, would have resulted in a mainstream account of how isomorphism produces homogenised (similar) organizations due to their search for legitimacy and the reduction of uncertainty.

Additionally, it would have also led to isomorphism appearing to be an exemplary case of power being a possession of change agents, who influence and determine others' conduct. This conceptualisation was insufficient to explain the data I was acquiring.

Due to Institutional Theory's commitment to an agency-centric view of power (Khan et al, 2007), I knew that using Foucault (1977) as one theorist within the critical paradigm, would provide an alternative dimension, as he viewed power as a relational and productive concept which explains how individuals are encouraged to self-regulate as their subjectivity is reconstituted in line with organizational objectives. Foucault's (1977) understanding of power therefore seemed a valuable starting point for considering how to advance and critique Institutional Theory. As my knowledge of the literature on the discourse of enterprise deepened, so did my understanding of Foucault's (1977) work, because the former draws on the latter so as to understand how discourse constructs subjectivity and 'truth regimes' (Rose, 1989; du Gay and Salaman, 1992; du Gay, 1996). I saw the links emerge between Institutional Theory, Foucault's analysis of power and the spread of the enterprise discourse, and believed that they could provide a theoretical explanation and contribution alongside the material from my fieldwork.

Using Foucault (1977) enabled me to explore the contradictions and challenges faced by individuals in the passive fire industry. It became apparent that, despite the creation of enterprising subjects as a government objective, individuals drew on the qualities of enterprise and turned them back onto the government. This reinforces the view that power is relational and productive because it can be exercised amongst individuals in a social relationship. Such

a perspective on power resonates with current moves towards bridging institutional and critical traditions (Willmott, 2011; Lawrence et al, 2011), but as Willmott (2011) acknowledges, one has to decide which strands of Critical Theory are the most important when combining both theories together. He identifies that the reference to individuals in Institutional Theory as 'powerless' is '…suggestive of a continued subscription to a possessive, rather than a relational, conception of power' (Willmott, 2011: 70). This means that 'Only a relational conception of power can make sense of the idea that such groups are not powerless…' and Willmott (2011: 70) recognises that a relational conception of power would help us to view individuals as '…active participants, rather than passive or disregarded ciphers'. I see Willmott's (2011) argument as a positive indication of the scope for using Critical Theory to enhance knowledge by applying an alternative understanding of power. This thesis has gone some way towards demonstrating how this critique can be achieved by focusing on one aspect of Institutional Theory, that is, the exercise of power through the three isomorphic pressures (coercive, normative, mimetic).

The next section of this chapter explores the main contributions of this thesis, from a theoretical and empirical perspective.

Theoretical contributions to Institutional Theory and enterprise

My overall theoretical contribution in this thesis is based on advancing knowledge of Institutional Theory in terms of how power is exercised to create similarity amongst organizations operating in the passive fire protection industry. The term that institutional theorists have used to explain how organizations become more similar is 'isomorphism' and

Institutional theorists (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008), have viewed isomorphism as a source of power, which ensures similarity and legitimacy by imposing demands on organizations in a dominating and repressive way. In this thesis, I have sought to advance this understanding of isomorphism by analysing it from a critical perspective.

I drew on Foucault (1977) who views power as relational and productive. This means that power becomes a means by which individuals exercise self-discipline. It is Foucault's (1977) perspective on power that has contributed to an alternative understanding of isomorphism as discussed in this thesis. I have explored how each form of isomorphic pressure (coercive, normative, mimetic) encourages individuals to self-regulate. This exercise of power is also deployed alongside the spread of the enterprise discourse, which seeks to construct individual subjectivity in an attempt to ensure that individuals always work according to, or exceeding organizational best practice. Viewing Institutional Theory from an alternative dimension of power contributes to our understanding of how and why organizations become homogenised in form and practice. It advances previous accounts which see similarity as the result of repressive power being exercised to secure legitimacy or reduce uncertainty.

