THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Exploring the Relationship between Case Study and

Action Research: Case Study Research being

Organised on the Kaohsiung Harbour in Taiwan

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of

Philosophy in the University of Hull

by

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April 2001

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reports on a case study investigation of the organisational setting of the Kaohsiung Harbour Bureau (KHB) in Taiwan. It reports on my methodological contribution in doing my study in a particular way, namely, by making use of my position in the Harbour to help develop multi-views in relation to the future. I tried not to abuse my working position as a former manager of warehousing and my current position as a researcher to make definite recommendations for action; but I wanted to create some options for thinking about future plans for privatisation of port activities through involving less power distance than is normally associated with planning in the Harbour. My study was not carried out by trying to operate in a neutral fashion. For instance, I clearly had an own involvement in raising questions in the interviews (individual and group) with participants and in the way I developed further questions during interviews and also carried information across interviews. I also tried to create some discussion on important issues that created high emotional responses for participants. I call my case study research, which was organised to be active in the hope to be of some benefit to participants, a special kind of case study. I reflect on the roles I played in the special case study in the dissertation. The dissertation also reports on the theoretical contribution that I think I have made in

relation to some themes arising from the case study (cross-cultural learning, politics and development, and the relevance of systems thinking). It gives details on how these themes could be explored with reference to the case. I discuss the themes in relation to wider literature on the topics and I add my ideas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thirdly, I would like to thank my friends of the Harbour of Kaohsiung for their moral support.

Without all of those persons' endless support and help for my research, I couldn't have been able to do the research.

Thank you all.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. My Approach to My Study

My approach is about exploring the relationship between case study and action research in my dissertation. I used a different research approach in my way of doing my study on Kaohsiung Harbour Bureau (KHB) in Taiwan.

This dissertation reports on my case study approach to look at the Kaohsiung Harbour Bureau (see Chart 1-1) in Taiwan. I used as my methods in the case what is traditionally called documentary research, observations, and interviewing. I used these in mainly what is called "a qualitative way" in that I attempted to go beyond collecting data using numbers to specify my results. My results are seldom expressed in numerical form (except roughly to give an indication of importance of a theme in terms of number of times it became mentioned). However, further to this, I used my qualitative approach in a special way that I explain in Chapter Three, linked to what I class as an unusual case study. My case study approach was one where I did not presume to be just an observer, or even participant observer, but also recognised that as a researcher I could make a difference to the way people think about their situation.

My work position involves managing and researching the Stevedoring and Warehousing Department (S&WD) of the KHB during the past ten years; this makes it difficult for me to try to pretend that I am observing without having some perspective and also without people interviewed being influenced by who I am and what they think my perspective is. Because I was aware of this, I tried to keep an open mind about the

way I read the documents that I examined, about the way I observed some interactions, and about all the ideas that people brought up in the interviews. I also tried to create discussions around the various people's ideas, although I did not attempt to do this by bringing together all the players in the Harbour into one group situation. Nor did I try to bring together people when I thought my trying this would make them break their trust in me to follow a suitable way of handling some of the relationships (and the power distances that had some meaning for the people). I followed a different approach, using myself to set questions to people that I thought may help them to look at issues in a way they may not have done if I had not been present (and conducting the interview).

My approach clearly differs from a survey style of approach (as most case studies also differ from this). I was not trying to get information from the Harbour by picking up lots of information that I could then analyse statistically. This would not have been what I felt was important to me to take use of the opportunity to use my position in the Harbour (and my role as researcher doing a Ph.D. and known to be doing this) to create some awareness about different points of view in relation to the possible future of the Harbour. I justify my position that I adopted in the specific case study, and the approach that I took to the case, by suggesting that I could make a better contribution to the people studied (and working with me) in this way.

Still, following case study research (and research more generally) I had some questions that I can say influenced my study.

These questions were all connected with some practical issues facing people in the Harbour:

1. The first question related to the way in which world trends towards privatisation had become experienced in the Harbour (in past and in relation to ideas for the future).

2. The next question related to how the people in the Harbour had been coping with these trends and pressures to follow them.

3. Another question was whether we can think of different ways of relating to these trends than just to follow them as if they are inevitable; and how we can adapt ideas about privatisation to the situations experienced by people in the Harbour.

Meanwhile, other questions (relating to my own roles) that I had to consider all the time as I conducted my study were:

1. How should I see my contribution in creating a research project that can have practical value to people spanned by the study (that is, people in the Harbour as well as residents of the City)?

