LAPPEENRANTA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Business

Knowledge Management

REPRESENTATIONS OF WORK AND WORKER IN THE THREE GENERATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT.

Critical Discourse Analysis of selected texts.

Examiners: Professor Aino Kianto

                       Senior Lecturer Hanna-Kaisa Ellonen

Ulla-Maija Uusitalo

ABSTRACT

The thesis studies the representations of different elements of contemporary work as present in Knowledge Management (KM). KM is approached as management discourse that is seen to affect and influence managerial practices in organizations. As representatives of KM discourse four journal articles are analyzed, using the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis and the framework of Critical Management Studies, with a special emphasis on the question of structure and agency. The results of the analysis reveal that structural elements such as information technology and organizational structures are strongly present in the most influential KM representations, making their improvement also a desirable course of action for managers. In contrast agentic properties are not in a central role, they are subjugated to structural constraints of varying kind and degree. The thesis claims that one such constraint is KM discourse itself, influencing managerial and organizational choices and decision making. The thesis concludes that the way human beings are represented, studied and treated in management studies such as KM needs to be re-examined.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Pro gradu-tutkielmassa analysoidaan työhön ja sen tekijään liittyviä representaatioita Tietojohtamisen kirjallisuudessa. Tietojohtamista tarkastellaan liikkeenjohdollisena diskurssina, jolla nähdään olevan vaikutus organisaatioiden päätöksentekoon ja toimintaan. Tutkielmassa analysoidaan neljä Tietojohtamisen tieteellistä artikkelia, käyttäen metodina kriittistä diskurssianalyysiä. Tutkielman viitekehyksenä on kriittinen liikkeenjohdon tutkimus. Lisäksi työssä pohditaan kysymystä rakenteen ja toimijan välisestä vuorovaikutuksesta. Tutkielman analyysi paljastaa, että tietojohtamisen vaikutusvaltaisimmat representaatiot painottavat rakenteellisia tekijöitä, kuten informaatioteknologiaa ja organisaatiorakenteita. Tämän seurauksena mm. panostukset em. tekijöihin nähdään organisaatioissa toivottavana toimintana. Vastaavasti representaatiot jotka painottavat yksilöitä ja toimintaa ovat em. tekijöille alisteisessa asemassa. Tapaa, jolla yksilöitä kuvataan ja käsitellään Tietojohtamisen diskurssissa, tulisikin laajentaa ja monipuolistaa.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

"De-familiarization aims to turn the well known into something unfamiliar and strange, thus making it less self-evident, natural and unavoidable. Dissensus readings break up the established meanings and closure in how we reason through exploring language."

Alvesson & Deetz 2000, 21-22

"Were we humans not reflexive beings there could be no such thing as society."

Archer 2003, 19

"We can presume everyone has imagination – we could not negotiate the everyday without it – but it is only visible in the world as our agency, in its action in the world. Agency, as well as imagination, is a defining human characteristic."

Spender & Scherer 2007, 17

1 Background, research questions and structure of the thesis

1.1 Background and purpose of the study

This thesis is the result of a personal inquiry - why is work in the alleged knowledge economy seen in such a contradictory manner? On the one hand, there are the numerous studies (academic, journalistic and governmental) that show how the intense competitive pressures, information overload and intensity of work cause problems in personal, social and family life (for studies on Finland, see e.g. Siltala 2004; Kasvio & Träder 2007). But there are also voices, although less in volume, that highlight the positive aspects of contemporary work: the creative and even liberating features of working life in the more flexible organizations of the knowledge age (e.g. Huhtala 2005) as well the "new hacker ethics" of the information age (Himanen 2001). It seems there co-exists (at least) two very different representations at play: the repressed slave to information and the emancipated knowledge worker. How can this be?

One answer would be to conduct an empirical and ethnographic study of the workers themselves, the agents in the knowledge economy. This will lead us to the concept of "knowledge work", on which there have been studies of recently (e.g. Alvesson 2004; Huhtala 2005; Pyöriä 2006), and a call for more (Bechky 2006), that shed some light on the issue. Furthermore one could focus on the sociological and political aspects of "work" itself: how labour in the postindustrial society could be conceptualized (e.g. Beck & Giddens & Lash 1994; Julkunen 2000).

However, one can also take another view and look at the underlying social structures and practices that form, together with action and agency, the dialectical *context of contemporary work*: the knowledge intensive economic organizations as depicted in the growing number of

academic research. If there is such a thing as "knowledge work", the social context of that action is then an organization that manages and uses knowledge as a resource. This in turn points us to popular management discourse that has emerged in the last fifteen years or so: knowledge management (KM). KM is thus used as a window to (and one representation of) the bigger discourse that can be called "the knowledge economy", "new capitalism" or "post-industrialist society " and so forth.

This thesis uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) – in particular the method developed by Norman Fairclough (2003) - to study the different representations (discourses) of work and worker in selected academic writings belonging to KM managerial discourse, emergence of which is one interesting representation of the knowledge economy in itself. KM is approached from a framework that identifies three main generations of KM: first generation that sees KM as information processing, second that focuses on KM knowledge sharing and transfer, and third which is interested in knowledge creation and innovation (Hong & Ståhle 2005; Snowden 2002). The thesis aims to analyze articles that are generally viewed as influential or otherwise illustrative examples of each of the generations and identify the representations regarding work and related aspects. The articles that are analyzed are: "The New Industrial Engineering: Information Technology and Business Process Redesign" by Thomas H. Davenport and James E. Short (1990) (first generation KM); "A Dynamic Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation" by Ikujiro Nonaka (1994) (second generation KM); "Knowing in practice. Enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing" by Wanda Orlikowski (2002) (second generation KM); and "The Significance of Distinctiveness: A Proposal for Rethinking Organizational Knowledge" by Georg Schreyögg and Daniel Geiger (2007) (third generation KM). The articles are introduced in section 4.6.

The thesis attempts to not just look at the individual, but also tries to see how the surrounding structures are construed and represented, and how the individual is seen to interact with this structure. We arrive at the interplay between structure and agency (Fairclough 2003; Archer 2000, 2003; Giddens 1979).[1] Using the earlier example of the "slave to information" and "emancipated knowledge worker", this thesis sees the situation in a different way. In the other representation, the surrounding society, with its structural and cultural constraints, drowns the helpless individual prohibiting individual's "agentic projects". In the other, there is a strong agentic response that makes the most out of the new structural enablements.

The ultimate aim of the thesis is to show how these representations construe the social world and its structures around us but at the same time how these representations – and especially our understanding of them as agents - could induce changes in the same structures. We can learn to identify prohibiting power structures for example and reflect how they could be changed. In this sense the thesis also belongs to a broader method and framework that is Critical Management Science (CMS) – it has a critical lens through which the underlying ideological assumptions and power relations of contemporary economic life are studied. In addition in critical theory studies such as CMS the theory of agency is strongly present, providing an activist tone for the research (Alvesson & Deetz 2000, 35).

Following the CMS tradition, one "by-plot" of the thesis is thus the critical and analysis of the whole Knowledge Management discourse itself. The aim in this respect is to show how certain social practices, background assumptions and values influence the KM as managerial discourse, and how these in turn influence the actual managers

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[1] It should be noted that bringing agency into the KM domain is to be credited to J.-C. Spender and Andreas Scherer (2007), and is unfortunately by no means the invention of the author of this thesis.

themselves when making decisions in organizations. These decisions are the ones that affect the individual worker.

1.2 Research questions and the structure of the thesis

The main research questions (**RQ**) are defined in Table 1.1. In addition sub-research questions (**SRQ**) are defined in order to help answer the main questions.

RQ.1	How are work, worker and related aspects represented in the selected KM articles and what different representations (discourses) emerge from the analysis?
RQ.2	How does structure and agency figure in the emerging representations?
SRQ.1	What is the socio-economical context of KM?
SRQ.2	What is general managerial discourse and its genres?
SRQ.3	What is the mechanism of influence and effects of managerial discourse?
SRQ.4	How does KM figure as managerial discourse?

Table 1.1: Research questions

The thesis is structured in the following manner. **Section 1** sets the scene with the background, research themes and questions. The structure of the thesis is outlined. Limitations and scope are discussed. **Section 2** focuses on the methodological framework of the thesis: CMS, CDA and the concepts of structure and agency. CMS both as an approach to studying management and organizational life critically as well as a research methodology is discussed. Furthermore in the same section a general overview of the history and theoretical underpinnings of discourse and text analysis is provided as well of the development of CDA. Together these form the theoretical and methodological framework of the thesis, choice which is justified as well as a discussion

of limitations and risks presented. This section ends with a synthesis of the thesis' framework.

The **section 3** provides a more detailed study on the particular method of CDA chosen: the relational textual analysis according to Norman Fairlough (2003). The detailed structure of analysis used in this thesis is defined. The section ends in a summary of the scope and limitations of the analysis performed. The actual analysis can be said to start in **section 4**. This section will provide the answers to the sub-research questions **SBQ.1-SBQ.4**. The socio-economical context of the articles is provided, mainly the developments in the global capitalism during the time frame in question (approx. 1990-2007). The emergence of the discourse of "knowledge economy" is introduced as well as the concept of managerial discourse. The genres of popular, academic, practical and political management discourse are presented, alongside the general features of especially the popular and academic genres. Their mechanisms of influence are described. KM as a managerial discourse is discussed and its development in the three generations is elaborated. Other alternative approaches to understanding and classifying the KM discourse are briefly mentioned.

Sections 5-8 form the actual CDA of the selected articles, with conclusions after each analysis. These sections provide the ground work for the main research questions **RQ.1** and **RQ.2,** as well as answering them on the level of a single article in each section. All analysis is pulled together in **Section 9** and the main research questions **RQ.1** and **RQ.2** are summarized, seeing also how the findings of individual articles relate to each other. Sub-research questions **SBQ.1-SBQ.4** are recapitulated and summarized. The thesis is evaluated as well as the usefulness of CMS and CDA for management studies is critically assessed based on the experiences of the thesis. The section concludes in a discussion on further research.

1.3   Relevant earlier research

Relevant earlier research can be grouped in three. First group consists of the organizational research concentrating on the study of management related issues themselves. Much of the not so numerous empirical research on management discourses has concentrated on either the rhetorics or narratives of a managerial discourse or on the phenomenon and influence of popular management "fashions". For summaries on earlier research see Abrahamson & Fairchild 1999 and Jackson 2001. Mats Alvesson (2004, chapter 7) for example looks at knowledge work in particular from a rhetorical viewpoint. There is a recognized need for more empirical research on management discourses, as they are widely agreed to be an integral part of contemporary management.

The second group of relevant research is the critically oriented management and political economy research that has focused on concepts like globalization, knowledge economy and neo liberalism. Chiapello & Fairclough (2002) for example have used CDA when studying the "new management ideology" associated with the "new spirit of capitalism" i.e. networked, global and innovation based capitalism that is relying on individual's self-management. It should be noted that much research in this vein is openly critical to current capitalist developments, and some can be classified as post-Marxist, which of course is the undertone of number of CMS research as well (as well as influencing CDA to some extent as well, e.g. in reference to the post-Marxist Ernesto Laclau etc.). In addition the postmodernist and Foucault inspired research on organizations, such as Huhtala (2005), can be seen as relevant research for this thesis.

Finally within KM research there are studies that reflexively look at the discipline itself with some critique. A good example of this would be Spender & Scherer (2007), which attempts to clarify the reasons for

KM's very existence. This research provides insight into the evolution of what has become a much contested discipline.

1.4 Scope and limitations of the thesis

The scope of the thesis can be defined in the following way: *the focus is on the analysis of four journal articles belonging to KM discourse, especially with regard to representations of work and worker, structure and agency; using the methodology of CDA and the research lens of CMS.* The scope of the CDA used in the thesis is defined in section 3.5.1.

The thesis' scope is limited first regarding its context. The thesis does not include a detailed study on the way management discourses are created, consumed and diffused in organizations or on management fashions as a phenomenon in particular. It focuses on the academic and popular management discourses, not on the political or practical ones. The thesis does neither offer a study of KM's evolution as a discipline. Second, the method chosen (CDA) creates limitations of its own, which are discussed in section 3.5.2. Third, when analyzing the articles themselves, the summarizing or evaluation of the actual content of the articles is beyond the scope of this thesis. This means that "Business Process Reengineering", "SECI-model", "knowing-in-practice" or "knowledge as discourse" are studied only as much as it is relevant with regard of the research questions. The thesis will not offer an extensive description of the SECI-model for example. Relevant research and critique on the actual concepts is referenced in the analysis for further reading.

Finally a few points have to be made about the structure and nature of the thesis. Even though this thesis has an empirical focus in as much it attempts to answer concrete research questions through the analysis of empirical cases i.e. the articles, it has the undertone of being an introduction to a research approach and methodology that is quite

marginal in management studies. Due to this marginality, the sections on the theoretical and methodological framework (sections 3 and 4) are arguably extensive. The process of writing this thesis has been a learning and discovery journey for the author, and because of this experience the author felt it necessary to include a quite detailed account on for example CDA as a method. Understanding the method aids in the understanding the analysis. In addition the thesis' findings and conclusions are openly admitted to be subjective and the interpretation of the author. This is directly due to the very nature of the methods chosen. This is discussed more in section 2.4 as well as in the concluding section 9.

2 Building the theoretical and methodological framework: Critical Management Studies, Discourse Analysis and Social Agency

2.1   Critical Management Studies (CMS)

2.1.1   CMS as an approach to management studies

Critical approach to management and the whole capitalist enterprise is in itself nothing new. Critical analysis of the role of organizations in society and the alienating effect of bureaucracy are for example central in the writings of Max Weber and managerial dominance over labour was recognized in Marxism. Similarly there has been a research tradition since the 1950s that is concerned with the formation of elites and the concentration of power in different areas of social, business and political life. More specifically in the field of organization and management studies the critical stance towards "modernist assumptions" emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This interest in critical studies was also fuelled by the popular concept of postmodernism, which saw the whole modernist project with its control structures, overt rationalization and certain organizational structures as things of the past. Critical theory can thus be summarized as being –

alongside postmodernism – a response to modernism and its unwanted side-effects. (Grey & Willmott 2005, 17-20; Alvesson & Deetz 2000, 9-16.)

The central issues in CMS are thus the criticism of the domination of positivistic (and mainly North American) managerial agenda in management and organizational studies with its underlying elitist power relations, and the use of scientific-like "neutral" language to push a certain ideology of work that stresses efficiency, competition and flexibility as the only means of survival in global market economies. This is of course the same ideology that is transforming governments and politics as well, with discourses of neo-liberalism and globalization.

As an academic concept Alvesson & Deetz (2000, 12) define CMS as "referring to organization studies drawing concepts primarily, though exclusively, from the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Habermas)". In addition the more philosophical based approaches of postmodernism such as Derrida and Foucault are seen as forming the core of CMS. These themes include the constructed nature of people and reality, emphasizing the role of language in that process, arguing against grand narratives and theories and recognizing the power-knowledge connection in systems of domination and control. (Alvesson & Deetz 2000, 12.) As it can be seen, CMS has its origins in multiple intellectual origins, but to go deeper into them is not the necessary in this context.[2]

What then does CMS as a concept include? Grey & Willmott (2005, 13) offer a useful distinction between "studying management critically" and "critical studies of management". The former is a collection of research principles and methodologies that could help break the dominance of modernist science in management studies with its prevailing model of positivistic scientific-technical knowledge. The latter is then the actual

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[2] For a detailed review, see Fournier & Grey (2000).

studies and insights gained from using the CMS as a method.[3] Since this thesis uses CMS as a guiding method, the next section will explore the former in more depth.

2.1.2 Studying management critically: a research position and a mindset

CMS is a critical theory research approach to studying management and organizations. Other possible approaches are e.g. normative studies, interpretative studies and dialogic studies, as outlined in detail by Alvesson & Deetz (2000, 31-37). The authors construct a useful grid describing the different research positions possible, which will help clarify the thesis' orientation. This grid is pictured in Figure 2.1 below.
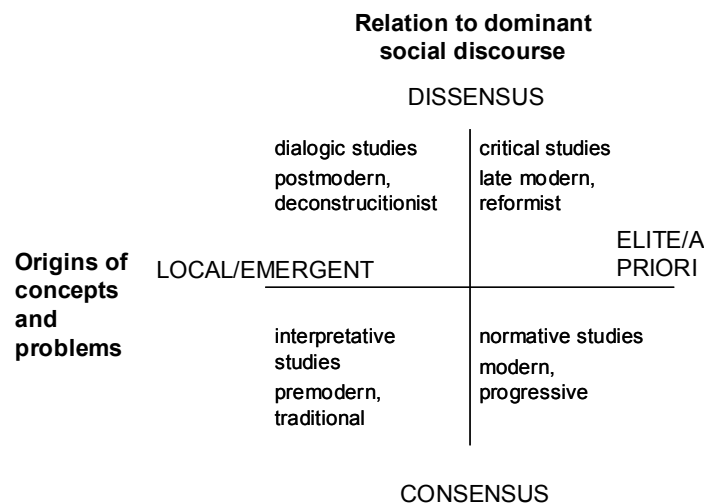
Figure 2.1: Dimensions of research approaches (Alvesson & Deetz 2000, 24)

The consensus-dissensus dimension focuses on relation of the research to the dominant and most common research themes and discourses, its ties to the existing order, so to speak. Does the research look for unity or difference, continuation or disruption? It is not, however, a question of agreement or disagreement, or one thing put

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[3] Current research interests of CMS are found for example in the abstracts of the CMS 2007 Conference proceedings at
http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ejrot/cmsconference/2007/abstracts.asp

against another. Rather it is a question of mirroring reality (consensus) or looking at it through a lens, seeing conflict, difference and fragmentation within a subjective reality (dissensus). (Alvesson & Deetz 2000, 24-28.)

The local/emergent-elite/a priori dimension focuses on the origin of concepts and research issues. Do they arise from the researcher and from theoretical knowledge and applied to the object of study (elite/a priori) or are they issues that have been raised and recognized within the context (community) of the study itself, e.g. organization (local/emergent). Language system used is central. In the priori – approach a strong theory drives the production of "objective" and universalized language of science, with fixed norms and requirements of reliability and validity. In the more local end of the dimension language use becomes more situated and "multiple", and theories have a less pronounced role. The goal is no to generate generalizable and theoretical knowledge, but rather to gain insight and practical know-how of the situation. In this sense the researcher and the "researched" are in constant discussion with each other, and there is no clear cut criteria for validity etc. (Alvesson & Deetz 2000, 28-31.)

In the above grid, critical theory studies such as CMS are identified as dissensus reading, that sees social relations as political and organizations as political sites that are social historical creations, trying to see the "strange" in the "normal". Critical theory studies have also an explicit set of a priori value commitments with an interest in moral and ethical issues. It can be said that these studies have a slightly suspicious mood about them, with a fear of authority strongly present. This leads to the goal of reformation of social order. Critical studies thus in a way combine the local manifestations and the general context, avoiding totality but at the same time trying to avoid near sightedness. CMS is not deconstructionist or postmodern in this sense: it does

recognize the existence of the macro-level. (Alvesson & Deetz 2000, 31-36.)

In addition to providing the research approach, CMS is also a mind-set or a lens to gain insight. Grey & Willmott (2005, 5) recognize three core propositions in CMS tradition that can be seen as forming a mental framework for approaching a certain issue:

1. De-naturalization: questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions of the established order, that typically are legitimized by naturalizing them, making them part of nature that cannot be changed. CMS takes the oppositional stance.

2. Anti-performativity: questioning the instrumentality of e.g. social relations and knowledge in value-production, the means-ends calculations. CMS questions the ends themselves, raising ethical or political questions.

3. Reflexivity: recognition of the mediated and value-laden nature of management studies, challenging the objectivity and production of "value-free" facts and the structures that support certain authorities. This includes being "language sensitive".

On a more pragmatic level, Alvesson & Deetz (2000, 18-20) list three tasks that should guide the researcher:

1. Insight: investigation of local phenomena; connecting the broader empirical themes (the context) with the actual local manifestations; focusing on actor or institution level empirical studies. Avoiding totality.

2. Critique: Understanding the effect of and critically study the macro-level structures and constraints that are imprinted and reproduced in the micro-level practices. Avoiding getting lost into details.

3. Transformative redefinition: developing of managerially relevant knowledge and understandings that enable change and provide

new skills. Avoidance of hypercritique, taking positive action seriously.

There is naturally much more to CMS research than what has been discussed above. The mentioned features give however a sufficient enough guideline for the purposes of the thesis, and further venturing into the methods of CMS is not seen as necessary.

2.2 Discourse analysis

2.2.1 Text and Discourse

If CMS offers the thesis its intellectual grounding, research perspective and position, then critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides the actual concrete methodology based on which the empirical analysis is actually done. In this section text and discourse analysis in general is first discussed, after which CDA is introduced in more detail.

Text and discourse both have their vague and popular uses in everyday language, usually so that texts refer to written language and discourse to spoken forms. The field of discourse analysis alone has a plethora of definitions for the concept of *discourse*, many of which are often contradictory (see for example Titscher et al. 2000 and van Dijk 1997a). One can credit the French philosopher and critical historian Michel Foucault for the widespread use of the concept especially in social sciences. Uses of the term in discourse analysis are for example the following: samples of spoken dialogue in contrast to written texts; spoken and written language; situational context of language use; and interaction between reader/writer and text. To put it simply, discourse is *"text in context"* including the notion of discourse as action. (Titscher et al. 2000, 26). The definition used in CDA is provided in section 3.

If discourse is text in context, then the term "text" has to be defined as well. A widely adopted and accepted definition is given by linguistic

theorists who define text as a communicative event that must satisfy seven specific text criteria (Titscher et al. 2000, 20-24). One can also say that everything that is meaningful in a particular situation is a text. (Titscher et al. 2000, 28-29). This is the basic notion of the linguist Michael Halliday whose Systemic Functional Linguistics is the main point of linguistic reference in CDA (Fairclough 2003, 227; Wodak 2001, 8). Fairclough (2003, 3) defines text very broadly: "any actual instance of language in use is a 'text'", including visual images and sound effects. This thesis analyses written texts (i.e. the articles), that are quite clear cut in their "being texts", so no further definition of text is necessary. The terms text and article are used interchangeably.

2.2.2   Approaches to Text and Discourse Analysis

Roughly speaking, there are two different strands of textual analysis: one that originates from text linguistics that studies isolated texts and one that can be called discourse analysis, and looks at text in context. Linguistic text analysis focuses on the internal structures of text and language, the formal aspects of language. The focus is on the cohesion and coherence of texts in their syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels, and uses particular theories of grammar. (Titscher et al. 2000, 24).

Discourse analysis on the other hand takes the relationship of a text with its social, political, historical or other context into the analysis. Discourse analysis is further divided into a) the textually-oriented methods and b) the more social-theoretical methods that do not pay much attention to the linguistic features of texts (which is the case of e.g. Foucauldian discourse analysis). In his method of CDA, Fairclough tries to overcome this division, and claims that "text analysis is an essential part of discourse analysis, but discourse analysis is not merely the linguistic analysis of texts" (Fairclough 2003, 3).

Another way to try and make sense of the discourse analysis field is to divide the different approaches into discourse as *structure,* discourse as *process* and discourse as *social interaction*. Discourse as *structure* includes analysis of syntax, semantics, and rhetoric as well as analysis of specific genres such as argumentation, narrative and story-telling. Discourse as *process* focuses on the cognitive (mental) processes of text production and comprehension. Finally, discourse as *interaction* views discourse as social, practical and cultural action. Conversation, dialogue and context are the focus of this approach, and subsequently methods e.g. conversation analysis and CDA. (van Dijk 1997a; van Dijk 1997b.)

Text and discourse analysis, whichever way one defines the field of different approaches, can then use many different methods. Titscher et al. (2000, 51) identify twelve analytical methods, including grounded theory, ethnography of communication, conversation analysis, content analysis and CDA. The next section will introduce CDA in more detail.

2.3   Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

2.3.1   Theoretical framework, principles and goals

CDA is a collection of methods for discourse analysis. Titscher et al. (2000, 144) and Meyer (2001, 14) stress that there is no single method of CDA, even though the theoretical background, basic assumptions and overall goals are common to all approaches. Therefore, when looking at the methodology, one always has to make a reference to a particular approach. In this study the approach is the one developed by Norman Fairclough, and it is described in detail in section 3. In this section the theoretical framework, principles and goals of CDA in general are summarized.

CDA is a young science as a distinct entity, which started as a network of scholars in the beginning of 1990's; the main contributors include

Norman Fairlough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk and Theo van Leeuwen. The theoretical framework derives from Althusser's theory of ideology, Bakhtin's genre theory, philosophical traditions of Gramsci and the critical Frankfurt School. Foucault has been a major influence as well. Furthermore, one of CDA's main theoretical roots is Critical Linguistics (CL), originating in the 1970's from the works of Habermas and Halliday, which highlighted the role of language in structuring power relations in society, as opposed to the linguistic tradition that focused on the formal aspects of language. One can also find a strong neo-Marxist tendency in most of the theoretical base of CDA. (Titscher et al. 2000, 144-146; Wodak 2001, 1-9.) The main theme of CDA is that the focus is not on purely academic problems but more on social problems, which are studied in order to produce "knowledge which can lead to emancipatory change" (Fairclough 2003, 209).

The general principles of CDA can be summarized in the following way (Wodak 2001, 5-6; Titscher et al. 2000, 146; Fairclough 2003, 1-16):

- CDA is concerned with social problems and the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures. Language is seen as a social practice and discourse as a form of social behaviour. Texts are analysed as elements in social processes.
- CDA is strongly interdisciplinary, and it needs perspectives outside textual analysis.
- Power-relations have to do with discourse, and CDA studies this relationship.
- Society and culture are shaped by discourse, and at the same time they constitute discourse – there is a dialectical relationship. CDA implies the causal social effects of texts, especially ideological.
- Discourses are historical, and can only be understood in relation to their context.

- The connection between text and society is mediated by e.g. socio-cognitive processes, interactive processes of meaning-making and social practices
- Discourse analysis is interpretative, with elements of description, understanding, judgement, evaluation and explanation.

The goals of CDA are beginning to emerge: it is politically involved, social scientific research that has an emancipatory focus. It attempts to make people aware of the underlying and reciprocal influences of language and social structure that shape the way people think and act, and how they are treated in society. Normally these are power relationships that people are unaware of, as they often are part of "the established order" that people take for granted. CDA gives voices to the ones that normally are not heard, who suffer the most from unequal power relations and so forth. Research topics include language use in organizations, investigation of prejudice (racism and sexism in particular) and the language of political economy, especially "new capitalism" or "knowledge economy" and contemporary management ideology.[4] Here we can make a connection between CMS and CDA: CDA is the concrete method and tool with which we can approach the central concerns of CMS.

2.4   Evaluating CMS and CDA: criticism and limitations

There is within the academic community critique aimed at both CMS and CDA. There are similarities in the content of this critique, and for the sake of being concise they are treated together in this section. Regarding mainly CMS, the fundamental critique focuses on the question whether CMS truly is an independent research approach at all. Thompson (2005, 364-365) regards the core propositions of CMS (see section 2.1.2) of anti-performativity, denaturalization and reflexivity as

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[4] For CDA oriented studies, see for example the journal "Discourse and society" by Sage Journals. http://das.sagepub.com/

nothing unique to CMS. He labels CMS as post-structuralist and postmodern research, which will only lead to the "triumph of epistemological relativism". CMS should be seen mostly as a brand for critical academics, who want to distinguish themselves. Grey & Willmott (2005, 349-351) conclude that most of the debate about CMS "has been conducted as a scholastic dispute", and the "ultimate assessment of CMS will be the extent to which is succeeds in making a critical - reflective and emancipatory – difference to understanding, studying, teaching and practising management". The author of this thesis does recognize the marginal role of CMS and the slightly self-righteous tone of the approach. On the other hand the author feels that dissenting and marginal voices are always needed – and people with lofty aspirations of reform.