Foucault's (1977) understanding of power fits with how individuals within the passive fire industry enact choices, but this is not due to them being autonomous individuals who are 'free' of power. 'Choice' is borne out of the participation individuals have with the enterprising discursive framework in which they participate. Applying this to the analysis of my data, I have sought to indicate that discourses do not exist externally to the individual, but are part of them. Enterprise shapes individuals' subjectivity as they engage in, or challenge the discourse

(Rose, 1999). Institutional theorists view power as repressive and as a force which is possessed by those in positions of authority who use it to determine and influence the conduct of others, leading to the production of homogenised subjects. Alternatively, Foucault (1977) sees power as productive and relational which is exercised amongst individuals who become self-regulating and 'normalised' against standard criteria. This thesis has explored how adopting a Foucauldian, critical understanding of power can lead to a more fruitful discussion regarding the influence of institutional pressures. It also has provided insights into how the enterprise discourse becomes part of the process through which isomorphic pressures define, reconstitute and homogenise individuals' behaviour.

Contribution to Coercive Isomorphism

The thesis draws on Critical Theory (CT), focusing initially on the Frankfurt School in order to contextualise and provide a precursor to exploring the work of Foucault (1977). In doing so, it was my intention to distinguish between the repressive and dominating conceptualisations of power evident in some CT literature, and the approach of Foucault (1977). The decision to use Foucault (1977) compared to other critical theorists is based on the extent to which his view of power can shed light on our previous understanding of isomorphism and this relates to the key research question for the thesis: how does a relational and productive understanding of power help us to make sense of isomorphic pressures? My theoretical contribution advances traditional accounts of Institutional Theory, specifically related to the three forms of isomorphism. Rather than viewing them as external pressures which lead organizations to become homogeneous (similar), when analysed from a

Foucauldian perspective, the isomorphic forces can instead be seen as a means by which to create self-disciplined and regulating subjects.

The first contribution to enhancing knowledge of isomorphic forces is associated with coercive isomorphism. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) imply that organizations will fulfil state expectations by complying with the coercive requirements stipulated in Government White Papers. Using a Foucauldian critique, this thesis contributes to our knowledge of how an enterprise discourse disseminated through White Papers is not simply coercive, not least because there is no mandatory requirement to fulfil the proposed objectives. Rather, the discourse can be understood as exercising disciplinary power, in an attempt to produce entrepreneurial and autonomous individuals who self-regulate. I argue that Foucault (1977) provides a '…concept of power [*which*] is understood to be performative as it participates in articulating particular perspectives that construct/depict the social world in distinctive power/knowledge frameworks' (Khan et al, 2007: 1059). Individuals do not passively absorb or respond to enterprising discourses; they engage, refute, resist and rearticulate them. This view of power, suggests that individuals are capable of continually negotiating their sense of self, through the participation they have in power relations.

Contribution to Normative Isomorphism

A contribution is also evident in relation to normative and mimetic isomorphism. Institutional Theory suggests that trade associations exercise a 'normative' isomorphic pressure, which occurs when professional norms and values are transferred to organizational members, through mechanisms such as training workshops and company literature. The norms and values

become accepted by individuals, as they learn what is expected of them, in order to be seen as a compliant and effective member of the organization. Trade associations transfer professional standards and best practice guidelines through the dissemination of codes of conduct, the measuring of performance targets and the requirements of standardization. I make a contribution to traditional accounts of Institutional Theory in this thesis by arguing that the exercise of power by trade associations is a means by which subjects regulate their conduct in accordance with the norms of professionalization (Rose, 1999; Dean, 1999). As members of a trade association, individuals experience disciplinary power as their conduct is 'normalised' by other trade associations (Foucault, 1977) and monitored against set criteria, such as 'colour booklets', which are a device through which to rank and judge the behaviour of all trade association members. The 'colour booklets' define what members have come to accept as desirable behaviour, such as ensuring that their products are tested by a testing laboratory prior to being sold on the market. The booklets become a way by which members can monitor the behaviour of themselves and discipline each other, because the organizations that comply are following the booklets' guidelines, whilst those who are deemed non-compliant avoid them. This becomes a point of comparison between members, which leads them to judge and monitor each other's behaviour. A comment by one respondent, Kieran (global consultant), highlighted the ways in which trade associations can judge one another's behaviour. He stated that the associations encourage their members to '*live up to the criteria*' which suggests that disciplinary power is exercised through standards of performance, targets and desirable conduct defined by the association.

