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ABSTRACT

The nature of employment in the United Kingdom has been changing significantly in recent years and a number of Government-led initiatives have been taken to help people to adapt to this. In particular, individuals are increasingly expected to take responsibility for their own training and development and employing organisations are being encouraged to support them in this. Central to these initiatives is a new system of educational and training qualifications to which has been added a formalised scheme for action planning. This paper outlines these changes and reports on the introduction of the action planning scheme to management development training for senior police officers. Through this it has been realized that the new initiatives--and indeed career guidance in general--have a strong bias in favor of young people entering the world of work for the first time. A model was developed which was felt to be more appropriate for supporting those in mid-career. Whilst helpful, this was shown to have some deficiencies. Proposals are made to improve the original model. (Author)

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Career Development in Mid-Career: Practice and Problems from a British Perspective

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Abstract

The nature of employment in the United Kingdom has been changing significantly in recent years and a number of Government-led initiatives have been taken to help people to adapt to this. In particular, individuals are increasingly expected to take responsibility for their own training and development and employing organisations are being encouraged to support them in this. Central to these initiatives is a new system of educational and training qualifications to which has been added a formalised scheme for action planning. This paper outlines these changes and reports on the introduction of the action planning scheme to management development training for senior police officers. Through this it has been realised that the new initiatives - and indeed career guidance in general - have a strong bias in favour of young people entering the world of work for the first time. A model was developed which was felt to be more appropriate for supporting those in mid-career. Whilst helpful, this was shown to have some deficiencies. Proposals are made to improve the original model.

Introduction

In the United Kingdom the context in which people plan and live their careers is changing markedly and in the last three to four years there have been some noteworthy initiatives to assist people adapt to this. In particular, the Confederation of British Industry, which is the main employers' organisation, together with the Departments of Employment and Education of the British Government, have been active in promoting a broad scheme in which career planning and appropriate guidance are prominent.

The theme of this conference is 'energising people in their work/life settings'. The aim of this paper is to describe the way in which we have tried to do this in my own organisation and how we have tried to fit our scheme into the emerging national pattern. From this experience it has been concluded that, despite the initiatives which have been taken, there are some fundamental shifts in emphasis which are still necessary. Consideration of this situation has led the author to propose a new framework which will be outlined.

The main conclusion is that within-employment career planning is likely to be more successful when the organisation in which the individual works has a clearly expressed purpose or mission and where this is integrated into a process of strategic planning which is similarly clear. In this situation, the individual can construct individual plans in a way which 'mirrors' the strategic management processes at an organisational level.

The Changing Employment Scene in the United Kingdom

The changes in the experience of work referred to, which have become noticeable over the last fifteen years, involve some fundamental shifts. Unemployment has been substantially higher than most people can remember and yet periodically the country has experienced skill shortages. Manufacturing industry offers far less opportunity than in previous years, partly through increased levels of mechanisation and automation, partly through the relative decline of manufacturing in the economy as whole. The number of young people has declined because of a much-reduced birth rate in the early 1970s yet unemployment amongst these people is higher than for the population as a whole. This latter situation is much disguised by the fact that many more young people are staying in education beyond the legally required age of sixteen.

Further and higher education are expanding rapidly and many more people are obtaining post-school qualifications. The nature of these qualifications is changing, with a radical change in the main school-leaving qualification (the General Certificate of Secondary Education, GCSE) and the addition of two separate schemes of vocationally-related qualifications, the National Vocational Qualifications, (NVQs), which are employment-based and

the General National Vocational Qualification, (GNVQ), which is college-based. The latter, which is very recent, is intended to be equivalent to the higher school-leaving qualification, 'Advanced Level'.

While only a few years ago it was normal to expect employment on an open-ended 'permanent' basis, increasingly contracts are for limited short-term periods. Whether or not this is the case, few young people entering the world of work today expect to remain in the same job for more than a few years, let alone the lifetime which was an expectation for many only a short time ago.

Despite these changes some of the difficulties we have experienced in the past still face us. In particular we remain a country in which people have relatively high salaries and yet, compared with our main international competitors, we still are relatively underskilled and underqualified as a nation.

A Response to the Challenge

This particular combination of circumstances, and the fact that so far we have not really come to terms with the need to increase our skills, has led to more recent attention. The Government, with the active involvement of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has taken a completely new approach. After many decades of exhortation to employers to take the initiative, the focus has now turned to individual employees.
There are new assumptions behind this thinking. People will change their jobs regularly and should take the primary responsibility for attaining and updating the skills they need. Employers need to recognise this and to support and encourage this activity rather than initiate and direct it. This has led to a new approach to employers, the 'Investors in People' programme, which specifies standards for employers in offering such support. This has been established by the Employment Department.

