WORKPLACE COMMITMENT AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES : THE TWIN TOWERS.

Grant Coates

Abstract.

This paper concerns an area of organisational analysis - namely workplace/organisational commitment, which has tended in the mainstream to be dominated by a single mode of analysis - organisational psychology (OP). This paper firstly questions the utility of an OP inquiry. Analysis of commitment from the perspective of OP is then brought to the fore through delineating its major current conceptualisations and manifestations within a case study organisation. Existing literature conceptions and so called best practice are placed under scrutiny in an applied situation. In doing so, it locates the economic rationale behind the ascendancy of commitment in the 1990s and the use to which the rhetoric is put. The analysis of the case study data illustrate real motivations behind such organisational practices and question the introduction of commitment orientated policies.

Introduction.

In the late 1980s early 1990s, organisations experienced faltering economic certainty. They conceded a desire to bring the disparate sides of employees and management together, towards a new level of commitment on the part of employees, to the goals and operations of 'their' firms (Nolan 1989). Barnard's (1938) naïve view of organisations as the measure of human co-operative instincts, benign in their influence, came full circle in contemporary management literature. Firms sought to follow the 'excellent' examples of Japanese and some European firms, introducing jobs and organisational forms that gave greater meaning to work. These fostered and even created a sense of participation and membership in the enterprise (Peters and Waterman 1982). At the same time this provided 'movement' towards a vogue structure for organisations - the flexible firm (McLoughlin 1990; Pollert *et al* 1992).[1]

The 1980s thus saw many attempts to overcome problems of political and technical management in organisations, towards regaining an 'emotional edge' in employment (Reed 1989). These spawned concomitant interest in the orientations of employees to their jobs, places of employment and the problem of commitment to the organisations' goals, values and activities. Such interest was seemingly due to a previous inability of organisations, under technical forms of management, to entreat employees to perform as they might wish them to, and an inability to mitigate the modernist destruction of individual identity (Coates 1992a).[2] Management thus increasingly focused on cultivating a sense of dependence,

loyalty, and identification within the workforce, superseding, to a large extent, concerns with conflict and performance (Marchington 1982; Reed 1989). This has resulted in the culture explosion, which attempts to harness the goodwill and extended effort of employees.

Much of the belief for this resides in the increased control aspects of such commitment (Burawoy 1979). This has surfaced through the re-spiritualisation of employment (Bowles 1989), and relative abandonment of the cash-nexus in an immediate, conscious sense (Wood 1991). A more obvious conclusion would be that organisations have seen the advantages of transnational organisations' employee relations. These they believe, create increased competitive advantage (cf. Edwards *et al* 1991). Thus debate has moved towards analysis of organisational practices that involve individuals in their own subordination:

> ... the literature highlighting the significance of gendered and 'cultural' apprenticeships for work amply illustrate the element of self-discipline or willing involvement in the work behaviour of subordinate labour. ... a willing engagement in work effort and thereby, paradoxically, actively *reproduce* the conditions of that subordination. (Sturdy 1992:116-117)

Such practices have been parsimoniously labelled postmodernist in form (by some), as against the older, modernist forms of control within organisations (Geary 1992; Lovering 1990; Thompson 1991).[3]

This paper and part two are based upon case study work carried out in the West Midlands. The present paper attempts to illustrate the practice of OP's conception of workplace commitment (WPC) through analysing the processes enacted by a case study organisation. In doing so it will critically examine the basis for the sovereignty of WPC theory, set within the academic/political focus of OP.[4] WPC has been the manifestation of OP in concrete methods to achieve its ends. While the organisation may be more generally viewed through traditional management texts (e.g. Buchanan and Huczynski 1985), in truth the organisation is reflected in many perspectives (cf. Hassard 1990; Kamoche 1991). Within academic discourse commitment is divided by its epistemological and ideological roots. However, the present hegemonic position of WPC stems from a single direction, OP.[5]

The intention of the paper is to present the arguments of OP and move debate beyond simple psycho- or structural understanding and definitions of commitment, towards analysis of the subject-structure interaction of the organisation. This will move to reveal, in the final analysis, the duality via analysis of the convergence between them. Within this the individual within the organisation will be viewed as exhibiting a form of commitment dissimilar to the predominantly US view.

Organisational Psychology and Workplace Commitment.