2. How could I build up relations with people without them regarding me as having an expert way of gaining knowledge about the situation?

3. How could I still satisfy the demands on me (as a researcher doing a Ph.D.) to contribute to some theoretical ideas about this situation as compared with other situations where people face similar issues?

These were the questions that guided me as I continued with my study. In my conclusion to this dissertation (Chapter Nine), I report on how these questions became dealt with by me in the course of the whole study. I give a summary of how the various chapters, taken as a whole, can be seen as answering these questions. None of the

questions could be answered in one chapter alone. It is only when reading the dissertation as a whole that one can realise how I tried to address the questions.

Although, I have set out some questions in relation to my unit of study (the Kaohsiung Harbour) and in relation to my role in the Harbour, I am not wishing through the study to get some final answers to the questions that I set. I am wishing that I can add to various people's views within the Harbour about what the Harbour can be (potentially also for the future) and also that I can contribute to other people's views about what this Harbour can be, in terms of various players involved. I also am wishing that I can create a report that is relevant to other people when looking at themes I created in my report on my study. This is through my discussions about relations in the Harbour, ways of seeing it, ways of seeing planning for the future, etc. And it is also through my discussions about my specific methodological approach that I adopted, which I believe could be useful for other researchers to consider.

But in the meantime, I can show how I have approached the layout of my report in this dissertation in terms of the way it makes some logical sense as a built-up structure.

1.2. Layout in Terms of Structure

In Chapter Two of the dissertation I give a literature review of privatisation. I show how the concept of privatisation is what one can call a "fuzzy" concept which has many meanings associated with it (this is how Starr defines its fuzziness, 1988, p. 7). It covers a great range of ideas and policies, which can be implemented in a variety of ways. According to Starr, there is not one meaning associated with privatisation. Nevertheless, the overriding political rhetoric that is associated with it, is that it promises to create results by releasing public enterprises into private hands

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for their management and control. Starr questions this rhetoric by examining a number of cases set in a number of countries. I also refer to other studies done, and in particular to studies done in relation to port privatisation. I therefore place my study of Kaohsiung Harbour in relation to this broad topic. I did not try to define the topic more specifically at this point, as Punch notes, this is not how qualitative research proceeds (1998). It is only as one proceeds with the study (in qualitative-oriented research) that one can begin to specify more about the way the topic is going to be handled during the study.

In Chapter Three of the dissertation I give a literature review of both action research and case study research. In this chapter I give a full account of what my own case study involves on a methodological level and why I believe it offers a methodological contribution. I suggest that any one study cannot achieve everything in terms of trying to create research of benefit to people; but we can try to create a way of working that in each project seems to be ethically acceptable in terms of establishing some relation with participants (which cannot necessarily be defined in advance of working in the situation). I expand on my view of what is ethically acceptable by suggesting that we take the advice of action research that the action researcher in the emerging process of action research must find a way of dealing with the people concerned. But my own approach is that we do not always have to do action research in order to accomplish an ethical stance as a researcher. It depends on how much the researcher feels the need to develop the research with people in terms of other people's expectations for their role too. I also focus on personal skills needed to direct the way in which my own case study research was undertaken. I focus too on the criteria for

quality that can be applied to assess it. This includes relating my methodology to issues of validity (internal and external) in the literature on methodology.

In Chapter Four, I give a detailed discussion of the processes of my case study. I give a full account of how I proceeded in the case to create an emergent process for the research and what was involved in doing the investigation. I show how I tried to organise a holistic investigation of the Harbour (as a unit of study). I explain what documents I used and what relevance they have to understanding my way of continuing with my study; I explain some interactions in terms of their importance in showing the intensity of emotion that is experienced around the issue of privatisation and around the way in which planning for the future of the Kaohsiung Harbour Bureau (KHB) is undertaken. And I show how I used my interviewing technique in a way that fits in with what I think is my own integrity in handling my relation with participants.