The second, more concrete stream of criticism is directed to the political or ideological stance of both CMS and CDA based research. Alvesson & Deetz (2000, 35) state that critical theory studies have explicit value commitments that guide the researcher. These commitments are usually political, ethical or moral. The same is even more pronounced in CDA. When scientific research positions itself as politically involved, it is inevitable that "the line drawn between social scientific research […] and political argumentation is sometimes crossed" (Meyer 2001, 15). Meyer continues (2001, 17) that the critics of CDA in particular see it as an ideological interpretation and not an analysis. It is claimed to be in fact a doubly biased interpretation: in the first place it is prejudiced because of a preset ideological commitment, and then texts for analysis are chosen to support this already decided interpretation. Critics claim that analysis should be the examination of several explanations or interpretations – and this is impossible in the CDA approach. Some of this critique is aimed at the term *discourse* in general, that it is a too vague a concept.

The critique such as described above is seen by Meyer (2001, 17) and Fairclough (2003, 15) as a part of the bigger methodological debate in social research that is valid for CMS as well: is it possible to do research free of any pre-existing value judgements and reflect on the material and gain insight without bringing researcher's own predefined categories etc. into the analysis (as positivist methodology would have it). As an answer, CDA advocates point out the following:

- CDA is always explicit about its predefined position, unlike other approaches.
- Textual description and analysis should not be seen as independent of social analysis.
- There is no autonomous pre-existing analytical framework that would suit every research question and be sufficient for every analysis.
- CDA denies the possibility of pure objectivity; there is no such thing as objective analysis of text.
- CDA does not assume that a text could be completely and definitely analyzed; texts cannot be reduced to our knowledge of them.
- In addition there are quality and validity criteria associated with CDA (see for example Titscher et al. 2000, 164.), which are discussed when evaluating the quality of the thesis' analysis in section 9.3.1.

Fairclough (2003, 15-16) reminds us that by itself, text analysis is limited and should be used in conjunction with other methods of analysis, e.g. ethnography, to see how texts are used in social life or organizational analysis, to link the micro analysis of texts to the macro analysis of structures. Moreover any analysis is inevitably selective and motivated by subjective factors.

> "What we are able to see of the actuality of a text depends upon the perspective from which we approach it, including the particular social issues in focus and the social theory and discourse theory we draw upon." (Fairclough 2003, 16.)

2.5   Structure and agency

In CMS the notion of agency is strongly present. At the same time the presence of macro-level structures are recognized. The question of structure and action/agency is a central one in social theory, with questions like "how do features of society (structure) influence human agents?"; "how do institutional arrangements form the context of action?; and "is there an objective structure and a subjective agency?", to name a few. The main issue deals whether emphasis is given either to structure or agency, and how the two are seen to interact. There are number of theoretical approaches possible, and the thesis will not go into this debate very deeply. The main issue is to be able to analyze both structure and agency as separate entities.

A focus on structure looks at the ways in which pre-given structures and systems limit, shame and determine events and action. This is the structuralist view, central to which is Antony Giddens' influential theory of structuration (Giddens 1979). In his theory structure is not seen as an external context or a system (which is the view of traditional structuralism, e.g. in structural linguistics) and action just a function of this system (the view of functionalism in e.g. biology inspired systems thinking). Instead Giddens emphasizes the duality of structure: it is a medium of action as well as the outcome of action. When agents act, they make (strategic) use of various structural properties (called modalities e.g. norms), and at the same time in this interaction these modalities are reproduced through communication and use of power for example. This approach makes it possible to better understand the institutional, structural and strategic dimensions of different social practice, e.g. (managerial) work. (Giddens 1979, 81; Willmott 2005, 334-335; Fairclough 2003, 224.) As Willmott (2005, 336) states, "the social practices that constitute managerial work can be studied as the skilled accomplishments of agents and as an expression of the structural properties of systems of interaction". This view does not,

however, make very clear *how* agents accomplish what they accomplish. In addition it obfuscates the differences between structure and agency and attempts in a way to diminish their "relatively autonomous contributions to social outcomes" (Archer 2003, 2). Indeed, Giddens does place the agent within regularised relations of autonomy and dependence, making the agent subordinate to a social relationship with only " a certain amount" of power over the other (Giddens 1979, 6); power which is due to the very involvement in that relationship, and not to the agents own properties as such.

A more agency-focused view on the other hand makes visible the ways in which situated agents produce events and actions. These ways can be surprising, creative and unexpected. This view is exemplified in the work of Margaret Archer and in the contemporary critical realist social theory[5] she is the leading theorist of. She is critical of the concept of duality, which is present in Giddens' theory, arguing that this view is "both hostile to the very differentiation of subject and object that is indispensable to agential reflexivity towards society" (Archer 2003, 2). She wishes to defend the human subject from an assault aimed towards it from two fronts. First there is the "death of man" or "Modernity's Man" that Archer claims is the result of the Enlightment tradition that reduces human beings to pure rationality and economic calculation. Second assault is the postmodern and social constructionist view of "Society's Being", in which there is no "self" beyond a biological entity, just "grammatical fiction" or a cultural artefact. (Archer 2000, 4-5.) In contrast to these views, Archer sees that ontologically structure and agency are two distinct areas of reality, both having real and different characteristics and powers. Structures are social forms that have a) temporal priority - they exists before an individual conceive a course of

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[5] Critical realist social theory refers to the ideas first articulated by Roy Bhaskar in the 1970s. It is a social scientific method that seeks to differentiate between how we study our social, human and physical world. See Archer, M & Bhaskar, R & Collier, A & Lawson T & Norrie A (eds) (1998) Critical Realism: Essential Readings. Routledge: London.

action; b) relative autonomy - they do not depend on how a single individual sees them; and c) causal efficacy - they can influence the course of action decided by an individual, making it either more difficult or easier. In contrast, agents possess different properties, including all the things that are applicable only to humans, such as thinking, believing, intending and loving. (Archer 2003, 2; 14.)

Structures' emergent properties are constraints or enablements that are "activated" only in a relationship with some specific agentic enterprise. Archer calls these enterprises "human projects". In her thinking it is essential to distinguish between the existence of structural properties and the actual exercise of their causal powers. And here the reflexive capacity of the human agent is crucial. Unless someone actually acts upon some structural constraint, the constraint is without any social consequence. She introduces the idea of personal reflexivity or "internal conversation": how agents identify and diagnose situations they are in, how they identify their own interests and design projects to achieve their goals (Archer, 2003, 5-9.). The "internal conversation" is genuinely interior, ontologically subjective and causally efficacious. It is a personal property which is real. (Archer 2003, 16.) Archer emphasizes the need for understanding the relation between human beings and the world: we can reflect upon the society around us, even though the same society enters into us (Archer 2000, 13).

The thesis takes Archer's view that there exist two distinct strata of reality, the structure and the agency, which have distinct properties. The two can then be analyzed separately in e.g. managerial discourse and their representations. In this sense managerial discourse is one example of the relation between the agent and the world (the structure)[6]. The dominance of certain managerial discourse can be

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[6] It should be emphasized that Archer sees this relation as being far more than a narrowly construed concept such as for example "discourse" (Archer 2000, 7). For the purpose of this thesis however it is possible to see discourse as an example of this broader relation.

seen as a structural constraint only if it is advocated influentially enough by some agents and then acted upon. These agents could be for example management consultants, and discourse such as "Business Process Re-engineering", as is shown in section 5. This agentic action in turn creates constraints or enablements for the individual worker, depending on the representation it creates, and which management in organizations then reproduce. Similarly the discourse of knowledge economy is realized in new ways of for example managing, as presented in managerial discourse such as knowledge management that in turn creates structural properties in organizations.

In conclusion, the main contribution of the notions of structure and agency is the recognition that both structural as well as more personal and agentic properties are present when studying the concept "work". In addition Archer's work clarifies the actual process through which these two components interact. CDA as a method takes both into account, especially in the concept of "social practice" and its elements. Agency itself is markedly important when studying the representation of social actors in a text.

2.6   Synthesis of the thesis' framework

CMS and CDA complement each other well, and it can even be argued that that they in a sense require each other. This is certainly the view of Fairclough. His method of CDA aims to bring together the more textually-oriented discourse analysis and the more social -theoretical one. In fact, Fairclough (2003, 209) sees CDA as a "resource" in social scientific research in general, and regards it as one element in critical research (like CMS), and not an isolated method of analysis. More importantly, CDA starts with the assumption that inequality and injustice are reproduced in language, the centrality of which is also recognized in CMS. Especially Fairclough's method of CDA is suited for analysis of contexts of social and discursive change (Titscher et al. 2000, 164). The

concepts of knowledge work and knowledge economy are a manifestation of a change happening at our workplaces, changes that seem to be creating new inequalities between groups of people: the knowledge workers and the traditional ones. The study of a social change of this kind requires also the presence of both macro and micro levels within the analysis, which CDA does take into account.

In summation, the thesis aims, through the theoretical lens of CMS as well as employing Archer's view of structure and human agency, to a) analyze the structural and agentic properties of contemporary work, manifested in the representations present in KM discourse; and b) analyze how these properties could be either constraints or enablements for individual agents (workers) through their reproduction in organizational practices. This is done by analyzing texts produced within KM discourse, using the methodology of CDA and background assumption of CMS. This is pictured in Figure 2.2.

Representations of:
activity=work, objects, means, actors, social relations, time & place

reveal

Structural / agentic properties of work

that create

Constraints / enablements

that define

agentic possibilities of individuals
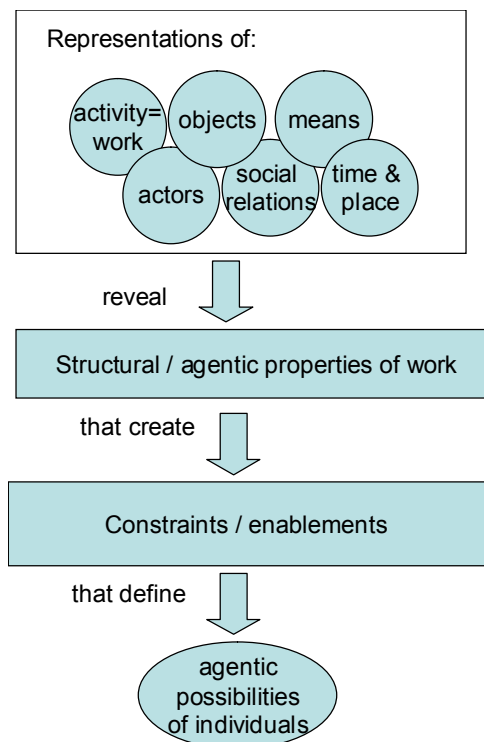
Figure 2.2: Synthesis of the thesis' framework

CMS offers the following background assumptions:

- De-naturalization: questioning the scientific and "value-free" rationale of organizations. de-naturalizing KM discourse, the "knowledge-myth" that justifies certain work practices and takes certain assumptions for granted.
- Anti-performativity: emphasis on agency, role of the individual and its having value in itself
- Reflexivity: analyzing the mediated nature of KM discourse and the background assumptions and values that influence the way work and worker is seen in mainstream management discourse. Studying how the use of certain language and discourse can shape what is seen as desirable and undesirable in contemporary working life.

Finally one could ask the fundamental question of why the focus on language and hence the choosing of CDA for a method. Chiapello & Fairclough (2002, 207) argue that language is becoming more central and more visible in the era of "new capitalism": the whole concepts of knowledge economy and knowledge-based economy imply that the economy is in fact discourse led. Knowledge, in all its forms and manifestations, relies on language, semiosis and discourses to be produced, circulated and consumed. This is also visible in the importance of semiotic aspects such as brands, images and identities in economic life, especially how they are ever present in different media. Representations are used as commodities, open to overt manipulation and design – globally. An example is the global influence of certain managerial "isms" that affect the way organizations are managed throughout the world. The process through which this happens should be made visible.

3   How to perform CDA: a relational approach

3.1   The levels of analysis

Fairclough (2003)[7] introduces what he calls a relational approach to text analysis. This means that in the analysis different levels of analysis are identified, as well as the relations between these levels. This approach is useful because it helps to clarify the focus of the analysis, and also because it acts as a reminder of the "bigger picture" of the analysis. Fairclough identifies three levels of analysis: the analysis of external relations of texts, the intermediate mediating level of analysis and the analysis of the internal levels of texts. All three levels have within them their own internal points of focus. This is clarified in Figure 3.1.

External relations of texts: social analysis

Bringing the "outside" to the text

Intermediate mediating level of analysis: discourse analysis

Relations between texts

Analysis of internal relations of text: text analysis

Linguistic analysis of particular texts

Social context of text
•social agents
•social structures
• social practises
• social events

Aspects of text meaning
• action and social relations
•identification of persons
•representations of the world

Intertextuality and assumptions

Order of discourse: language aspects of social practices
•genres: ways of acting
•discourses: ways of representing the social, physical and mental worlds
•styles: ways of being

Interdiscursive relations

Text itself
•semantics
•grammar and vocabulary
•phonology and graphology
•types of exchange, speech etc,.

Figure 3.1: Relational approach to discourse analysis

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[7] This section is based on Norman Fairclough's book "Analysing Discourse" (2003), and as a source it is not mentioned further on in this section unless there is a direct quote. Additional sources are mentioned. Figures and tables presented are the thesis' author's own attempts to clarify the complex relations between concepts in CDA.

3.2 Analyzing the social context of text

3.2.1 Social structure, social practices and social events

Texts are part of the social world and social processes. One way in which people can interact with each other, act as individuals and establish identities is through speaking and writing. This is the basic premise of discourse analysis as mentioned earlier - language and its manifestations in texts are seen as elements of a larger social context, and thus they have to be analysed in this context. This context can be divided into four concepts: *social structure, social practice, social events and social agents.*

Texts are shaped by both the people who create them (use the language) as well as the more abstract structures and established social practices within which the action of agents and social events happen. This is in reference to the structural approach of Giddens: there are certain pre-given structures that limit, shape and determine events and action. However agents (human actors) have power to create and produce events and texts. People have the freedom to interact with and shape structures and practices. Social structures can be seen as a set of all the (abstract) possibilities that exist, and some of these structural possibilities or constraints are then selected for use in social practices. In Archer's terms (see section 2.5) human agents call on these structural elements, and in this way make these structural elements "real". It is important to realize that this selection is controlled (mediated) by intermediate organizational entities that oftentimes have powerful ideological motivations.

Social life is thus seen as interconnected networks of social practises of different sorts: economic, political, cultural, family, etc. (Chiapello & Fairclough 2002, 193.) Every social practice in turn is an articulation of

different types of social elements: action and interaction, subjects and their social relations, instruments and means, objects, material world (time and place) as well the language aspect – discourse. Together these elements constitute a social event, the concrete and particular manifestation of social activity, the "actual" thing that "happens". The social event also produces the situated use of language, and thus produces "a text". The analysis of these elements is the central focus of the analysis performed in this thesis.

It should be clarified, that Fairclough uses the term discourse in two ways. As an abstract or mass noun (that is always used in the singular form), he refers to the use of language as part of the social activity within a social practice. For example part of doing any work is using language in a certain way. This use of language is *discourse*, and constitutes genres such as popular management literature. When using discourse as a count noun (that can have both singular and plural forms), Fairclough refers to the particular and different ways of representing aspects of the world. The representation and self-representation of social practises constitute *discourses*. An example would be discourses on knowledge work[8].

Language is an element in all four concepts: in social structures as language systems, in social practices as orders of discourse and in social events as texts (and in the social agents' use the language). Social practises networked in a particular way constitute a social order (e.g. global neo-liberal capitalism, management education in western societies etc.), and discourse aspect (use of language) is accordingly an order of discourse. An order of discourse is the way language is used, a combination of genres, discourses and styles. Finally text as a part of social event can then be defined as the manifestation of the use

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[8] The correct use of *discourse/discourses* according to Fairclough's definition proved in fact very difficult. One main reason was that other authors do not make the same distinction. The thesis attempted to follow Fairclough´s definition, but admitting that in this it was not probably wholly successful.

of language that can be oral, written or visual and symbolic (semiotic), and has certain types of meaning attached to it. This is pictured in Figure 3.2.
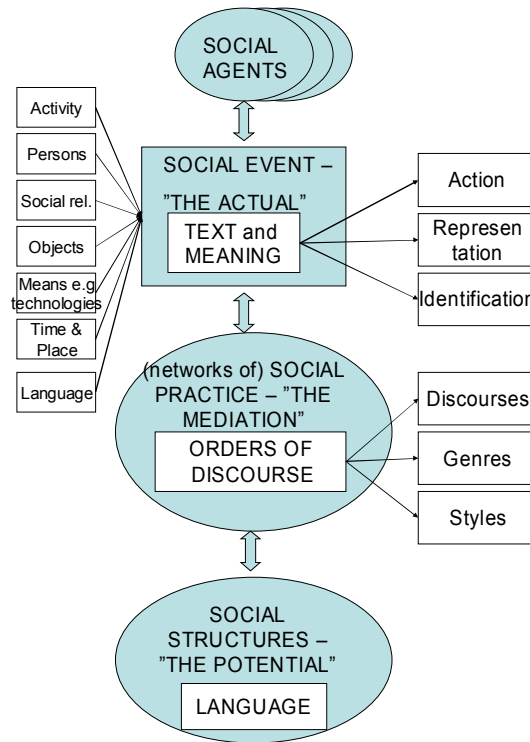
Figure 3.2: The social context of text

3.2.2   Aspects of textual meaning: the multi-functionality of texts

One theoretical root behind CDA is the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL, or Systemic Functional Grammar SFG) of Halliday that emphasizes the multi-functionality of texts (Wodak 2001, 8; Titscher et al. 2000, 51, 148; Fairclough 2003, 26). Texts represent simultaneously aspects of the world (physical, social and mental); enact social relations between people and their attitudes, values and desires; and connect parts of text together as well with their context. And it is people that make texts do those things in the *process of meaning-making*. When looking at texts this way, we can identify three major types of text meaning: *action, representation and identification.* Texts are thus seen as ways of acting, ways of representing and ways of being.

The meanings that are given to specific texts as part of specific events (action, representation and identification) have their counterparts on the level of social practice: the relatively stable and durable ways of acting, representing and identifying. These are respectively *genres, discourses and styles (=elements of orders of discourse).* Text analysis consists of two interconnected things: first specific texts are analyzed in terms of the three types of meaning and see how they are realized in e.g. vocabulary and grammar; and second this concrete instance is connected to a more abstract social practice by studying the genres, discourses and styles used.

These all are connected together in a complex way, that is to say the types of meaning etc. are not separate from one another, they have a dialectical relation. For example discourses are enacted in genres, discourses are inculcated in styles, and genres and styles are represented in discourses (Figure 3.3). They are separated mainly because of analytical reasons but they affect each other in various ways.

3.2.3   Intertextuality, assumptions and difference

Intertextuality and *assumptions* are concepts that analytically belong to the social analysis level of texts, but they move a step closer towards the analysis of texts themselves. Intertextuality refers to the relations between one text and other texts which are incorporated into the analyzed text. These texts are "external" to texts, but brought in to the text in various ways: quotations, citations, indirect speech and so forth. Intertextuality brings other "voices" into the text, making it more *dialogical* - recognizing difference and being open to it. When analyzing intertextuality, one asks questions such as: which texts and voices are included, which are excluded, what significant absences are there?

Assumptions, on the other hand, reduce difference (and diminish dialogicality in the process) by making explicit or implicit assumptions about certain things, thus creating "a common ground". What is left unsaid in texts is as important as what is said – some things are taken as given, and thus left unsaid. There are three main types of assumptions:

1. existential assumptions: assumptions about what exists,
2. propositional assumption: assumptions about what is, what can be, what will be,
3. value assumptions: what is good or desirable.

Intertextuality and assumptions are important concepts when analyzing texts with regard to social difference, ideology and hegemony - making particular representations universal ones, with associated value systems and assumptions. Fairclough takes the example of representations of "globalization": it can be seen as being the aspirations of a hegemonic neo-liberal discourse seeking a universal status for this particular vision of economic change. This includes the assumptions that anything that helps "efficiency" and "flexibility" is desirable.

In addition to analyzing the different voices actually present, text can be analyzed by looking at how it deals with *difference*. Texts vary in their orientation to difference, and Fairclough identifies five broad categories:

1. an openness to and recognition of difference, there is a dialogue of voices present in the richest sense of the term,
2. a polemic accentuation of difference, a struggle over meaning and power,
3. an attempt to resolve or overcome difference,
4. a focus on commonality, solidarity, bracketing the difference, and
5. consensus, a normalization and acceptance of differences, suppresses differences of meaning.

3.3   Texts as orders of discourse

3.3.1   Overview

As stated earlier, orders of discourse are the language aspects of social practices (Figure 3.2) that are made up of a combination of genres, discourses and styles. Genres, discourses and styles are the relatively stable and durable manifestations of ways of acting, representing and identifying through texts, which in turn relate to the social activity, physical and social world and persons involved in the social event (or discursive event) that is studied. This relation is pictured in Figure 3.3.
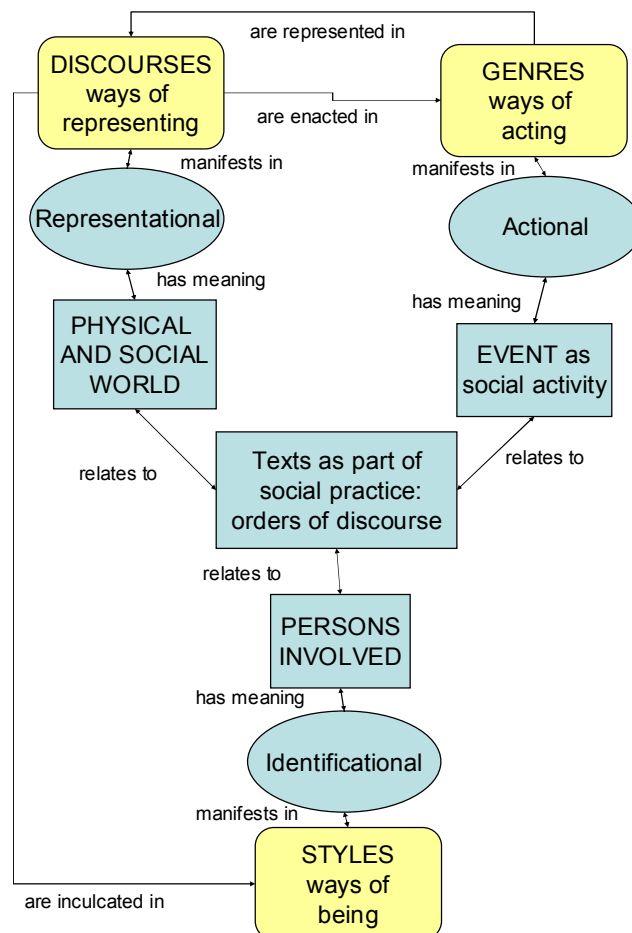
Figure 3.3: Components of orders of discourse

3.3.2   Genres: ways of acting

Genre is seen as a particular way of using language (a particular discourse) associated with a particular social activity. Genre analysis attempts to answer the following types of questions: what sort of activity is the text part of, what are the social relations between the author and the audience, who are the supposed readers etc. Examples of well established genres are for example Interview, Report, Narrative, Argument and Conversation, and they are realized in certain semantic and grammatical features. Genre analysis can be performed in three steps: first the analysis of genre chains; second the analysis of genre mixtures in a text and the creation of "formats"; and finally the analysis of the individual genres in a text.

Genre chains imply a movement of meaning; ways of using language associated with certain social practices "flow" into one another in the same ways as a chain of events. One example could be a management research process (modified from Fairclough 2003, 32). Research on management practices transforms the genre of "real business" into the genre of academic research. This in turn becomes a genre of language use in management education in the form of e.g. a case study. This could then be further used in the language of management consultancy or by a "popular management guru", which then enters back into the genre of "real business" when managers apply the language (e.g. in the form of new "isms" and catchphrases like "knowledge management") in their work. This example also shows how global capitalism makes it possible for a genre embedded in certain culture – in this case most often the North American business education and management consultancy – to become enacted in other cultures around the world. Fairclough calls this "action at distance", which is typical for new capitalism. It transcends time and space. The above example can also help to understand the concept of "recontextualization". In this case a particular academic research study is recontextualized in various ways.

It is used as a case study in education, as consultancy material, and to maybe justify changing management practices in another company and so forth.

Typically however a text is not of a single genre, it is a combination of different ones; it is a **genre mixture**. This also contributes to the creation of new genres. These changes of genre and genre mixtures are said to be typical in "postmodernism", where different kinds of social boundaries are blurring and shifting. Fairclough mentions as an example the way mass media mixes different genres: fact and fiction, news and entertainment, drama and documentary. Genres are also used "outside" their typical context: for example universities use the genre of advertising when trying to attract research money or students. The mixing of genres creates what could be called "formats". They are assemblies of different genres into a recognizable entity, e.g. web sites, "reality TV" etc.

Finally the **individual genres** can be analyzed. This can be surprisingly complicated due to the following reasons. Firstly, genres differ from each other greatly. Some are stabilized and defined, almost ritual-like, for example scientific research papers. Others can be extremely fluid in format and variable, for example advertisements. This means that genres can sometimes be hard to identify. Second, genres have no clear or established terminology or hierarchy. Genres can be defined on different levels of abstraction. Fairclough identifies the following levels:

- pre-genres: genres that are very abstract and are above any particular social practice, e.g. Narrative, Argument, Conversation. These can be combined to form e.g. Conversational narrative.
- disembedded genre: genres that can be used in various contexts and social practices, e.g. Interview, Report.
- situated genre: a genre that is specific to particular social practices, e.g. an ethnographic interview as a research practice.

Individual genres are analyzed in terms of Activity, Social Relations and Communication Technology. Activity analysis answers the questions "what are people doing (discoursally)", "what is the purpose of the text" and "is there a hierarchy of purposes". In some cases activity can manifest itself explicitly, but more often the purposes of texts are implicit. One way activity can be analyzed in some cases is by looking at how the text is organized into well-defined stages and if it has a "generic structure". For example the generic structure of a news report includes a headline, lead paragraph, satellites and a wrap-up section. The generic structure of an argument on the other hand is the combination of three "moves": grounds, warrants and claims. Social Relations analysis looks at how the agents - in the social practice that the text is part of - are organized, what the power structure (hierarchy) is and the social distance of the agents involved. Finally a genre is analyzed with regard to the communications technology used: two-way/one-way and mediated/non-mediated.

Individual genre types usually have, in addition to the above, very specific methods for analysis. For example conversation analysis, argumentation analysis (including rhetoric) and narrative analysis are all significant methods within the larger context of discourse analysis itself.[9]

3.3.3 Discourses: ways of representing

Discourses are ways of representing aspects of the world. There are always many perspectives and different ways of interpreting the world around us, and these become different discourses in the networks of social practices (social orders). For example, this thesis looks at the different representations of "work" that can be found when studying particular perspectives. One interesting notion that Fairclough (2003, 124; Chiapello & Fairclough 2002, 195) brings up is that discourses are

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[9] For extensive bibliographies on these methodologies as well as others used in social studies see: http://wwwedu.oulu.fi/sos/tm2/anht/analyysi.htm.

not only representations of the world as it is seen to be, they are also "imaginaries" - parts of projects that aim to change the world in certain directions. Discourses are in this sense projective.

Discourses imply a degree of repetition, commonality and stability that can transcend local and particular representations. This means that they are shared by groups of people and have some stability over time. As an example, the way knowledge management is represented in this thesis by the author as an individual is not yet a discourse because not each representation is a separate discourse. However the way a management "guru" speaks of knowledge management and shares his/her representations in an academic journal article, that in turn is cited by others and used in management education globally, can be called a discourse. Discourses vary in their degree of repetition, commonality and stability over time however. Some are almost "common sense", for example the discourse of the self as a rational individual, whereas others are more specifically tied to particular point in time and context, for example the discourses present in Business Process Reengineering or Knowledge Management in the economic management domain.

Texts can be seen as creating certain representations and thus being part of certain discourses as well as drawing upon other discourses within itself. They generate discourses as well as using them. Discourses can be identified by the identification of the main parts of the world (physical, social and mental) which are represented, the "themes" of the text. This is done by looking at what elements of the represented social event (Figure 3.2) are included, excluded or prominently described. This allows for a comparison of different representations of similar events. This analysis looks also at certain linguistic features.