At the individual level, the emphasis was originally placed on the NVQ system, which enables people to obtain recognised qualifications for demonstrable skills. Being competence-based, they can can be awarded to recognise training successfully completed or, alternatively, through formal assessment of competences acquired through work experience.

Many people find this very appealing - to obtain qualifications which recognise what they are capable of doing improves their status in their present employment and increases their chances of obtaining new work at an appropriate level of skill.

While this remains an essential part of the overall system, attention has now turned to the process of obtaining an increase in skill. The emphasis here is on constructing action plans and recording the outcome of these plans. The result is a record of

the process by which skills are acquired which is regarded as complementing the NVQ qualifications. A national standard format has been established for this: the National Record of Achievement (NRA). Through this, indiv-iduals are invited to construct formal action plans and then to set down their subsequent achievements (to which they add a summary of their qualifications) - all in a form which enables this information to be presented to prospective employers.

It is recognised that many people would find guidance helpful in the process of constructing the action plans and attention has now turned to providing this guidance on a national scale. The present debate is on how this might be funded. Although employers stand to benefit through increased skills and flexibility of their staff it is also true that they stand to lose the skills of the people they might want to keep.

All of this represents a enormous change in national culture as far as attitudes towards employment are concerned. While the developments are not yet all in place, so far all indications are that the resulting change is considerable. Emphasis so far has been mainly on the 18-25 year old age group but the intention is to extend this to everyone right up to the age of retirement. This is being called 'lifelong learning'.

Experience in Police Training

The author works at the Police Staff College at Bramshill which is the national training centre for senior police officers. He is the course manager of the Leadership Development Programme which is a management development course for newly appointed Chief Inspectors (who are equivalent to police Captains in the United States). Officers on this course are usually in their thirties or forties and typically have fifteen to twenty-five years experience in police work.

Recently the design of this course was changed to include a proportion of time spent in organisations outside the police service. This presented the problem of how this experience should be recorded and a decision was made to follow the recommendations of the NRA format as far as possible.

The outcome of this development will be reported in due course. What is of interest here are the initial problems which were encountered. While the principles of the NRA were found to be relatively straightforward, the use of the standard format was less so. The conclusions were that, despite assertions to the contrary, the format does not suit all employees but favours those who are in the school- or college-to-work transition. Overall the needs of those in mid-career do not seem to be served well. Informal discussion with other organisations who have adopted the NRA scheme suggests that we are probably one of the first to try it with employees who are genuinely in mid-career.

This in turn suggests that there are some more profound issues which may need to be considered.

The underlying philosophy of the NRA system

The NRA system has been constructed in a way which fits the well-explored motivational characteristics of goal-setting (see, for example, Latham & Locke, 1979; Locke & Latham, 1990) It is argued that the process of carefully selecting goals which are achievable, and agreeing these with someone else, can have a powerful motivating effect. What is essential in the NRA approach, therefore, is to go through this process. This is then continued as the action plan which has been constructed is put into practice. The outcomes are recorded and discussed with the person with whom the plan was agreed. This discussion, therefore, also constitutes a part of the essential process. The tangible product is an agreed written statement which records what the person set out to do, what they achieved and what they learnt. To maintain the motivational effect, it is essential that individuals themselves draft the original document, but the final version is the result of the discussion and, where possible, includes appropriate evidence. Part of the value of the final document derives from the ability of the other person involved to verify this evidence.

This emphasis on process introduces a problem because when the wide differences in individual development needs are taken into account, a standard format for the final document becomes difficult. In the NRA, this problem is addressed by providing distinctive binders and stationery for the record but leaving many of the forms almost completely blank with no more than the NRA logo and a simple heading. Other forms within the NRA provide a little more guidance, and this will be referred to later in this paper. The result, however, is a distinctive document which has the appearance of value and which is becoming recognised by employers and employees alike. At the same time, within this distinctive appearance there is considerable flexibility which allows for considerable individual differences.

The Bramshill Experience

It has already been mentioned that circumstances on one of our management development programmes at the Police Staff College presented problems to which the NRA approach appeared to offer a solution. It was decided in the early stages not to follow the NRA document format however, as much of the information (for example on education and qualifications) already existed in personal files.