In Chapter Five, I begin to show how my case study makes a contribution to theoretical development in terms of certain topics that arise from my case. As shown in Chapter Three, I had to be open to seeing what themes may be relevant as ones to explore in more depth in Chapters Five to Seven. I chose to concentrate on cross-cultural learning, on politics and development and on the relevance of systems thinking. I add material from my case to make comments on the literature in regard to these themes. As I show from my Chapter Three, case studies can be used to make some contribution to theory development, as long as we do not try to pretend to make robust generalisations in the statistical sense. This is therefore how I approach Chapters Five to Seven. I indicate why it is important not only on a theoretical level but also on a practical one not to try to create one internally valid or externally valid view of the evidence of the case. This is so that a variety of interpretations can still be

given. This variety was encouraged by me as part of the study (during my talking with people) and also in my write-up for my Chapters Five to Seven (in the form of the dissertation that later will also be converted and shortened to some extent for readership in the KHB). Both through the process of the use of techniques (such as documentary research, observations and interviews) and through my way of reporting, I hope to encourage people to keep open their way of seeing problems and therefore be more flexible in their minds.

I believe that my research can be seen as making a methodological contribution; a theoretical contribution; and is also of benefit to participants and therefore can be considered as making a practical contribution. I tried to take up the challenge of doing this way of case study research in my specific situation-involvement in the KHB.

In Chapter Eight, I summarise my approach adopted in my dissertation and my way of working in and on the case. I explain how I became involved in the case as a person and I show my involvement through my way of theorising. But I explain that I do not want to provide a theory that can be used by participants internally to think that there can be a definite course of action that some theory shows will be successful in practice.

In Chapter Nine, I conclude the dissertation with a further summary of my whole enterprise. I also provide a diagrammatic presentation that brings me back to showing how I conducted my study, in relation also to the overview of the literature on case studies and on action research presented in Chapter Three.

Chart 1-1: <u>The Harbour of Kaohsiung</u>

CHAPTER TWO

EXAMINING SOME LITERATURE ON

PRIVATISATION

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is about exploring some of the literature on privatisation as a background for explaining the context of my own case study research on Kaohsiung Harbour in Taiwan. As shown in following chapters, I conducted a type of case study, by focusing to start with on the way in which privatisation efforts have been dealt with and experienced in the Harbour. In chapter Three, with reference to literature on case study research and on action research, I show what my own case study research involved. I suggest that my study requires some investigation not only of the history of the Harbour, but also investigation of the trend towards privatisation that many authors refer to.

My case investigation involved a mix of past, present and future tenses. I used some starting topics to set off the fieldwork. These topics were related to questions about privatisation as it had occurred in the dockworker system in the Harbour and I also concentrated on plans for further privatisation that had been decided under the Kennametal (in short: KMT) government (over many planning years). But I show that in terms of some election vows of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), there are now different ideas circulating about the future of the Harbour. This also shows that the trend towards privatisation in this case is not necessarily one that will be followed in the same way or on the same scale as previously thought (see Chapter Four for details).

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In this chapter, using literature on privatisation, I provide some historical context that can help us also to understand the details of the case mentioned in Chapter Four.

To begin with, it is important to remember that Kaohsiung is one of the top seven Asia-pacific ports. It is strategically located on the South Eastern coast of Taiwan and provides a world-wide seaborne traffic link with almost all the major ports in the world. It handles around 80-million tons of imports and exports annually. Main import cargoes come from Australia, USA Saudi Arabia, and Japan; while main export cargoes go to Hong Kong, Japan and USA. In 1999, the container throughput of 6,985,361 TEU's made the port of Kaohsiung the third largest container port in the world.

However, when we consider the scope of its operations, we realise that the port of Kaohsiung is closely adjacent to the city area, and the development of the port operation area is therefore limited as compared with other ports. Decision-making around the future of the port is focusing on efforts to maintain and develop functions of an international port as well as enhance competitiveness of its operation in the process.

Kaohsiung City and the port rely heavily on each other. They get their prosperity and development through each others' influence. Therefore, one of the aims of people considering the future of the Harbour is how to make it become the window of the City. This involves issues of how the Harbour can develop in a way in keeping with its place in close proximity to, and as a pride for, those who live in the City (and elsewhere in Taiwan).