Clegg (2010: 9) argues that 'professionalism' is the 'sign of power at work' because the transference of norms and values which guide individuals' conduct, results in accepted routines and practices which are replicated and taken-for-granted. The theoretical contribution which this thesis makes is to argue that the exercise of power to encourage conformance through professional norms is not a force which is constraining and dominating, because to be a 'professional' still indicates that power is being exercised, yet in a productive way (Foucault, 1977). Power is productive because it shapes individuals' subjectivity by encouraging them to internalise the norms and values as their own, which suggests to them that they can become more efficient, effective and responsible subjects. Clegg notes that when institutional theorists discuss 'stable and durable' social systems, they imply that individuals are exercising power to ensure homogeneity and stability, but in doing so, they downplay how power is also part of managing oneself and exercising authority, to govern everyday matters such as health, lifestyle and diet (Clegg, 2010). This resonates with my findings whereby individuals are encouraged to regulate their conduct, thus becoming homogenised and normalised against established criteria.

The thesis also makes a contribution to our understanding of Institutional Theory and the exercise of power by arguing that trade associations enable the government to 'translate' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 181) the enterprise discourse to organizations. The enterprise qualities of responsibility, autonomy and choice are communicated through the association's exercise of disciplinary power, which links the political aspirations of government, with individuals' desire to improve their own sense of self (Rose, 1999). Despite translating enterprise to its members, the thesis demonstrates that conformance to the trade association's

objectives is by no means universal. Members use enterprising qualities in ways that are advantageous to them, as some adopt a discourse of 'morality' to raise standards, whilst their counterparts use a discourse of 'denial' as they capitalise on a 'lighter touch' (UKAS, 2004: 1) environment in order to turn the qualities of enterprise back onto the government. Such instances of non-conformance, are never discussed by institutional theorists, who seem intent on advocating that institutional pressures will result in the homogenisation of conduct, without discussing the influence of power. The emphasis on homogenisation and legitimacy seeking takes precedence in Institutional Theory, over the ways in which individuals' subjectivity is shaped and constructed by their engagement with power relations. A greater understanding of how normative isomorphism exercises power and becomes a disciplinary mechanism, can point to how it minimises collective engagement amongst individuals within the association. I argue that in an environment of deregulation, associations are meant to be arenas for the exchange of ideas. This is not possible when they are adopted as mechanisms through which members are judged, ranked and individualised against their counterparts. Perhaps what is required is the chance for members to 'join forces', so that they can suggest alternative ways of regulating the industry, and rather than excluding and 'individualising' the 'cowboys', they should instead be brought in as active participants in the discussion.

Contribution to Mimetic Isomorphism

DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) concept of 'mimetic' isomorphism has also been advanced in this thesis. From an Institutional Theory perspective, this term explains how organizations become similar to one another, because they copy cultural practices which are deemed valuable or successful. Using the example of Aqua-Tilt (pseudonym), a global manufacturer in

the construction industry, I explore the development and adoption of their enterprising culture. This aimed to improve fire safety within the industry by encouraging individuals to internalise the discourse and norms associated with enterprise (du Gay and Salaman, 1992), through the use of cultural practices, including reward systems, team camp guides, and training and development events. Aqua-Tilt's culture is used as a disciplinary model in order to improve standards and enhance compliance within the industry; the company provides a benchmark which other organizations and individuals can measure themselves against, hence acting as a visible gaze (Townley, 1998). My contribution uses a Foucauldian critique to point to how mimetic isomorphism exercises disciplinary power to normalise and shape the conduct of individuals, with the intention of creating 'enterprising subjects'. Viewing power in this way is a less 'agency-centric' (Khan et al, 2007: 1058) alternative to previous institutional accounts.

The research indicates that the exercise of disciplinary power through mimetic isomorphism does not just exist in a vacuum inside Aqua-Tilt. The account I present reveals how replication occurs on a much wider scale, because Aqua-Tilt itself is drawing on the advice and guidance from gurus and predecessor cultures, in order to implement their chosen enterprise culture. Despite using enterprise as a means of increasing autonomy, the underlying organizational objective of improving fire safety and providing a means of dealing with the lack of mandatory enforcement, has encouraged work intensification, as employees are expected to *go the extra mile'* (Kim, sales co-ordinator). Although Aqua-Tilt's culture is constructed around the notions of autonomy, empowerment, and responsibility, this has not always been paralleled with a greater devolution of authority. In order to fulfil the objectives of being a 'model' which other organizations replicate, Aqua-Tilt employees are exposed to

centralized and bureaucratic methods of control. Whilst such interventions seek to colonize employees and drive out resistance through promoting enterprising qualities, as a number of employees pointed out, this contradiction can lead to resistance and inappropriate behaviour as individuals actively create 'unmanaged spaces' (Bolton and Boyd, 2003: 297). This is the result of employees distancing themselves (Collinson, 1994) as they seek to exercise their autonomy in alternative ways.