It was found that the NRA recommendations on the process to be followed were extremely useful but despite the fact that the format of the documents was minimal, problems at once arose because the documents betrayed a set of in-built assumptions that

it was young people who would be completing the record. Despite the assertion that:

> 'The National Record of Achievement (NRA) provides individuals with a nationally recognised format for recording achievements in education, training and throughout life... The participation of individuals and providers of education and training is crucial to the development of a national commitment to lifelong learning...' (NCVQ, 1993, emphasis added)

a sheet which is headed 'School Attendance' is strangely irrelevant to managers who are in their forties and who have more than twenty years experience in their profession.

This can be seen to be symptomatic of career interventions over a much wider area. Despite the worthy intention to extend guidance to a much wider client group and despite explicit statements in support of this aim, deeper down nothing seems to have changed. To borrow a term from the 'soft systems' theorists (see Checkland, 1982) the *'weltanschauung'* is inappropriate. *'Weltanschauung'* refers to the 'world view' - that set of values, assumptions and basic perspective that any individual or distinct group of people brings to a situation. The prevailing *weltanschauung* of career development can be seen to be that of the school- or college-leaver. By default, anyone else is essentially a school- or college-leaver who didn't get it right and who needs to correct matters later in life. Given the changing experience of work, this needs substantial revision. Indeed, it could be said to be more appropriate to reverse the approach. Adopting the *weltanschauung* of the mature adult in mid-career, the young person then becomes the 'special case'. Trying to enter the world of work when what is needed most is experience of organisations and their variety - and, indeed, the skills of negotiating with them - puts the young person in a difficult situation. Viewed from this overall perspective, the shortcomings of the NRA format are hardly surprising.

Developing a new world view

Developing a framework which can make the new approach concrete and practical is another matter. The author has recently published an outline which he believes makes some progress (Ballantine, 1993) but exposure to people who are actually wrestling with complex personal decisions in mid-career has revealed some shortcomings. In the remainder of this paper the framework will be outlined and these problems identified. Some ideas of how these might be resolved will also be presented.

The new framework

The framework considers two separate dimensions: firstly the

individual versus the organisational and secondly the purposive versus the causal.

The first of these dimensions has been discussed by others over a considerable period (see, for example, Schein, 1978; Arthur & Kram, 1989; Herriot, 1992). It recognises that, to at least some extent, the employment relationship which typically is emerging can be best explained in terms of negotiation and renegotiation of the set of mutual expectations between employer and employee - what has been called the 'psychological contract' (Argyris, 1960).

The second dimension is less familiar but is emerging as a significant factor in strategic planning. What is being recognised is that there are two alternative views of the world which are complementary but very different. Action planning - and the setting of clear goals and object ves in general - represents one, the causal perspective. It is based on a fundamental logic of 'if I do this, then that will result'. This leads to an instrumental view of the world in which ends are identified and then means sought which realise those ends.

Goal setting is a powerful method of achieving desired goals but is not universally recognised as the best way of planning. In the United Kingdom, Sir Geoffrey Vickers stands out as a theorist who denied the emphasis which is often given to this approach. Using the example of the exercise of power, he commented:

> '...a man who loves power... both seeks power and exercises power. If he finds himself in a position in which his opportunities for exercising power are inadequate to what he feels to be his capacity, he will probably seek... a position of greater power... For such [a person, positions such as this] are indeed goals, to be attained once and for all; and the existence of such a goal will explain something of what they do. But even before and still more after their attainment of their goal, the primary explanation of their activities is not the pursuit but the exercise of power. As they go through their daily work, chairing a difficult meeting, conducting a complex negotiation, they enjoy - amongst other things - maintaining that relationship with their milieu which is the exercise of power.' (Vickers, 1965, p.32, author's emphasis)

Thus it is the continuing activity which is important, especially the maintenance of relationships with others, rather than the goals:

> 'The goals we seek are changes in our relations or our opportunities for relating; but the bulk of our activity is in the relating itself'. (p.33)

Such an approach, based on purpose rather than causal

relationships, can be seen to represent a prominent part of the way we think. In comparison with objective-setting it has a timeless quality in which the aim can never be achieved in the sense that one can say 'this is complete'. For example, a person may strive to be honest but people do not say things like 'Now I have achieved my objective of being honest I am going to direct my attention to something else'.