The data of Table1. from an international comparison shows the following placing of Kaohsiung Harbour in the world:

TABLE 1. TOP 30 CONTAINER PORTS IN 1998 AND 1999

(THROUGHPUTS IN TEU)

1999rank	1998rank	Port	1999	1998	% change	TEU change
1	2	Hong Kong	16,100,000*	14,582,000	10.4	1,518,000
2	1	Singapore	15,900,000	15,100,000	5.3	800,000
3	3	Kaohsiung	6,985,361	6,271,053	11.4	714,308
4	5	Busan	6,439,589	5,945,614	8.3	493,975
5	4	Rotterdam	6,400,000	6,010,503	6.5	389,497
6	6	Long Beach	4,408,480	4,097,689	7.6	310,791
7	10	Shanghai	4,210,000	3,066,000	37.3	1,144,000
8	8	Los Angeles	3,828,851	3,378,219	13.3	450,632
9	7	Hamburg	3,750,000	3,550,000	5.6	200,000
10	9	Antwerp	3,614,264	3,265,750	10.7	348,514
11	13	New York/New Jersey	2,863,342*	2,465,993	16.1	397,349
12	11	Dubai	2,844,634	2,804,104	1.4	40,530
13	12	Felixstowe	2,700,000*	2,523,639	7.0	176,361
13	13	Tokyo	2,700,000*	2,168,543	24.5	531,457
14	21	Port Klang	2,550,419	1,820,018	40.1	730,401
15	19	Tanjung Priok	2,273,303	1,898,069	19.8	375,234
16	16	Gioia Tauro	2,253,401*	2,125,640	6.0	127,761
17	7	Kobe	2,200,000*	1,900,737	15.7	299,263

17	15	Yokohama	2,200,000*	2,091,420	5.2	108,580
19	22	Bremen/Bremerhaven	2,180,955	1,812,441	20.3	368,514
20	23	Manila	2,103,721*	2,690,000	-21.8	586,279
21	19	San Juan	2,084,711	1,990,272	4.7	94,439
22	20	Algeciras	2,000,000*	1,832,557	9.1	167,443
23	28	Laem Chabang	1,828,460	1,559,112	17.2	269,348
24	24	Colombo	1,704,389	1,714,077	-0.6	-9,688
25	26	Oakland	1,558,900	1,505,567	3.5	53,333
26	29	Nagoya	1,541,000*	1,458,076	5.7	82,924
27	40**	Yantian	1,580,000*	1,038,174	52.2	541,926
28	33**	Qingdao	1,540,000	1,214,000	26.9	326,000
29	27	Seattle	1,490,048	1,543,726	-3.5	-53,678
30	30	Le Havre	1,378,379	1,319,278	4.5	59,101

Notes: * = port estimates; ** = 1998 ranking based on Port Traffic League in Containerisation International Yearbook 2000; 1998 figures in this listing may differ from those in the Top 30 analysis published in CI March 1999, as this listing has been compiled from latest port and CI Yearbook 2000 data

Sources: Port, CI and CI Yearbook 2000 data.

March 2000 Containerisation International.

This table gives some indication of where Kaohsiung has been placed historically in terms of container handling, in relation to other major world ports.

Kaohsiung Harbour is largely owned by the government, excepting now for the dockworker system. Because of the importance of this context of ownership of Kaohsiung Harbour, I begin with a discussion of some of the literature on this, to place the conditions in Kaohsiung Harbour in some historical perspective. History in this definition does not only include the history of the Harbour, but also the history of knowledge about other harbours. As Gummesson notes, history in this sense "can help us to see where we fit in, and it adds meaning to our lives" (1991, p. 90). It helps us to "avoid reinventing the wheel" (1991, p. 90). This does not mean to say that we can learn recipes from whatever other harbours have been doing in the past (including Kaohsiung Harbour). History can also teach us that "there are no simple formulas, that history does not provide solutions but a thought process, and that we have to realise and accept ambiguity and complexity" (1991, p. 90).

My discussion of the issues of ownership in my case study is aimed at showing the ambiguity and complexity around this concept, also as applied to Kaohsiung Harbour. Although the government wanted to plan and to do privatisation of Kaohsiung Harbour and some negotiations were completed in 2000 regarding further privatisation of the Harbour, the decisions have not been finalised (although in 2000 some people believed they had been). And other ways were planned to change the KHB organisation to become special public juridical persons, while also being of a privatisation style which is independent from the governmental supervision of its budget, personnel administration and procurement system. However, in order to improve its operation efficiency and

become more competitive, the business part of port's operation will continue to be privatised.

As far as the issue of privatisation of port business is concerned, Cass, 1996, suggests that "in developing its own method of privatisation, each country must determine its own priorities and then establish what commercial arrangements are the most suitable to achieve its aims in accordance with its history, (culture and particular characteristics", p. 8). Part of my case study investigates this uniqueness with reference to the specific history of Kaohsiung Harbour, including cultures in the Harbour and politics in the country as a whole.