Within the traditional OP view from a managerial, (pseudo-psychological) position, WPC is seen as the acceptable 'manipulation' of innate psychological bonds.[6] Hence the focus upon the individual as malleable object, and upon separate aspects of individuals, as variables capable of persuaded direction to achieve pre-defined ends/outcomes. It is seen as unnecessary for individuals to consciously grapple with the personal constructs or meanings that drive their actions. The 'subjective factor' in the study of organisations by OP, if any, is manifested in the experiences of organisational members gleaned from Likert scales (Brooke and Price 1988). Epistemologically OP has adopted a rigid functionalist

understanding that knowledge about social reality cannot come from individual's consciousness (Burrell and Morgan 1979).[7]

The controversies raised by the methods of this perspective can be illustrated in the way questions of job satisfaction and stress are tackled with vigour, but often in a way that reduces them to sanitised variables to be quantified and therefore steered. In a reductionist paradigm such as this, the emphasis is upon studying simplified emotional processes. Emphasis is rarely placed on questions asking why certain emotions, age, gender, etc., affects commitment (cf. Fineman 1993), more often it is assumed that they do have effects and there is a need to measure them not explain for their prevalence. It is very difficult to control for these 'implicit' variables, or make them constant for the testing of individual attributes, such was the situation at the case study organisation:

> We had a geezer in here the other day from ACAS or somewhere like that, he was doing a survey of some sort for management. He kept asking these questions about how many times ya did something, I kept trying to explain why to him but he didn't want to know, just how old was I and how many times? (Employee)

Organisations have believed the utilization of WPC methods would enable them to engage with much larger organisations and take them on at their own game. It is well known that Japanese transplants use psychometric testing of recruits (Fucini and Fucini 1990), but it is also the case that many smaller organisations are now adopting performance related pay and performance appraisal (Bowles and Coates 1993). The latter is a human resource management (HRM) favoured technique as a means of securing the extra effort required to compete in the 1990s.

Such theories evidently disregard the individual as sentient and knowledgeable beings, of having consciousness of the consequences for action of certain avenues - ways - of acting, and thus of being in any way responsible for their action. Individual employees are viewed as without the ability to reason pre-bargained work situations or mitigate the vagaries of organisational life by default, hence the need to cajole and paternalistically persuade them, like children, into the productive process.

A problem arises, overlooked by much literature on WPC, that in the creation of a committed workforce, the requirement for its genuine nature, does not necessarily mean productivity will automatically increase as a reciprocal action. Commitment is thus not necessarily related to productivity (Guest 1987), though some of its benefits may be manifest through it. Otherwise what occurs is a situation where the 'carrot' and 'stick' come into being (Burawoy 1979). If such a motivation for paternalism (cf. Ackers and Black 1991) over workers is genuine then there will be no ulterior motives and no set period in which to *witness* improvement in productivity/quality.

This however was not the situation at the case study where the chairman decided:

> What we want from our emphasis on the employees benefit, is to get the company turned around fast, we cant afford to dawdle in the present economic climate.

Moreover, an important point to note about these schemes is that they are written by and for managers to enable them to remain committed to the organisation and performing well, to

get the most from their workers and ease *their* burden of production deadlines (Scase and Goffee 1989), not for workers at all. For example one case study employee argued:

> .. if I do my job well, its not me who gets a bonus straight away, its the manager, he gets a packet and its me that's put the work in, not him.

Hence we can see that while practices promulgated are *meant* to provide for employees, they are not practically applied under WPC programmes. It acts more as a proselytising of what appears to be right, without actually finding out from individuals themselves.

Considering this, we can understand the need within this tradition, for the most part, to require a paradigm closure so that a theoretical approach 'best equipped to provide the required analytical resource and methodological tools', is allowed to develop (Burrell 1980:23). Thus it tends to regard social conflict and power struggles, as symptoms of organisational abnormalities and pathologies, produced by unplanned economic growth and unregulated social differentiation. Those associated with it are unable or unwilling, to see that conflicts of interests and values are endemic to organisational structures and practices and in some cases can enhance their functioning (Reed 1992). Indeed, organisations are both the major arenas in which these struggles take place and the primary instruments through which power is exercised to achieve partisan outcomes.

Intellectual innovation and progress therefore appears to be interpreted in isolation from any systematic consideration of contextual factors and how they relate to individuals and the direction and content of their cognitive change (Coates 1994). In terms of WPC, most texts' aim at the integration of individuals into the organisation to meet 'its' goals, as Aryee and Heng (1990:229) explain:

> Researchers have sought to identify key variables in the employee-organisation linkage that may help organisations meet the challenge of the marketplace. *One* such variable is organisational commitment.

This creates a de-personalised symbolic and cultural universe, inhabited by an amorphous and anonymous mass of people, who have to be organised (Wilson 1977), who are or can become committed. Within this, the principles of calculability and predictability become embedded in an organisational research culture, that works to secure compliance through socialization into collective norms, valuing conformity above all other considerations. Much the same can be illustrated by the case study who's HRM policies were seen to be the best in the Midlands:

> While we can offer a semblance of equality for employees, a part in the decision making process if you like, we cant give them real power, they wouldn't know what to do with it would they. Yes, it does mean we treat them a bit like children, but they are aren't they? (MD) At the end of the day, it comes down to output, productivity, you know, profit. If we start giving out jobs over to the workers we'd be in a right mess wouldn't we. No, the bottom line is letting them see what they are doing has a purpose - that they are needed. Its still my job to get it out of the doors on time and I still have to make them do it quicker in the end, too much talk and no action, that's what these changes are about. (Manager)

Inherent within both WPC literature are the organisational controls that subordinate all human needs and values, to the pervasive demands of technical reason (cf. Grint 1991).