The linguistic aspects are however not addressed in this thesis (for a detailed account, see Fairclough 2003, especially chapter 8; van

Leeuwen 1995), the main point is to understand that discourses can be differentiated in terms of semantic relations, classification schemes and various grammatical features. For example, in neo-liberal texts one can identify "companies" as hyponyms[10] for "capital", or "globalization" for "economic progress". In addition there are metaphorical issues, such as talking about economic performance as a "survival of the fittest" etc. Other elements one can try to identify are the levels of abstraction used and the use of active subjects and verbs, instead of so called "nominalization" in which noun-like wording is used to signify activity, e.g. "globalization" instead of verbs. Regarding actors, one can analyze the agentialization of action by human agency or the de-agentialization of action (brought about by e.g. natural forces, processes etc). Do things just "happen" without the answer to "by whom?" (eventuation); describing things as something that just "exist" (existentialization) or saying that action happens through a natural process such as "the importance of knowledge is expanding / growing" (naturalization). (van Leeuwen 1995, 96-97.)

3.3.4   Styles: ways of being

Analysis of styles attempts to answer questions concerning the identity of the author that is projected in the text, what are the value commitments and desirables/undesirables present. Styles are the discoursal aspects of ways of being, and the linguistic constitution of identities. Styles are linked to the complex process of identification, which is also one type of text meaning. In texts the discourses are inculcated and imprinted: the assumptions behind different representations are partly realized in styles. Styles are mainly realized in a range of linguistic features, such as phonological features, vocabulary and metaphor, as well as non-textual aspects such as body language. Styles in a text serve two purposes: they help to identify the

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[10] In linguistics, a hyponym is a word or phrase whose meaning is within that of another word. For example, scarlet, vermilion, carmine, and crimson are all hyponyms of red.

"characters", the distinct identities of a culture, and they help to evaluate the authors of texts in terms of e.g. their position within a discourse.

Naturally the genres that most benefit from style analysis are the ones that are typically spoken, e.g. conversations, interviews and such. But it is also interesting to analyze the authors of written texts:

- How does the author identify himself or herself? Is there a distinct "character" present - e.g. a "management guru" or "expert"?

- In what ways do the authors commit themselves to certain values and assumptions? What do they construct as desirable and what undesirable? Do they make clear evaluative statements or are there more assumed values? How value laden is the text? This is called evaluation analysis.

- How is the author positioned within a certain discourse? Are they cited by others (intertextuality) and who does the author him/herself cite?

Fairclough also uses the term "modality" which refers to the relationship between author and the representations: what authors commit themselves to in terms of truth or necessity. In practical terms this means the analysis of how the authors state their claims, and do they make strong claims about "knowing the truth" about the way work is to be developed in organizations, for example. It is also a question of making predictions about the future. Management experts are one growing group of individuals who claim to know these truths and make strong predictions. In short, they exercise their power through these truths and predictions.

3.4   Linguistic analysis of text: semantic and grammatical relations

The last level of analysis is the analysis of the internal relations of the text itself. Semantic and grammatical relations reveal many things about the genre of text, the legitimizing features of text as well as its potential impact on how people think and act as social agents. The thesis' focus is not on this level of analysis, but two issues relating to it are relevant:

First issue is the creation of "logic of difference" or "logic of equivalence" (Fairclough 2003, 88). Semantic relations of text look at the meaning relations between sentences and clauses, which in turn have their realization through grammatical relations. Semantic relations can be causal (marked by conjunctions "because", "in order to"), conditional ("if"), temporal ("when"), additive ("and"), elaborative (using rewording, example giving) and contrastive ("but", "instead of"). Certain semantic relations create differences between objects in text (contrastive relations) or suppressing differences by describing objects as equal (additive and elaborative relations, using lists). These in turn are an aspect of a social process of classification and categorization, which strongly shape how people think.

Second important issue is the question if a text tries to "understand reality" or if it takes things as given, looking at appearances only. Fairclough calls this "*explanatory logic*" versus *"logic of appearances"*. It is in his view typical for the contemporary (popular) management writing that complex socio-economic transformations are described "simply as given, an unquestionable and inevitable horizon which is itself untouchable by policy and narrowly constrains options, essential rather than contingent, and without time depth" (Fairclough 2003, 95). They are promotional rather than analytical, trying to persuade people that the solutions offered are the only ones and there is no room for dialogue. He calls these persuasive and prescriptive texts "*hortatory reports*" – a new genre. This is clear in certain management journals:

the goal of the author is to provide managers guidelines for transforming their own business. They have a strong "problem-solution" orientation instead of an explanatory, more analysis-focused view (an expository genre). Both are characterized by typical semantic and grammatical relations. They also use different strategies for legitimating their claims, making them justified. There are four main legitimation strategies: authorization, rationalization, moral evaluation and mythopoesis (use of narratives, moral or cautionary tales). The explanatory logic uses mainly rationalization strategies, whereas logic of appearances relies on narratives, painting a picture and so on (mythopoesis). The differences of these two "logics" are summarized in Table 3.1.

LOGIC	**EXPLANATORY**	**APPEARANCES**
Genre	Expository	Hortatory report
Semantic relations	Causal	Additive, elaboration
Grammatical relations	Hypotaxis (subordinate clauses using e.g. "because")	Parataxis (equal clauses, using e.g. "and")
Legitimation strategies	Rationalization	Mythopoesis

Table 3.1: Comparing explanatory logic and logic of appearances

3.5   Defining the thesis' analysis

3.5.1   Scope of the analysis

Following the relational approach described in this section, the scope of the analysis can now be defined as follows:

1. The social context of the texts

The focus of the thesis is the study of a group of representations (=the chosen articles that further represent the three generations of KM) within KM discourse. KM discourse in turn is placed in the larger order of discourse that can be labelled "knowledge economy". The social context level analysis is done in two parts: first in section 4 as a general

background analysis to help "frame" the following texts in their context, as well as looking at the general genre KM discourse texts can be seen part of: management literature. Second, as part of the actual text analysis, the particular social context of the text is elaborated. In this sense it should be noted that the actual publication of the articles analyzed can also be regarded as a social practise and a social event in itself, which in turn can be analyzed.

Level of analysis in CDA	Research issue addressed	Content of actual analysis
Overall social context the texts. The orders of discourse, the "framing" of the texts.	Development of global capitalism, emergence of the order of discourse "knowledge economy" and discourse of KM within. The genres of management discourse and the mechanisms through which they are influential in management.	Analysis of the "knowledge economy" and relating discourse. Analysis of KM as a discourse driven concept. Overview analysis of general management discourse and its genres.
The social context of each text in particular.	Recognizing the social and discursive context of each article	Analysis of text's context, social practices framing it and the actual "event" of its publication. Discourses incorporated.

2. Intertextuality, assumptions and difference

KM discourse draws its origins form multiple sources, as is shown in the section 4.5. This is analyzed on the level of the individual articles in the form of intertextuality. The text is also analyzed with regard to assumptions present as well as its orientation towards difference.

Level of analysis in CDA	Research issue addressed	Content of actual analysis
Intertextuality and assumptions. Difference and dialogicality.	Use of other discourses, influences behind KM discourse. Orientation to difference: a division of knowledge work and non-knowledge work, division between different groups of people etc. Analysis of associated value systems and assumptions.	Does the text incorporate other "voices" and texts, how? What notable absences are present? Analysis of assumptions, dialogicality and difference.

3. Genre

Genre is analyzed more briefly than other levels. The genres present in the individual texts are however identified, as well as potential genre chains and the issue of recontextualization.

Level of analysis in CDA	Research issue addressed	Content of actual analysis
Genre : (genre chains; genre mixing; individual genres)	Purposes for writing the particular text, the activity the text is part of. Power structures between the author and readers. Genres of managerial discourse present.	Genre analysis of the particular text. Analysis of explanatory vs. hortatory logics and possible recontextualization and genre chains.

4. Discourses

The thesis approaches work as a specific instance of a social practice, a social event. "Work" is seen as a configuration of certain elements, which are analyzed in detail. These elements are also analyzed with regard to them being either structural, agentic or both.

Element of social practise	Research issue addressed	Content of actual analysis	Structure vs. agency
Themes of the text	Which parts of the world (physical, mental, social) are present?	Recognition of the elements present.	Both.
Social actors and their relations.	Who are the main actors in the text? Who have the agentic presence and capabilities for agentic action? How are actors interacting?	Activation / passivation of actors; impersonal representation / naming; exclusion / inclusion. Social relations present.	Mainly agentic properties, relations can be structural as well.
Action and activity	The representation of work evoked. Nature and organization of work. Is work represented in detail and performed by a named actor or is it generalized into processes that may obfuscate responsibility and agency?	Concrete /abstract representation; presence / absence of some action. De-agentialization / agentialization features in the language used; nominalization and generalization.	Mainly structural, can be agentic as well.
Instruments and means used.	Use of certain means to achieve desired outcomes of work.	Analysis of the role of technology and tools in doing work.	Mainly structural.

Objects	Objects of work, concrete products / abstract symbols / other people	Analysis of concepts like data / information / knowledge / products / processes.	Can be both.
Material world: representation of time and place	Where is work taking place, when?	Analysis of the expression regarding time and place.	Structural.

This thesis attempts to see how the chosen texts compare to each other regarding their representations of the elements. The representation of social actors is of special interest with respect to the representation of agency. Fairclough (2003, 150) makes this point very clearly in the following extract:

> "The significance of 'activation' and 'passivation' is rather transparent: where social actors are mainly activated, their capacity or agentive action, for making things happen, for controlling others and so forth is accentuated, where they are mainly passivated, what is accentuated is their subjection to processes, them being affected by the actions of others, and so forth…Impersonal representation of social actors can dehumanize social actors, take the focus away form them as people, represent them, for instance […] instrumentally or structurally as elements of organizational structures and processes."

5. Styles

Style is analyzed from the viewpoint of the position and influence of the author(s) within KM discourse, which in turn influences the effectiveness of the representation in organizational domain. The underlying motivations and values of the author(s) are briefly discussed.

Level of analysis in CDA	Research issue addressed	Content of actual analysis
Style	Identity of the author(s), value commitments and position within the KM discourses. Self-positioning of the author(s).	Analysis of the author as a "character". Stylistic devices used. Listing of desirables and undesirables.

3.5.2   Limitations of the CDA applied

There are two clear limitations regarding the scope of the analysis done in the thesis. Firstly, the individual genre of the texts is not analyzed in great detail. For example argumentation analysis would most probably

be a very beneficial supplementary tool, since this method is especially suitable for analyzing academic texts and helpful in revealing the implicit assumptions. The reason for the omission of deeper genre analysis is simply that it would have required the detailed study of an additional method of discourse analysis, which would have expanded the scope beyond its purpose.

Second, a very detailed linguistic analysis of the texts is not performed in the thesis. This means that the level of the text itself is not analyzed in detail. The texts are analysed linguistically as much as it is necessary when trying to identify the general grammatical, semantical and lexical "mood" of the texts. This is especially important with regard to the representation of social actors and action. The analysis performed however is far from a complete analysis of social action and agency in texts[11]. Once again, to build the competencies necessary to perform good and detailed linguistic analysis of the English language would have necessitated efforts too great for a master's thesis.

To conclude, the focus of the thesis is not on representational meanings' grammatical or lexical realization but more on the content of the representations. This can naturally be considered a major methodological weakness of the thesis. Fairclough's method of CDA does stress the importance of linguistic analysis. In his view text (linguistic) analysis is an essential part of discourse analysis, in order for it to be distinguished from a more Foucault-inspired discourse analysis, that pays little attention to the linguistic features of text (Fairclough 2003, 2-3).

One can however justify the omission of some and emphasis of other elements in the analysis. In CDA, the very presence of different levels of analysis and the concepts of social structure and practice as well as

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[11] For an illustrative example of a detailed linguistic analysis regarding social action see van Leeuwen (1995)

historical context consequently allows for conclusions to be made about the structures and context. (Titscher et al. 2000, 232-234.) This is very relevant when the research subject is a complex social entity such as "work in the knowledge economy". In this case, texts used for analysis are seen as the representations of a topic that is indicated in the research questions as an object of the study: "work" and its elements, especially the interplay between agency and structure. The thesis is neither interested to a great extent in the authors of the text (what they represent) nor in the grammatical and lexical features of the texts themselves[12].

3.5.3   Performing the actual analysis

The articles were analyzed in the order of their appearance. This is in accordance to the three generations view of KM that has a temporal view. The actual analysis was conducted in the same fashion for all the texts. First, the texts were read and re-read without further analysis two to three times in order to internalize the content. The journal in which the text appeared was researched regarding its influence (impact factors on the ISI Journal Citation Reports) and general orientation (e.g. websites). The author(s) were also researched, especially regarding their "status" within the academic or other community and their bibliography (e.g. using Google Scholar, Wikipedia and possible academic research done on the authors and their ideas previously). However, as the authors are not the focus of the thesis, this research was quite cursory. The influence of the particular article was analyzed mainly by researching various citation numbers (Google Scholar and ISI Social Sciences Citation Index). This is however a somewhat problematic way to measure influence. First reason being that in for example the cases of Davenport & Short and Nonaka most references made regarding their ideas and concepts are made to their successful

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[12] For an elaboration on functions of texts as research material, see Titscher et al. 2000, 31-33.

books, which were published after the articles analyzed here. Second, a citation index is relevant mainly in the context of academic discourse, not so much in the context of managers themselves. Third, it tells nothing of the recontextualization within e.g. consulting practices that act increasingly as the intermediaries between managers and the academia. It is however an established and widely used, thus making it a useful albeit a limited tool for measuring influence. It does if nothing else reveal trends.

The actual textual analysis was performed using various methods, such as mind maps, assigning the different levels of analysis a colour code and then underlining relevant examples in the text, as well as taking general notes. The structure and content of the analysis followed the scope set out in this section. Due to the differences in the nature of the texts, the structure of the analysis does vary somewhat, especially regarding the analysis on genre. This was unfortunate, but some deviations were unavoidable and an attempt was made to justify them when they occurred. It also became obvious during the analysis that the learning curve on CDA did make the last analysis more refined than the first one. To overcome this all analyses were revisited after the first round of CDA was completed, and the analyses modified accordingly in order to make them more comparable to each other.

4 Social context of texts: bringing the "outside" in

4.1 The macroeconomic context globalizing capitalism

CDA stresses the importance of looking at texts within their larger context. This is also the sub-question **SRQ.1** as outlined in Table 1.1: What is the socio-economical context of KM? One important context relevant for this thesis is the macroeconomic one in western capitalist societies during the time in question, that is, approximately from the late 1980's onwards, during which the triumph of global, unregulated market

economies was becoming evident. This has been written and debated about in great volumes (see for example the source used here, Frieden 2006), so a cursory overview is sufficient enough for the thesis' purposes.

In the 1980s, after decades of accepting governmental involvement in the economy, different interest groups started to push a new ideology: "the magic of the marketplace" (a term coined by Ronald Reagan) and macroeconomic policies of monetarism. This ideology can be called also free market and neoliberal, and it was associated with the conservative right-wing governments of Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, and with the belief that governments should not get involved in the economy. This was a reaction to the high employment, slow growth and inflation that economies suffered from 1973 until the early 1980s. (Frieden 2006, 371; 394-399.)

Results of these policies were for example large scale deregulation and privatization, tax cuts, anti-inflationary measures and the strong belief in globalization. Social policies, labour unions and the politics of the left became increasingly unpopular – indeed their opposition of the globalizing forces were soon drowned out. Markets were seen across the globe to be the superior mechanisms of economic allocation. At the same time, technological advancements and innovations encouraged this integration of the world's economies, and created whole new industries as well as reduced the cost of monetary and other types of transactions overseas. All this meant new types of fierce competition: for example Japanese sales to the United States grew from 6 billion dollars in 1970 to 30 billion in 1980 to 80 billion in 1986. (Frieden 2006, 394-405.) In addition regional integration in the 1990s mainly in the form of the single European market and NAFTA accelerated the overall process of economic globalization (Frieden 2006, 411.)

The 1990s thus saw the general acceptance of free trade as the official economic policy all over the globe, and the following globalization proved very powerful. There were however challenges emerging for the global capitalism towards the end of the millennium (Friedman 2006, 457-472). First, there were the antiglobalization movements such as those directed against World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as the growing demands for a more socially ethical and ecologically sustainable economic development (see e.g. Crane & Matten 2006) gaining speed in the 21st century. Second, the vulnerability of the global financial system was demonstrated in various currency and banking crises, most recent example being the sub-prime mortgage crisis during autumn 2007, and the subsequent threat of protectionism (see e.g. Helsingin Sanomat 7.9.2007). These crises showed the globally destabilizing capabilities of the financial systems, which are the very core of an interconnected world economy. Finally the third big threat came from the fact that the world economy indeed was global: intensifying competition from new directions, mainly China and India, as well the intensifying of cultural and religious issues. There has been a marked increase in the questioning of the globalization's rule over national issues, as well as market demands coming before social issues. There have been demands for more governance and accountability of the global economic system. Friedman concludes that "the challenge of global capitalism in the twenty first century is to combine international integration with politically, social responsible government" (2006, 476).

4.2   A new era of knowledge economy?

Not only has the world economy gone through a drastic change, the effects of those changes on human beings and societies have prompted numerous ways of explaining what is happening. The discussion centres on the debate if we indeed have entered a whole new era in human history, and if so, what is the new era like and how should we as

humans respond and act. This era has been labelled for example knowledge or information society, post-industrial society or more generally postmodernism. This view identifies the predecessors as the society before industrialism and the industrialist or modern society, implying a distinction between the "old" and the "new". One central theme of this debate is the role of information (technology), knowledge and symbols in every aspect of human life: economic, social and cultural[13]. The other theme is whether we really are living in a new historic and unprecedented era or not[14]. This debate includes the emergence of such concepts as "knowledge-intensive firms" and "knowledge work", as opposed to non-knowledge intensive firms and forms of work.[15]

However way one wants to position oneself within this debate, one thing is clear: knowledge-intensive work is a substantial part of at least a significant proportion of contemporary organizations and its economic significance great (for figures especially in the Finnish context see e.g. Pyöriä 2006). Even critical voices do admit that "knowledge-intensive organizations are, or soon will be, dominating the economy and working life in terms of absolute numbers" (Alvesson 2004, 9). This thesis will not go into this debate further and positions itself in the following way: the developments in global capitalism as well as the significant advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) have had a huge impact on all social entities across the globe. Especially the world economy is more and more organized around the production, distribution and use of symbolic artefacts, information and subsequent knowledge. The further use of terms such as the "knowledge economy" is thus acceptable as an apt description of what is unarguably a central element to economic and organizational life in the 21st century.

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[13] See for example the famous trilogy by Manuel Castells (1996) The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Blackwell Publishers.
[14] For an overview on the different theoretical perspectives see Webster, F. (2002). Theories of the Information Society. London: Routledge.

4.3 Effects on organizations: main discourses in the late 20th century

The world economic developments described very briefly above emphasized the need for more efficiency and renewal in organizations wanting to "survive" in the globalizing market place. The answer was searched for in a number of directions. First and maybe foremost as a markedly new feature was the growing importance that was beginning to be placed on **information and communications technology (ICT)** as an efficiency enabler in organizations on the whole. During the late 1970s and 1980s technology was applied to great extent in manufacturing and in the factory environment. The efficiency demands facilitated the automation of routine manufacturing work, such as materials management and logistics. ICT was applied to highly structured and high volume transactions that could be automated. However, during the late 1980s ICT started to penetrate the office: computers and software started to become commonplace in non-manufacturing work as well. This in turn meant that new problems arose: what to do with ICT in this environment, why did it not increase productivity in the same way as in manufacturing[16] etc. Organizations as systems were beginning to be moulded to become "IT suitable": the thinking was that organisational development requires or at least is enabled by IT (Earl 1994, 9.) This partly led to process thinking, which originates from the Total Quality Movement (TQM) of the 1980s as well – also an attempt to increase efficiency. Later, as ICT developed towards networks and distributed computing, the users themselves started to take a more central role with the seemingly endless possibilities of the Internet. For an overview on the development of

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[15] For a critical view see Alvesson (2004).

16 This was the topic of much debate throughout the 1990's. See for example Lucas, H. (1999). Information Technology and the Productivity Paradox. New York: Oxford University Press; Brynjolfsson, E. & Hitt, L. (1996). Paradox lost? Firm-level evidence on the returns to information systems spending. Management Science, 42, 4, 541-558.

information systems research especially in an organizational context see Orlikowski & Barley (2001); Markus et al. (2002); and Tuomi (2002).

Alongside this development there were beginning to emerge new ways of representing organizations. In **organization studies** (and organizational development studies) one can identify a number of different views on the organization that can be roughly grouped in the following way according to the development phase of capitalist societies they most commonly are associated with - remembering the persistence of the views of the "earlier" period (Morgan 1997; Checkland & Holwell 1998; Hatch 2006):

- The industrializing society, early industrialism: bureaucracy, vertical "stovepipes", scientific management, fordism, modernism, "hard" systems;

- The industrial and late-industrial society: "soft" systems, the organism metaphor, self-organizing, horizontal / lateral views of organizing;

- The post-industrial society– networks, partnerships, collaboration, organisations as cultures, chaos theories, postmodernism, organizations as knowledge systems, narratives.

One can also identify an analytical division between "traditional organisational literature" and newer, e.g. Foucault –inspired views, that claim the disappearance of the split between organization and the worker, the manager and the managed (Huhtala 2005, 35).

In the more pragmatically oriented domain of **management research** the 1980s saw the emergence of "competitiveness" as a central theme, with its undertone of "beat the Japanese", especially in the North America, which - rhetorically at least - required not just new, but radically new management philosophies (Earl 1994, 8). This led to a marked increase in the interest towards management practises and

leadership, which in turn manifested itself in the growing number and popularity of publications such as The Harvard Business Review that were dedicated to management issues, as well as the visible emergence of so-called management "gurus" such as Tom Peters and Michael Porter, with their books being sold around the world in tens of millions copies. At the same time the mainly North American based consulting companies became world-wide in their activities, and the demand for their services grew rapidly, creating the means for the active promotion and spreading of such popularized management issues. All these developments meant that certain representations or discourses of management advocated by only a few were suddenly influencing the management practises in organizations around the world. (Furusten 1995, 1-3; Gibson & Tesone, 2001; Jackson 2001, 11.) This development in itself is nothing new, as there have existed persistent management ideas before, e.g. Bureaucracy and Scientific Management. What is different, however, is the marked increase in the number of these ideas since 1980s, the influence they seem to have on managers, and the shortening of their life-cycles. This has prompted the use of "management fashions" or fads" to describe these management ideas. (Jackson 2001, 14.) The main fashions of the late 20th century include the reengineering movement, the effectiveness movement and the concept of a learning organization.

4.4   General managerial discourse

4.4.1   General discourse, its participants and genres

The existence of the above described management research on practical management can be analyzed as managerial discourse (way of using language in management related issues and contexts, in the abstract noun usage as defined by Fairclough, section 3.2.1), with corresponding genres. This is the sub-research question **SRQ.2**: What is the general managerial discourse and associated genres?

Furusten (1995, 8-9) identifies a concept of "general managerial discourse", in which certain participants (voices) use language in a "conversation" about organizational and managerial life, and in this sense create credible representations of reality and events. He identifies the following participants in this discourse: teachers and researchers in business schools and universities, management gurus and other authors of management books and articles, management consultants who diagnose and solve organisational problems, practitioners (managers themselves etc.) and politicians, involved in e.g. labour associations making macro-level decisions. These participants use distinct rhetoric and linguistic characteristics in their managerial discourse, which create certain genres within this discourse. Furusten calls these four genres "part"-discourses, but Chiapello & Fairclough (2002, 199) identify them clearly as genres: popular management discourse, academic discourse, political discourse and practical discourse.

Popular management discourse, as the name suggests, implies a rather simplified rhetoric intended to be made accessible to a wide audience. This discourse can also called a managerial "ism", "fad" or "fashion"[17]. It has the typical following characteristics: a collective belief that it is on the leading edge of management progress; own distinctive use of language, "jargon"; it demonstrates a bell-shaped life-cycle; and it is actively promoted by certain consultant, business schools etc. (Furusten 1995, 9; Zorn & Taylor 2003, 101; Abrahamson & Fairchild 1999). The participants are typically management consultants and business journalists, as well as academics crossing over to this genre. A typical feature of popular management discourse is the strong "problem-solution" orientation of the text, the creation of a simple "how-to" –recipe for managers stated with the authority of an "expert" or

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[17] For articles and books written about popular management discourse, see Gibson & Tesone 2001, endnotes 2 and 3. For a synthesis on research on management gurus and fashions see Jackson 2001.

"guru". This discourse takes things as given, and provide their solution as the only answer, providing the audience not only the methods for being more successful, profitable etc. but also the arguments for justifying their decisions. (Chiapello & Fairclough 2002; Fairclough 2003, 94-98.) As described in detail in section 3.4., Fairclough uses the term "hortatory report" for this type of genre.

Academic discourse includes the use of language in the actions of academic research as well as teaching in academic institutions. One main difference to the popular management discourse is the almost ritualized way academic management discourse is structured as a genre: the way academic research papers are constructed (usually through argumentation and explanation), the way papers are published (the process of peer review etc) and the way the authority of the author is established through referencing. (Furusten 1995, 9-10). Fairclough uses the term "expository genre" (section 3.4) to describe this more academically oriented discourse, though one obviously not used by academic discourse alone.

Political discourse includes the use of language in e.g. legislation, political programs and such aiming to produce laws and regulations for business practices. Juridical and political rhetoric have features specific to them, which are not looked at in this thesis. (Furusten 1995, 10.) One interesting notion is however the fact that the more "business-like" rhetoric and even the features of popular management genre are entering into the political domain as well, Faircough (2002, 163) talks of the "colonization" of other domains by the economic one.

Finally **practical discourse** is used to describe the ways managers themselves talk about their work with colleagues and use language to describe management related issues (Furusten 1995, 10). It is this discourse that is typically strongly influenced by popular (and to lesser extent academic) discourse: in order to appear professional, one must

use the latest catch-phrases and also justify one's own actions by referencing to a higher authority and belonging to the "in-crowd" (Chiapello & Fairclough 2002, 196; Gibson & Tesone 2001, 123). Practical discourse is not within the scope of the thesis however.

Furusten (1995, 11) points out that many of the actual participants in general managerial discourse quite often use several genres in different situations: management consultants may have been practitioners, academics may write popular management books, consultants teach at universities and their case studies are used as academic material. And finally most have attended business education themselves. In addition the concept of "genre chains" describes (see section 3.3.2) how individual genres can flow into one another. In conclusion, there is a complex interaction between these discourses, but that does not mean they cannot be analyzed separately.

4.4.2   Mechanisms of influence

How then does managerial discourse influence the practices of management (sub-research question **SRQ.3**)? On a theoretical level this question has been answered in section 3, when describing how social structures, practices and events all tie into each other, and how they are present in the orders of discourse and its elements (Figure 3.3). Managers act and interact within these networks of social practice, and they also interpret and represent to themselves and also to each other what they do, and these interpretations and representations further shape and reshape what they do (Chiapello & Fairclough 2002, 195).

Certain managerial discourse, be it popular or academic one, creates imaginaries – representations of how things could and should be in organizations. These in turn are manifested and materialized in managerial action; in genres for managing and conducting the everyday

operations and decision making. In this way managerial discourses affect everyone. In addition genre chains and the process of recontextualization (section 3.2.3) spread certain managerial discourses into society very efficiently.

On a more concrete level the mechanisms of influence can be seen as follows (Furusten 1995, 52-53): general managerial discourse appears in the institutional environments of organizations providing certain representations of managerial and organisational life. These representations are simultaneously *created, diffused and consumed (adapted)* in organizations, actions which are triggered by various variables. These processes and triggers have been studied elsewhere, see e.g. Furusten 1995; Abrahamson & Fairchild 1999; and Gibson & Tesone 2001. Jackson (2001, 22-36) identifies four approaches that have been used by academics to explain in particular popular management discourse phenomenon: the rational approach, which sees that these fashions exist because they work and explicitly respond to the needs of managers; the structural approach, which stresses the socio-economic, political and cultural contexts that make certain representations popular at a given time; the institutional approach, which looks at the triggers and processes of diffusion as described above; and the charismatic approach, that place the guru's personality and performance in the centre of the analysis, and claims that managers look for gurus as means of developing their own self-concept as a manager.