In discussing the meaning of privatisation in the context of other countries' efforts to privatise the business of Harbours, Cass notes that what we can learn from other countries is that privatisation is linked with a specific philosophy. A philosophy of regarding ports as commercial undertakings, without specific port sector controls on investment or capital budgets, "has been promoted as part of deregulation schemes in several countries" (p. 17). But Cass notes that despite the philosophy that sees ports as commercial undertakings, there is "No comprehensive or systematic study which has yet been undertaken to identify and quantify the benefits of deregulation" (p. 18). He argues that there is some "anecdotal evidence (mainly from the UK) to suggest that major benefits have been obtained"(p. 18). However, this does not amount to a clear indication that benefits have been obtained, or what criteria are being used to decide that benefits are being obtained. He notes that many major ports "in the UK claim significant improvements in productivity resulting from new working arrangements which provide for total labour flexibility, reduced manning levels and increased responsiveness to customers' need"(p. 18). This is the idea associated with privatisation

efforts done in the UK. But he states that although the companies involved in the businesses operating commercially say that their profitability has risen by 20% "there is substantial evidence to support the view that the assets were under-valued and the undertakings were sold at well below market values" (1996, p. 19). So there is not one unambiguous message coming from the experience of privatisation in the UK.

Cass in fact shows from his review of Harbours in Europe that although many European governments are aware of the idea of deregulation and its apparent association with increased entrepreneurship, they still try to "retain control over port development matters and the industry is a long way from operating in a totally free and competitive market" (p. 20). Nevertheless, he notes that "the general trend throughout Europe is towards a less regulated industry" as this us regarded as "stimulating ports to become more efficient to the ultimate benefit of users" (p. 20).

In this chapter I look at a range of literature investigating the assumed benefits of different arrangements that have been tried in some countries. I consider this literature in the way that Gummesson notes that it can help us to realise that there are no simple formulae but that each situation has to work with the conditions (including human relations) that affect the whole functioning of an idea in context. This should be recognised when readers see my Chapter Four, where I discuss the idea of privatisation in the context of Kaohsiung Harbour in terms of the human relations there.

Turati notes that the complexity of any organisational change arises from the interpersonal texture and the compromise of visions and interests (1996). Instead of reading case studies quickly to get a description or try to get one vision, he suggests that questions can be asked like: "What is the underlying rationale of change? Who could contribute to change? How can one integrate problems, solutions and actors? Is

there a unique/natural process of change or alternative 'rationality' that should be identified before beginning with the change process?" (p. 132). These questions are ones that both I and the other people whom I was involved with when I conducted my study could consider so that we did not believe there was only one rational way to try to make plans for change (policy development). Turati (1996) suggests that possibly there is not one theoretical model that can offer an explanation of all the different cases in which people are involved in organisational change and that therefore different cases can show different ways in which development planning may occur. I follow him in using my case also not to make generalisations about successful ways of organising change.

The meaning of the Kaohsiung Harbour, as with the meaning of its history, its present and its possible future, cannot be quickly defined. In whatever way we see the Harbour, Yang and Tsai introduce the idea that it is important in the 20th century to "strengthen multiple ways of thinking" (1998, p. 386). This is something that I also want to emphasise in this chapter. This is part of my idea of keeping a variety of interpretations in my mind and in the mind of participants so that they can think about the Harbour without hoping that there is one way of working with the mind and one way of seeing problems and solutions. I hope through my dissertation not to give superficial descriptions without offering a view of complexity or allowing others to appreciate complexity.

2.2. Meaning Associated with Privatisation

Starr (1988, p. 7) states that privatisation is a "fuzzy concept that evokes sharp political reactions. It covers a great range of ideas and policies, varying from the

eminently reasonable to the wildly impractical". According to Starr, there is not one meaning associated with privatisation. Nonetheless he states that "however varied and at times unclear in its meaning, privatisation has unambiguous political origins and objectives. It emerges from the countermovement against the growth of government in the West and represents the most serious conservative effort of our time to formulate a positive alternative" (1988, p. 7). Privatisation as a concept is linked to promises to "create results comparable or superior to conventional public programs". He notes that this is what the wave of privatisation initiatives implies.