OP is therefore concerned with individual behaviour and its direction as it exists in various contexts. However, such behaviour is still what people do, not what they are (Willmott

1989). This has been the reductionism of OP's treatment of the subjective experience towards abstract and supposedly 'quantifiable' traits and mechanisms.

These are viewed as compatible with practice-led assumptions and not theoretical ideals. This failure to address issues of subjectivity and power underlies a major flaw in its analysis of commitment - that it lacks relevance to social issues inherent in the human condition. OP and HRM theories in general purport to fill the divide between the individual and the social, however, Henriques *et al* (1984) identify its failure to do so as a weakness, and a 'dualism'. Committed actions are here separated from their conscious and reflexive articulation. Henriques *et al* also argue that when OP attempts to provide accounts of how the two sets of determinants interact in shaping behaviour, they tend to arrive at biological and/or individual rationality explanations as some sort of causative agents.[8] Within the workplace for example, sabotage to machinery would be blamed on the deviant, criminal tendencies of workers, illustrating their lack of commitment, rather than on the working conditions or practices that they are often otherwise powerless to respond to more directly. These practices are now made more difficult to enact with the introduction of HRM techniques. For example at the case study organisation the HRM director agreed:

> Yes we've had sabotage in the past, now we've got people watching each other, dependant upon others to get the job done. So we one of them sees another cutting badly and making waste, they go up to him and tell him off. That way we save on waste and their mates keep them in line - simple really. (HRM Director)

Such a perception is bereft of a conception of individuals as social subjects with unique personal histories. Instead it focuses on easily marketable packages of behaviours, with individuals as standardised social objects (cf. Reed 1992). Here deficiencies are seen to lie with the individuals themselves, not the system/structure they enact their work lives within. WPC is thus a static phenomenon, individual dynamism is lost forever. Commitment not only occurs within organisations, but any commitment expressed at work is dependant on the realities that the individual faces externally to work (cf. Garrahan and Stewart 1992; Coates 1994). This was eloquently put by many members of the case study:

> I like work, I like it a lot, but it boils down to the fact that my life outside is more important to me, I've got me pigeons and that's where I wants to be most days, not here. Though I does like it here, honest. (Employee)

The question of why people should be manipulated as such is never broached. Other commentators have viewed the way to engender or at least accept the possibility that employees might wish to become committed to the organisation, is to just *be* a good company and allow employees to make the choice themselves (e.g. Hosking and Fineman 1990). However, this is not an economically viable avenue, even for the big organisations traditionally associated with these practices.[9]

How has this been manifest in the history of the case study's organisation more generally? It is to this that we now turn.

Methods.

The data upon which the analysis is drawn comes not from the vaunted Greenfield cases such as Toyota or Bosch, but from an *apparently* non-exceptional case study organisation

in the West Midlands area. A case study organisation was chosen - Diarg[10] - which had a long history of management-led closed shop unionisation. The methodology for the research with the case were based on various empirical research methods. Firstly, a self-administered, strictly anonymous questionnaire was issued to both organisations' members. Use was also made of access to organisational documents and files, and over 50 in-depth recorded interviews were also conducted with representatives of all levels within the organisations. Taped interviews were also conducted with the managing directors and the chairman of the board. Additionally repeated visits were made to directly observe the production process and in one case take part. Access was gained through the human resource director, who had 45 years experience at Diarg and was a well-respected person amongst all employees. Due to this longevity of service at all levels of the organisation, individuals did not feel intimidated that the human resource director was 'sponsoring' the research.

The Case.

The case study organisation chosen was Diarg. Diarg manufactured high quality components for the aerospace industry in large batch quantities. These were precision products with small tolerances. Diarg had approximately 350 employees with roughly a 30/70 split between staff and operatives. A traditional employer for most of its 80 years of operating, Diarg took a bold step forward 5 years ago and introduced flexible forms of working. This included the harmonisation of conditions for all employees.

The management structure however remained far from flat, in that there were still five directors and eight managers for two main areas of production. Since the early 1980s it progressively modernised with the introduction of both CNC and CAD machinery as and when it became available. The organisation had a strategy of keeping up with industry trends for newer and better machinery as part of a competition 'busting' policy.

Diarg faced fierce international competition and had frozen additional recruitment since 1989. In order to remain able to meet orders, Diarg had initiated a coreperiphery employment relations policy (McLoughlin 1990). This involved having a steady core of full-time, permanent employees, and a periphery of temps, who had little or no employment security and did not know from one week to the next if they would remain there. In terms of production it served other manufacturers of highly complex products and was thus reliant upon their markets in defence and aerospace for their business. Diarg produced high quality, high value added products using semi-skilled labour. The most striking observation about Diarg was its union density - 100%. This was effectively the running of a closed shop, though this was through management instigation; 'over the years having their full attention has been a boon, it means there is less likely to be a strike' (Chairman).

The Organisations' Commitment as History.