We can also place discourse and subsequent representations within the structure-agency –framework presented in section 2.5. Discourse is part of the structural and cultural makeup of organizations, creating what Archer (2003, 5) calls emergent properties. These properties become then enablements or constraints for human action only if they aid or obstruct some agential enterprise. So if for example a manager needs to re-organize work in order to cut costs, he or she can call on some

dominant and widely accepted (taken for granted) managerial discourse such as Business Process Re-engineering (BPR), that will enable him or her to take certain action. The reasons for him or her doing so are varied, for example the manager can truly believe that BPR works, or he/she may feel pressurized to do so as competitors are doing so etc. In the same way the same dominant representation present in BPR discourse could be a constraint for the human resources manager when attempting to justify the investment on worker well-being programs. Discourse thus creates for example strong implicit or explicit value assumptions on what is regarded as desirable or undesirable action in the organization.

4.5   KM as managerial discourse

As was discussed earlier, management research produces oftentimes very powerful representations of the ideal management practise. Examples of such are Scientific Management in the early half of the 20th century, the already mentioned Total Quality Management (TQM) in the 1980s, Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) in the 1990s and the different innovation and creativity based management practices of the 21st century such as Peter Senge's "learning organization". One such stream that emerged in the beginning of 1990s in management research is Knowledge Management (KM).

This thesis is not concerned with the different streams of research that are the theoretical background of KM, neither is it the focus of the thesis to summarize the various views that exist within this umbrella concept. For a discussion and debate on the origins, evolution and content of KM, as well on theories concerning knowledge as a competitive advantage (e.g. the resource and knowledge based views of the firm) please see accounts by Blackler 1993; Grant 2002; Tuomi 2002; Hong & Ståhle 2005; Acedo et al. 2006; Baskerville & Dulipovici 2006; and Jasimuddin 2006.

What this thesis is however concerned with is the study of KM as managerial discourse (sub-research question **SRQ.4**: How does KM figure as managerial discourse?). KM can be placed within the wider order of discourse of knowledge economy, which in turn has been argued to be a discursive concept in itself (Chiapello & Fairclough 2002, 195; Schreyögg & Geiger 2007, 90). The concept of knowledge economy suggests that there has been a qualitative and a distinct change in economics and societies, that they are now knowledge driven: change happens through the generation, circulation and operationalization of knowledge. Chiapello & Fairclough argue that "knowledge driven" amounts to "discourse driven": knowledges are generated and circulated as discourses, and become operationalized in economies and societies through the very processes described in discourse analysis. If KM is concerned with knowledge in organizational setting, then it too must be discourse based already in itself. In addition Zorn & Taylor (2003, 101) recognize KM specifically as belonging to the genre of popular management discourse: "…KM is the most recent in a long line of management trends that have emerged with great fanfare as the 'next big thing' in management practise". Jackson (2001, 176) agrees and also identifies KM as a management fashion - in addition noting that interestingly KM has not been a guru-led discourse, as no single individual has assumed a strong leadership role.

Why then has KM emerged as a specific managerial discourse? Zorn & Taylor (2003, 100-101) identify the following trends as possible reasons for KM's emergence as a "management buzzword":

- KM is part of the general increase in what is referred to as "knowledge work" and the requirements this places on the organization;
- KM efforts are prompted by the recognition of intellectual capital as a source of organizational success;

- KM is a response to the failure of previous management trends such as downsizing and the subsequent loss of expertise;

- KM is a response to the explosion of information available, the information overload;

- KM offers solutions for managing global, distributed and networked expert organizations.

- KM is partly fuelled as well as greatly facilitated by the development of ICT.

Having established KM as management discourse, and at least partly popular one, in order to perform an analysis according to the methodological framework described in detail in sections 2 and 3, an approach to KM discourse that allows for a systematic selection of representative texts is needed. There are a number of ways to approach this varied field of research. Much of the recent debate within KM has to do with the concept of knowledge itself and the subsequent grouping of KM research according the knowledge typologies used (Alvesson 2004, 41-58). Other possibility is to look at the principle research questions KM research, the "anxieties of KM", as Spender & Scherer (2007) put it. Yet another possible avenue is to analyze the different theoretical schools KM research belongs to, and group the research accordingly (Acendo et al. 2006), or based on the disciplinary roots of KM (Jasimuddin 2006). All these were considered for the thesis, but finally the one that was chosen was a very practical view that groups the KM literature in three generations. This view can be criticized for being too simplistic and an oversimplification. No typology or classification is absolute; they are always purpose driven and subjective. However the three generations view has the merit of having a historical perspective: how KM has evolved over time. In addition it serves the practical purpose of the thesis, which is to enable a systematic and justified selection of texts to be analyzed. It can not be stressed enough, however, that the analysis is done on a small number

of articles, and as such is not a valid analysis on the generations as a whole; at best it is indicative.

4.6 The three generations of KM: introduction to analyzed texts

Tuomi (2002), Hong & Ståhle (2005) and Snowden (2002) have used the analytical tool of dividing the evolution of KM into three generations, ages or waves using a historical viewpoint. Hong & Ståhle argue that these views form a logically unified picture of the transition that has happened within KM since its inception. They see these generations differing from each other significantly in six respects: which disciplinary perspective is dominant; what is the main concern; what is seen as key tools; what unit is the prime knowledge carrier; what is the nature of knowledge; and what temporal horizon is seen as relevant. In the following the three generations are briefly described along these respects, using the summary of relevant literature provided by Hong & Ståhle (2005, table 2).

The first generation or age is defined as collection of KM related issues that emerged prior to 1995. Tuomi (2002) sees that KM as a management "movement" did not emerge until 1995 with the publication of Nonaka & Takeuchi's famous book "The Knowledge Company". Tuomi also places KM in a continuum with TQM and BPR[18] , whereas Hong & Ståhle (2005) do at least implicitly claim that some form of KM did exist on its own prior to 1995, and in part led to the technologically led revolution of process management and BPR as discourse: they describe the first generation of KM as "…focused on the appropriate structuring and flow of information to decision-makers, as well as on the computerisation of major business applications, which lead to a technology-enabled revolution dominated by the perceived efficiencies of Business Process Reengineering (BPR)" (Hång & Ståhle 2005, 131).

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[18] Thus also implicitly labelling it popular management discourse, as both TQM and BPR are the most often cited examples of that genre, see e.g. Jackson 2001.

Snowden (2002) takes the middle ground, stating that prior to 1995 the KM –type activities' main goal was to provide the informational support for BPR initiatives, and as a distinct entity emerged in 1995. There are also views that KM actually emerged because of BPR: the efficiency gains were achieved often by downsizing, which in turn meant the loss of expertise in organizations (Zorn & Taylor 2003, 100). The point here is not to dwell on this discussion too deeply, except to recognize that KM and BPR as management discourse are in the first generation very much intertwined and connected to each other. This is the reasoning behind choosing the following article as the representative for the first generation KM: "The New Industrial Engineering: Information Technology and Business Process Redesign" by Thomas H. Davenport and James E. Short (1990). This article is arguably an important text in popular management discourse of BPR, which in turn is intertwined with the development of KM discourse.

However the first generation is defined, it has some distinct features: it has a technological perspective, its main concern is to identify knowledge and take care of its subsequent storage and distribution (information processing), using mainly ICT as the key tool. Individuals are seen as the prime knowledge carriers. Knowledge is rational, explicit and context free – unproblematic, so to speak (Snowden 2002). The temporal focus is on skills and knowledge needed at present.

Unlike the first, **the second generation** is much easier to define: the year 1995 is seen as a historical year for KM. The second generation "…started circa 1995, focusing on the movement of socialisation, externalisation, combination, and internationalisation known as the SECI model, proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi" (Hång & Ståhle 2005, 131). The perspective is one of sociology and organizational development, with the main concern of knowledge sharing and transfer and its exploitation. Key tool is social interaction and communication, which defines the nature of knowledge to be communicative and tacit –

and thus more problematic. Prime knowledge carrier is a collective, group or a community. The temporal focus is more in the near future. In addition the advances in distributive computing and groupware as well as the emergence of what became the internet around mid 1990s helped spark the interest in the more socially oriented and knowledge sharing views (Tuomi 2002).

It is thus quite obvious that the original article by Ikujiro Nonaka "A Dynamic Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation" (1994) has to be analyzed, as it has reached a paradigmatic status in the field (Snowden 2002; Spender & Scherer 2007). The downside of analyzing this article is the fact that it has already been much analyzed and criticized over the years (Gourlay 2006; Gueldenberg & Helting 2007). However, it has not been analyzed using CDA and from the view of the research questions set forward in this thesis, so there is the – albeit small - possibility of unearthing something new. To build and compliment on this analysis of a much-known text, another article has been chosen to represent the second generation: Wanda Orlikowski's "Knowing in Practice. Enacting a Collective Capability in Distributed Organizing" (2002). This article focuses on the "knowing" aspect of work and views works as proficient practice. Orlikowski can arguably be grouped with the third generation writers as well – she does concern herself with innovation and knowledge creation with the focus on knowing and action, thus echoing the themes of the third generation. This article should in this sense be viewed as being "between" the second and third generation, underlining the difficulty of making such analytical distinctions.

The third generation has brought more multi-disciplinary views into KM discourse. There is no one view that would represent the recent developments around the concept of KM – rather, it could be described as a broad discussion on the philosophical foundations of knowledge itself. It includes the philosophical and psychological perspectives of

sense-making and the use of narratives, emotionality and the connection between knowing and action. Knowledge itself is treated more as a representation than something "actual", and this discussion on the very nature of knowledge is at the heart of much debate within latest KM research (see e.g. Spender & Scherer 2007).

 According to Hong & Ståhle (2005) the main concern of the third generation KM is that of exploration: how to create new knowledge for the needs of a future still unknown. Key tools are varied, including the notion of the self-renewing organisation. Nature of knowledge is interpretative, intuitive, context-bound and narrative, creating collective understandings. In this sense the third generation of KM is a matter of understanding discourse and discourses, as well as defining more clearly what knowledge actually is.

The focus on discourses led to the choosing of the article by Georg Schreyögg and Daniel Geiger (2007): "The Significance of Distinctiveness: A Proposal for Rethinking Organizational Knowledge" as the representative for this generation KM. The authors introduce the concept of discursive knowledge as a new dimension of KM, which would result in e.g. knowledge evaluation procedures in organizations. The choice of this article can be subjected to criticism – and with good reason. It is by no means comparable with the other articles chosen with regard to its influence, it is simply too early to tell which way the "established order" of KM will turn. Thus the reasons for this choice are mainly intuitive and subjective. In addition it provides a novel way of approaching KM in organizations.

5 CDA of the first generation KM: re-engineering the organization

As an example of the first generation KM – or alternatively seen as discourse leading to the creation of KM - the article "The New Industrial Engineering: Information Technology and Business Process Redesign" by Thomas H. Davenport and James E. Short is analyzed, following the methodology and scope described in section 3. This section answers the research questions **RQ.1** and **RQ.2** from the view of this particular text.

5.1 Social context of text

5.1.1 The publication of the article as a social event

The article "The New Industrial Engineering: Information Technology and Business Process Redesign" by Thomas H. Davenport and James E. Short was published in a popular management journal, the Sloan Management Review (SMR). MIT Sloan Management Review is a peer-reviewed academic journal with particular emphasis on corporate strategy, leadership and management of technology and innovation, with the intended readership of managers themselves, making it part of academic as well as popular management discourse. As Earl (1994, 6) states: "In a sense, therefore, the concept [BPR] belongs to the managerial journalism domain, although two early seminal articles (Davenport & Short, 1990; Hammer, 1990) appeared in journals which provide an interface between business schools and practitioners". The ISI Social Science Citation Index rates SMR as just below average regarding its impact (e.g. impact factor for 2006 is 0.888) (ISI Journal Citation Reports, October 2007), indicating its articles are not particularly cited within academic context[19].

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[19] The median impact factor for journals in the management category is 0.903 for year 2006. All the analyzed texts belong to journals within this category. (ISI Web of Science: Journal Citation Reports.)

One can assume safely however that the journal is well read among practitioners themselves, such as managers and consultants. SMR is published quarterly by the MIT Sloan School of Management, which is one of the five schools of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and one the world's most famous business schools. It can be argued that by appearing in this particular journal alone gives the text legitimacy and implies that the authors are influential experts in their field. The content "can be trusted" (in fact, the website claims the journal to be "The most trusted source of useful and innovative ideas for business leaders"[20]) so one can safely assume that readers do not question the content.

5.1.2 Discourse framing the text

In **information systems research** one can place this text within research that started to focus on understanding the mediating role of technology in semi/non structured processes, and not only looking at IT[21] in automation of structured processes. IT related discourse is in every way at the very core of the text, being the (natural) force behind engineering. The text also places an emphasis on the role of IT professionals within an organization.

In **management research** the text is a representative and partly the origin of the "reengineering movement" (BPR). In addition, as was discussed earlier in section 4.6, BPR and KM are in many ways tied to each other in ways that are difficult to exactly define. KM is referred to in the article, albeit in a veiled manner, talking about "informational objects" and "informational processes" and their management. KM as a

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[20] http://sloanreview.mit.edu/smr/about/
[21] The text uses the abbreviation IT (information technology) instead of ICT (information and communication technology), which this thesis mainly uses. In this section 5, IT is however used as it is used in the analyzed text.

term is mentioned in a table as one of IT's capabilities, in such that "IT allows the capture and dissemination of knowledge and expertise to improve the process" (p.17).

Most of all this text is part of **organization studies** discourse and the Tayloristic scientific school of management or industrial engineering (IE), and is to be placed in this continuum of totality and universality seeking representations of management. IE is aimed at optimizing the work done in organizations by solving not only technical problems but also human labour problems with engineering principles (Morgan 1997). BPR is seen as continuing this legacy of efficiency-driven models of organization, but fitting with the 1990s systems view of the organization as task-oriented, interdependent and activity-based process (Earl 1994, 9). Davenport & Short clearly place their text in this continuum, with their article title: "The New Industrial Engineering". This is also present implicitly in assumptions. However, even though the systems view is present, as e.g. collaboration over organizational units is encouraged, there are also strong elements that can labelled as "traditional organizational thinking" (Huhtala 2005) or viewing organizations as socio technical "hard systems" (Checkland & Holwell 1998). Organizations are entities that exist in their own right, and people are part of this entity through a role structure. This entity can then be manipulated, controlled and changed (=engineered).

5.2   Intertextuality and assumptions

5.2.1   Intertextuality

What other discourse does the text incorporate, what other "voices" are included or notably excluded (dialogicality)? One way to analyze the intertextuality of text is to do a brief analysis of the references used and the way they are used. Of the 37 different end noted references, one can count 21 as being general academic, 9 case studies (of course

academic in character) or other company related material, 6 articles in management journals such as Business Week and Harvard Business Review, and one policy studies oriented. One interesting finding is that 12 references were MIT related. This would indicate that the text is along the lines of the common research themes at MIT. This is also present in the acknowledgements ("the authors wish to acknowledge the support of the Center for Information Systems Research at MIT Sloan School".) Consulting organizations are mentioned as well (McKinsey & Company) with Harvard Business School. The authors themselves worked at Ernst & Young (Davenport) or MIT (Short) at the time of writing the article. All this strongly indicates that the text is an accepted part of the established business education and consulting practices in the USA, and not one to question the basic premises of global capitalist economies. This finding is further supported by the non-modalized assertions made about contemporary economic realities, e.g. regarding the unpredictability of the business environment, need for change etc.

Some critique directed towards IT's effects on people is mentioned, forming opposing "voices". These views are however credited to two outside sources, Shoshana Zuboff (a direct quote) and Edgar Schein (an indirect quote), who both are very influential academic writers[22]. Here other voices are present, but their presence is quite bracketed. In addition, the text includes numerous indirect reports telling how things were done "at IBM" for example, or how "in several companies, the managers felt that..." (p. 16). In contrast there are only three direct quotes from managers themselves. This way a voice is given to organizations and the practitioners themselves, but the message is mediated by the authors. All reports are in support of the text's main

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[22] Zuboff's In the Age of the Smart Machine (1988; New York: Basic Books) is considered a definitive study of the impact of IT in the workplace. Later she has expressed strong social critique of "managerial capitalism". (Checkland & Holwell 1998, 6.) Schein is credited with the term "corporate culture", and is a leading academic in the field of organizational development and learning.

argument. In this sense the text is not dialogical, even though the objects (organizations and workers) are actively present in the text.

5.2.2 Significant assumptions

One of the most prevalent assumptions in the text regards the way authors view work and organizations. There is the existential assumption, which implies also a strong value assumption, that something akin to scientific management and industrial engineering is the best way to develop organizations. The authors see that Taylor's vision was so powerful that something similar is now needed and desirable: "at the turn of the century, Fredrick Taylor revolutionized the workplace" (p. 11); "…two newer tools are transforming organizations to the degree that Taylorism once did"; (p. 11)"…no subsequent concept or tool has rivalled the power of Taylor's mechanizing vision." (p. 11). These assumptions do not leave much room for the substantial criticism directed at scientific management (see e.g. Morgan 1997), especially regarding its view of the individual worker. Of course, the authors do not wish to recreate Taylorism as such, and they mention the different context and limitations (for example they criticize the overt rationalization and lack of context and vision in Taylorism, p. 14) , but what is notable is how they see such a universal concept of "totality" in management as something desirable. Moreover, the authors see the industrial engineers persisting in the future: "We believe that the industrial engineers of the future…" (p. 25). The authors view work in organization as something that should be managed as a systemic entity. This is evident in the propositional assumptions such as: "business activities should be viewed as more than a collection of individual or even functional tasks" (p. 12). The organization is a system, which in some cases does not work as well as it could, and can be re-engineered to work better.

The other very relevant assumption is the one made about IT. This is evident in the following propositional assumptions: "it (IT) can fundamentally reshape the way business is done" (p.12); "information technology's promise…is to be the most powerful tool in the twentieth century…"(p.12); "And few would question that information technology is a powerful tool for reshaping business processes" (p.25). IT is thus both a tool and a force of its own.

There is also a particular view of business environment: the business environment is unstable, which is undesirable but unavoidable as "today's corporations do not have the luxury of such stability" (p.12); IT is continuing to evolve, so the redesign "must generally be dynamic"; and organizations must be prepared to change their way of organizing and skills as needed (thus implying also the need to direct change towards workers, as they are the ones owning the skills).

5.2.3   Difference

Even though the general assumptions regarding work in organizations are quite obvious, the text does recognize the emergence of a type of work that is different from the legacy of Taylorism and industrial engineering. Types of work done as process are differentiated by classification and typologies that make the distinction between physical objects and intangible ones - "informational" objects. Difference is in this way accentuated, and objects categorized. This is what Fairclough calls "logic of difference": tendency towards creating and proliferating differences between objects, entities and groups of people (2003, 88). This in turn is part of a social process called classification: the text classifies types of work as well as types of processes (p. 18). Also a distinction is made between "managerial" and "operative" activities, which also imply the existence of two corresponding types of workers, operative ones and managers. The authors concede that knowledge intensive activities may need new approaches, even though the text

does not as a whole make clear what these might be. "Even the notion of managerial activities involving definite outcomes is somewhat foreign" (p.20); "Strangely, the proportion of informational processes already transformed by IT is probably lower than that of physical processes" (p 20). The authors imply that there seems to be an anomaly going on in organizations (something "strange").

It can thus be said that the orientation to difference in the text is mainly consensus seeking that attempts to normalize differences by recognizing them but still attempting to fit them into the same general model of "new industrial engineering": certain representation of work is made the universal one. Certain openness to the emergence of difference in the working life (knowledge work) is however present. It is not in the form of dialogue, but in the form of recognition.

5.3   Genre

The text is part of discourse that has a quite high abstraction level: it has a high degree of repetition, it is shared globally in economic discourse and it has been a stable representation that is still strongly present in organizations today. (See section 5.6.2 on its influence.) The circulation of the journal itself is global, and the text is a typical example of **genre chains** and recontextualization. The elements of academic research are being recontextualized as a management and business "how-to" recipe. The text originates both from academic research but also management consulting research: "we report on research conducted at MIT, Harvard and several consulting organizations…" (p.11), and later on became the material for a best-selling popular management book as well [23].   The text also links different scales together: connecting the academia and business as well as linking local and global. It is also an example of a genre of governance - restructuring and rescaling the working life in the new capitalism or

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[23] Davenport, T. "Process Innovation: Reengineering Work Through Information Technology" (1993). Harvard Business School: Boston.

knowledge economy. What is seen as favourable and desirable, in the light of particular case studies, is made desirable universally, regardless of culture, nationality, history or other social context - and even transcending time. This is stated very clearly in the summary of the article: "The individuals and companies that can master redesigning processes around IT will be well equipped to succeed in the new decade – and the new century" (p.25).

The text is also a **mixture of genres**: the pre-genre of argument, disembedded genre of a research paper (academic managerial discourse) as well as a more situated genre of popular management discourse. All three are present simultaneously. The argument is pronounced: "The author´s *argue*, in fact, that it (IT and BPR) has barely been exploited at all. But the organizations that have used IT to redesign […] processes have benefited enormously. This article explains *why*". (Emphasis added.). Second, the academic genre in the text is somewhat played down, and instead the practical and popular discourse features are quite obvious:

- steps approach: easy to "teach", easy to understand;
- case study included, success story to motivate; and
- management issues involved are highlighted.

Academic managerial discourse genre is evident mainly in the general format and structure of the text, as well the context of the journal in which it was published. It is however good to note that the references used were quite varied in character, ranging from academic research to "computer vendor's advertising videotape" (p. 20). The text also includes a case study that can be classified as a pre-genre Narrative: it tells the story of the redesign project at Rank Xerox U.K, with named actors, more emotional wording and a chronological ordering of events.

Of the **individual genres** present, the text is clearly for example an argumentation, but as defined in the section 3.5.2, argumentation

analysis is not within the scope of the thesis. It suffices to say that the basic claim of the argument in the text is that managers can redesign (reengineer) their processes to be more effective using IT, and doing so they can ensure the future success of their company. There is also the claim that IT-enabled redesign of business processes is something that most companies would benefit from. The authors base their claim on research, case studies and best practice evidence.

Within the scope is however to see which managerial discourse is most prevalent in the text. There are strong characteristics of popular discourse, such as a prescriptive tendency and a higher level semantic relation of problem-solution structure: why and how IT and BPR should be used together in organization development. Claims made are quite categorical: "Those aspiring to improve the way work is done must begin to apply the capabilities of information technology to redesign business processes" (p. 11). Second, simple how-to –recipes are offered: "..we extract from the experience of the companies a generic five-step approach…(p. 11). Third, studying the semantic and grammatical relations of the introduction and summary reveal that the text does use more equal clauses (using "and") than subordinate ones (using e.g. "because") and the semantical relations of sentences and clauses add and elaborate on earlier sentences rather than explaining them. The text also uses mainly stories and narrative case studies as legitimizing strategy (mythopoesis), rather than pure rationalization. These would imply that the text is, alongside being an Argument, also a Hortatory Report (section 3.4). This strengthens the view that this is more a popular management genre than academic one.

The purpose of this text can primarily be seen as an attempt to educate managers on the potential of IT in business process redesign. However, one can also argue that on a more abstract level, the text tries to justify the validity of an engineering approach to organizational development: "Working together, these tools (IT and BPR) have the potential to create

a new type of industrial engineering…" (p.11). A more implicit purpose can also be identified - the text is meant to establish the authors as experts on the subject matter (and maybe to expand the consulting business in IT and BPR). Fairclough does however warn about "over-privileging purpose" in defining genres (Fairclough 2003, 71): not all genres constitute action that is purpose-driven. He makes the distinction between communicative action, where the discourse (interaction) is aimed at arriving at an understanding and strategic action, which is oriented to achieving results. The text analyzed here is an example of a quite clear strategic action: it is oriented to efficiently producing results.

5.4   Discourses

5.4.1   Main themes

The main theme of the article is improving how work is done in organizations, especially focusing on the implementation of *change* in all its dimensions: technology, organizational and human activity. The text represents both aspects of the physical, existing world (people, existing companies as entities, products manufactured, IT systems created etc.) as well as aspects of social life and social structuring of economic institutions and work in contemporary society (processes, roles in the workplace e.g. managers, structuring of organizations etc.). Mental aspects (which include human processes) are represented much less, but they do make an appearance in the few terms like "learning", "worker empowerment", "creativity" and "innovation", and few references made to e.g. reciprocity in accomplishing work (endnote 33). The text thus stresses structural themes.

5.4.2 Representation of social events

Social actors. Companies are treated as actors, and they are the main "characters" of the text. E.g. IBM is quoted as "saying" something etc. Companies are also classified, e.g. "companies that were succeeding with BPR" (p.13) – no mention of companies who were not, however, even though the sentence presupposes their existence - as well as named (Xerox, Ford, Mazda etc.) Companies are the ones taking agentic action. Human actors in the text are mainly mentioned through their organizational role, not as individuals, thus they are represented impersonally: sales manager, process consultant, CEO, owner of a process, users (of system), case manager, manager, lawyer, and assistant, to name a few. These form a role structure, through which the individuals work in or for the organization (Checkland & Holwell 1998, 82). Human actors are classified very clearly into managerial and operational, and managerial ones are given a more pronounced role, e.g. new skill requirements (p. 24) are meant for managers only.

Human actors are also mentioned in groups such as teams, IT groups and "employees". The roles mentioned most are managers and IT related personnel, who are also the assumed target "audience" for the text. Overall the IT personnel's role is pronounced, as if they are the one group who could be emancipated by BPR. There are many indirect citations, "As one manager put it…"; The company's managing director commented…". People in organizations are treated equally with material components of the organization. This is evident in the author's definition of process, which lists in a manner that reduces difference, "…organization of people, materials, energy, equipment and procedures…" (p.12). "IT" is mentioned as an actor as well, stating how it can "do something", "make something possible". This is similar to the representation of companies in the text, they are naturalized.

Social relations manifest through the different roles in the organization that are needed: "…two additional roles were necessary…"; "Mutual Benefit Life created a new role, the case manager". (p.17). These quotes would imply that the needs of the organization and its processes are more important than the needs of the individual worker. Division between managerial and operative activities insist on the hierarchical nature of social relations. Managerial issues are highlighted. The commitment of managers is something the authors see as being of major importance – the importance of commitment of other groups of employees is not treated with equal manner, in fact it is generally just stated that "…a process redesign effort…will probably encounter resistance…" (p. 23), implying that this resistance (of employees) must be overcome: they must deal with the change that the organization sees necessary; or rather managers must "manage change", the employees being the object of change management, not active subjects. Overall, managers exist to "manage" and control, others exist to perform the tasks set out by the organization.

Activity (=work) is represented first and foremost as a process (at least in the desirable state the authors argument for). It can be seen as a combination of action, social relations, and the objects to be managed, as well as a control tool. Business activity is not something owned or controlled by an individual worker: "business activities should be viewed as more than a collection of individual or even functional tasks" (p.12). Also the efficiency of a business activity (=work) has to be maximized: "they (business activity) should be broken down into processes that can be designed for maximum effectiveness" (p.12) [24]. Thus activity creates a system that consists of structures and tasks that are separate from people and their processes (Huhtala 2005, 33). Two different types of activity are identified: operational and managerial. Activity is however described in a concrete manner, using examples to make abstract

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[24] This constitutes a hyponym: improvement of work equals efficiency and effectiveness.

statements clearer, e.g. ""For example, a sales manager may be aware that there are inefficiencies in customer order entry" (p. 16). In this sense activity does belong to someone who also can take responsibility. It also servers the purpose of making the reader identify with the representation.

Objects are seen as dimensions of processes, something that are created and manipulated: physical and informational. Information is something that is objectified and transferred in the process, something that can be managed and codified, and in turn transferred, stored etc. especially with the help of IT. Concepts of information and knowledge are used interchangeably, and are not defined. Information is something that somehow just "is" and exists for the organization to use. The whole organization is also seen as an entity, an object, that has boundaries (there exists "interorganizational" processes as opposed to "interfunctional") and that can be the target of engineering efforts.

Instruments and means. Two tools are explicitly mentioned, IT and BPR (p. 11). BPR as a method is naturally what the whole article is about. But IT is a central instrument in the text as well: an actor, an enabler and a central capability. The benefits of IT are described in detail (Table 1 p. 17) and IT is seen as having a positive impact on organizations. IT is actually more than means; IT is seen as almost an conscious actor in organizations: "Information technology should be viewed as more than an automating or mechanizing force; it can fundamentally reshape the way business is done" (p.12). It could be argued that this representation of IT has partly contributed to the present day view of IT being almost a "natural force" of its own, like no human being was behind its existence or responsible for it. If activity in the text is described in an agentialized manner, then the means, IT, is something that seems to be doing things all by itself, with no-one

controlling it. This is perhaps the most worrying representation in the text.