Reconciling these two aspects of expressing future intention has become prominent in strategic planning in organisations. (see, for example, Campbell et al, 1990). They are not seen as incompatible but as complementary. If a causal, objective setting approach answers the questions 'What?'; 'When?' and 'How?' a purposeful approach answers the question 'Why?' This approach to strategic management has largely resulted from the failure of 'Management by Objectives' (MBO) to meet its promise as a management technique. MBO was thought to offer great potential (see, for example, Drucker, 1955; Odiorne, 1970). In practice, it was found that MBO resulted in over-complex sets of objectives which lacked coherence because of a comparative lack of an overall sense of direction or purpose. The value of goal-setting is as great as ever, but more is needed. There is good reason for us to beware, therefore, because much of the current enthusiasm for the motivating effects of action planning for individuals have more than a passing resemblance to the

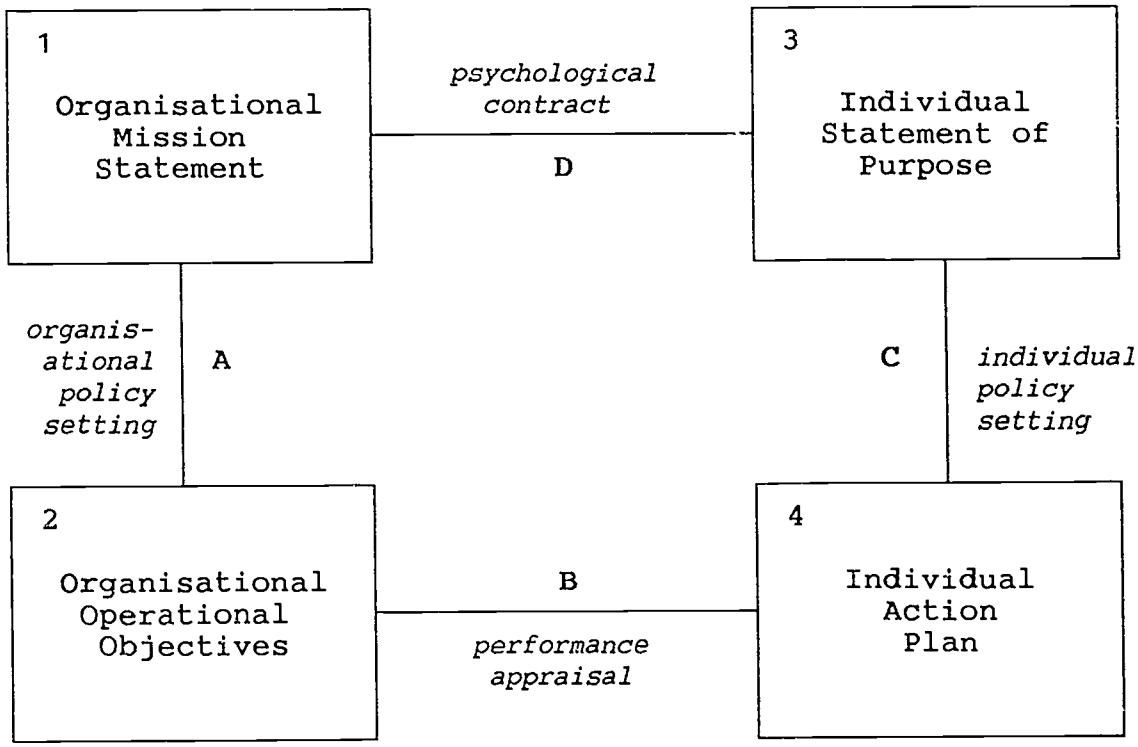

Figure 1: The Basic Model

arguments in favour of MBO which were heard about twenty years ago.

Ballantine (1993) argued that, if the newer approach was adopted in an organisation's strategic planning, it would be to the individual's advantage to adopt a planning process which 'mirrored' this at an individual level. This is shown in figure 1. The advantages of the action planning approach are maintained but the purposive aspects are made explicit. Most prominent here is an examination, in Vicker's words of 'maintaining [the] relationship with their milieu'. Bearing in mind the theme of this conference, this implies the total set of relationships one has with others and the personal significance of the work role amongst the other life roles one may choose to adopt - an approach which fits well with that adopted for many years by Super (1980, 1990). The nature of the relationships in the model are discussed further in Ballantine (1993).

The framework in practice

The framework was introduced in a limited way into the police service management development programme mentioned earlier. The results were interesting: while most individuals found it helpful in thinking through their planning, two objections were raised. Firstly, in the light of their experience they did not find it easy to relate to the 'organisation' - rather they felt their immediate relationship was with their work team. Secondly, the model implies that objectives in an action plan are best thought of as deriving from a sense of purpose, yet this begs the question: on what basis does one make choices of purpose?

The first of these considerations gave the clue to where in the literature it might be useful to pursue the first of these issues, what was surprising was that this source gave a strong lead on both. The approach in question was sociotechnical systems theory.