In the 1980s, Diarg pushed within the organisation an emphasis upon sharing the organisations' goals. This was manifest in both the contemporary political and academic circles, as being an economic imperative (Adnett 1989; Bowe *et al* 1992; Cooke 1990). To illustrate this *sine qua non*, Diarg adopted the role model of Japan and promulgated it as the way forward (Arbose 1987; Oliver and Davies 1990).[11] The organisation's handbook sought to define this outcome:

> Diarg is committed to producing an environment for its employees that meets their needs. In doing so, it is hoped that employees needs and those of the organisation can become convergent. As we are all aware Japan has illustrated that through co-operation we can build a better organisation - together.

The promise of the Japanese pedagogy that Diarg sought, was, according to Kanter (1990:357-6), that 'post-entrepreneurial strategies' would be more motivating for people, meaning that the corporation 'should reap the benefits too, in increased productivity'. Such belief re-awakened enthusiasm in Diarg for 'the dynamics of organisational re-design' (Reed 1991), and reflected the explosion of interest in organisational culture and symbolism (Turner 1990), but more importantly in order for culture to function securely, through the aim of commitment:

> We tried to make sure that our employees become committed quickly to the goals of this organisation. That way we can make sure they perform their duties without too much supervision. The way we do this is through providing the right environment for them to work in, making it more like a family than a workplace. (Chairman)

The emphasis therefore within Diarg shifted during the late 1980s towards this strategy of inducing subordinate co-operation, by means of the control and management of collective beliefs and values, based upon OP theory, which *should* have produced a genuine moral engagement or commitment with the organisation (Anthony 1991). Diarg recognised the OP need for the existence of a psychological bond between the individual and the organisation - a *oneness* of purpose. Commitment thus was:

> The extent to which employees identify with organisational goals, value organisational membership and intend to work hard to attain the overall organisational mission. (La Van and Banner 1985:32)

Commitment however, was not designated as a consensual construct, nor was it articulated as a conscious one, but as:

> A stabilising force which acts to *maintain* a behavioural direction when expectancy conditions are not met and do not operate. (Chonko 1986:19, emphasis added).

This was represented in Diarg at board level, here the chairman and the managing director formulated, alongside the human resources director, the strategy that would shape the form of commitment Diarg was after. This was to be manifest in two main conceptions of OP commitment in their organisation, a) 'behavioural' acts, and b) the consistencies of 'affective attachment and identification' (cf. Salancik 1977). These combined, they felt, would connote a sense of devotion, loyalty or allegiance (Williams and Hazer 1986):

> Once we've sorted out how we can make them committed, performance appraisal, job numbering, etc., we can focus on the individual. I mean the Japanese don't put up with all this phafing around do they, they integrate the individual, *make* them see that the organisation is them - without them it would fail. That's the path to good profits these days (Chairman). [12]

This was also manifest in the way Diarg treated the union, more as a lap dog than a fighting adversary. The union had been dominant for most of the organisations operating history. However, events had overtaken it much the same as the national scene. Through economic imperatives and swift manoeuvring by management, they had managed to head off any union response:

> In the old days this company was dominated by strong trade unions. With the economic downturn and Conservative legislation the position of the unions has weakened dramatically. We are actively trying to sweep away the last vestiges of their power and status with pay deals. We acknowledge only one union representing 100% of the workforce. (MD)

This demonstrates the OP evaluation of commitment, which derives from Porter *et al's* (1974) orthodox measure of commitment. Porter *et al* defines it as the relative strength of the individual's identification with, and involvement in, a particular organisation - a union would detract from this. What commitment demands is according to Coopey (1989:43):

> i) A strong desire to remain a member of the organisation; ii) A strong belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organisation; and iii) A readiness to exert *considerable* effort on behalf of the organisation (Coopey 1989:43)

This manifests itself in Diarg in individual actions that conformed to notions of doing more than was required by the job description and fellow workers. This was the individual's search for ontological security (Giddens 1984). However, such explanations make invisible the reflexive experiences of the individuals themselves:

> We're not really interested in the what they think about anything, what we are after is the expression of their commitment through increased production and loyalty. At the end of the day its the bottom line isn't it. (Manager)

This is represented in how the individual performs as a person at work, how they exhibit their commitment.

Loyalty, Security and Degrees of Commitment.

Important for OP is the loyalty individuals are expected to express towards their organisations. Hirschman (1970) in *Exit, Voice and Loyalty,* argued that loyalty stood for an irrational affection that prevents exit from an organisation. Leaving a certain group carried a high price with it, even though no specific sanction was imposed by the group.[13] Giddens (1984) accredited this to a routinization of organisational life, rather like home life.[14] This 'is vital to the psychological mechanisms whereby a sense of trust or *ontological security* is sustained in the daily activities of social life'(1984:xxiii). However, any commitment to an organisation, he argues, is not a mutually protective contract due to the unequal position of each protagonist:

> ... well its nice to be able to know ya got a job next week. At my old place you didn't have no regularity like, no security. I got a mortgage and kids ya know. (Employee) At this place you gets into a cycle, I know if I got a problem, the boss'll deal wiv' it straight 'way. Sort of takes weight off your mind. (Employee)