Time & place are represented as something that can be overcome by using IT: "IT can transfer information…making processes independent of geography" (p.17); "…IT can make it possible for employees scattered around the world to work as a team" (p.19). Time itself is represented in a linear fashion, progressing sequentially.

5.4.3 A competing representation

There is however another representation of the organization, work and worker that emerges from the article with closer inspection. First, when the authors look at the objectives for process design, they mention Quality of Worklife / Learning / Empowerment (p.14). Here they voice (the only) criticism of IT: "Zuboff points out that IT-intensive processes are often simply automated, and that the informating or learning potential…is often ignored. Moreover, Schein notes that organizations do not provide a supportive context for individuals to introduce or innovate with IT." (p.15). In addition the authors identify interpersonal processes, which imply a change in how companies are structured: "…companies shift to self-managing teams as the lowest unit of organization" (p.19). They mention (at the time of writing) new types of IT that can facilitate (=make more efficient) that type of work: groupware, group decision making software as well as communications technology.

Thirdly, as already mentioned in section 5.2.3 on Difference, the authors recognize the existence of a type of work that is somewhat foreign to them (e.g. they use a very vague reference to a "computer vendor's advertising videotape" in this context instead of a more valid one). Examples: "Companies increasingly find it necessary to develop more flexible, team-oriented, coordinative, and communication-based

work capability" (p.12); "Emphasis now needs to shift to processes that incorporate semistructured and unstructured tasks and are performed by high-skill knowledge workers" (p.20). They continue this with a case study of an expert system development (p 22), where they quote a manager as saying ""…[the system] lets us communicate at higher speed and in greater depth". There is also a brief mention of Apple's "New Enterprise": "the company relishes its lack of formal hierarchy; Apple managers describe their roles as highly diffuse, and team and project based" (p.23).

These are all indicative of a post-tayloristic, post-bureaucratic or "soft systems" view of organizations (see e.g. Morgan 1997; Huhtala 2005; Checkland & Holwell 1998). This view sees organizations consisting of people and their social relations, as well their cognitive personal processes (sense making, knowledge –sharing and communication). How do these two representations exist in the same text? The authors do not very strongly commit themselves to the critique of IT or to the more "human aspects": instead, they caveat by saying "Of course, it is rarely possible to optimize all objectives simultaneously, and in most firms the strongest pressures are to produce tangible benefits." (p.15). This is to say that the more human oriented and learning and innovation oriented goals are "realistically" not as valid as the other ones (cost reduction, time reduction and output quality). Almost comically, in the same section, the authors mention as an obviously desirable thing that "as a result (of a new IT system and process redesign), Ford has eliminated three-quarters of the jobs in accounts payable" (p.15).

The mention of e.g. expert systems, interpersonal processes and self-managing teams would indicate that the authors do see the growing importance of more knowledge intensive work and flexible structures. It is however important to remember that what they intend to do with those is to subject also "the informational and managerial processes" to engineering principles and standardization and efficiency gains made

with the help of IT. It can thus be argued that while the authors recognize the existence of a changing way of working, they still see that it also can be treated as a socio-technical system: "In short, rather than maximizing the performance of particular individuals or business functions, companies must maximize interdependent activities within and across the entire organization" (p. 2). This means that the competing representation is made to fit with the established one, the difference is reduced, not celebrated.

5.5 Style

The authors position themselves as experts in this area, reporting on their case studies and experiences. The tone is very pragmatic, explaining what is happening in organizations and telling individual managers what to do. The authors use assertive statements ("The importance of both IT and BPR is well known", "The IT is such a powerful tool that…") and prescribe the reader to do something ("Develop business vision…"; Identify processes…", Understand and measure…"; "Design and build…".) as well as emphasizing these with words like "must". The way of writing is one of authority, which assumes that the authors have the power to tell others what is and what should be. There are present however the standard cautious statements typical in academic writings: "…the actual experience base with IT-enabled process redesign is limited" (p.25); "We have only began to explore the implications and implementations of this concept…" (p.25). The authors do create a form of dialogue with the readers, in a sense that they claim to understand the realities of managers and try to help them. The authors belong to an exclusive "we"-community that knows how to succeed, and want to help others join in – by buying BPR consulting services, perhaps.

Evaluation analysis on the other hand focuses on making explicit the values the authors commit to. The article here is quite explicit in what

the authors deem as desirable, even though they are reporting on case research results. For example their definition of "the new IE" (p.12) presupposes a number of things: the question "How can IT support business processes" presupposes that IT *can* support business processes; and "How can business processes be transformed using IT" presupposes that IT can *transform* business processes", and together these questions presuppose that *having* business processes is desirable. Desirables and undesirables are described below.

Desirable	Undesirable
vision of something akin Taylorism, "the new IE"	Inefficency and ineffectiveness
extensive use of information technology, IT should influence process design	not using IT in process redesign
efficiency and effectiveness, streamlining	rationalization of decomposed tasks, sub-optimizing
viewing work as processes	determining business requirements before considering IT's capabilities
having a strong strategic vision	not having the senior management committed
creating routinized processes	having a static view of process development
making processes independent of geography	redesigning just individual jobs and tasks
replacing or reducing human labour	
increasing use of information and analytics	
detailed tracking and measurement	
disintermediation	
subjecting processes to rigorous analyzis and redesign, including "managerial" and "informational" processes	
strong commitment of senior management	
facilitation and influence skills	

Table 5.1: Desirables and undesirables in Davenport & Short text

5.6   Conclusion

5.6.1   Findings of the analysis

The article is an example of modern purpose-driven strategic action that is aimed at efficiently producing results. The genre is an argumentative research paper, which has a strong prescriptive and problem solving orientation, thus making it a popular management discourse. The main claim made by the authors is that managers can redesign (reengineer)

their processes to be more effective using IT, and doing so they can ensure the future success of their company. The authors base their claim on case studies, making this text an example of the universalizing tendencies of global capitalism: what is seen as favourable and desirable in the light of particular case studies is made desirable universally, and experts have the authority to tell what is and should be.

The article represents organizations as socio-technical systems that can be reengineered to work better. The activities in the organization create a system that consists of structures and tasks that are separate from people and their processes, and people "inhabit" this entity through a role structure. Information and knowledge are objectified. Standardization, efficiency and use of information technology are seen as desirable. Work is seen as something done in a structured process. The process can be either operational or managerial, and the objects informational or physical. It can thus be concluded that there is no explicit representation of "knowledge work" in this article, but it is implicitly present in the combination of either managerial or operational activity handling informational objects. Work is described in a concrete manner, and the actor responsible is named, at least through a role. What is most interesting though is the role of IT as a naturalized actor. This type of representation affects how human-computer interaction has been regarded in dominant discourses. Overall, structural properties dominate the text.

5.6.2   Influence of discourse

One could argue that the text is "just a child of its time", and leave it at that. The risk in this argument is to forget that this particular representation has been an extremely powerful one, see for example Jackson (2001, 72-75) for an analysis on re-engineering's influence. This particular article was cited in ISI database 273 times and 1188 times in Google Scholar (Sept. 2007). In hindsight it is easy to see that

this article was a seminal one in management studies. The so-called "reengineering movement" had its origins in this article and another, maybe even more powerful one, by Michael Hammer (1990) "Reengineering Work: Don´t Automate, Obliterate", that appeared in Harvard Business Review [25]. This representation has also been extremely durable, considering the lifespan of most popular management discourse. Michael Hammer wrote in the April 2007 issue of Harvard Business Review (2007, 111): "Business has embraced process management as a way of life. New and controversial when I first introduced the concept 17 years ago […], the process-based approach to transformation is now routinely used by enterprises all over the world. Few executives question the idea that redesigning business processes […] can lead to dramatic enhancements in performance…"

The authors "truth" and prediction about the future became a self-fulfilling prophecy, partly because their discourse had a high degree of repetition, stability and global reach. Thomas Davenport has since this article published number of books on the subject of BPR as well as KM[26], becoming a veritable "guru". He also quite quickly turned his attention to knowledge work and knowledge workers, especially in regard to their efficient and process-like management and productivity, but with regard to the findings of this analysis, interestingly recognizing that "the nature of knowledge work is different from administrative and operational work and that people who perform it resist structured approaches" (Davenport et al. 1996, 53).

BPR as it was advocated by Hammer and Davenport fast became the justification for large downscaling in organizations during the 1990, resulting in a growing critique towards the whole concept (see e.g.

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[25] Especially Hammer and his "harder" version of the reengineering movement in general is analysed by Jackson (2001).
[26] Davenport, T & Prusak, L (1998) Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What they Know. Boston, MA : Harvard Business School Press.

Wikipedia's extensive coverage on the subject for an illuminating, if not academically valid, summary[27]). Even though this was not claimed to have been the intended result, the analysis here shows that the representation of work was one that valued standardization, efficiency, automation and detailed management of activities, from which success was to follow, thus leaving not much room for workers as subjects or individuals as knowledge creators as the source of competitive advantage. Thomas Davenport himself wrote in 1995 an article in the journal Fast Company titled "Reengineering – The Fad That Forgot People", where he already in the title admits the neglect of human agents as well as the "faddishness" of BPR. Even though the original view is thus somewhat softened later on, the most recontextualized representation is still the original "hard one" and as such the most enacted one in organizations.

6 CDA of the second generation KM: knowledge sharing

In this section the article "A Dynamic Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation" (1994) by Ikujiro Nonaka is analyzed following the methodology described in section 3. The article is both *at* and *being* the core of second generation KM, and thus a very significant one. This section answers the research questions **RQ.1** and **RQ.2** from the view of this particular text.

6.1 Social context of text

6.1.1 The publication of the article as a social event

The article by Nonaka appeared in the February 1994 issue of Organization Science. The journal is a management focused academic journal which covers a wide range of issues and disciplines. The ISI Journal Citation Reports rates Organization Science very high (e.g. impact factor for 2006 is 2.815, which is 4th in the category of business

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[27] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_process_reengineering

journals), and articles published in this journal have also some enduringness, the median age of its articles cited in 2006 was over nine years (Journal Cited Half Life 9.2), compared for example to Sloan Management Review, where the median age was 4 (ISI Journal Citation Reports, October 2007). Quite interestingly, Nonaka first published the ideas presented in this paper already in 1991 in a more popularly oriented publication the Harvard Business Review (HBR), and had published articles on knowledge creation since 1988. The 1991 article "The Knowledge Creating Company" however did not yet make an impact (cited 226 times in ISI database, but most citations are from year 2000 onwards) and one explanation that has been offered (Snowden 2002) is that BPR discourse was gaining speed and time just was not ripe for the themes presented by Nonaka. By 1994 however there was an obvious need to look at organizations and their competitiveness from another angle.

6.1.2   Discourse framing the text

In **management research** this article can be seen, as was shown in section 4.6, as founding discourse of KM, marking the beginning of its second generation. But maybe even more so, this article highlighted the differences between the Western and Japanese management styles and philosophies, thus strongly bringing the question of culture into management research. One has to remember that BPR was about the "beating the Japanese" – this article in part exposed why at the time in question the Japanese innovations were threatening the Western industries[28].

In **organization studies** this article belongs largely to the stream of organizational development and (cognitive) learning, and sees

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[28] For more on the discussion on the differences between Japanese and Western models of management and knowledge management, see e.g. Hedlund, G. (1994). A model of knowledge management and the N-form corporation. Strategic Management Journal, 15, 73-90.

organizations as self-organizing complex organic systems, composed of human (mental as well as biological) activity with no clear boundaries. There are a number of physiological and biological metaphors used to describe organizations and their activity, e.g. "organizational mind" (p. 22) and "…like the firing of neurons in the brain" (p. 23). There is also terminology inspired by the theory of self-organizing, such as "synergetics" (p. 28) and references made to cybernetics' principles such as "requisite variety" (p. 29), which is derived from the classic work by W.R. Ashby "An introduction to cybernetics" from 1956. In addition the article has influences of the chaos theory (p. 28). These framing discourses indicate a view of organizations that see them consisting of creative human practices and multifaceted social processes and relations (the soft systems view), as opposed to the traditional enitative approach of organizations as socio-technical "hard" systems. The references to cybernetics are however somewhat contradictory to this, as organizational cybernetics have been also connected to the hard systems view.

Information systems research is not strongly present as framing discourse for this article. Explicitly it is mentioned as creating the "knowledge-base" layer of the hypertext organization (p. 33). Interestingly, however, a broader technological discourse presents itself also implicitly, as something ever present and intertwined with human action within the organization. This can be seen in references to artificial intelligence (p. 16) and the above mentioned cybernetics references. Also it can be deduced that the presence of IT is a requisite for the creation, processing, accessing and sharing of information, especially when dealing with the concept of redundancy efficiently (p. 29). IT has also provided the key term "hypertext organization" (p. 32).

6.2 Intertextuality and assumptions

6.2.1 Intertextuality

Looking at the "other voices" that the text incorporates, there are fascinating and unusual references used, at least when compared to the Davenport & Short article, which were quite straight forwardly all management related. Nonaka's references are multidisciplinary and range from management studies to for example linguistics, cognition, cybernetics, social constructivist studies, eastern and western philosophy and the epistemology of knowledge. There are four explicit direct quotations, and looking at what they are about is quite revealing:

- the differences between information and knowledge (p. 15);
- the "learn with the body" concept present in Eastern thought, demonstrating the embodied nature of human knowledge (p. 22);
- the concept of the organizational mind and its similarities with brain, "at an abstract formal level, at least, the politics of the social organization and the physiology of the brain share much in common" (p. 23); and
- the need for increasing uncertainty and complexity in self-organizing and evolution, role of imagination (p. 28).

What these quotes demonstrate is certain openness to new ways of looking at economic organizations in addition to the view of organization as a process and hierarchy (traditional view). It is important to note that *all* these views of the organization exist in the text. The article is quite dialogical in this sense: it recognizes the need for both a hierarchical division of labour with its efficiencies and routines as well as the self-organizing teams of nonhierarchies. "…an organization can maximize the efficiency of its routine operation, which is determined by bureaucratic principles of division of labour and specialization, and also the effectiveness of its knowledge creation activities" (p. 33). On the

other hand, no voice is given to actual members of organizations, diminishing this theoretical dialogicality.

6.2.2   Significant assumptions

If the representation of work and organizations is quite varied, the assumptions in the text do make certain representations seem more favourable. The main existential assumption is that we are living in a knowledge society, and that this requires the constant creation of new knowledge (p. 14). This in turn creates the propositional argument that what really matters is change, and the value assumption that change is a desirable state of things. This is accentuated by the use of certain wording to indicate movement, as is analyzed in section 6.4.2. In addition, the article makes it clear that engaging human beings is central to knowledge creation, they are "knowledge subjects" (p. 17) who require certain conditions in order to flourish, so to speak. The value assumption here is that in the existing knowledge society, it is desirable and even necessary to look at the individual first. This view is explicitly assumed to be better than the "mere economic rationality" (p. 34). The article assumes quite explicitly that human individuals want and are capable of extensive new knowledge creation, and "are continuously committed to recreating the world" (p. 17).

Finally, it is assumed that knowledge creation activities are central to all organizations everywhere. "…it should be stressed that the principles described have a more general application to any organization, either economic or social, private or public, manufacturing or service, in the coming age despite their filed of activities as well as geographical and cultural location" (p. 34). The article seeks universality for the ideas presented and sees them as a desirable goal.

6.2.3 Difference

The article does recognize different types of work (routine and knowledge creating) and worker, as well as different types of organization and management models (top-down, middle-up-down and bottom-up). In the end, however, the differences are seen to form a harmonious entity, the "hypertext" organization: "But it does not mean that the two activities [routine and knowledge creation] need to operate separately and independently. Rather, it stresses the need for the careful design of the two activities which takes account of their distinctive contributions to knowledge creation" (p. 33). There is evident an attempt to resolve or overcome difference. There is also the recognition of difference regarding Western and Eastern philosophies, the management of Japanese and American / European firms etc. (e.g. p. 22). However, these differences are not treated in a particularly polemic manner, which could easily have been the case. In contrast to the Davenport & Short article, this text operates mainly on a "logic of equivalence" that subsumes various social phenomena under a unified idea (Fairclough 2003, 88).

6.3 Genre

Genre chains, **genre mixing** and **recontextualization** are not as pronounced in this article as they were in the Davenport & Short article. The text does bear similar features however as the Davenport & Short article regarding recontextualization. The research does originate from a case study that is then recontextualized into generalized theory. This in turn became the basis for a 1995 book[29] that became widely spread amongst managers and consultants, recontextualized even further.

When analyzing the **individual genres** present, the text is quite clearly the genre of academic management discourse, with a high level of

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[29] Nonaka, I & Takeuchi, H (1995). The Knowledge Creating Company. New York: Oxford University Press.

abstraction and the stated goal to "….develop the essential elements of a theory…" (p. 15). Key concepts are defined and academic references used widely. The author is distanced from the text and passive verbs are widely used, arguments are not credited to active agents. Instead, phrases such as "it can be argued…"; "the goal of this paper is…"; "it follows from the following discussion that…"; "it has been pointed out…" are used. The general mood is that of a cautious academic text. Concepts are explained thoroughly and legitimized through rationalization, making the text of expository genre, using explanatory logic. There are however also tendencies of moral legitimation in the text placing organizations within a humanistic society (p. 34).

The purpose of this text is not explicitly clear. Considering that Nonaka had published his first article on the subject in 1987 [for a bibilography see Nonaka et al. (2006)], and having published almost every year since, it can be stated that his ambitions and purposes are the ones of an academic wanting to establish a whole new theory regarding knowledge creation – and in hindsight this is what in fact did happen. The attempted change is one of great magnitude: a paradigm shift. What Nonaka identifies as the dominating paradigm (the "other" that needs to be changed) is one that "conceptualizes the organization as a system that 'processes' information or 'solves' problems" (p. 14). This is the paradigm to which the BPR discourse obviously belongs to, and in this way the purpose of the text may also have been to create a counterforce to very powerful (North American) management discourse of the time.

6.4   Discourses

6.4.1   Main themes

The main theme of the article is to explain "how knowledge is created through a dialogue between tacit and explicit knowledge" (Abstract).

The article emphasizes mental and social aspects over physical ones. The article is strongly an imaginary, it aims to change the way we look at organizations and economic life in general: "…the theory of organizational knowledge creation is at the same time a basic theory for building a truly 'humanistic' knowledge society beyond the limitations of mere 'economic rationality'" (p. 34). In this sense the text presents a competing representation of work and the individual's role to that of the Western one. It attempts to break the prevailing representations of overt rationality, efficiency and scientific knowledge with for example the notions of bodily experience, redundancy and knowledge related to action. As an additional theme, the article introduces a philosophical discussion on the nature of knowledge itself, something that is completely overlooked in the BPR discourse. The themes are thus something that originate from human action, having agentic properties.

6.4.2   Representation of social events

Social actors. For Nonaka, individual members are the "prime movers" of the organization (p. 17). He notes that "an organization cannot create knowledge without individuals" (p. 17). Individuals are recognized as organic systems with a body as well as a mind and personality, imagination and emotions. Humans are subjects who act with intentionality, need autonomy and freedom, motivation and a sense of purpose. Consequently agentic action is given a central role at least theoretically (e.g. p. 15). However, due to the theoretical and abstract nature of the text, individual actors are represented very impersonally, with no named individuals in the text (other than referenced authors). Actors are grouped in top managers, middle managers, lower managers and front line employees (mentioned explicitly only once on p. 30).

Despite the emphasis on individuals, not all actors are treated equally in the text. If Davenport & Short heralded the IT-personnel, then Nonaka explicitly champions the middle-managers and team leaders. In fact,

they are treated almost as omnipotent: "They even remake reality according to the company's vision" (p. 32); "The middle management sometimes plays the role of 'change-agent' for the self-revolution of the organization" (p. 32); "They are the true 'knowledge engineers' of the knowledge creating organizations" (p. 32); "…it is the role of top or middle management to determine the evaluation standards [for judging truthfulness of new knowledge]" (p. 26). In fact, anyone who even works with them is seen as the most important individual, as becomes clear from the following praising quote: "The most important knowledge creating individuals in this model [middle-up-down] are neither charismatic top managers nor the entrepreneur-like lower managers, but every employee who works in association with middle managers" (p. 32). Gourlay (2006, 1416) has noted in his critique that actually the middle-managers are the ones who act as gatekeepers for and even the creators of knowledge: "…Nonaka argues that knowledge is created when managers decide something is knowledge for an organization".

Organizations are seen as actors as well. Organizations are active, and in fact not only respond quickly to problems, they actually "create and define problems and then actively develops new knowledge to solve them" (p. 14). The proposed ideal hypertext organizations are also seen as "structural devices" that enables the "orchestration of different rhythms" (p. 33). This structurality is strongly present also in the figure depicting the form of the hypertext organization (Figure 4, p. 34). Organizations as entities possess knowledge as well as create new knowledge (p. 34). One interesting finding is also the implicit idea that actually organization as an intentional actor equals not all members of the organization but the top management. This can be deduced from the following extract: "…they [top management] give form to 'organizational intention' that is beyond the personal intention of top management as an individual. This is achieved by asking questions on behalf of the whole organization: What are we trying to learn? What do we need to know? Where should we be going" Who are we?" (p. 31).

One can critically ask how the combined intentions of few top managers could transcend the intentions of individual top managers in creating the organizational intention. In this sense the hypertext organization is still hierarchical and top manager led.

Social relations. In the text the need for continuous interaction between the individual and the external world is stressed. In fact, the author talks about individuals, but somewhat conflictingly regards the viewing of individuals as independent, separate actors as too limited (p. 30), and prefers to talk about "members" of organization. Individuals need to become anchored in the organization. Interaction thus equals the sharing of knowledge between members in a self-organizing manner. "…create a 'field' or 'self-organizing team' in which individual members collaborate…" (p. 22); "…the middle-up-down model takes all members as important actors who work together horizontally and vertically" (p. 30). Nonaka has later used the Japanese concept *ba* for describing these "fields"; it is a shared space for emerging relationships (Nonaka et al. 2006, 1185).

The social relations are not all harmonious; instead rivalry, crisis and chaos as well as a sense of challenge are repeatedly mentioned as key forces in knowledge creation. Communication and dialogue are central to this interaction as "…language is socially creative activity and accordingly reveals the importance of the connection between language and reality created through dialogue" (p. 25). In the representation of dialogue, the disrupting elements are present as well in the notion of dialectics: "Team leaders, therefore, should not discourage the dramatic and volatile dimensions of dialogue" (p. 25). In this sense difference through dialogue is very much encouraged in the text.

Activity (=work). The emerging representation of what is work is two-fold. First, when looked at socially, work can be defined as a "field" for interaction, a social construction based on exchange of tacit knowledge

through dialogue (communities-of-practice, self-organized teams). Second, work is something that can enhance and enlarge individual's knowledge, fulfilling the highest needs of humans through creativity, reflection and bodily experience. "What matters is 'high quality' experience, which might, on occasion, involve the complete redefinition of the nature of a 'job'" (p. 21-22). Thus the representation of work is almost noble and with high ideals. It supports the "imaginary" theme mentioned earlier. There are three types of work represented: routine operations, knowledge creating activities and managerial activities. Of course, the article on purpose diminishes other aspects of work other than knowledge creation related activities, raising the question how the routine workers (that implies the potential "low quality" experience) are to be treated. On the other hand, there are indications that same individuals do perform the routine work as well as participate in knowledge creating project teams: "…they come back up to upper business-system layer and engage in routine operation until they are called again for another project" (p. 33). It is thus implied that routine work is not knowledge creating, making the two very distinct from each other, and creating an implicit assumption of inequality and respective importance.

There is also a representation of movement and continuous fluidity in the organization of work. The notion of movement is strong in the text, with wording like "upward spirals" (p. 20); "dynamic circles" (p. 27); "never-ending circular processes" (p. 32) as well as using musical metaphors like the notion of organizational rhythm and frequency, that can be composed and orchestrated (p. 33). If one combines this representation of work with the way social actors and their relations are represented, the overall discourse is one of continuous change, with great demands placed on the intellectual and social capacity of individuals, not to mention the middle-managers specifically. "This is a continuous process and the ability to switch swiftly and flexibly between the three layers in the hypertext organization is critical to its success"

(p. 33) One can rightly question if every individual is up for this continuous task of moving between different "layers" of the hypertext organization, if everyone is even given the same chance to begin with, and if all this indication of continuous, almost improvising movement is not just a little stressful? The abstract style of the text does not allow for a concrete representation of work. There are hardly any mentions of actual tasks that the theory could be applied to, expect general references to innovation and new product development. This is in sharp contrast to the very practical and example laden text of Davenport & Short.

Objects. Main object in the text is knowledge. Knowledge and its creation in all its modes and types is the target of all activities described. Concrete products which may result the knowledge processes are not discussed, expect when talking of prototypes or generic "new products".

Instruments and means. Technology is mentioned as an enabler, but quite briefly in connection with knowledge base layer of the hypertext organization. The main means for achieving knowledge creation are mainly mental and social ones, such as dialogue using dialectics, metaphors and analogues; and building self-organizing teams using trust, the principle of requisite variety and boundary spanning. As the analysis reveals, these are quite difficult and abstract concepts.

Time & place. As mentioned earlier, the text describes movement and associated time very fluidly. Time and space are seen as something that can be allocated "to compose an organizational rhythm "(p.33). Where Davenport & Short painted a picture of a linear input-output process, Nonaka talks about "multilayered loops"; and that "stages can take place simultaneously, or sometimes jump back or forward" (p. 27). This builds on the earlier comments on the speed and nature of work. Otherwise the text does not anchor itself to any particular time or place,

expect to say the theory is based on hands-on research and practical experience of Japanese firms (p. 34). The text does however place an economic organization within a *society*, making it responsible to its wider environment (e.g. p. 35).

6.5   Style

The author positions himself as a detached and somewhat cautious academic, explaining to readers how the knowledge society should approach new knowledge creation. Jackson (2001, 11) describes the styles of "Asian gurus" such as Nonaka as "distinguished by their low-key, cerebral styles and the spiritual orientation of their work". This is confirmed by the preceding analysis. Nonaka does not address the readers in ways that would create a dialogue, or invoke that "we are in this together". He makes only a few strong claims about the truth, e.g. "Any organization that dynamically deals with changing environment ought not only to process information efficiently but also create information and knowledge" (p. 14); "… it is necessary to pay increased attention to the processes by which it [knowledge] is created" (p. 34). Somewhat surprisingly there is not a strong sense of commitment present, but that can be due to the academic nature of the text. Since the text is not explicitly value laden, the evaluation analysis is somewhat difficult and faces the risk of over interpretation. Few central desirables and undesirables can however be identified.

Desirable	Undesirable
a truly humanistic approach	mere economic rationality
building an active and dynamic understanding of the organization	static and passive view of the organization
members working together in self-organizing teams	role of the individual as independent, separate actor, "the intrapreneur"
emphasis on the middle-manager	looking at (charismatic) top management only
interaction and socialization	just combining knowledge
redundancy and experimenting	over efficiency
embodied action	mere representation of a world that exists independent of our cognitive system
movement, fluidity	rigid structures
knowledge creation	efficient information processing only

Table 6.1: Desirables and undesirables in Nonaka's text

6.6   Conclusion

6.6.1   Findings of the analysis

The article is academic management discourse that aims to explain in a rational fashion contemporary phenomena, without making strong claims about "the truth". It seeks universality for findings that are particular, but does this using analytical scientific method of theory building instead of a promotional and persuasive tactics; it attempts a paradigm shift, a potential counterforce to what can be identified as the BPR discourse.

The desirables listed above in Table 6.1 reveal a representation of work, worker and organization that focuses on relational processes rather than stable structures and tasks, and holds that organizations cannot be viewed without creative human practices. Agentic properties seem to prevail. The representations thus seem refreshingly humanistic after BPR's worldview. However, when read critically, one can point out few contradictions and concerns. First, the text in fact does place a great emphasis on the organization as an actor and an entity: "These modes operate in the context of the organization and, while acknowledging the role of individuals as essential actors in creating new knowledge, the central theme of this paper has been to address the processes involved at an organizational level" (p. 34). Structural elements are strongly present after all, under the guise of the hypertext organization. Individuals are members of the structure and the two are still split up. Organizations are not in fact seen *consisting of* human practices after all; they are seen *containing* them.