The sociotechnical systems approach

The history of this approach has been well-described elsewhere (see, in particular, Trist, 1981; Weisbord, 1987). It arose in the UK in the late 1940s and was associated with the Tavistock Institute in London. Its main concern was in the interaction between social and organisational systems on the one hand and technical systems on the other. Its main point was that while the design of organisations should not be determined by technical considerations neither should technical requirements be based on current organisational arrangements. Rather, new technological possibilities should be regarded as opportunities for the reconsideration of the nature of organisational problems. This should give rise to new organisational designs which should then

result in appropriate technological solutions. (Rice, 1958; Emery and Trist, 1960)

This would seem to be an unlikely source of innovation for the field of career development, but an essential part of the model for putting the approach into practice was to realise the significance of the 'primary work system' which most frequently means the individual's work group. Not only does the primary work system serve to mediate between the individual and the organisation in the socio-techical approach, it is also regarded as fundamental in understanding the relationship between the work that people do and the way in which they do it.

Quite separately, the sociotechnical theorists - especially in later expositions (see, in particular, Ackoff & Emery, 1972; Emery & Trist, 1972; Emery, 1977) - identified the importance of not only separating purpose from objectives but of recognising the role of 'ideals' in the selection of purposes. Thus reference to this literature offers the possibility of development on both dimensions of the original model.

Updating the model

This suggests an extension to the original model from a 2 x 2 design to a more complex 3 x 3 design. On this view, ideals inform the choice of purposes which give longer term direction to the selection of objectives; and this must be conducted at the levels of the whole organisation; the primary work system and the individual. This is shown in Figure 2.

Two points must be made to complete the basic outline of the new model.

Firstly, a distinction must be made between the sociotechnical notion of the 'primary work system' and the individual's work group. In many cases, these will be identical. In such cases, the only distinction lies in the perspective from which the grouping is viewed. 'Primary work system' implies an organisational perspective, with a focus on the work to be done. 'Work group' implies an individual focus, with an emphasis on the social relationships involved. The distinction becomes more important when the primary work system is large because it will then fragment into a number of work groups. While the optimum size of a work group appears to be about seven to ten members, primary work systems can consist of seventy or eighty members. This possibility is represented in figure 2 by multiple boxes to represent the element of primary work system purpose in the model.

Secondly, Emery (1977) points out that it is only individuals that can be directed by ideals. The concept is not a collective one. On this view, the top management team agree the purposes of the organisation and must convey them to all the organisation's

members. This is the function of 'mission statements' and similar devices. Individuals are able to set (arguably will always set, even though they may not be aware of it) their own purposes on the basis of their own ideals. The nature of ideals for workgroups is much more tenuous, however. The truth of Emery's statement becomes clear in that the purposes of groups appear only to exist by the individuals within them taking individual responsibility for their actions. Hence no separate box is shown on the diagram to represent group ideals.

An example at the organisational level

The model has been described in an abstract way in which it may be difficult to see the practical relevance. A brief example from recent British business history may help. It