> We will give as much as we receive from them, without a bit of give there's no take is there. I'm sure you understand how it is. If we keep shouting at them, we only get their backs up, this way we get to keep production flowing. (Manager)

Historically OP has a problem centred approach, where assessments are made concerning the separate theories in relation to the assumptions they make and their implications for social behaviour (Thompson and McHugh 1990).[15] OP texts and thus practical programmes,

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have therefore tended to be dominated by three kinds of theory in relation to WPC (cf. Hosking 1988):

1) Personality theories: attributes of people are sought and assumed to provide variables applicable to a large number of people.
2) Cognitive theories: emphasis given to context, denying self-sufficiency to the individual in favour of social/cultural institutions (Allport 1963).
3) Social psychology: where people and contexts given equal weight.

The later perspective on WPC enquires about the range of individuals' goals and values, and indeed whose goals and values! For Diarg it was no longer a question of not being committed to the organisation, but of individuals being committed to parts of the organisation. Commitment here resembles more of an understanding that there were competing commitments on the individual, e.g. the Quality of Working Life (QWL) movement. The QWL movement stressed that it would enhance productivity, efficiency, and commitment, while alleviating symptoms of discontent, mental illness (!) and despair (Herrick and Maccoby 1975; Rose 1989). This was reflected in Diarg when the managing director said:

> ... the thing is, these people are used to life pushing them down, they don't have much to get from it. So, give them a job with a bit of regularity, but of solidity, and they will happily do as they are told. At the end of the day we don't expect them to be morons spouting the company slogan like those Asians, we know they wont love us. But, if we can get them to feel committed to their particular task or cell group, then we have got something we didn't have before.

The possibility that the individual may subscribe to organisational values that are different from the dominant ones, i.e. subversive ones, or to those which relate wholly to the external world, seems not to alter Diarg's view that this will not necessarily make the person un-committed to the organisation itself, i.e. the organisation still elicits commitment:

> Attention to interdependent actors who, at any particular point in time, may broadly be understood to be pursuing particular projects to add value to their lives and the lives of others ... In other words ... the actions of others, are meaningful only in relation to value ... social order or culture. (Hosking and Morley 1991:126)

> When we see they are getting a bit lost commitment wise, we give them something to do for the organisation and bring them back into the fold (MD)

We can see from this that commitment at Diarg in the vein of OP, has many dimensions of enactment, but to understand how this commitment manifests itself within this theory we need to turn to the dominant issues of personality.

Personality and the Generation of Commitment.

At a practical level WPC attempts to affect behavioural consequences (Mowday *et al* 1974; Shore and Martin 1989). At Diarg, organisationally committed individuals thus remain with an organisation and perform *reliably* for years. To affect these behavioural consequences, individuals are not seen as entering the organisation empty, but as having antecedent characteristics or pre-existent traits they cannot change. These will affect the level and extent of commitment. This is the introduction of causal mechanisms:

> The organisationally mediated personal characteristics of an individual and the modal aspects of his/her organisational experience, have a direct effect on commitment to an organisation. (DeCotiis and summers 1987:453).

Perhaps this is why in Diarg the recruits had to pass certain criteria:

> We like our recruits to come from the local area. People in the local area are used to hard work, they know what's its like to get their hands dirty. We sort of expect them to come ready trained for hard work here. If they don't say the right things at interview, or appear not to share the ethos of Diarg, then we don't let them past the gate. (Human Resources Director).

For Diarg commitment is thus a predictable and measurable variable dependant on antecedents brought to the work environment by the individual (Meyer et al 1989). Hence the increased use in general of psychometric testing, even for manual positions (Fucini and Fucini 1990). Commitment was viewed as the acceptance and interior-isation, by individuals, of norms and values not their own, over and above their own - the subsumption of will. The characteristics' individuals brought to the organisation were held to mingle with the existing organisational practices to produce an organisationally and individually specific commitment (Cappelli and Sherper 1990):

> Now I've had many sorts of people in here, you cant class them as all the same. But get them in here and they soon find their feet in their own terms. They might not all be happy souls, or look that keen, but they've got commitment in other ways. (Manager)

However, there is agreement within OP that no commitment-type person exists, i.e. certain individuals are not predisposed to commit to an organisation because of some unique configuration of personal characteristics. *Inter aila* this made it problematic to engage in pre-selection practices by Diarg's recruitment panels, like Toyota *et al*, they preferred individuals with a propensity to commit. This problem always arises when the micro variables of individuals are isolated to explicate a cause-effect relationship. In this sense commitment has to be generated by Diarg and others.