Second, the manager-managed relationship is taken for granted, even with the emphasis on autonomy and self-management. There are still team leaders and the all-powerful middle managers, who have the most pronounced agentic presence. Their agentic action can create

significant structural constraints or enablements for the individual employee. There is also implicit the assumption that there are management models that can be improved *per se*. The model advocated in turn allows the creation of the actual structural properties that then enable the powerful action of middle managers. In this sense the structural properties that enable agentic action for some can subsequently create structural constraints for others. Last, the text creates a very demanding representation of work. It can and should be questioned whether human actors really desire constant change as depicted in the text, or can in fact handle such demands. The text actually may contribute to both the "information slave" and the "free agent" representations as described in section 1.1.

6.6.2   Influence of the discourse

In hindsight, the influence of this article, especially with the subsequent book written with Hirotaka Takeuchi "The Knowledge Creating Company" (1995), which popularized the knowledge creation modes as the "SECI-model", is comparable to that of BPR discourse. This article is cited in ISI Social Sciences Citations Index 713 times and 3419 times in Google Scholar, and the 1995 book with Takeuchi is cited 6558 times (Sept. 2007). For more analysis on Nonaka's influence and evolution of his ideas, see Gourlay (2006). The article is quite unanimously seen as a watershed in management research in many ways. First, it brought the innovation and knowledge creation processes of organizations with their mental aspects front and centre. Second, it presented a culturally competitive representation of work and organization to the prevailing western one. And third, it is seen as marking the beginning of the managerial discourse of Knowledge Management as a distinct entity and even a theory, especially, as Gueldenberg & Helting (2007, 119) note, "Introducing philosophical notions into the knowledge management discourse was a bold move by Nonaka".

If the SECI-model as a discourse rivals BPR in its potential influence (in fact, the citation numbers of the Nonaka's article are triple to the ones of the Davenport & Short article), there are however few interesting and notable differences between the two discourses. First, the SECI model has not been subjected to comparable scrutiny and criticism as has BPR. Gourlay (2006) offers a summary of existing critique as well as presenting his own, and Gueldenberg & Helting (2007) criticize the epistemological and philosophical grounding of Nonaka's theory. But, on a whole, it is, a generally well accepted paradigmatic theory on organizational knowledge creation (which Nonaka stated as his intention in the 1994 article). Second difference is the extent to which the SECI-model has been applied in management practices in the real world of organizations. Gourlay notes that there is little actual evidence that something such as the SECI-model actually exists in the "life-world" of organizations: "Nonaka's proposition that knowledge is created through the interaction of tacit and explicit knowledge via four knowledge conversion processes has been found wanting on empirical and conceptual grounds" (2006, 1430); "…the evidence adduced in support of the modes of knowledge conversion is either non-existent, anecdotal, or open to alternative explanations" (2006, 1416)[30]. On the other hand, BPR discourse with its variations has been implemented in huge numbers in organizations (Jackson 2001, 72-75). The reasons for these differences (and indeed the reliability of that claim altogether) can not be stated definitely based on the limited analysis done in this thesis. Discourse analysis can offer a few possible explanations, however. These are discussed in section 9.2.2.

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[30] Nonaka et al. (2006, 1179-1180) naturally argue the contrary, stating that knowledge creation theory (i.e. the one including the SECI-model), "is increasingly having an impact on today's general management practice. Several organizations [...] report that they have built initiatives, projects and functions on concepts outlined in organizational knowledge creation theory."

7 CDA of the second generation KM: "the practice turn"

As another complimenting representative of the second generation KM, the article "Knowing in Practice: Enacting a Collective Capability in Distributed Organizing" (2002) by Wanda J. Orlikowski is analyzed according the CDA methodology outlined in section 3. This article can also be seen indicative of the issues tackled in the third generation as well. This section answers the research questions **RQ.1** and **RQ.2** from the view of this particular text.

7.1 Social context of text

7.1.1 The publication of the article as a social event

Wanda Orlikowski's article was published in Organization Science, the relevance of which is analyzed in section 6.1.1, as Nonaka's article appeared in the same journal (this being purely coincidental). The influence of Orlikowski's article, however, is not comparable to that of Nonaka or Davenport & Short. The author herself is mostly known in academic circles and not so much within management practitioners, as she has not written for example a popular management book. Her representations are not in this sense directly influential in management practices, reasons for which are discussed in section 7.6.3.

7.1.2 Discourse framing the text

Wanda Orlikowski is most known on her work on the use of technology, and is a professor of information systems, so **information systems research** is strong framing discourse in the text. Orlikowski has coined the term "technology-in-practice" describing the way users interact with technology e.g. software, creating structures in the enactment of recurring use of the technology (Orlikowski 2000). Technology not in use is an artefact. Her research draws strongly from Giddens' theory of structuration (see section 2.4), with the added emphasis on human agency.

Within **organization studies** discourse the text echoes the constructivist claim that organizations are decentred and distributed knowledge systems. Like in the case of technology, Orlikowski sees organizational work as embedded situated practice, and organizations thus socially constituted. This belongs to what has been more broadly labelled as the "practice turn" in organizational studies (Schreyögg & Geiger 2007, 79). Technology is placed within the organizational context as both an artefact and social practice (Orlikowski & Barley 2001). Orlikowski has in addition studied organizational communication (especially genres), and this emphasis can be identified in the analyzed article as well (Orlikowski & Yates 1994).

Management research discourse is not strongly present. The text does not for example explicitly provide new management models. Rather one can see managerial discourse of KM as the framework within which Orlikowski studies the different perspectives on organizational knowledge. Her perspective is (broadly interpreted) a representative of the communicative and knowledge sharing focused research of KM second generation, with the focus of *situated practice*: "…organizational knowing as emerging from the ongoing and situated actions of organizational members as they engage the world" (p. 249). One can also place the text within the action and activity centred discourse of "embedded practice", present for example in the more familiar concept of "communities-in-practice". In addition the discussion on "core competencies" is a framing discourse. The article draws also from anthropology, notion of autopoiesis and constructionist biology in making the claim that knowing and practise are mutually constitutive. In this sense the text is multidisciplinary and similar to that of Nonaka.

7.2 Intertextuality and assumptions

7.2.1 Intertextuality

The text is a report on an empirical study conducted into the product development activities of a large, global high-tech organization called "Kappa" (not its real name). When doing the analysis one has to distinguish between the representations of *Kappa itself as a company*, and the representations of Kappa *made by the author*. The representation of Kappa itself is for example very dialogical, with the direct quotes revealing that the company encourages dialogue and open communication: "there is a lot of dialogue and open communications, involving people in decisions, not just dictating this the way it is, but engaging people in discussion and dialogue…" (p. 265). This is not however of interest for this thesis. What is important is to see *how Kappa is represented by the author*. What she has chosen to represent can be assumed to be important to herself as well. There are for example 66 direct quotes made by various Kappa employees of all levels present in the text, incorporating a multiplicity of voices. More specifically, the case study looks at how the "… thousands of Kappa software engineers around the world go to work and knowingly do what they do to get the complex job of distributed product development done" (p. 269). The text does rightly give a voice to the software engineer themselves, as of the 78 employees interviewed they comprise the biggest single employee group (21) (Table 1, p. 255).

In texts such as this, intertextuality is also a matter of recontextualization (Fairclough 2003, 51). A "real" and original event is reported extensively, and then transformed into another report (an academic research paper) that is later used in variety of contexts (such as this thesis). There are two issues to address when studying a reported text (Fairclough 2003, 51). First, what is the relationship between the report and the original event reported? The original event

(the reality of Kappa) is used to support and elaborate a conceptual argument developed by the author on organizational knowing. "… I first lay out the key elements of current perspectives on knowledge before developing my perspective on organizational knowing. I then explore this perspective in terms of the field study I conducted within Kappa" (p. 249). The reporting is thus used to substantiate the author's claims. In addition, the original event is not reported directly, but is in fact mediated twice: "I was unable to participate in or observe project activities directly, thus my understanding comes primarily from interview data and from the traces of work evident in project documentation. This is clearly a limitation of my study, and ethnographic data would offer more grounded accounts of work practices." (p. 255). The original work practices are recontextualized in the (subjective) narratives of the employees and documentation, then interpreted by the author and finally reported in a journal article and eventually interpreted by a reader such as the author of this thesis.

The second issue to address is how the report figures in the rest of the text, how is it treated in the text it occurs (the article). The numerous direct quotations (66) create the implicit claim that the author is faithful to the original event. The text uses a variety of references, and the case study research setting and methods are openly revealed. The author interviewed 78 Kappa employees (Table 1, p. 255) from a variety of backgrounds, nationalities and jobs, adding to the claim of scientific reliability. This is supported by the lack of strong generalizing tendencies.

In addition, the author uses modalized assertions, such as "I wish to explore a possible explanation…" (p. 249); "…such a capability may also be salient in many other organizational activities" (p. 250); "I have argued that paying attention to organizational knowing might complement our understanding…" (p. 271). On the surface then the text

is a model example of what Faircough has defined as "most dialogical" (Fairclough 2003, 47).

7.2.2   Significant assumptions

As seen from the above analysis, the text is claimed to be value free and neutral. However, one has to ask why the author has chosen Kappa, and why does the author believe that what Kappa does is desirable for others as well. This in turn will reveal the assumptions behind the text.

Kappa is defined as a successful company (p. 253, p. 256, p.267, p. 269). The text equates success with good growth of revenues (15% on avr.), large market share of products (40%), projects being completed on time and satisfying customer requirements (p. 254). Orlikowski concedes that these are "conventional measures" (p. 256) but she does not offer the "un-conventional" ones either. It is thus the assumption that the above measures can be equated with success, and are a good indication that what Kappa does is desirable for others as well. In addition the distributed product development structure of Kappa is seen as an example of "distributed organizing" that is assumed to be the inevitable consequence of globalization: "… the capability of operating effectively across the temporal, geographic, political and cultural boundaries routinely encountered in global operations." (p. 249). The presupposition is that since there is a thing such as "globalization", there is an corresponding organizational structure. In addition the article makes the existential assumption that globalization, constant change and expansion of ICT just "are" realities for organizations.

The 66 direct quotes present in the text reinforce the value assumption that "the Kappa way" is good. Of all the quotes, overwhelming majority of 55 can be classified as positive, describing how good things are at Kappa. The author has chosen not to include more negative comments,

as one can assume not all 78 interviews were all about positive things (unfortunately one can never find out). The representation that the author has chosen to create is thus a very positive one, and one that will support her explanation of organizational knowing. The author does point out some risks and challenges for Kappa in the future, e.g. the stressful environment of a global project organization for the individual (p. 260) or the risk of complacency and difficulty of change associated with a strong organizational culture (p. 258; p. 262). These comments are in a minor role, however.

The influence of Giddens' theory of structuration on the thinking of the author creates the assumption that individuals interact in and recreate the structural environment of social life, which is reproduced and constituted in the everyday routines of individuals. Individual's activities express the structural properties as well as the knowledgeability and reflexive capability of the individual.

7.2.3 Difference

The text creates a harmonious representation of the case study company, Kappa, with not many voices of disagreement present. The representation of work does not create divisions between different types of work or groups of people, but one has to bear in mind that the focus is on one particular manifestation of work: distributed project organisation that deals with knowledge and symbols, and not a whole organization with other functions as well. The research setting thus has diminished the possibility of difference from the outset. In addition the whole theoretical background in the practice oriented research has the orientation of "logic of equivalence" (Fairclough 2003, 88). Concepts such as communities-in-practice and knowing-in-practice are very inclusive and based on an assumed equality of actors. In contrast, the author recognizes the different perspectives regarding organizational knowledge, summarizing research on this subject. She attempts

however to reconcile the differences: "Much has been learned, and much will be learned, from the two perspectives on organizational learning discussed above" (p. 250); "I believe a perspective on organizational knowing complements the existing perspectives…" (p. 269). In conclusion the text is not one to polemitize or create divisions.

7.3   Genre

An important feature of this text is the **recontextualization**, which was already analyzed in section 7.2.1 as part of intertextuality. The particular work practices of Kappa are studied, and evaluated as good and desirable. These practices are then transformed into theoretical concepts that create the competence of distributed organizing, which furthermore is seen as an example of organizational knowing. This creates an interesting **mixture of genres**. There are two different genres present in the text: the disembedded genre of a research paper (with argumentative tendencies) as well as a situated genre of an (ethnographic) interview based case study. Overall the text is a mixture of a very situated genre and a more detached one. The situatedness creates a specific context (global product development of Kappa) as well the assumption that work is situated action that has a contextual and provisional nature. The academic research genre however attempts to overcome this situatedness. One can cautiously identify a hierarchy of genres in the text (Fairclough 2003, 70): the main genre is the case study and the sub-genre is then the creation of the academic argument.

Regarding **individual genres**, the text does not yield itself to an easy genre analysis. The main "feel" of the text is naturally an academic one. The level of abstraction is not however particularly high, as the direct quotes and concrete representation of Kappa ground the text to "reality". The author makes herself present in the text, creating a dialogue with the reader, using first person expressions: "I wish to…"; "My focus…"; "I wish to explore…"; "I believe…." In this sense the

author is present and takes the responsibility for her views. On the other hand the author places some responsibility to the Kappa employees, interpreting their views on Kappa: "It is an explanation grounded in what people do every day to get their work done" (p. 249). The author does not prescribe, nor make strong claims or offer solutions.

There are several purposes present that tentatively can be said to form a hierarchy of purposes (Fairclough 2003, 71): the explicit purpose is the reporting of the case study, finding out how a successful company actually does product development. The other purpose is then to use the practical findings in support of the theoretical thinking of the author, which had developed *a priori* the empirical study, and is obviously the result of a long and systematic academic research. Finally, there seems to be the implicit purpose of highlighting the essential role of human agency in accomplishing knowledgeable work and the recognition of the individuals' importance alongside the competencies of leaders, strategies, ICT etc. The text is a managerial discourse in the sense that it does identify certain organizing practices (distributed organizing), that need particular (structural) conditions to be successful.

7.4   Discourses

7.4.1   Main themes

The main theme is work in general, how people do their jobs, everyday, everywhere. This is a very inclusive theme, and does not make the distinction between for example a manager and the managed. The physical, mental and social themes are intertwined in the concept of knowing-in-practise. Knowledgeability is not "out there" (in external objects, systems or routines) or "in here" (brains, bodies or communities), but is enacted in everyday practice (p. 252). When looking at the success of Kappa, the author recognizes both structural properties such as strategic, technological, financial, political and

cultural elements (e.g. customer relations, technological creativity, strategic positioning) as well more agentic properties such as the individual "knowing-how" to do product development. Of the 66 direct quotes, exactly half can be said to roughly focus on issues that concern more the individual agency, and the other half on more structural issues.

7.4.2 Representation of social events

Social actors. Actors are represented very concretely using the numerous examples from Kappa, and not one group is explicitly excluded or highlighted. There is a certain respect for the individual worker present in the text. Individuals are seen as purposive, reflexive, monitoring their own activity with the capacity to "choose to do otherwise" (p. 249; p. 252). This is also what Archer points out: "Thus, by their nature, humans have degrees of freedom in determining their own courses of action" (Archer 2003, 6). Actors are represented as very active: in numerous places the author talks about what people "do to get their job done" (p. 249); "…what members actually did every day as part of their complex and distributed product development work" (p. 256); "…[software engineers] go to work and knowingly do what they do…to get job done" (p. 269). There is a degree of repetition to make this point, and the author is almost adamant about it: "…*insisting* on the essential role of human agency in accomplishing knowledgeable work" (p. 269).

The organizational actor is acknowledged as well, as it can "know" and "do". Indeed, one main aim of the text is to look at organizational knowing, and this presupposes the existence of an entity that is the organization. This is represented in the way Kappa is portrayed as an active actor in saying for example that "Kappa focuses", "Kappa will need to", "Kappa encourages", "despite Kappa's efforts" etc. Somewhat in contradiction the author does talk about "Kappa members" frequently

and the collective that is "Kappa": "Kappa has to collectively know how to do distributed product development" (p. 269). There seems to be representations of three levels of actors: the individual worker ("the thousands of software engineers"); the collective of "Kappa" made up of its members, and the organizational entity "Kappa".

Social relations The practices seen as comprising the "knowing how to do global product development" (sharing identity, interacting face to face, aligning effort, learning by doing and supporting participation) highlight the social dimension of organizing. The case company Kappa is represented as one that relishes face-to-face contacts and social networks, trust and social capital. This is concluded by the author to be one of the key practices for distributed organizing. The relations themselves are represented as happening horizontally and based on real needs, not e.g. according a hierarchical role structure. Interestingly, there are no mentions of the manager/managed relationships in terms of one exercising power over the other. For example the practice of "knowing the players in the game" seems to apply to all employees, and is not the privilege of only the senior executives for example. In contrast however, there is the image of individuals being shipped from project to project, regardless of their preferences, as well as the stress of extensive travel. This is acknowledged by the author as well as being present in few direct quotes: …" I may be grinding this person down to work 70 hours per week so as to get the project done on time. So I couldn't care less after this project is over if this person leaves" (p. 264); "…then the stress got to me, and I got out in October because I wasn't sleeping nights" (p. 260).

Activity is seen consisting of different practices that in turn are situated recurrent activities of human agents (p. 253). This does not indicate a separate structure, rather implying that agents *are* the structure. The only type of work mentioned is "knowledgeable work" or "skillful practice". The term is in contrast to the concept of "knowledge work", as

it can be used to describe any type of work, and does not imply that e.g. only informational objects are to be used etc. This does not create divisions or inequalities as anyone can be knowledgeable of and in their work, regardless of the content. In a sense this representation makes the whole debate about "knowledge work" and "non-knowledge work" irrelevant. What is unclear, however, is if this concept of knowledgeable work implies that there is also "non-knowledgeable work". In a sense it does not appear to be so, as the author notes for example that "individuals are understood to act knowledgeably as a routine part of their everyday activity" (p. 249), which includes work based activity. "Knowing is an ongoing social accomplishment" (p. 252) which is "inseparable from human agency" (p. 252) implies that every human being is knowledgeable, and thus performs knowledgeable work. This consequently would imply that all the arguments made in the text about the nature of knowledgeability and knowing work would apply to *all* work. This offers very interesting and almost radical possibilities on the representation of work itself and is discussed more in section 7.6.2.

Objects The object of work activity in Kappa is creating concrete, although symbol and knowledge based, products: operating system software with its different versions. The empirical case study thus enables to represent what people actually *do* very concretely. On the other hand the concept of knowing-in-practice is exemplified also in making of fine flutes, playing basketball or riding a bicycle (p. 253). In this sense the applicability of the theoretical concept not limited to just work oriented activities. The object of knowledgeable activity is anything human agents choose it to be. Treating knowledge itself as an object is however criticized, as it results in "objective reification" (p. 250).

Instruments and means. There are a number of Kappa tools and means that are mentioned in the text. On the other hand Orlikowski does not offer many concrete tools of her own for facilitating knowing in practice. One can assume the practices studied at Kappa could be used

as tools as well. The main purpose of the Kappa tools is to help "aligning of products, projects and people across time and space" (p. 261), that is to say help managing the different boundaries presented by globalization. The tools mentioned are a project management model, a planning tool, structured systems development model and the use of standard metrics. The knowledgeable human activity is thus in the end subjected to a structured model of product development, including the "kilomanhours" of individual engineers. The presence of these tools is in fact quite pronounced, and as such they constrain and delimit the freedom of agentic action: projects are planned in a certain way, individuals assigned to projects based on skills and manhour calculations etc. Orlikowski herself recognizes a risk in this: "When Kappa members use the plans, methods, and metrics to focus their attention and guide their work activities, they also inadvertently discount ideas and activities not expressible in the vocabulary of the plans, methods, and metrics in use." (p. 262). By saying they create a *vocabulary*, Orlikowski implies that they create certain *discourse* (way of using language) as well as *discourses* (ways of representing) within the organization.

Time & place is the context for the situated and ongoing activity. This context is pronounced, as the whole representation of work and action is situated and embedded. There is an emphasis on different boundaries that the author recognized when doing research at Kappa: temporal, geographic, social, historical, technical and political. These boundaries "shaped and challenged their [Kappa members'] everyday work" (p. 255), and were noted to be very important: "…because of the obvious salience of these boundaries to the distributed work…" (p. 255). This is in sharp contrast to the Davenport and Short representation where in particular IT was to help overcome these types of boundaries, creating a single context, the global market place. The text here represents globalization differently: it is made up of boundaries and

creating multiple contexts for action instead of a single one. The boundaries are however dealt with various tools (see above).

7.5 Style

The style of the author is personal and committed. The author makes it clear what she believes in (human agency), and wishes to share this with the reader. The author comes across as an empathetic academic, who genuinely believes in the individual. There is no "guru" mentality present. The aim is to create an understanding through communicative action. The author does seem almost naive in her handling of Kappa, and critically one wonders if things really are as positive as the quotes make it out to be. This certain naiveté is evident especially when she describes how "Kappa invests extensively in its employees" to create "marketable skills" (p. 263), based on for example a brochure handed out to new employees. [She does continue that the interviews suggest this not to be just "ideological rhetoric" (p. 263)]. Here Orlikowski follows Giddens stating that "people are knowledgeable and reflexive, and they tend to know more about what they do than researchers give them credit for" (p. 255). What the author sees as desirable and undesirable are listed below.

Desirable	Undesirable
essential role of human agency	privileging knowledge-as-object or knowledge-as-disposition
how Kappa does distributed product development	the idea of transferable or sharable "best practices"
trusting people's own accounts on their own activities	privileging knowledge at the expense of knowing
focus on what people do to get the job done	overlooking the importance of situated and ongoing action
capability to operate across different boundaries, aligning effort	relying only on ICT for communication
sharing identity	
interacting face-to-face	
learning by doing	
supporting participation	

Table 7.1: Desirables and undesirables in Orlikowski's text

7.6   Conclusion

7.6.1   Findings of the analysis: the question of agency

The text is communicative discourse that highlights the central role of human agency and situated action as a possible explanation and elaboration on organizational effectiveness. The discourse is agentialized, social relations pronounced and work is seen as the contextual ongoing accomplishment of individuals. The text is explicitly a report of an empirical field study (global distributed product development), but also an attempt to support a conceptual argument made by the author.

This article is one where the question of structure and agency are explicitly present, and help clarify the debate (section 2.5). Orlikowski has her theoretical grounding in Giddens' theory of structuration. Orlikowski cites Giddens in saying that "organizational life is continually contingently reproduced by knowledgeable human agents" (p. 271). This implies that the two are mutually constitutive: the structures of organizational life are at the same time used by agents and (re)produced by them. Same is true for Orlikowski's notion of knowing and practice. The two cannot be separated; they are not two distinct areas of reality or ontologically separate. Giddens (1979, 47) notes that one of the contributions of structuralism in general is "an attempt to transcend the subject/object dualism". This is exactly the kind of "transcendence" that Archer criticizes: "More recently, it has become popular to suggest that we abandon the quest for a causal mechanism linking structure and agency, in favour of 'transcending' the divide between objectivity and subjectivity altogether. Basically, this enterprise rests upon the conceptualizing 'structures' and 'agents' as ontologically inseparable because each enters into the other's constitution" (Archer 2003, 1).

Representations of this text can be seen as "pro agency", but not giving human action the full independence Archer claims it to have. For Archer, there actually is the "out there" and "in here" referred to in section 7.4.1. Olikowski seems to overlook the fact that even in her own representation there does exist social "forms" or structures which are not the individuals own making or choosing. There is the entity "Kappa", which the individual engineers did not "make" (even though they do constitute and "recreate" it) and which existed before them; there is "globalization", which is not something an individual can choose not to participate in at least if they work for Kappa; and the model of distributed organizing with its structural tools places constraints and/or enablements on agents e.g. the requirement of extensive travel and the existence of a rigorous planning method.

7.6.2   A new view of organizations and work

The other interesting finding of the analysis is the one regarding the representation of work and its relation to the worker, section 7.4.2. The implicit argument is that if any work equals (potentially) knowledgeable work, then the representations made about knowledgeability in the text would apply to *all* work. For example: "Continuity of competence, of skilful practice, is thus achieved not given. It is a recurrently but nevertheless situated and enacted accomplishment which cannot simply be presumed." (p. 253.) Would this mean that the (practice of) work does not exist on its own and without human agency? It would seem so, as the author states that: "Take away the practice of doing machine design, flute making, and paper handling, and there is no tacit knowledge and no collective competence in these areas" (p. 270). If no-one does the actual practice (=work), then there is nothing, expect maybe a manual, which in itself is not the actual practice and thus "knowing", as knowing "is inseparable from its constituting practice" (p. 271).

This would be in sharp contrast to e.g. BPR representation of work, where work is something that can be the object of engineering efforts independently *whether there is someone executing them or not*. This is due to the inherent conceptual split between work and worker, the organization and the people. Instead, the view present in Orlikowski's text is that work simply does not exist without the human who knowledgeably and recurringly does it every day. This would make much of the traditional organizational presuppositions obsolete, and instead focus on organizations as consisting of human practices, thus erasing the split between the two (Huhtala 2003, 35). There are no longer "management practices" to be improved or "business processes" to be engineered. Rather the question would be to improve the conditions "under which skillful performance is more and less likely to be enacted" (p. 270). Structural properties need to be looked at in order to enable knowledgeable action, not to be improved *per se*. "It is a process of helping others develop the ability to enact – in a variety of contexts and conditions – the knowing in practice" (p. 271). Structural properties are to be identified and developed to become real enablements for knowledgeable and thus effective human action that then recreates the very same structure in the truest sense of duality.

7.6.3 Influence of discourse

The article is cited 111 times in the ISI Social Sciences Citation Index and 352 times in Google Scholar (Sept. 2007). It is interesting to note however that most citations are from year 2005 onwards and growing (see Figure 9.6 in section 9.2.2), potentially indicating a growing interest in the "practice turn" in organization studies advocated by the article. As was noted earlier, the text is not part of popular management discourse, and consequently its influence on management practices is limited. This may be partly due to the situatedness inherent in Orlikowski's thought.

Even though the text itself is not overtly critical of any certain school of thought or discourse, Orlikowski does implicitly criticize some features of popular management discourse: the focus on "best practices" that aim to provide instructions and tools that are employable by large number of people. First, she questions who decides what "best" is, and second, because practices are situationally constituted they cannot be transferred or moved (p. 271). She suggests the use of the term "useful practices" instead. This implies that there cannot exist something that is universally best for everyone, which precisely is the main claim for most popular management gurus and their "isms", and indeed the basic notion of global capitalism.

Since discourse of situated action and practice is quite contrary to the traditional view on organizational life, it is no surprise this discourse has not been recontextualized by management consultants for example. It does render them in a way obsolete, as it elevates the knowledgeability of the individual employees, and erases the universal applicability of certain measures and solutions. It erodes the power relationship between the expert and non-expert, between the manager and managed, and between the management consultant and the organization employing them. "In particular, we might learn some useful insights about capabilities if we focus on what people do and how they do it, rather than focusing on primarily on infrastructure, objects, skills, or dispositions" (p. 271). This view would force organizations to actually look at what they do, instead of buying in on yet another "easy fix" that engineers their infrastructure, optimizes their objects or develops transferable "best" practices.

One can make another argument on the lack of influence: the notion that there is not "an out there" or "an in here" makes the idea of managing and especially managing knowledge practically impossible. There is, in fact, no such thing as "knowledge management" at all. If one can only manage the conditions of skillful practice which are only

present in the actual activity of individuals, how can you plan, create common objectives and do any of the tasks deemed important for leading an organization? It still does exist, no matter how hard one tries to visualize it as only a constituted construction, and it does interact with a social reality. A critique of this "practice turn" in especially knowledge management is presented by Schreyögg & Geiger (2007), which is analyzed in the next section.

8   CDA of the third generation KM: knowledge as discourse

Finally the thesis turns to the third generation of KM, which is a multidisciplinary collection of research, maybe tied together only by temporal closeness. The article chosen to represent this generation is by Georg Schreyögg & Daniel Geiger: "The significance of distinctiveness: a proposal for rethinking organizational knowledge" (2007). This section answers the research questions **RQ.1** and **RQ.2** from the view of this particular text.