I have explored how when employees challenge the objectives of Aqua-Tilt, they tend to end up reinforcing the norms and values which does not result in them improving their working lives. For instance, the rewards provided through Word Aqua, which were used to acknowledge individuals who had contributed to the achievement of goals or had simply *'made others smile',* were challenged as employees rewarded everyone within the team, regardless of their contribution. Whilst employees were exercising their dissent, they were also reinforcing the qualities of enterprise, as they were still meeting organizational values, just not in the way that managers would have expected. Resistance can therefore contribute to the naturalisation of power, as individuals end up supporting the regime which offers them so little freedom. I suggest that the findings of this thesis indicate that practices can change and that we should understand how organizations can move in different directions to benefit those subject to enterprising regimes.

Theoretical Contribution to Enterprise

Through the investigation of the spread of the enterprise discourse in the passive fire industry, I have also made a distinctive contribution to the enterprise literature. My findings provide a

unique insight into the consequences of self-regulation and the creation of 'enterprising subjects'. The industry is self-regulated as successive governments in the UK have remained committed to a 'lighter touch' (UKAS, 2004: 1) approach to regulation. Governments have argued that this provides practitioners with the autonomy and responsibility to deal with their own practices without intervention from the state, and thus allows them to become 'enterprising'. Whilst enterprise may appear to be desirable, in the passive fire industry, it has created a continuum of responses, ranging from those individuals who take enterprise seriously, to those who abuse it; the former have become resentful of the latter that appear to be more concerned with minimising cost, rather than ensuring the production of quality products. These findings contribute to the enterprise literature, by suggesting that the government's objective of creating subjects who are self-regulating can cause more problems than initially predicted.

Additionally, enterprise in the passive fire industry was not merely resisted, but its principles were used by individuals for their own advantage. The requirement to self-regulate, as part of being an enterprising subject, became the very means which allowed individuals to undertake practices which would benefit them and their organizations. For instance, they knew that self-regulation meant having 'choice' and 'autonomy' so they used these qualities to engage in non-conformance, by 'choosing' not to comply. There have not been any previous studies conducted on the impact of enterprise within the passive fire industry, nor has there been a consideration of how enterprise can be used opportunistically to achieve objectives which are at odds with the original intentions of the government. Whilst it may be assumed that

deviance will be punished, in the passive fire industry, this does not happen as there is insufficient control.

Empirical Contributions

By grounding the research for this thesis in the passive fire protection industry, I have been able to provide a distinctive contribution to our knowledge and understanding of an industry which has not previously received any attention in academic literature. Research has been conducted in the wider construction sector (Jørgensen and Emmitt, 2008; Green and May, 2005; Bresnen, et al, 2005), but there has been no specific focus on the passive fire protection industry. This has resulted in a lack of recognition being given to an industry which is fundamentally important for ensuring life and building safety. As societal members, we all work, shop and live in buildings which should be protected by passive fire products, and therefore the role of the industry is significant and wide-ranging. By drawing attention to the fundamental features of the industry and conducting research at different levels within it, I have sought to provide an insight and capture the differing viewpoints regarding how the industry operates and the perspectives associated with its (lack of) regulation.

The empirical findings from this thesis have the potential to be used by other researchers who may be interested in exploring further the impacts associated with deregulation in the passive fire protection industry, or equally, they could use the findings to lobby, discuss, debate and question policy makers who are responsible for making regulatory decisions which have ultimately life and safety consequences. This could lead to changes occurring in the ways in which the passive fire industry is regulated. Whilst I am not suggesting that any one of us has

the capacity to change the Governments' point of view, and thereby instigate 'change' by influencing the ways in which the industry is regulated, what I do believe is that the empirical contributions stemming from this thesis can lead to us posing questions which may contribute to 'micro-emancipation' within the industry (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992).