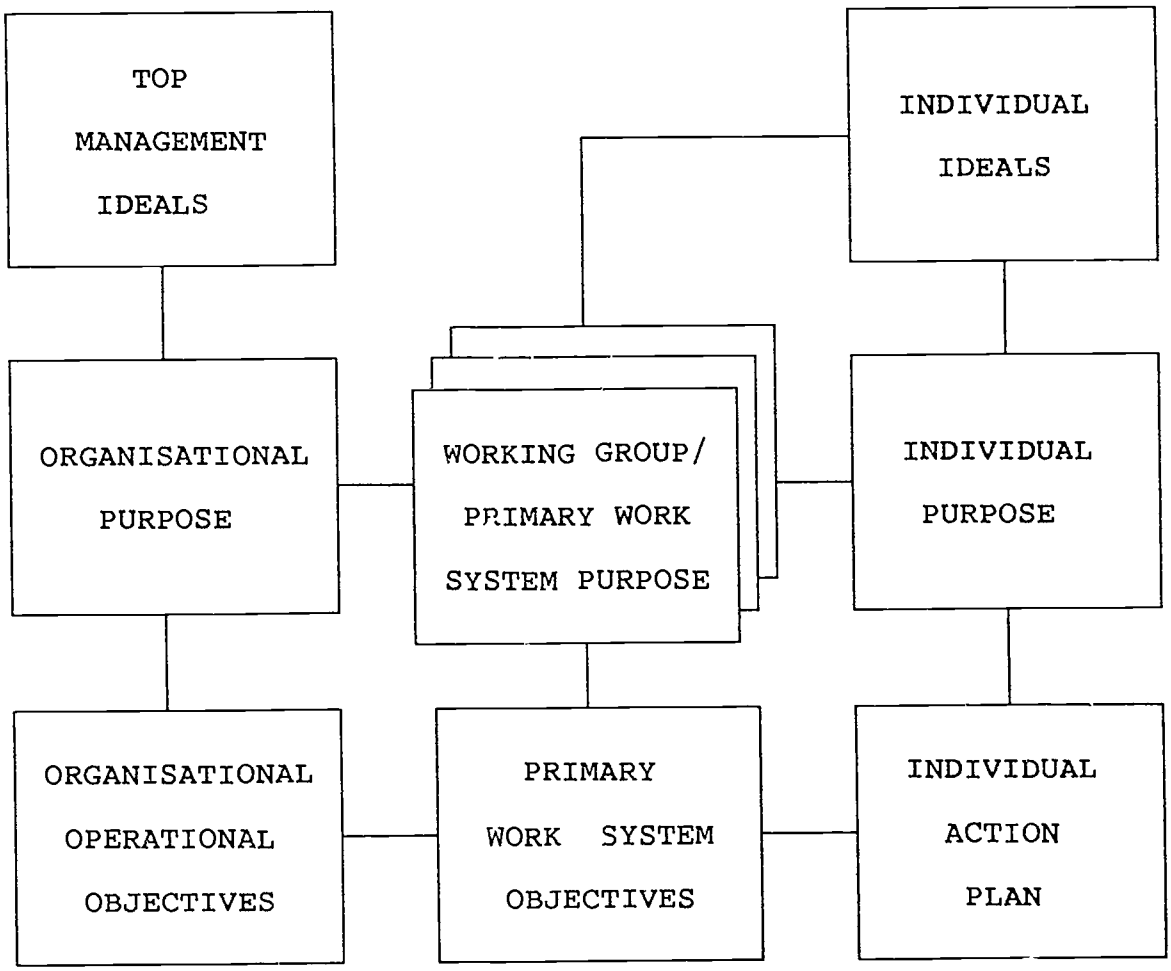

Figure 2: The extended model

concerns the changes in business activity of the 'building societies' which are similar to the American 'savings and loan' associations. These organisations have gone through considerable change in the last ten years.

Established many decades ago, the original purpose of the building societies was to operate as banks with highly restricted operations. In return for making loans solely for borrowers to buy houses, and also for operating on a not-for-profit basis, they received extremely advantageous tax concessions. This enabled them to offer low interest rates to borrowers and high interest rates to those who chose to save with them. The conventional banks were unable to compete with this.

During the 1980s, this position was changed considerably. Legislation aimed at general deregulation of banking and financial services has enabled building societies to operate much more like conventional banks and they now offer a wide range of banking services to customers with private accounts. Their principal purpose remains offering loans for borrowers to buy houses, however, and towards the end of the 1980s many building societies decided to support this activity through entering the business of estate agency (real estate). Many privately owned estate agency companies were bought in this period by the building societies. Unexpected changes in the housing market then led to heavy financial losses. The move into this market was seen to have been unwise and many building societies sold off their recently acquired estate agency businesses.

In terms of the model which has been described here, these changes can be described in terms of the building societies' purposes. Moving from restricted business activity they can be seen to have extended their purposes to include a full range of banking services to the private customer. They can then be seen to have further extended their purposes to managing the sales of houses for their customers. Many who got involved in this activity then withdrew.

What, it may be asked, informed these decisions? On the basis of the model it would be a set of ideals. It may be argued that it is simpler than this, that it was simply the changing opportunity to make profits and that the profit motive alone explains everything. This may be, in which case in terms of the model the sole ideal would be making a profit. But many building societies did not enter the estate agency business and some of those that did remain in this market. It seems that different companies make different judgements in how close to their core business they are prepared to stay in order to make profits. They also may be judging profitability over different periods of time. An 'ideal', in the sense meant here, is whatever informs these types of judgement.

Towards identifying common ideals

So far in this argument, 'ideals' have been described as factors which influence us when choosing between purposes and an example has been given to illustrate how this might operate at an organisational level. The concept must be explored further in order to apply it to career development. The socio-technical theorists did not follow this through at the individual level except in a very general way but it is possible to obtain some insight.

In general, ideals have much in common with values in that they influence us in terms of potentiality. In other words, both look forward to anticipated outcomes, and the effect of both ideals and values on decisions is not specific to a particular situation but is more generalised. There is one key difference between values and ideals, however: ideals refer to the desired outcomes of our ultimate strivings while values simply guide us in our decisions. At the personal level, we may strive for the ideal of 'perfect health' but we are simply guided by the value of 'fairness' (Emery, 1977).