8.1   Social context of text

8.1.1   The publication of the article as a social event

The article appeared in the journal Organization in 2007. Organization is a multi-disciplinary journal with a stated critical and theoretical orientation to organization studies, with the focus on issues such as power, discourses and gender in a broad organizational context for example[31]. The ISI Journal Citation Report rates Organization's impact as well above average (e.g. impact factor for 2006 is 1.329), and the median age of its articles cited in 2006 was over five years (Journal Cited Half Life 5.6) (ISI Journal Citation Reports, October 2007).

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[31] http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsProdAims.nav?prodId=Journal200981

The volume in which Schreyögg & Geiger article appeared is a special issue dedicated to studying the philosophical foundations of KM, an endeavour that has its origins in a November 2004 special issue of the same journal. The editors of the volume, J-C Spender and Andreas Scherer have an interest in attempting to find the problems KM is the answer for, shed light on the multiple epistemologies of KM and advance the discussion (Spender & Scherer 2007). The Schreyögg & Geiger article has to be seen in this context: it is meant to be critical and offer new insights into the very foundations of KM. The text itself originates already from 2002, and has presumably developed over time. The article and its influence are very different from the earlier articles analyzed: it has not yet been cited once in either Google Scholar or ISI Social Sciences Citation Index. And it is safe to assume that it certainly has not entered into the management practitioners' realm. It should mainly be seen as a self-reflecting text meant to be consumed within the KM community itself.

8.1.2   Discourse framing the text

The authors place the text within **management research and organization studies**, notably as a critique towards research that assumes the existence of such concepts as "knowledge society", "knowledge intensive firms" and "knowledge work" without due consideration of the notion of knowledge itself. In this sense the main framing discourse is in fact the **philosophy of science**, making the text part of a "far reaching and long standing debate" (p. 82), reflecting on the nature of knowledge itself. Communication studies create another framing discourse, with references to argumentation analysis and the philosophy of communication/language.

8.2 Intertextuality and assumptions

8.2.1 Intertextuality

The text incorporates other texts in a typically academic fashion, and all of them are attributed to someone in the way of referencing them. These other texts can be divided into two broad groups. First there are the "opponents", that is the advocates of what the authors call the "practice turn" in organizational research: the growing interest on practices and situated action in organizations. The longest direct quotes, interestingly, are given to these opponents, e.g. Schön on knowledgeable action and Davenport & Prusak on the broad definition of knowledge. Second group of voices belong to the theoretical founding fathers behind the authors' argument, mainly Habermas and Toulmin. Intertextuality is thus used to create on a) the image of what is opposed and b) the backing and justification for the authors' argument.

In addition the authors use modalized assertions when describing the dominant views on contemporary societies: "knowledge is considered to be..."; corporations are assumed to be building…"; …authors even propose re-conceptualizations organizations…"; "…industrial societies are assumed to be transforming themselves into knowledge societies" (p. 78). They do not assume the existence of these things as the earlier authors analyzed all did, attempting to paint a rather unanimous picture of reality, instead the authors leave room for other views.

8.2.2 Significant assumptions

What does the text take for granted? The general tone of the text is one of critical reflection that is careful not to make any hasty assumptions. One can however identify few key assumptions on which the authors' argument seems to rest. First, they assume the importance of language. Even though the authors criticize the "practice turn" of

organizational studies they themselves advocate a similarly comprehensive view, named in likewise manner, the "linguistic turn" (p. 82), which holds that our understanding of the world is bound to the language used. It shows how every researcher does hold strong assumptions that another can then attempt to debunk. Another assumption is the belief in the individual's (and thus communities) ability for "correct argumentation" and "good reasons" (p. 85; p. 87), which does require some distinct capabilities from the individual. The authors do realize this as a limitation and risk (p. 95).

8.2.3   Difference

Accentuation of difference is a central theme in the text and merits a longer analysis than what has been performed for the other articles. The importance of difference is made explicit already in the title of the text: *the significance of distinctiveness*. The authors want to explore and underline differences that make certain concepts distinct from each other. They openly criticize the "practice turn" or "epistemology of practice" that does not differentiate between e.g. action and the specific knowing of an actor. By coincidence a prime example of the practice oriented research is Wanda Orlikowski's research analysed in section 7. One finding of the analysis was that what was implied by Orlikowski is that all work is potentially knowledgeable work. This finding is supported by Schreyögg & Geiger, who claim that by following this line of reasoning: "…we would end up finding that all work is knowledge work" (p. 93).

Instead the authors stress that if we take for example the notion of knowledge work seriously, "…we have to build a template that allows for differentiating systematically between knowledge societies, between knowledge-intensive firms and firms that are less knowledgeable etc. If knowledge is supposed to build a distinguishing element with high value for both organization and societies, it has to be conceived in terms of

distinctiveness." (p. 81.) The authors want to create differences, the text moves between an exploration of difference and a more polemic struggle over meaning, as they explicitly place the opposing "voices" in the same text (Fairclough 2003, 41-43). Instead the authors of this text insist that the themes of e.g. knowledge society "…build on distinctive dimensions such as *exclusivity, specificity* and/or *excellence*" (p. 80) and the contrasts thus created. The contrasts and distinctions the authors make are the following:

- everyday opinion, skills and habits vs. knowledge which is the outcome of reasoning processes within discourses (p. 86);
- societies which base their operations increasingly on discursive knowledge and the treatment of validity claims as problematic i.e. knowledge societies vs. societies which do not i.e. industrial societies (p. 91);
- firms which predominantly use, discursively generate and reflexively treat knowledge i.e. knowledge-intensive firms vs. firms which primarily operate with non-reflexive modes of communication i.e. non-knowledge-intensive firms (p. 92); and
- type of work that handles and generates discursive knowledge and questions its validity claims i.e. knowledge work vs. type that does not i.e. non-knowledge work (p. 93).

8.3 Genre

Genre mixing or **genre chains** are not very pronounced in this text. The text is predominantly an academic research paper that has a clear argumentative structure. One can assume that as such it will not be **recontextualized** extensively in e.g. consulting or management practices. It will most probably stay within academic context and discourse. There is however a peculiar shift of genre in the section titled Knowledge Management (p. 94). If the rest of the text is detached and academic with a high level of abstraction, then this part is quite suddenly concrete, using lists and examples. There is almost a

problem-solution orientation present in this section, with questions of "how to", and the answer of "the suggested conception of discursive knowledge can provide a well-founded platform to develop practical guidelines..." (p. 94), and then the examples of Shell, NASA and Xerox following. Of course this orientation is still far off from e.g. the genre of the Davenport & Short article, but even the slight similarities are somewhat surprising. The academically critical stance of modalized assertions changes to making the implicit assumption that these companies are good examples for others.

Despite the "digression" described above, the **individual genre** of the text is academic management discourse. The explicit purpose of the text is to provide a critique and an alternative approach to defining the concept of knowledge. The targeted readership are other academics within the field, and the authors create a dialogue with them, creating the "we are in this together" –sense of common purpose: "It we are interested explaining knowledge societies, knowledge-intensive firms and knowledge driven competitive advantages we therefore need a different framework..." (p. 81). In this sense one could argue that the text is in fact an academic "problem-solution" report, meant to advance and improve the academic research on organizational knowledge. If popular management discourse offers solutions for management practitioners by offering them new tools and methods, then this paper seems to offer the same kind of tools for academics themselves for improving their research on knowledge related issues.

8.4   Discourses

8.4.1   Main themes

The main theme is to establish a more relevant definition of knowledge to be used in management studies. The text deals mainly with mental and social themes such as the argumentation process, communicative

practices of communities and so forth. Physical themes are present much less, but make an appearance in the section on Knowledge Management (the "digression of genre" mentioned before).

8.4.2　Representation of social events

Social actors. Actors are represented abstractly and impersonally. Actors exist as members of e.g. a discursive community (p. 86) or participants in an argumentation process. It is not made clear who can or is even allowed to participate in the exclusive knowledge processes (see **Activity** below) thus performing knowledge work. What is stated is that "some people lack the rhetorical qualities to defend their reasons in an appropriate way" (p. 95), making the implicit assumption that there inevitably exists a division between actors based on certain personal factors.

The actors that are named are mainly the "voices" present in the text (see Intertextuality in section 8.2.1) belonging to this academic debate, not actors belonging to the societies or organizations that are the focus of the text. In the section on Knowledge Management, however, organizations NASA, Shell and Xerox are explicitly named, as well as their "discursive review committees" (p. 94), which is in sharp contrast to the abstract feel of the rest of the text. In addition "best reason" is recognized as an actor that can exercise power in organizations as a "second authority" (p. 95).

Social relations Social relations are represented in three areas. First there are the academic community's internal relations that stem from the treatment of the concept of knowledge. Second, the social relations of communities and societies are represented mainly as existing in the "life world" and "sphere of discourse", which of course are not something concrete. The only mention of a concrete organizational form that would create certain social relations is a reference made to

Nonaka's hypertext organization (p. 95) as an example of a desirable multidimensional organization, as opposed to "strict hierarchical setting" (p. 95). Third, a new type of power relation emerges from the discursive procedures the authors see important for Knowledge Management in organizations. This would take the form of specific review committees that would evaluate the knowledge produced in e.g. communities of practice within the organization (p. 94). These instances would in fact have the power to withhold some knowledge from the rest of the organization. This is implied in the assertion made regarding what Shell and Xerox had done: "It proved necessary to have a qualifying look at the knowledge processed within the network before it is disseminated company wide" (p. 94-95); "...to decide what from the knowledge communicated informally...should be captured and entered in a company wide database." (p. 95). These quotes raise a number of critical questions, which are recognized by the authors to some extent as well. Who decides what is deemed worthy knowledge and what not? Who belongs to these review committees? Isn't their activity actually censorship? Who establishes and maintains the discursive procedures? Here a parallel to Nonaka can be identified: he stated that middle managers set up the evaluation procedures for knowledge creation, creating a similar power relation regarding knowledge and its accessibility. This has been criticized (see section 6.4.2) and similar critique seems to apply here to some extent.

Activity Concrete work activity is not represented in the text as such, but the text does build a representation on what constitutes knowledge work as the authors see it (p. 93). This would be work that finds out new knowledge, connects older and newer elements of knowledge as is done in e.g. accounting firm; imports knowledge from science or consultancy, checking whether innovative products confirm with regulations; and generate new knowledge through the discursive mode. The representation in fact echoes the representations and definitions present in discourse of professionalism and professional organizations

(Alvesson 2004, 19-21). In addition it is claimed that in knowledge work (when defined this way), skills and tacit knowing do not play such an important role (p. 93). This creates the opposing representation of non-knowledge work that relies on skillfulness or practical proficiency that equals successful action (p. 89). Thus we have the knowledge handling and creating rational worker, who can argue and check the validity claims of new knowledge, and the more intuitively and practically operating worker who does other things, supposedly routine work. This actually resembles Nonaka's representation and division of knowledge creating activities and routine tasks. The authors do however state that "effective action in developed societies requires both knowledge and tacit skills" (p. 89). Argumentation is a single activity that is represented concretely, demonstrated by a graph (p. 85), giving the representation a somewhat mechanistic feel. Over all, the "scheme of correct argumentation" is indeed a strictly defined activity "...with its own prerequisites and rules" (p. 84).

Objects There is a distinct entity (object) that is "knowledge" that has exclusive qualities, and allows the distinction of low/high quality knowledge (p. 81). This implies that there is also "the other", non-knowledge that the authors define as "everyday opinions, skills and habits" (p. 86). The authors stress that they oppose the positivistic idea of objective truth (p. 82; 86). Instead they stress the role of the "better argument" as the force deciding the conclusion that is to become the inter-subjective "truth" for the time being. The notion of the exclusiveness of knowledge and its rather demanding characteristics (p. 87) create the value judgement of knowledge being something not attainable by anyone. This is of course in sharp contrast to Orlikowski and even Nonaka, who both assume knowledge creation is available to anyone or at least to most members of the organization.

Instruments and means. The tool by which knowledge work can be carried out is Toulmin's argumentation process that creates knowledge

as discourse. This in turn emphasizes the centrality of language and communication in knowledge work.

Time & place The text is anchored in contemporary society labelled as knowledge society. The authors seem to make the parallel with knowledge society and a "developed society" (p. 89), making the presupposition that there are also "undeveloped societies" that do not rely on knowledge to same extent. In addition knowledge societies are seen as consisting of functionally specific "subsystems" or "fields" that increasingly use the discursive mode of knowledge generation. The representations of time and place in their concrete forms are not strongly present. Instead there are references to "mental" places such as "life world"; "spheres of communicative practices of everyday life" and "sphere of discourse/argumentation" that are socially constructed, and which we can "enter" (p. 84). The life world is "naïve", where validity claims are not questioned. They are accepted implicitly as embedded in everyday routines. The representation of the sphere of argumentation/discourse on the other hand is the "place" where validity claims are processed and argumented. It can somewhat harshly be argued that as the authors place knowledge within the sphere of discourse, and skills, intuition and routine into the life world, they make the implicit value judgements that the life world is somewhat inferior to that of the sphere of good reasons and argumentation – it is indeed "naïve". This is similar to the judgements made regarding knowledge itself. Of course they do state that their more restricted notion of knowledge "...does not intend to in any way to call the importance of tacit dimension into question. The importance often claimed for successful everyday practice in organizations cannot and should not be denied." (p. 89.) However the text does offer the elements for making this value judgement upon critical reading.

8.5   Style

The authors commit themselves to the argument they make in the text: "our conclusions strongly advocate a new dimension of knowledge management" (p. 95). They do not however commit personally to the issue, maintaining a detached academic style throughout the text, but the use of "we" when referring to the authors themselves does create a more personal feel. The text creates differences between objects, using contrastive grammatical relations (e.g. "versus") and saying explicitly that "we should treat different things differently" (p. 80). The text is meant to classify and categorize things, creating what was introduced in section 5.2.3 in conjunction with Davenport & Short article, "logic of difference". In this case a text such as this creates a division between knowledge work and non-knowledge work (inherent in their view of KM). The text does not however take things at face value (e.g. all societies are knowledge societies since knowledge represents any reality construction), it goes beyond the surface in trying to explain and understand certain concepts; it is an explanatory report. What the author sees as desirable and undesirable are listed in Table 8.1.

Desirable	Undesirable
discursive procedures for examining critical validity claims	organizational narratives as taken for granted knowledge claims
multidimensional organizational forms	strict hierarchical settings
differentiating between high-quality and low-quality knowledge (even non-knowledge)	applying the everyday perspective of knowledge to knowledge issues and knowledge management
creation of knowledge evaluation procedures in organization	

Table 8.1: Desirables and undesirables in Schreyögg & Geiger text

8.6   Conclusion

8.6.1   Findings of the analysis

The text by Schreyögg & Geiger is an argument that is reported as an academic research paper. It can be qualified as philosophically self-

reflecting on a discipline the authors themselves in some ways belong to, knowledge management. The text uses logic of difference and has the explicit purpose of classification and categorization. The authors reveal that the whole discussion on knowledge is built on distinctive dimensions that demand a template that allows for systematic differentiation of e.g. knowledge work and non-knowledge work. This is in sharp contrast to the representation of work present in Orlikowski's article which purposefully seemed to subvert differences by representing all work equivalent of each other regarding knowledge. As was mentioned, this representation makes everyday managing of work somewhat difficult, as everyone does "same work" knowledge wise. The differentiating representation of the Schreyögg & Geiger article on the other hand makes it possible for a manager to make distinctions and for the individual worker to identify doing either knowledge work on non-knowledge work. This distinction can have both positive and negative consequence. In addition the new power authority of "best reason", "better argument" and a "knowledge review process" seem almost threatening forces.

8.6.2   Influence of the discourse

As was mentioned, the article has not been cited as of yet within the academic community (the earlier version presented at a 2002 conference has few citations in Google Scholar). The authors admit that their view on KM has "not yet accounted for institutional and behavioural factors that might limit or even inhibit discursive reflection of knowledge in organizations" (p. 95), and is in this sense an "imaginary" discourse. Their discursive mode of knowledge management can be seen as a structural device that may or may not be activated by agents, due to both agential and structural reasons. At the moment their discourse is still just a structural possibility and property among many others, waiting to be owned by agents.

9   Conclusions and discussion

The purpose of the thesis was to analyze contemporary work critically in its broader context of knowledge society and as a concept within managerial discourse of knowledge management. The aim was to see what types of representations of work are present in KM discourse, and how these might influence organizational managerial practices. Special attention was paid to the question of structure and agency.

This section synthesizes the previous ones and attempts to answer the research questions as set out in Table 1.1 in section 1.2, and reproduced below for recollection (Table 9.1).

RQ.1	How are work, worker and related aspects represented in the selected KM articles and what different representations (discourses) emerge from the analysis?
RQ.2	How does structure and agency figure in the emerging representations?
SRQ.1	What is the socio-economical context of KM?
SRQ.2	What is general managerial discourse and its genres?
SRQ.3	What is the mechanism of influence and effects of managerial discourse?
SRQ.4	How does KM figure as managerial discourse?

Table 9.1: Research questions of the thesis

The research questions have been addressed in the earlier sections (**SRQ.1-4** in section 4, and **RQ.1** and **RQ.2** in sections 5-8 from the view of a single article), and this section is an attempt at a comparative summary of the findings and a discussion on the findings' broader implications. The summary concentrates on the discourse analysis of the articles - that is the representations regarding the way work activity, actors and their relations are represented. Emphasis is on structure and agency (**RQ.2**), which is approached using Figure 2.2 from section 2.6. To aid the reader, the main theoretical points regarding agency as well

as the Figure 2.2 are recapitulated in section 9.1.1. This final section also includes a critical evaluation of the contribution of the thesis to earlier research, as well as evaluating the suitability of the methodological framework as set out in sections 2 and 3. The section concludes on a discussion on further research.

9.1 **RQ.1** and **RQ.2**: representations and the question of agency

9.1.1 Structure and agency: arguing for the human subject

A central debate within social sciences revolves around the question of an individual's ability to influence and alter the structural and cultural forces of societies. The main theoretical arguments were introduced in section 2.5., representing Giddens' theory of structuration (Giddens 1979) and Archer's theory of agency (Archer 2000, 2003). The thesis takes the view of Archer: structure and agency as two separate entities and strata of reality that have their own properties and capabilities. Structure poses constraints and enablements for agentic behaviour, but they become activated and real only if an agent chooses to act upon them. They do not exist autonomously or automatically. (Archer 2003, 5-9.) The key is study how the human agent's properties and powers emerge and are activated through their relations with the world (Archer 2000, 7). One such (limited) relation is discourse, specifically managerial discourse that creates possible constraints or enablements for agency within the domain of organizations and work.

This thesis attempted to reveal one set of representations within which contemporary work takes place: the view of work in knowledge management discourse. To recapitulate from section 2.6., the thesis aimed to a) analyze the structural and agentic properties of contemporary work, manifested in the representations present in KM discourse; and b) analyze how these properties could be either constraints or enablements for individual agents (workers). This was depicted in Figure 2.2., which is reproduced below.
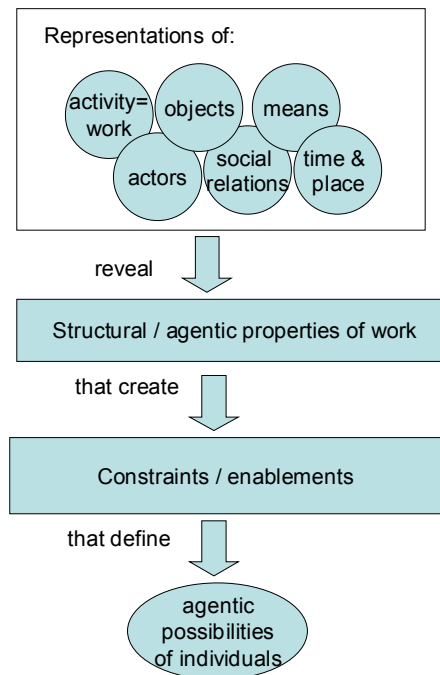
Figure 9.1: Recalling the thesis' framework

The individual articles and their analysis from sections 5-8 are now summarized in the following sections and the findings placed within the above summarized broader framework.

9.1.2   Reengineering discourse by Davenport & Short

Davenport & Short article represents work as a process that consists of individual tasks. Processes make up a business activity, e.g. "develop a new product"; "develop a budget"; "manufacture a product". The representation is thus one of structure, a generic device which when "populated" by workers, "does" the things an organization is meant to do. This structure corresponds with a role structure, which again is a structural element meant to connect the work and the individual doing it. They are separate objects, and both can be manipulated and engineered – but so that workers are "made to fit" with the structure. Managers for example can be taught new skills that correspond with the needs of process management. The manager-managed split is

pronounced, the relationship is represented only one way, manager to employee, and managers as actors are in a pronounced role.

Work activity is categorized into certain types, thus creating the corresponding work types. The representations that emerge form the analysis are summarized in Table 9.2.

| | | Objects of work | |
		physical	informational
Work types	operational	MANUFACTURING	ROUTINE BACK-OFFICE. KW?
	managerial	DOES NOT EXIST	PLANNING & CONTROL. KW?

Table 9.2: Work types in reengineering discourse

Knowledge work (KW) is not explicitly present in the representation, but one can tentatively place it as a possibility in the informational object column, and the possibility of both operational and managerial work (which is in fact explicitly stated by the authors). The resulting representation is thus surprisingly inclusive, as the potential knowledge work, or rather informational work, is not seen to be the exclusive property of managers only. In addition managers were given a voice in the text, although through indirect reporting. What does create inequalities in this representation however is the emphasis placed on ICT and BPR as the central tools for transforming organizations, both structural elements. The investment (both the effort and money) in these is seen as a desirable course of action for organizations, thus constricting the possibilities for agentic action and choice. In addition, the naturalized role of ICT is in itself a constricting structural element, as the development of it seems to come before the needs of the user (individual employee). Quite clearly also ICT-personnel themselves can be seen as gaining a higher status through enactment of this representation, which is in fact reality in many organizations. These conclusions can now be tied together with the framework of the thesis in Figure 9.2.
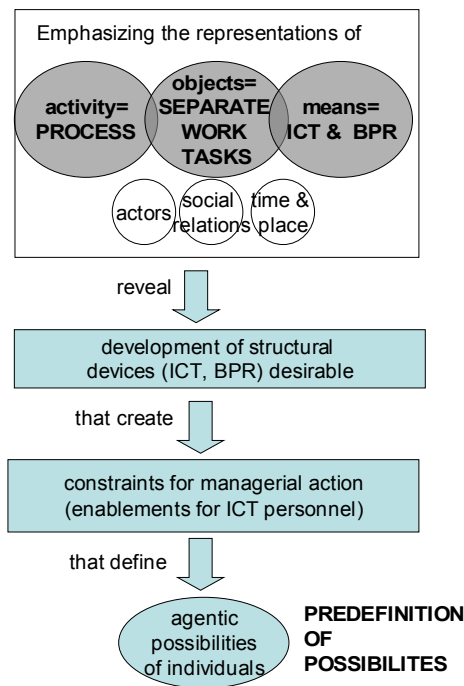
Figure 9.2: The reengineering representation summarized

The reengineering representation has strong structural tendencies, especially in that the development and manipulation of structural elements to gain maximum efficiency is seen as desirable. This is present already in the presupposition that there even exists such a target for reengineering. They have temporal priority and relative autonomy. These tendencies strongly influence managerial action in particular, as the representation's genre and style is targeted at managers. Managerial action is thus constrained by the structural properties of this representation, thus displaying also causal efficacy. This further diminishes the agentic possibilities of individual employees, even though the possibility of something like knowledge work is in principle open to everyone. The work and role of an individual worker is predefined by the processes and tasks and even programmed into information systems.

9.1.3 Knowledge sharing discourse by Nonaka

Nonaka's article creates a two-sided representation of work and of the individuals doing it. On the other hand there is a strong logic of

equivalence in the representation that every individual is capable of and willing to engage in knowledge creation, and should be given this opportunity. However, once these individuals enter the organizational domain, they become "members" that are anchored to a structural device that can either be a self-managed team or a more hierarchical structure. This is underlined by the fact that no voice is given to the individuals themselves in the text. Work itself is either "a field for interaction" that creates and shares knowledge or routine/managerial operations. Two strong almost contradicting representations thus emerge. The ideal hypertext organization includes both, and its internal relations are represented as ever moving, changing, fluid and rhythmic.

As with reengineering discourse, certain work types can be identified from the text, although the focus is somewhat different. These can be derived from the actors (roles) and the operations type mentioned (Table 9.3). The shadowed boxes indicate that the particular combination was not presented as a possible one, and a question mark indicates that the possibility was not made clear.

Role

	Front line employees	Lower managers	Middle managers	Top managers	Team leaders
routine operations		?	?		
managerial operations					
knowedge creation activites					

Table 9.3: Work types in knowledge creation discourse

The representation can be seen as inclusive to a certain extent, but the text is not entirely clear on who "can" participate in knowledge creation activities (knowledge work is not explicitly mentioned). There seems to be the assumption however that anyone can "move" between the different layers of the hypertext structure. Also it is not made explicit if middle managers and team leaders are in fact same roles. Inequalities

rise from the prominent role given to middle managers (especially if they indeed are also team leaders), as they exercise a great deal of power over evaluating new knowledge etc.; and from the apparent difference of status between routine and knowledge activities.

Agentic properties are strongly present in this discourse as individual's internal processes form the central element of the knowledge creation mechanisms as depicted by Nonaka. It has to be stressed however that once these enter the organizational domain, they become more structural as the SECI-model is in a way a "vehicle" for organizational knowledge related activities. The organization's tools for these activities are however very "agentic": dialogue using dialectics, metaphors and analogues; and building self-organizing teams using e.g. trust. This representation can be placed within the thesis' framework as follows (Figure 9.3).
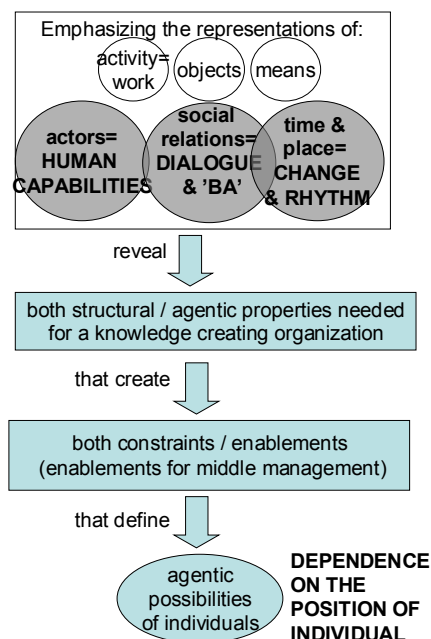
Figure 9.3: Knowledge sharing representation summarized

The representation thus reveals strong agentic properties of at least the knowledge creation types of work. They rely on humans' capability of reflexivity and imagination, for example. But in order for them to become capabilities of an organization, they are placed in a context of

hypertext organizations that seems to embody both structural and agentic elements. The representation is thus not straight forward (as reality hardly ever is). The self-managed team or "ba" (or project-system layer of a hypertext organization) does not have the structural properties as Archer outlines, they exist only once members have created them and only through the members (no temporal priority or autonomy). Once established, however, the presence of team leaders and organizational vision for example does imply some structure and thus also a causal efficacy. These do influence the course of action of the individual. The business-system layer on the other hand resembles the reengineering representation of work with strong structural properties.

One can conclude that in Nonaka's representation the agentic possibilities of an individual depend a great deal on the position of the individual in the "imaginary" of a hypertext organization. If one is capable of the constant movement and dialogue of the project-system layer, then one has some agentic freedom. But if one is not willing or able or maybe even allowed to participate in the knowledge creation activities, then the business system layer is not much different from the Davenport and Short representation, but with the added structural constraint of a very strong middle management and a potential lower status within the organization. In addition, the individual working in the business system layer is connected to the ever accumulating knowledge base layer, thus potentially creating "information overload" and further constraints.

## 9.1.4   Discourse of knowing in practice by Orlikowski

The representation by Orlikowski is "all agent". Actors are activated and "doing things", not one group is excluded or exalted, they are also given a clear voice in the text. The structures present are that of the case study Kappa and a more general model of distributed organization, but

as a giddensian duality requires, knowledgeable and thus effective human action recreates the very same structure, making it all come back to human action. Work itself is seen as consisting of human practices that in turn are the result of recurring activities of human agents. This is almost the exact opposite of the Davenport and Short definition of work. They construct work in a similar way, except for them work equals business activity, practice equals process and human activity equals tasks. Whereas in Orlikowski's representation none of the components exist without the human agent and the "doing" part, for Davenport & Short all components are part of an objective reality that exist as independent objects.