The limitations of the thesis and improvements for future research

This thesis is not and cannot be an all-encompassing account which fully explores all of the theoretical literature associated with institutional or Critical Theory, nor does it contain every discourse which arose during the research process. I am fully aware that I have limited my discussion to a focus on certain features of Institutional Theory and the enterprise discourse, which means that I have been understandably selective and ignored other discourses, such as gender. Focusing only on certain discourses, may imply a lack of sensitivity or acknowledgement of how other discourses may interact with enterprise and how they may draw on the same principles and practices to construct subjectivity. That said, a gender discourse did become apparent during the research, especially as it was a male dominated industry and masculinity seemed to be imbued with the enterprise discourse in terms of the expectations of being 'entrepreneurial' and 'risk-taking'. By ignoring gender discourses, I have therefore excluded the opportunity to explore how women and men in the industry participated differently when responding to the requirements and opportunities presented by self-regulation and enterprise. The references some women made to their male counterparts being *'more concerned with playing computer games than getting things right'* (Denise, consultant) could have been used to contrast masculine and feminine traits which were embedded in how individuals responded to be 'enterprising'.

Another way to have conducted this research, would have been to examine how males/females respond to the discourse of enterprise, and to draw attention to how male competitiveness for example, could impact on the extent to which they comply (Collinson and Hearn, 2001). Maier and Messerschmidt (1998, cited in Martin, 2006) found that the 'Challenger' spaceship disaster was the result of practices which were associated with competitive masculinity. No man involved in the spaceship's launch wanted to lose face in front of his male counterparts which led them to remain silent, despite knowing that there were faculty mechanisms which ended up leading to the disaster and the subsequent loss of life. One way of extending this thesis therefore, would be to explore how discourses which are associated with gender are interwoven with enterprise, and to consider how they are bound together and respond to the associated exercise of power through isomorphism. Such an account would have enabled me to explore whether these are linked to or influenced by the exercise of power through isomorphism and subsequently how different discourses overlap, develop, collide and compete with each other, as individuals draw on them to negotiate and enhance understanding of their personal and working lives (Cohen and Musson, 2000). Despite recognising these other possibilities in conducting the research, it has to be acknowledged that qualitative research inevitably has to exclude some issues whilst including others (Clifford, 2004).

Conclusion

There have been a number of recent attempts to combine Institutional and Critical Theory and scholars have acknowledged the limited discussion of power within the former theory (Willmott, 2011; Lawrence et al, 2011; Dover and Lawrence, 2010). I believe that this is only the beginning of viewing Institutional Theory through a critical lens. It is not just power

which institutional theorists have tended to downplay; they also appear to neglect the empirical side of research (Kraatz, 2011). For example, when Institutional Theory is used as the theoretical framework for analysis, it is not always discussed or applied to an empirical site. While I am not claiming that all research has to use a case study, trying to understand the applicability of Institutional Theory without a 'site' for investigation makes it significantly more challenging. The theory can appear to be dogmatic and difficult to apply to 'real-world' settings because it is increasingly disconnected from the meanings, emotions and challenges experienced by individuals in organizations. By participating in and undertaking fieldwork from a qualitative perspective, one can foster the development of novel insights and acknowledge the experiences of organizational members. Institutional Theory arguably needs to provide a more forthright discussion regarding its 'real-world' significance, by paying more attention to the empirical challenges facing organizations. This would make institutional insights more accessible and available to those outside academia and breathe new life into the theory (Dover and Lawrence, 2010).

I have aimed to inject a critical understanding of power into Institutional Theory and in doing so I have endeavoured to point out how using a critical lens can advance understanding of how the exercise of disciplinary power through isomorphism, can impact on the lives of individuals who are subject to it. For me, being *critical* does not mean simply exposing the limitations and flaws of one theory compared to another. It involves a sustained investigation in order to capture the ways in which a theoretical account, in this case, Institutional Theory, can be advanced by combining it with a different perspective. Whilst Foucault (1977) and Institutional Theory may appear to be unlikely bedfellows, I argue that conducting analysis

using different theoretical frameworks has the potential to generate insights and enhance understanding of the phenomena being studied that would not have been possible by the use of one framework alone (Worrall, 2004). After all, '…there can be no convergence to one understanding in a world that consists of multiple and usually conflicting understandings which are conditioned by the position of different observers and participants in society' (Worrall, 2004: 163).