Looking for more precise indication of the nature of ideals, a common thread through the socio-technical literature (see Ackoff & Emery, 1972; Emery, 1977; Emery & Trist, 1972) is the postulation of four domains or 'parameters of choice'. These are: familiarity or accessibility, which leads to the generalised ideal of plenty; knowledge, which leads to the generalised ideal of truth; understanding, which leads to the generalised ideal of good; and motivation, needs or affect, which leads to the generalised ideal of beauty.

Ackoff & Emery (1972) made this more specific at the level of institutions in society:

The ideal of plenty is reflected in politico-economic functions (which would relate directly to the pursuit of profit - as in the building society example given earlier).

The ideal of truth is reflected in scientific functions. In the case of business organisations, this would be seen in the knowledge or 'know-how' which is necessary for the maintenance of competitive advantage. In a broader sense, this would also be seen in the pursuit of education.

The ideal of good is reflected in ethico-moral functions. In the case of business organisations, this would be seen in those activities which seek to reduce conflict between individuals and between institutions, and also to reduce conflict between objectives held by individuals or institutions.

The ideal of beauty is reflected in aesthetic functions. Ackoff & Emery (1972) comment that this is the least understood of the four. It is certainly associated with creativity, and perhaps

with processes of renewal from the exhaustion which characterises so much of modern business life.

Ideals at the level of the working group

At the level of the working group, Emery (1977) interprets the four generalised ideals in a rather different way. Plenty becomes homonomy - which by analogy with 'autonomy' for the individual means a sense of independence for the group together with a sense of interdependence within the group.

Truth becomes nurturance - mutual support within the group.

Good becomes humanity which becomes especially clear in the relationship between people and technology, a notion expressed well in Norbert Weiner's book The Human Use of Human Beings (Weiner, 1950) or Joseph Weizenbaum's Computer Power and Human Reason (Weizenbaum, 1976).

Beauty remains beauty. In the case of creative work such as is found in occupations in art and design this is relatively easy to make more concrete. In a more general sense, Emery puts it thus:

> 'I am suggesting that men will increasingly choose and more consciously strive to choose those purposes that manifest intentions calculated to stimulate both themselves and others to expand their horizons of desire, and to rationalise conflict... One implication of what I am postulating as an ideal is that men will increasingly reject the pursuit of purposes that are likely to be ugly, deforming, degrading or divisive.' (Emery, 1977, p.76)

Overall, this set of ideals summarises in a remarkable way the more recent notion of the 'learning organisation'. (Senge, 1990; Pedler et al, 1991)

Ideals and the individual

But what of the individual level? Socio-technical writers give us few hints here, but it is easy enough to see what they might be at a rather imprecise level in the work situation. Plenty is almost certainly associated with those extrinsic rewards on which we all depend and also with personal power. Truth is likely to be associated with that striving to increase our competence at what we do. Good, with its association with reduction of conflict, may relate to the quality of our social relationships or conviviality. Beauty again remains beauty. Perhaps, in a wider sense, this links to notions of 'workmanship' (for which I am unable to discover a gender-free equivalent) - that sense of satisfaction and pride in applying a high level of skill in a 'job well done'. Robert Pirsig captured this in his book Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (Pirsig, 1974).

Each of these ideals can be related to conventional factors which are taken into account in career guidance but the combination, particularly when interactions between the four ideals are considered, appear to offer new insights into the process of choosing purposes and selecting goals. The quality of social relationships, what has been called here 'conviviality', is particularly noticeable in the work of Donald Super (see, Super, 1980, 1990). The ability to link the ideals to their analogues in group and organisational settings offers quite new possibilities, however. The complete set of ideals described here is set out in Table 1. Note that, as Emery (1977) pointed out, all ideals are by their nature held by individuals. 'Group ideals', therefore, refers to ideals that individual group members bring to bear in the maintenance of the integrity of the group.

Implications for Career Decision Making and Guidance

The model which has been outlined offers a framework for considering certain aspects of career decision making. Special attention is drawn to different categories of factors which on occasions can be at the source of difficulty. Often these difficulties are resolved by individuals paying attention to factors in some of the categories and ignoring others. Situations such as these can be further complicated by organisational factors outside the individual and the model can enable these to be identified.

More specifically, factors associated with rewards, for example, can lead to conclusions quite different from those based on, say, working in a convivial team, or on work which is designed in such a way as to recognise qualities of humanity. But all of these factors are internal to the individual and a different set of compromises may be necessary in balancing decisions between considerations involving the individual and the team or organisation. For example, reconciling satisfactions based on personal reward with independence and interdependence within the team - those factors which Trist (1977) has called 'homonomy' - produces very different conflicts.