Within Diarg, commitment was seen to generate high expectations of work which in turn raised threshold levels of satisfaction for a given level of job reward (Koys 1988). Individuals thus looked to take an ever increasing role in decision making as expectation rose from the accomplishment of one level. This lead at Diarg to a desire in the employees to see the organisations' goals, and therefore the product of their labour, achieved. Of note here is that under such notions of WPC, employees were no longer to seek the performance-reward relationship, i.e. instrumentalism of old, nor supposedly the individualism it bred. Commitment at Diarg was argued to be generated through the organisation working to fulfill individual training/personal requirements. This was noted by both employees and managers as being a significant lever in the commitment process:

> I see it like this, they provide me with some training and I put it to work for them. I get to do something different you see, not the same stuff day after day. (Employee)

> They no longer feel that this is all there is. In providing training we are seeking to engage them in the work process. We kill two birds with one stone really. On the one hand we give them the opportunity to better themselves, on the other, we get them to increase output and production levels rise. Simple really. (Chairman)

There have been a number of studies on the means required for the building of commitment in a workforce (Caldwell *et al* 1990; Drennan 1988; Koys 1988). This construction is seen as non-conflictual, i.e. the manipulation of individuals to adopt attitudes not necessarily their own, is viewed as acceptable. More desirable than leaving them with their own in the case of Diarg, because they are "too heathen to care for". Diarg argued in relation to their future employees, for an emphasis on:-

- Induction - careful recruitment and selection.
- Early socialisation into company norms, values and objectives.
- Career paths based on extensive exposure to the central functional area.
- Use of training, reward and control systems to enhance key behaviour.
- Reinforcement of central values through constant role models - a Skinnerian perspective (cf. Burrell and Morgan 1979).

These were reflected in Diarg's three main points of organisational membership:

- Every individual will have another member of the organisation act as their guide to the rules and to what is expected of them on joining Diarg.
- Every individual will have the opportunity to improve themselves and Diarg will make sure that every individual will receive training to achieve their personal goals.
- Diarg will provide an environment in which every individual can feel at *home.*

Such is the example at Diarg of the HRM policy which was one attempt to appropriate the above techniques and actions to engender commitment, not just at entrance to the organisation, but at all stages. Guest (1987:503) argues such policies are designed to, 'maximise organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work'.[16] Examples used by Diarg and UK organisations, are mainly North American, which more explicitly emphasise the *enforced* alignment of employees' beliefs towards the employing organisation (Koys 1988; Locke and Henne 1986). The traditional or accepted HRM view is that QWL and high productivity can be achieved only if management treats employees as assets (e.g. Peters and Waterman's (1982) seven S's). HRM theory states that if employees *perceive* an organisations' HRM practises to be created to treat them respectfully and fairly, they are more likely to be committed to that organisation - the notion of mutuality -than if they did not have these perceptions (Jamal 1986). This was again illustrated at Diarg by the way in which employees were given off the job talks as to the importance of the new working practices. These went over and above the union's head, bypassing the only real avenue for disquiet. Each 'meet the employees' session took about half an hour and was delivered by the managing director in work time. For the purposes of the talks all performance related pay for that day was adjusted accordingly, a sign from the managing director that he felt sincerely about the needs of the workers:

> It was a cynical ploy to get people to listen to him and accept that these new working practices were for the good of the workers. They weren't of course, but when you have the power to override schedules and pay regardless, you can make people believe what you like. (Ex-employee)

This was reiterated by the managing director in a different way, but the emphasis remains the same - on getting people to come over to your side:

> It was the HR director's idea that we do it on company time, that way we get everybody's attention and they feel more inclined to believe me when I say the changes are for their own good. [*Are they?*] I'm not answering that.

Popular ways of creating this commitment based upon HRM ideas of OP have appeared in the management press. These include both Japanese and home grown techniques, some of which Diarg adopted:-

a) Organisational development and gain-sharing, fostering team work by emphasising shared goals, e.g. ESOP's (cf. Baddon *et al* 1989; Forrestor 1990; Nichols and O'Connell-Davidson 1992).
b) A share in the decision-making process (Mortimer 1990).
c) Employee rights - wages, benefits, protection (a just/fair model in return for commitment).

Within Diarg this desire to *make* employees conform to the organisations' goals and values were manifest in two ways. The first partly placed emphasis on the rights of employees to be working there. What this actually meant in practice was that employees were given a staff manual on joining which stated boldly that:

> Diarg as an organisation cannot function without its employees, *you are essential* to it. As such Diarg seeks to be a fair judge of employees and the work undertaken. Diarg does not wish to be in conflict with you, we can only win through working together. Trust is an important word here at Diarg, and we will work together towards making it a reality, here, for you. ... No employee will have their salary unfairly stopped for not meeting the job target time. A procedure is in place and all employees have access to it if they feel they are being unfairly treated.

This is part of the just-fair model of HRM, in which employees are entreated to take part in the process of their control in return for the opportunity to have their say or at least be involved in decisions. This position has been shown to be a tenuous and fallacious one (Garrahan and Stewart 1992), especially at Diarg who:

> ... feel no need to actually introduce any sharing in the decision making process. No, this is for management in the final instance. We can let them debate the merits, but its our decision in the end that counts. (MD)

The other part to this just-fair model was that Diarg presented a four point plan:

I. *Commitment* from its management to develop all employees in order to achieve business objectives.
II. *Planning and review at regular intervals* of the training and development needs of all employees.
III. *Action* to train/develop employees on recruitment into the company and throughout employment.
IV. *Evaluation* of the company's investment in training/development to assess achievements and improve effectiveness.