The representation does not create a classification or categorization system that would allow for a similar work type summary as with the previous discourses. In fact the situatedness inherent in this discourse makes the entire split between certain types of work in the face of knowledge irrelevant. There are things individuals do as part of their work, and all these things can be done knowledgeably and skilfully. There is no knowledge work *per se* - or knowledge management for that matter. The representation is thus egalitarian. It is not however particularly individualistic. The collective context where work happens is pronounced, and the knowledgeability of an individual is part of a collective capability. The main goal of that capability is to be able to form a structure, to *organize* across the various boundaries inherent in global economy.

Returning to the thesis' framework, discourse of knowing in practice does not yield for a straight forward analysis. The reason is that the theoretical assumptions regarding structure and agency are different than what the framework suggests: structure and agency are mutually constitutive and do not exist as separate entities. However an attempt to fit the representation into the thesis' framework is pictured below in Figure 9.4.
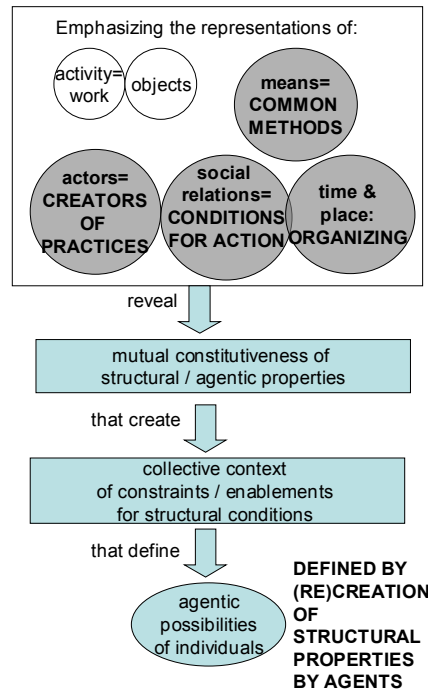
Figure 9.4: Summary of the practice oriented representation

Structural properties of work are ones that enable the collective knowing in practice, they are created by the agents themselves through e.g. extensive face-to-face communication, planning and identity building. This agentic action creates the structural conditions for knowledgeable action (which again recreate the structural conditions and so forth). In fact, the constraints or enablements in this representation are thus not ones that affect an agent directly, but ones that influence *the creation of the conditions*. These are identified as extensive planning tools, common methodologies, communication practices, training practices etc. All these tools are in fact highly structural and belong to the organization as an entity. Of the discourses analyzed this one actually highlights the most the importance of common methods and models. The enactment of a representation such as this in organizations can create a strong internal force of tools, methodologies and metrics. When followed blindly they can create a strong constraint especially when a change in these practices is needed. Tools and methodologies thus have the properties to create a

strong internal discourse and representation of what is seen as desirable action. They can be used as an effective device for control and power as well, a modern "iron cage"[32] if you will. On a positive note, it is a very egalitarian "iron cage" that applies to all members of the organization.

### 9.1.5 Discourse of distinctiveness by Schreyögg & Geiger

Discourse presented by Schreyögg & Geiger is somewhat different from the others. It may be classified as not managerial discourse at all; rather it is a discipline internal discussion on key concepts within knowledge management. As such it is however supposed to influence other researchers, and potentially then managerial discourse as well. In the representation, work as activity is not of central concern, rather the object and content of work. The representation argues for exclusiveness and distinctiveness when analyzing contemporary societies, organizations and work regarding knowledge. The argument is also a critique towards practice focused research. Instead of inclusiveness and situatedness, the representation is one of differences, categories and generalized universal principles. The representation categorizes work as depicted in Table 9.4.

	non-knowledge work	knowledge work
level of the individual	work that predominantly relies on the use of routines, everyday opinion, skills and habits	handles and generates discursive knowledge and questions its validity claims
level of the organization	operation on non-reflexive modes of communication	predominantly use, discursively generate and reflexively treat knowledge
	non-knowledge intensive firms	**knowledge intensive firms**

Table 9.4: Work types in discourse emphasizing distinctiveness

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[32] Iron cage is a concept by Max Weber. It refers to the limiting and constraining effect on individuals of over-bureaucratic, rule based and rational control present in modern societies. (Introduced in Weber's book "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (1904), available online at
http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/world/ethic/pro_eth_frame.html

The representation of non-knowledge work and organizations seem to rest on agentic properties such as intuition, tacit skills and practical proficiency. Knowledge work on the other hand is "liberated" form such life world processes and uses the more developed agentic capabilities of reflexivity, argumentation and (better) reason. There is thus a clear value statement inherent in the classification. The agents in the "sphere of reflection" can create new knowledge and question previous knowledge. Most importantly, knowledge workers make the judgement if new knowledge is useful and to be made accessible to the non-knowledge workers. They also guard against "harmful" false knowledge. The knowledge workers operate under rigorous structural elements of argumentation. In this sense the knowledge workers are – while free of the naiveties of the life world - subjected to structural constraints of intellectual nature. All actors are mainly represented as carriers of certain types of capabilities that then define their possibilities to perform either knowledge work or other types of work. There are similarities to Nonaka's text: agentic possibilities seem to depend on the "sphere" the actor occupies in the organization. This is summarized below using the thesis' framework (Figure 9.5).
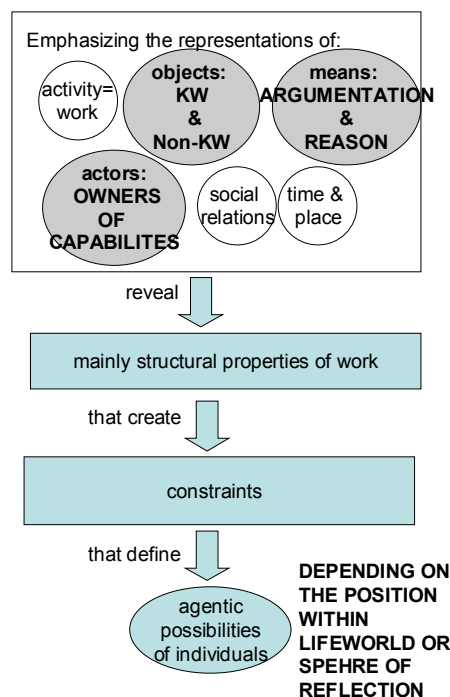
Figure 9.5: Summary of the representation based on distinctiveness

Naturally the above summary is a crude oversimplification to emphasize the point. However the representation does include the elements for making such an analysis. The representation is one that emphasizes structure; structure that would help to better understand and further study certain contemporary phenomena. It is a structure that the authors feel is lacking in the current "practice turn" of knowledge management.

9.1.6   Comparative summary of the findings

The analysis revealed many surprises. First, the author was actually quite surprised by the inclusiveness of reengineering discourse of the Davenport & Short article. It was not as mechanistic or dehumanizing as one was maybe let to believe, the actors were present and taking responsibility for their action – although naturally within the constraints of ICT and BPR. They were also treated rather equally, of course bearing in mind the existential assumption of a manager-managed relationship. On the contrary, the seemingly agentic representation in Nonaka's text revealed also strong tendencies of structural constraints. It is contradictory discourse, which would, if enacted in organizations, result in most probable inequalities between the knowledge-creators, routine workers as well as the omnipotent middle managers. Orlikowski's article is then at the other end of the spectrum, stating that without agentic action there in fact is no work or organization even. Her representation of Kappa did however remind us that all agentic action in organizational context needs to be co-ordinated and aligned somehow, and in her discourse this is to be done using various highly structural tools that can eventually become a "natural" restricting force of their own if misused. And as a final surprise, newest discourse (Schreyögg & Geiger) is the only representation where knowledge accessibility is represented as potentially restricted. All the other representations at least to some extent maintain that information and knowledge,

whichever way defined, are important for every individual worker and the availability of it crucial for the organization as well - be the reason behind it effectiveness and efficiency, new knowledge creation or enabling people to act knowledgeably. If this discourse becomes more widely recognized and recontextualized as more popular management discourse, then the critical questions of equality and power regarding knowledge creation, evaluation and availability become crucial ones for organizations.

Finally none of the representations focused solely on the individual human being as an agent and actor. All placed the individual within a larger collective context, and the individual's value was measured from this viewpoint. Human beings were represented as either performing certain predefined activities; as carriers of certain capabilities that enable knowledge creation; or as (re)producers of recurring practices. There was no clear representation of the human being as interacting reflexively and purposefully with the structures of an organization. Based on the analysis of these few articles, it would seem that KM discourse has not yet embraced the individual to its full extent.

9.2   Sub-research questions summarized

9.2.1   **SRQ.1**: the context of knowledge management

As was argued in section 4, the developments in global capitalism and especially the advances in ICT have contributed to the emergence of "knowledge economy" as order of discourse. Thrift (quoted in Jackson 2001, 26) has coined the term "soft capitalism" to describe a transformation of capitalism that stresses fast-paced change, uncertainty, need for continuous adaptation and flexibility and the need for willing subjects i.e. workers. Based on the analysis of the assumptions and intertextuality of the texts, it can be concluded all analyzed texts belong to this type of discourse. With the exception of Scrheyögg & Geiger article, all authors make either assumptions or

non-modalized assertions stating the importance of knowledge and recognizing the acceleration in the rate of change; Schreyögg & Geiger make the same assertions but in a modalized form, however not rebuking them either. Knowledge is assumed clearly as something positive, something that all organizations and individuals should strive to create more of and use effectively as an ultimate goal. "Knowing" more or creating new knowledge is synonymous with success, progress, desirable capability and fulfilment.

In addition all texts represent organizations as natural actors: the authors (and supposedly also the assumed readers) do not question the existence of an entity "organization", which can "say" and "do" things – it is treated as a reified social collectivity (Checkland & Holwell 1998, 80). The texts also attempt to propose measures that would increase the efficiency and efficacy of organizations, making them more successful, thus equating success with efficiency and progress: use of ICT and BPR; innovation and knowledge creation; collective capability of distributed organizing; and the creation of superior high quality knowledge. The basic notion in all articles is that change is good; change is desirable – or at least unavoidable. They all belong to discourse that basically accepts the global order of neo liberal capitalism and the central role of commercial organizations in it. All texts also imply the existence of a knowledge society as opposed to a time when knowledge was not central to economic value creation, once again reinforcing the representation of knowledge as something superior and desirable. The article analysis reveals that voices critical of global capitalism and its possible negative effects are not present. It can be concluded that based on the texts analyzed in this thesis, KM is in support of global capitalism and takes its premises as given. It is not a critical or opposing discourse; in fact it takes a surprising number of things as "given".

### 9.2.2 **SRQ.2-SRQ.4**: managerial discourse and its influence

Within the knowledge economy, certain type of discourse has become increasingly influential: general managerial discourse, especially the genre of popular management discourse (see e.g. Jackson 2001). Thus the representations, genres and styles present in the knowledge economy can be approached through managerial discourse. One such discourse is KM.

The way managerial discourse influences organizational life can be summarized in the following way (recalled from section 3.3). Managerial discourse such as KM affects and is realized in a) how humans choose to act, e.g. through genres of management practices; b) how reality is represented, what is seen as desirable or undesirable etc. through value assumptions and other elements present in discourse; and c) how the persons involved as agents are identified in discourse, and how different ways of being are constituted in the styles of discourse. Representations (discourses) are thus at the same time enacted in genres, inculcated in styles as well as self-represented through genres. However, as Archer (2003, 9) and Fairclough (2003, 29) both underline: this process is not automatic. A new discourse may become one of the organisations structural properties, but it may never be enacted or "owned" by the agents. It does not automatically become a constraint or enablement. This places the focus on the influence mechanisms of discourses. This was not a main research focus of the thesis, and for example the "real" influence of the articles analyzed is hard to evaluate based on one thesis and too far-reaching conclusions need to be avoided. Four tentative conclusions can however be drawn.

As the **first conclusion**, it is evident that the representations of all of the generations of KM are simultaneously present: the later generation builds on the earlier ones, mixing features of this discourse with new rhetoric. As Tuomi (2002) aptly describes, in the increasingly

informationalized society, the first generation KM will stay alive and well. Even though new representations have since become more visible, and the more "human-oriented" orientations have become accepted, many development projects in organizations still are grounded on the belief that somehow organizations and their processes can be engineered as existing entities especially using the all-powerful ICT, and people are taught to deal with the change, rather than e.g. seeing the change originating from the people and their sense-making processes, and consequently changing the organization as they see it. IT dominates KM as well. Spender & Scherer (2007, 8) note: "What concerns and anxieties appear in the KM literature? For most the IT issues dominate…"

This is also evident when historically analyzing the citation indices of the analysed articles: first generation article by Davenport & Short was published in 1990, but its citations peaked between 1998-2002 with citations later on as well; second generation example article by Nonaka was published in 1994, and its citation numbers grew steadily and reached their highest so far in 2006. The citation numbers for Orlikowski's article have also risen significantly. The trends for the citations of the articles during 1990-2006 are pictured in Figure 9.6.
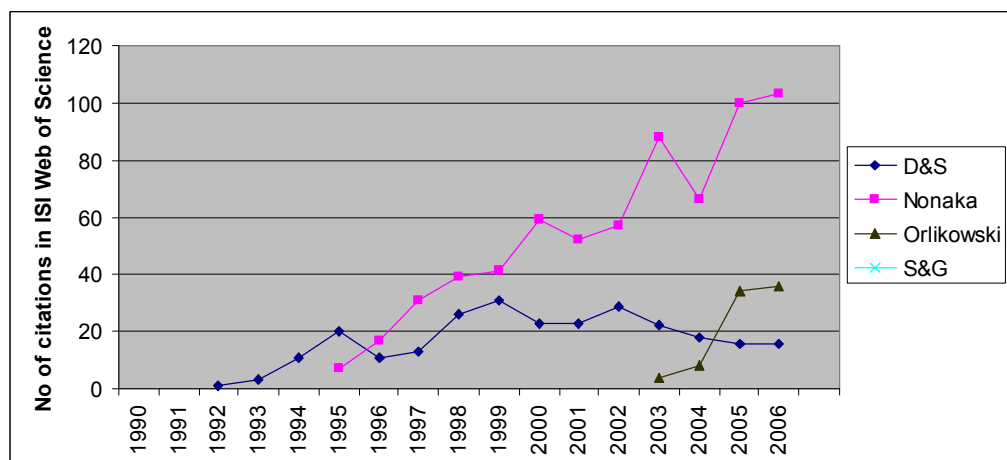
Figure 9.6: Citations of analyzed articles 1990-2006 (ISI Web of Science).

One explanation can of course be that in academic circles "dogmatic" articles such as the ones by Nonaka started to be criticized only later on, accounting for the growing citation numbers. However, whatever the reason, this shows that for example the reengineering and SECI-discourse is still very much part of contemporary discussion. Further, based on the limited findings of this thesis, it can be argued that of the three generations analyzed, the representation of the first one, reengineering discourse, has been the most influential in organizations, meaning it has been owned and enacted in organizations globally to great extent over time.

The **second conclusion** follows the first one: a structural focus seems to be the most influential one in organizations. It is a generally well accepted view that the reengineering movement is at least partially behind the emergence of KM, mainly due to its focus on organizational information processing and its subsequent engineering [33] . This connection does raise some critical questions regarding the nature of dominant KM discourse and the representation of work and worker it contains. The first generation with the focus and desirability of ICT and the reengineering of processes, people and information is strongly structural; the whole premise lays on the presupposition that there exists a structure and information that can be engineered on their own, without the people inhabiting the structure or creating the information. BPR discourse thus creates a strong structural device that truly exists before human agents, independent of them as well as exercising power over them through a role structure with built in power relationships and roles. This fits Archer's definition of structure very clearly.

In addition, the more agentic (even though containing strong structural elements) discourse of Nonaka's SECI-model and the extent to its actual implementation in organizations has been contested (see section

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[33] For a broad discussion on the effect of e.g. information processing on KM see Jasimuddin (2006); and a discussion on BPR and KM in section 4.6.

6.6.2 for a discussion, and e.g. Gourlay 2006). This discourse has been influential in the academic realm; it is a popular concept, but one that is by nature difficult to put in practice. As discourse it may be that its human and social focus makes it more difficult to become truly owned and enacted by managers. With regard to the research questions this avenue of reasoning is somewhat discouraging: when human activity, interaction and agential practices are highlighted, discourse is maybe less likely to be put in actual practice in organizations.

The **third conclusion** relates to the importance of recognizing the existing power relations within management practices and between its participants. If the "practice turn" representation advocated by Orlikowski would increase in its influence, it would be in sharp contrast to the Davenport & Short representation. Is the organization a separate structure or is it in fact created by agents through their recurring activities? If so, there is nothing to be reengineered or manipulated, only people - and they can choose not to be manipulated, at least in theory. This would highlight agential properties of organizations, work and their development. At the same time this representation erases the expert – non-expert relationship between managers and e.g. management consultants. Thus this discourse does not reinforce the power-laden position of those who recontextualize and spread (favourable) discourses in a global economy. It is thus unlikely that this discourse will much increase in its influence – there are no participants willing to spread it.

Lastly the **fourth conclusion** has to do with the effect of certain discursive tactics on the influence of discourse. For example, BPR discourse uses such tactics as universality and easy to understand "consultant speak" that is accessible to managers as practitioners. They "speak the same language". The practical and popular management discourse converge in discourses such as the BPR. On the contrary, for example the text by Nonaka offers no easy how-to approach to the

actual management of knowledge creation. Instead, the article is laden with "difficult" concepts such as knowledge subject's intention, autonomy and fluctuation; dialectics of dialogue; redundancy of information, requisite variety and so forth. Nonaka does present a practical perspective, but it is far from the style of the prescriptive categorical claims presented by Davenport & Short. Even the stylistic feature of using a passive form regarding the author himself (or referring to "this paper") rather than stressing the "we, the experts" position of the authors as done by Davenport & Short, distances SECI-discourse from the reader. It is only human and understandable that managers trying to understand the fast paced changes around them look for universal explanations that can be applied to their own particular situation. It is not much help or consolation to read about the mental, social and even irrational forces behind successful KM. An ICT-centred project is simply easier to grasp and technology is at least superficially easier to manage than human beings. This may partly explain how certain discourse can become hegemonic and certain representations accepted as the preferred ones and pursued as the norm.

9.3 Evaluation of the thesis

The theoretical and methodological framework used in the thesis is quite extensive. The thesis thus needs to be critically assessed from at least the following viewpoints: validity of the findings; the quality of the actual analysis; and finally the suitability of the framework and methods regarding the research questions.

9.3.1 Validity and the quality of the findings

The main critique that should be aimed at the findings is to question how good a representative or a sample four articles can be. Is it not unfair to attempt to categorize the varied and multifaceted discipline of KM into generations, and then generalize on all third generation KM

based on a random article for example? The answer is of course yes, it is. It is dangerous to make too far reaching generalizations based on only few texts[34]. The three generations view is however mainly just an analytical tool to make a selection of texts in some way systematic. The findings are to be understood as a) belonging definitively to the actual texts analyzed; and b) being only indicative of the broader themes present in the generation the text analytically was grouped in. The author has not always succeeded in making that distinction in the thesis, which is a clearly a significant weakness. In addition the choice of articles can be criticized, especially regarding the representative of the third generation: it could be argued that the Screyögg & Geiger representation is not discourse at all, since its recontextualization and level of repetition is very low.

The validity of the empirical material aside, there is also the question of the validity and quality of the CDA itself that was performed. CDA and CMS in general were assessed in section 2.4. Titscher et al. (2000, 164) state the following as quality criteria associated with CDA:

- CDA must be intelligible in its interpretations and explanations;
- The way in which the researched has arrived to the results must be recognizable;
- Validity of CDA is not absolute, but open to new contexts and interpretation;
- The interplay between interpretation and explanation, open-endedness and intelligibility is important;
- Results must be of practical relevance and usable for real life solving of social problems.

Does the analysis meet these criteria? The arguably extensive reporting on the CDA performed on the articles was intended to make transparent the way interpretations were reached; the section on CDA and the

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[34] For example, Jackson used 134 data sources (articles, books, speeches etc.) when analyzing reengineering discourse alone (Jackson 2001, 65).

scope of the analysis was to help with the intelligibility of the analysis; too far-reaching conclusions and explanations were avoided; and contextual factors underlined. The criterion where the thesis falls short of its goals is its usability for social problem solving: it would be arrogant to claim that the findings could much help in making a positive change in e.g. managerial practices. However as a starting point it does offer useful insights and methods.

In addition the author is self-critical of the following issues regarding the analysis:

- In order to perform a thoroughly valid analysis, CDA needs to be practiced and studied more. It is most probable that the thesis uses some concepts in too vague (maybe even erroneous) a manner, if scrutinized by someone more familiar with the method.

- During the analysis it is hard to see the forest from the trees: everything seems suddenly important, and the analysis expands uncontrollably. This is undoubtedly a weak point in the thesis; the analysis could have been more concise.

- There are no objective means to decide how valid the analysis is. One has to rely on subjective judgement. This requires a clear framework and research issues with which to frame the results. Otherwise the analysis ends up being a collection of miscellaneous (albeit interesting ones) "tit bits".

- Finally one has to be able to stop analyzing at some point: there is critical analysis and then there is over-analysis and paranoia.

Does the thesis also meet the CMS task criteria as put forth in section 2.1.2? First regarding "insight": the thesis is not an empirical study in the sense that it does not empirically study organizational life, the actual flesh and blood worker. But is an empirical study of KM discourse, the articles can be seen as local forms of the KM phenomena. Micro-level is also present in the CDA method, which puts individual texts into

scrutiny. Second, on "critique", the broader context is strongly present. This is a necessity in CDA, as the interplay between structural context and text is emphasized, thus connecting the insight with broader critique. Finally, on "transformative redefinition", the thesis (hopefully) has a positive tone and an emancipatory feel, attempting at constructive criticism.

9.3.2   Suitability of the framework

How does the combined framework of CMS and CDA suit the research questions and management research in general? First, when internalized properly, CMS offers an undoubtedly useful mental research approach to management issues. The questioning of the taken-for-granted assumptions of the established order (de-naturalization) helps in developing a critical stance. Anti-performativity makes it at least somewhat possible to look at e.g. people as having value in themselves, although the "value added" approach is very much ingrained into a management student's thinking. But most of all the recognition of the mediated and value-laden nature of management studies and challenging the objectivity and production of "value-free" facts (reflexivity) does provide a truly refreshing lens to management. Of course CMS does have an over-purposeful oppositional stance, and it is sometimes difficult to not let it become too guiding for research, but keeping a positive outlook on the issue is helpful (avoiding hyper critique). It can be agued that CMS is probably better suited for research questions that have a more pronounced social problem present, e.g. an inequality aspect such as the question of gender in KM. In hindsight the CMS "branch" of the framework could have been omitted without the thesis suffering any great deal. CDA as a method includes the same basic premises. In contrast the question on structure and agency would have deserved a more thorough research, as it proved a very powerful addition to the CDA when analyzing the different elements present in a text.

As for CDA, the method itself is well suited for management issues. However, due to its contextual nature, it is not the best method for doing comparisons between texts, as was one original purpose of the thesis. The texts are seen as belonging to a particular context, and varying in e.g. genre and style, which makes a comparison difficult. This affects the quality of the analysis, and the comparative results are not as satisfactory as the author had hoped. What did prove to be especially valuable is how CDA helps in identifying underlying themes and notions in particular events (e.g. texts) and then makes it possible to look at them again in a broader context, making them part of a larger entity. For example the understanding of the author of KM as a historical and evolving concept increased more than one could have ever imagined. During the process of doing the thesis, it was fascinating to see how the themes presented in the different articles tied all into one another as the analysis progressed. It should be stressed that the individual articles were not chosen purposefully as ones that would have some relations to each other in any explicit way. However, it turned out they were in constant dialogue with each other. The most pronounced example is of course the way Schreyögg & Geiger criticized the practice-turn research, and having just analyzed a prime example of that (text by Orlikowski), the insights gained were significant. In addition both Nonaka and Orlikowski implicitly offered critique towards what they called "best practices" (Orlikowski) and the "input-process-output logic of organizational information processing" (Nonaka), which both can be identified quite easily as features of reengineering discourse. As a researcher this was a wonderful experience: seeing how seemingly independent themes and representations tied into one another. This truly is the richness of (critical) discourse analysis.

9.4 Contribution of the thesis to earlier research

Earlier research relevant to the thesis was summarized in section 1.3. This thesis can be seen as contributing to this research in the following three areas. **First,** methodologically this thesis can be seen as a novel framework for approaching KM. The combination of CMS, CDA and structure/agency –theories offer a unique perspective into this discipline. Approaching KM as managerial discourse offers interesting new insights regarding its influence and implementation within organizations for example. At the same time the thesis adds to the empirical research on management discourse in general and broadens the use of CDA within academic research. **Second**, this thesis can be seen as a self-critical analysis of KM itself, revealing some of the background assumptions and values on which KM is built. This type of reflection is called for by Spender & Scherer (2007, 5), in order to bring some common ground into the contested and even frustrating discipline of KM.

Third and hopefully most importantly, however, this thesis contributes to the important discussion on the role of the individual human being vis-à-vis the rapidly changing context known as the knowledge society. In particular the thesis aimed better to understand how work and its doer, the agent, is conceptualized and represented in knowledge centred discourse such as KM, and how work is influenced by such discourse. The thesis tentatively claims that the agency of the human being is not central to the KM representations analyzed, at least not after the agency is brought into the organizational domain. The "knowledge-era" does not celebrate the individual, seems to be the sad case.

9.5   Discussion and further research

Spender and Scherer (2007, 17) argue that imagination is the other defining human characteristic - the one that rationality needs in order to deal with "knowledge-absences" (knowing what we do not know). They see KM as being more about managing and responding to these "knowledge-absences" than managing the actual existing knowledge (products of rationality). Thus knowledge intensive work should be about managing imagination, not exploiting reason. Here the role of agency becomes central. For Spender & Scherer imagination becomes visible through our action, our agency; hence the "managerial challenge, having admitted agency, is to control and direct it...Knowledge work is about admitting the imagination, agentic behaviour directed towards the organizations goals" (2007, 17).

The thesis however concluded that in the representations of KM analyzed, agency is mainly subjugated to structural constraints of varying kind and degree. One such constraint is KM discourse itself, influencing managerial and organizational choices and decision making. The author of the thesis wishes to argue that so far KM has not admitted agency, and as a consequence might not yet be the tool to help organizations to do so either.

This finding is however just a starting point. Spender & Scherer (2007, 22) suggest that "KM is about shaping the purposive and the agentic activity of those working under incomplete knowledge". *KM can and should thus be about agency*. Further research should then have the purpose of aiding KM in developing tools for managers and all individual agents alike in helping them to recognize, enhance and make real the potential of agency. This research should include for example the following aspects:

- Studying more closely the constraints that different organizational structural properties place on agency, e.g. the critical analysis of organizational planning and project methodologies and metrics, such as budgets. What do they deem as desirable and undesirable and are they considered constraints or enablements by their users; are they indeed the knowledge society's "iron cage"?

- Helping organizations to understand and identify discourse and representations shaping and influencing it. Discourse does not automatically become a constraint or enablement for agentic action, it can and should be evaluated, "normalizations" need to be understood and "de-familiarized". The CDA of corporate strategies might for example offer eye-opening insight into how agency is regarded in different organizations.

- Clarifying what each organization sees as being knowledge work and non-knowledge work. There might not be universal definitions and sub-definitions for "work" in our contemporary society. In this sense Schreyögg & Geigers' representation of distinctiveness should be studied further.

Finally on a more theoretical level the whole construction of self, personality and social identity and thus agency as theoretized by Margaret Archer (2000, 2003) should be looked at more closely from the viewpoint of today's knowledge intensive working life. Archer's notion of the "inner conversation" might offer an interesting starting point for developing a more agency focused view on organizations and their management. In order to admit agency and uncertainty, emotion and imagination in its wake, we have to broaden the way human beings are being represented, studied and indeed treated in management studies such as knowledge management: "Open out the 'internal conversation' and we discover not only the richest unmined research field but, more importantly, the enchantment of every human being." (Archer 2000, 319.)

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