Whilst I acknowledge that the account presented is not exhaustive and that there are alternative ways to be 'critical', I argue that my choice of Foucault (1977) provided me with a strong foundation from which to advance Institutional Theory, and to undertake a considered analysis of the empirical data. By taking a critical approach to Institutional Theory it indicates the potential for it to be developed further, which may also lead to enhancing understanding about the practices of managers in contemporary organizations, and in using knowledge to gain insight about managerial problems. It was not my intention to be 'critical' in terms of creating emancipatory action and the associated objective of instigating change to the research site. Instead, I used my presence as a means to engage with respondents about their day-to-day activities, which at times also provoked debate and discussion and encouraged individuals to reflect and ponder on what improvements could be made.

In conclusion, this thesis indicates that the enterprise discourse remains contested and ambiguous and is an insufficient way to regulate the passive fire industry. Whilst it ensured compliance through the utilisation, for example, of Aqua-Tilt's culture, it did not ensure compliance for all sectors of the industry. The position that Aqua-Tilt and its employees adopt

can be made sense of when it is considered that they are market leaders within the passive fire industry. From this perspective, Aqua-Tilt has a vested interest in conformance to self-regulation, particularly as the organization has already invested substantial resources in designing the internal architecture of the organization to promote and encourage its employees to adopt a 'moral' position regarding compliance. Yet within any industry there are only a few market leaders, and despite wanting to appear a 'model' which others can replicate, it is unlikely that those organizations below the elite level of Aqua-Tilt will comply in an environment of deregulation.

This thesis suggests that it is as likely that the enterprise discourse, which was initially designed to encourage compliance, can equally be turned back upon on government and be used as a rationale for non-compliance. This also supports the exercise of productive and relational power because power is not only exercised by authority figures, but also those who are deemed to be 'docile' (Foucault, 1977). Successive governments' commitment to enterprise has clearly produced unintended consequences and the discourse of 'denial', emanating from the enterprise discursive framework acted as a resource for individuals. Government is therefore left with a dilemma. If they remain committed to self-regulation, then they are in effect creating the conditions which exacerbate the very problems they are seeking to improve. Whilst there was support for enterprise from employees working at Aqua-Tilt, where it was used to exercise their commitment to 'morality', they resented working in an industry where their counterparts were able to exercise the very same logic of enterprise to engage in what they considered to be deviant practices. The thesis prompts us to consider that perhaps the governments' proposal to regulate through enterprise is not as desirable as once

thought and the implication that enterprise can improve upon the bureaucratic means of regulation is clearly questionable. A lack of stringent rules, regulations and effective inspection to police the practices occurring in the industry which promote life and building safety is a concern that may only be rectified if a more forceful and control orientated process is implemented which encourages autonomy and responsibility, but not at the expense of monitoring and enforcement. It is however hard to predict in advance what the outcomes of such changes might be, and whether it would potentially lead to an environment where fire safety is given the recognition it deserves.

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<u>Interview guidance form</u>

Give some details of myself; the purpose of the research and explain that the information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence, with anonymity assured.

Background Information:

- Outline the purpose and scope of the research.
- Explain why I have an interest in this subject and in this sector.
- How I hope the interviewee will help to advance the research.

Section 1 – The Interviewee

1.	Could you please give me some biographical details: a brief overview of your career, covering the various job roles you have held?
2.	Which of the jobs/roles have given you the greatest opportunity to influence the direction of the company or the sector?
3.	Which of the jobs/roles have given you the greatest personal satisfaction? Why?

Section 2 – The Industry Sector

1.	Could you please give me some background details on the architectural ironmongery sector for which you work?
2.	Which industry sector/s do the organisations that you work with operate in?
3.	How would you characterise the users of the products? (Manufacturers – large/small?)
4.	Will you describe the various ways in which the manufacturers/distributors are regulated?
5.	What would you say are the regulatory measures that impact most on those with whom you work?
6.	As a freelance consultant, what does your role involve regarding the provision of help/support to those companies who face regulatory pressures?
7.	What are the main benefits for organisations that outsource their specialist skills to you?