The particular environment within which these ideas have been developed - that of the policing in the United Kingdom - produces particularly vivid real-life examples. The course members on the management development programme mentioned previously are facing an exceptional level of organisational change at the present time.

At the organisational level, there has been considerable debate about the purposes of policing, which has resulted in a 'Statement of Common Purpose and Values' (ACPO, 1990). Even within this there is ambiguity of interpretation which for operational managers often produces difficulties. Policies which are designed to increase the chances of the arrest and conviction

Parameters of Choice[1]	Generalised Ideal[2]	Institutional functions[2]	Group Ideals[1]	Individual Ideals[3]
Familiarity, accessibility	Plenty	Politico-economic functions	Homonomy	Rewards
Knowledge	Truth	Scientific functions	Nurturance	Competence
Understanding	Good	Ethico-moral functions	Humanity	Conviviality
Needs, affect	Beauty	Aesthetic functions	Beauty	Workmanship

Table 1: Generalised, Institutional, Group and Individual Ideals Summarised

Sources: 1: Emery, 1977; 2: Ackoff & Emery, 1972; 3: This paper.

of criminals for example, can be at odds with policies designed to prevent and reduce crime. This particular example is presently at the source of considerable political controversy. Another debate which focusses on choice of purposes at an organisational level is concerned with the way in which police practice interacts with the judicial part of the criminal justice system. In the adversarial system under English Law, the gathering of evidence becomes related to producing a persuasive case for the courts. When contrasted with the inquisitorial system which is more common in continental Europe, it becomes clear that this does not necessarily lead to establishing the truth (Woodcock, 1992).

At the team level, policing in the UK, as in many countries, is highly dependent on effective team performance. At the same time, it has become recognised that high levels of cohesion within committed teams can have detrimental effects on performance. In a number of well-publicised cases this has led to behaviour which has subsequently been regarded as ethically unsound, and which has given rise to miscarriages of justice, a phenomenon which has become known as 'noble cause corruption' (Delattre, 1989). For this reason, it has become common to restrict the periods of time for which a particular team can stay in existence, and for which individuals can stay in a particular role. This, understandably, can create dissatisfaction. Yet officers are given a measure of choice in their progression through roles as part of their career development. From a different tack, it has also resulted in much attention being given to a statement of ethical principles for the service which is currently being prepared.

At the individual level, new competences are required and new standards of performance are being defined. An example of the latter is to be found in the presentation of evidence for prosecution, and it is not unusual to hear of officers talking about the standard of presentation of evidence - which they regard as an indicator of professionalism. Another is in the development of interviewing techniques which conform to sound ethical principles (Gudjonsson, 1992). Emphasis is being placed on the need to develop competence right through the officer's career, and self-development is seen as an appropriate means of helping each individual identify their own training needs at whatever level they are in the organisation.

These examples have been chosen as indicators of contemporary concerns. The model has yet to be used in helping officers clarify the complex issues they face but it is felt nevertheless that the approach is promising. All of the issues transcend the simple setting of objectives, and in a more general sense the service has shown its acceptance of the Statement of Common Purpose and Values (ACPO, 1990). Furthermore, the stimulation for the development of the model was directly from people facing these very problems. Further development no doubt would be beneficial.

Conclusion

The practical starting point for the argument put forward in this paper is that a shift in *weltanschauung* is necessary for career guidance if the needs of adults are to be adequately addressed. Experience in the United Kingdom is showing the value of action planning in career planning but an inappropriate set of assumptions about the context of this activity remains. Specifically, too little account is given to the experience that mature adults bring to bear in making career decisions, particularly that experience that relates to finding congruence between one's personal life and the demands of life in organisations. With this in mind, it is argued that the process of career planning for the individual should mirror the process of strategic planning in the organisation.

The enthusiasm which can be seen for action planning at the present time has a strong resemblance to that for management by objectives several decades ago. The disappointment which followed the reality of MBO has now been resolved by separating matters of purpose from those of objective setting. Attempting to make use of these ideas with mature adults facing significant career decisions revealed difficulties associated with (i) needing to take into account the significance of the group in which the individual the individual works and (ii) some basis for choosing between individual purposes.

Socio-technical systems theory may seem an unlikely source of stimulation to develop these ideas, but there is no question that conceptually the issues are the same. What is intriguing is that problems with an immediate, practical origin in career development should lead so directly to thinking from such a different area of applied social science. What has been presented is merely the outline of an idea, however, a sketch of what might be worth developing.

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