These were the written cannons of Diarg's policy towards employees and provided the basis of their HRM policy. However, these failed to take into account the:

> ... poor management really, they don't really develop anyone, they ain't got the time really, its always tomorrow, its output that counts now. If I was to stand up and say I wanted to be trained on the keiper [machine name] they'd look round and say no. Training's a joke really, commitment my arse. (Employee)

On top of this was the failure of the appraisal and performance related pay schemes to actually deliver higher rewards for extra effort/output:

> As it stands the performance related pay scheme isn't working, we've tried to make it more responsive to the actual jobs we get in, but we cant get it to make one off payments before new targets are set. And as for appraisal, its a no no, what with the new business objectives being introduced almost weekly, people's agreed performance appraisal schedules are being thrown into the bin. The theory's alright until you start putting it into practice in the real world. (Finance Director)

The second way in which Diarg placed emphasis on engendering commitment was through the financial incentive, through the employee share ownership scheme, or ESOP (Forrestor 1990). Here employees were entreated to conform because their 'salaries' were dependant upon them putting in the extra effort involved. Team work was expected to be paramount as this was the means to an organisational profit and thence to an employee profit. Those not making the grade were not looked upon favourably by other employees:

> ...when the whole teams wages depend on one person pulling their weight, there's no time for slacking man, you gotta pull that weight of get it kicked by the others. My team works the hardest of all in this factory, that's why we get the best wages, our productivity is always on the up.

This is the way to organisational development favoured by HRM, it persuades the employee to put more than their usual effort into production. Coupled with the just-fair part of HRM, it is a formidable array of subtle power to persuade employees to be committed to the organisation.

CONCLUSION.

Although much of the work in the area of commitment at Diarg has been undertaken in a normative and prescriptive manner, this has arisen mainly through the managerialist economic vein adumbrated here (cf. Thompson and McHugh 1990). Within Diarg this OP view of commitment has remained discernible as an individual(s) outcome - i.e. an end in itself - tend the sheep and the flock will follow.

There was within Diarg, a contradiction between the individualism necessary for engendering personalised commitment and the need to fit this into a teamwork or cooperative framework. If Diarg measures commitment by personal output - whether as part of a team or not - as most do, this presents problems for creating commitment and understanding how individuals will conform to organisational aims (Bowles and Coates 1993). Here the social is left external to analysis (Coates 1992).

This could be seen within Diarg with the records it kept on an individuals' work performance despite being members of a team. This was necessary to formulate pay and contradicted the desire to remove forms of control. It merely removed it to the secret world of the human resources department, it did not eliminate it. In this sense the team became the overt control mechanism, while management still retained the right to apportion payment.

The problem thus arises with Diarg as an example, that OP theories regard individuals as construct singular. Individuals however, are male or female, young or old; they are young black women or old white men, etc. It is very difficult to control (make constant) for this.

They simply ignore the individual as sentient being, of having knowledge as consequence for action, of being in any way responsible for action as individuals.

What we have seen with Diarg, is that despite the use of these high level performance management techniques, there is still considerable room for manoeuvre by individual employees. If we cast our minds as far back as the Affluent Worker studies in the 1960s, we can see that those at Diarg espouse similar meanings for their actions - working for the debts incurred in living apart from work.

What we must not overlook however, is that despite the motives for working, the way in which individuals are expected to perform and *act* is still dictated by ideology, in this case OP. In this sense we might argue that employees are collectively resisting while still espousing the rhetoric of compliance. We might also point out that the methods used for measuring commitment are woeful in their inaccuracy. Demming (1986) has already questioned such attempts to measure individuals' efforts.

In order to determine the social aspects and their impact, a more socially oriented analysis is required rather than an individualistic one. This will be dealt with in part two, as will notions of convergence. However, one point to note in the meantime, is this does not mean a social psychological perspective where people and contexts are given *equal* weight, as the research encountered in this perspective here has simply been treated as statistical interaction between 'inputs' from individuals and contexts.

A major methodological problem also arises for WPC studies more generally when questions used to control for certain attributes are (or appear to be) too simplistic. For example, questions like: "do you agree with this statement, 'in general I'm satisfied with my job'", to control job satisfaction out of affecting a study on organisational commitment. This appears to be an inadequate control mechanism, because it attempts to control out those actions and definitions that are constructed in the work place that have a salience for those individuals involved! Much of this is an attempt to control variables to enable prediction, not explanation. It is the latter that remains vital if any understanding of employees is to progress beyond present incarnations.

The situational attributes are also not questionable for OP, but organisational climate is created (by way of social interaction) from the former in the texture of the very way the organisation creates its rules and actions for functioning. Thus those structures that form the shell of the organisation act back upon the very actors that enable its functioning. Actors make their social contexts through evaluative descriptions. Social order is not a given, rather actors choose, construct and negotiate order in and through their relationships with others. Just as people shape contexts (and thus organisations), contexts also shape people who become conditioned to accept actions as legitimate depending upon whom they interact with on a long term basis.