8.	How do you ensure that the companies with whom you work are compliant with regulatory requirements?
9.	How do you acquire the information and knowledge of regulatory change which affects the organisations with whom you support?
10.	What does this process of communication entail and do you perceive it to be effective?
11.	Do you perceive your role to be one of persuading/educating the organisations to comply with regulatory requirements?
12.	What are the other mechanisms in place that inform organisations of regulatory changes and requirements?
13.	How much involvement do you have with trade associations/professional bodies and what do you perceive their main role/purpose to be?
14.	What do you perceive to be the benefits of being a member of a TA/federation?
15.	What mechanisms does a TA/federation have in place to inform organisations of the need to participate?
16.	Do you feel you have been able to have any input into regulatory change/formation?
17.	Do you feel that the organisations that you support understand the process by which new regulations and standards come about?
18.	Do you feel they are quick/slow to respond? Why?
19.	To what extent do you think organisations pay lip service to the regulatory requirements?
20.	Why do organisations comply?
21.	What is your view on third party certification and the role that they play? (accountability/legitimacy)
22.	What are the benefits for organisations who participate in this process?
23.	Where do you think the main pressure for compliance is coming from? (Gov', TA, industry?).

24.	Are there any ways in which the interaction between manufacturers/distributors and TA/Gov could be improved? If so, how?
25.	Is there sufficient opportunity for organisations to communicate their suggestions/concerns regarding regulatory change/formation?

Section 3 – Finally

1.	Do you feel that organisations are involved as they could be in the formation of standards and regulations?
2.	What do you think could be improved to increase their involvement? In what ways? (UK/EU level?).
3.	What regulatory changes are coming through at present that is most likely to impact on organisations?

Details of interviewees and observations undertaken

The following table identifies the interviewees that participated in the research and their occupational role. Information is also provided regarding the observations undertaken; all individual and company names are pseudonyms.

Name of Interviewee	Occupational Title/Organisation
Andy	Fire engineer
Anita	Trade association consultant
Anna	CEO, Collective Edge (consultancy firm)
Ben	Technical director, trade association
Bob	Culture team camp co-ordinator, Aqua-Tilt
Christopher	Chairman of European technical committee
Dan	Business development manager, manufacturer
Daniel	Retired consultant
Denise	Consultant, trade association
Derek	CEO of a trade association and chairman of a trade federation
Elaine	Trade association consultant
Gary	Fire engineer, Aqua-Tilt
Glen	Senior manager, fire certification laboratory
Hannah	Sales co-ordinator, Aqua-Tilt
Ian	Sales director, manufacturer
Jim	Project development manager, manufacturer
Joe	Fire engineer, Aqua-Tilt
John	Retired technical director
Josh	Marketing manager, manufacturer
Ken	Site inspector
Kevin	Senior manager, fire certification laboratory
Kieran	Global consultant
Kim	Sales co-ordinator, Aqua-Tilt
Len	Marketing consultant, manufacturer
Lynton	Team leader, Aqua-Tilt
Mark	CEO, trade association
Matt	Senior manager, fire certification laboratory
Martin	Sales director (Aqua-Tilt)
Melanie	Export Manager (Aqua-Tilt)
Nigel	Contractor
Pauline	Marketing manager, Aqua-Tilt
Philip	Contractor
Richard	Health and safety officer/paint sprayer
Ronnie	Team leader
Ross	Sales co-ordinator, Aqua-Tilt
Sarah	Corporate Responsibility manager, Aqua-Tilt
Simon	Government regulator/policy writer

| Will | Marketing manager/CEO trade association |

Observation/number attended	Number of attendees
Trade federation x 8	Ranged between 15-30
Trade association x 5	15
Marketing meetings (trade association) x 1	10
Aqua-Tilt x 2 (company tours)	Interviewed people on ad hoc basis (met multiple people during the tour)
Building sites tour	Site representative provided the tour
Fire labs x 2	10/15
Fire tests x 1	10-15
House of Lords trade association event	150
Contractors task group x 3	20-25
Trade association event	80
Contractors work site tour	2 main interviewees but multiple workforce on site