Therefore organisational climate is a product of the former two not an equal antecedent. What we shall see in part two is the attempt at a collective level to integrate idioms of thought and action under notions of individual consciousness and meaning.

NOTES.

1. See Brown (1992) and Reed (1992) for a more comprehensive treatment of the history of organisational enquiry.

2. Mainstream (Modernist) organisational theory assumes that the underlying trajectory of institutional development in industrial and post-industrial societies, produces more highly 'organised' socio-economic systems. Thus, the social organisation and administrative co-ordination of industrial life came to express the cultural norms of rationality, efficiency and are most closely associated with the 'operationalization' of unified social practices associated with factory production, bureaucratic co-ordination and the market economy. This Modernist project believes the organisation to be self-sustained, selfpropelled, as existent outside the conceptions of the individual actors within and based upon the Fordist conception of the labour process (Grint 1991). This was based on a pyramid of control, defined in classic bureaucratic hierarchical fashion (Clegg 1990). Concomitant with this modernist tradition of management revolving around Taylorist notions of working practices, Paternalism existed as a form of authority and a process of legitimation, which enabled power relationships to become moral ones, partly through religious codes and partly through a sense of social duty by owners (cf. Black and Ackers 1988).

3. There is now seen to be less of an 'inevitable' compulsion towards conscious total 'control' by management as an overriding aim or end in itself (Marchington and Parker 1990; Reed 1989).

4. The term OP is a representation and encompasses a host of other better known terms, e.g. social psychology, systems theory, human relations, etc.

5. However, more generally the literature illustrates a polarisation around two ideological areas, OP and organisational sociology, both of which take the structural level in their 'popular' incarnations. The first exhibits aspects of individuals' - psychometric testing, and the second focuses on aspects of power and control. In neither has the individual figured very highly as a reflexive being.

6. Notions of commitment arose long before the 1980s, when it was recognised there existed a link between job attitudes, behaviour and output. In the 1940s/1950s this was represented by scholars such as Selznick (1943), Blau (1955), Gouldner (1954) and Etzioni (1961). Also implicated, were more formal theories of administration developed by consultants, engineers and managers such as Barnard (1938), and Fayol (1949), which established links between rational worker behaviour and productivity, accepting that a 'happy' worker produced more (Rose 1991). Inevitably this 1980s re-emphasis can be traced to the work of Mayo (1933), who's critique of industrial civilisation, constructed around an industrialised image, set the tone for the present day romancing with humanistic perspectives. The Human Relations approach is compatible with the contemporary dominant emphasis on normative functionalist analysis.

7. Authors who illustrate this OP tradition are, Brooke and Price (1988), Curry *et al* (1986), DeCotiis and Summers (1987), Dubinsky and Hartley (1986), Jamal (1986), Koys (1988), Loscocco (1990), Meyer *et al* (1989), and Morrow and McEllroy (1988). Such

authors inform management textbooks, which explains why the question, whether people should be manipulated as objects through symbolic management, is never broached in those texts read and learnt from by managers, because this would require a paradigm/perspective shift (Burrell and Morgan 1979).

8. The problem here is that OP is looking for cause-effect relationships. Looking at only a few of the titles can illustrate this, e.g. Curry *et al* 1986.

9. For example the train maker ABB in Derby, as a means to rank people for redundancy used performance appraisal. In June 1993 they announced how they would conduct redundancies, not those last in as in traditional theories, but those whose *performance* did not match the set levels! It was also announced in June 1993 that Rolls Royce white-collar workers voted in favour of redundancies by way of (poor) performance ratings.

10. All names mentioned herein are fictitious.

11. However, it remains imprecise to argue that Japanese organisations exhibited the actual qualities alleged, as some might (cf. Whitehill 1991).

12. It is no surprise therefore, to see a link between behaviour and identification through the following means (cf. DeCotiis and Summers 1987:446): Internalisation of the organisations' goals and values. Involvement in an organisational 'role' in terms of those goals and values. Desire to remain in the organisation serving its goals and values. Willingly exerting effort.

13. For the purposes of this analysis only, commitment and loyalty can be considered similar.

14. This does not constrain individuals from breaking out of the cycle of seriality that routines and rituals reinforce, as such definitions might imply.

15. For OP then, important areas of practical and theoretical concern to maintain commitment have included motivation, attitudes, job satisfaction and leadership studies (Blackler 1982). This is not exhaustive, other more familiar topics are selection, recruitment, core-periphery and performance appraisal (Bowles and Coates 1993).

16. Flexibility has been primarily directed at changes in working practices providing the means for more systematic management control. The main emphasis of flexibility has been upon work practices related to job demarcations, the deployment of labour within a plant/enterprise, flexible working time, the use of subcontracting and temporary workers (Rannie 1991; McLoughlin 1990).

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