Starr points out that he generally opposes privatisation as a sweeping rhetoric, even though he may favour some specific proposals that privatisation covers. He notes, however, that any specific proposal is not always easy in any case to put into a rigid category. "Many things seem to be public and private at the same time in varying degrees or in different ways. As a result, we quarrel endlessly about whether some act or institution is really one or the other" (1988, p. 8). He suggests that part of the quarrel is linked to people's political commitments to side with one or other type of programme. So he notes that "on the other hand, when we speak of public opinion, public health, or the public interest, we mean the opinion, health, or interest of the whole of the people as opposed to that of a part, whether a class or an individual". Public in this sense often means "common not necessarily governmental". He indicates that the public-spirited or public-minded citizen is one concerned about the community as a whole. But he points out that in:

> ...the modern world the concepts of governmental and public have become so closely linked that in some contexts they are interchangeable. The state acts for the whole of a society in international relations and makes rules binding on the whole internally. Now, of course, private is contrasted with public to characterise that which lies beyond the state's boundaries, such as the market or the family (1998, p. 8).

Starr notes that in modern discourses, and especially in the discourse of economists, "the marketplace is quintessentially private" (1988, p. 9). Economists use the public-private distinction to signify the contrast between state and market. And they also use the distinction often to point to the idea that the production of goods and services can be shifted from the state to the private sector. However, Starr notes that the public sphere can have different connotations, if we think about the public sphere as one where issues can be discussed openly and not kept secret. So, for instance:

> ... *the public sphere may be conceived of as the open and visible — the sphere of public life, public theater, the public marketplace, public sociability. The public sphere also may be conceived of as that which applies to the whole people or, as we say, the general public or the public at large (1988, p. 10).*

If we look at the private/public distinction in this way, then privatisation corresponds to withdrawals from these kinds of public spheres. Starr notes that historians and sociologists, as opposed to economists, "write about the withdrawal of affective interest and involvement from the sphere of public sociability" (1988, p. 11). For instance he notes that Richard Sennett suggests that "since the eighteenth century modern society has seen a decline of public culture and sociability, a deadening of public life and public space". In this sort of public-to-private transition, the swing is "from civic concern to the pursuit of self-interest". (1988, p. 11). This is an interesting way to look at the private/public distinction because it helps us to see that the economic definition of private associated with better economic performance, can be given a different meaning when we realise that public may mean more open to public discussions and concerns.

Starr notes that it is a short step for economists to decide that privatisation becomes "a withdrawal from the state, not of individual involvements, but of assets, functions, indeed entire institutions". This becomes related to "a confidence that pursuit of private gain serves the larger social order". It also "leads to approval for both self-interested behavior and private enterprise" (1988, p. 12). Starr notes that with this meaning of privatisation, the term began to gain wide circulation in politics in the late 1970s and 1980s (which is when he wrote this article). The broad definition of privatisation then includes "all reductions in the regulatory and spending activities of the state" (1988, p. 20). However, in another use of the term, privatisation says little about spending cuts unless these are linked to a shift from public to private in the production process. This "leaves open the possibility that privatisation may not actually result in less government spending and regulation" (1988, p. 21).

Starr points out that once we understand different meanings associated with privatisation, we realise that "No general theory about the performance of public versus private organisations is likely to succeed if it fails to distinguish among political systems and the structural variety of public and private institutions" (1988, p. 23). If we realise this, then we can look case by case to see how indeed privatisation might be accomplished and what benefits might ensue from this, taking into account that added performance is not always gained with a shift to the private. Actually, according to Starr, the concept of a public government implies "an elaborate structure of rules limiting the exercise of state power. Those who wield power are to be held publicly accountable — that is, answerable to the citizens — for their performance" (1988, p. 24). So according to Starr, this can be a more accountable way to organise

enterprises. Government decisions and deliberations must be publicly reported and open to general. This idea of Starr fits in with some other authors who have noted that sometimes in privately owned companies, managers do not feel so accountable to the public for the way in which they run the corporation, and may decide, for instance, to make investment decisions that serve short term gains for them rather than long term public interest (Weil, 1998, p. 40). Weil indicates that in view of this, ironically, the worldviews that underpin the claim that private-sector management is "good" (and efficient) while public sector management is "bad" (less efficient) "are beginning to be challenged by many successful private-sector companies" (Weil, 1998, p. 40).

In similar thinking, Starr notes that even though right-wing schools condemn the public sector as irredeemably inefficient, policy analysts in micro-economics realise that we need to recognise the "proper role of public institutions in producing public goods" (1988, p. 25). Starr also notes that in general, when it comes to actual processes for implementing privatisation, privatisation can becomes "an occasion for managerial enrichment and entrenchment. It is striking that in Great Britain, France, and other countries that have privatised state-owned enterprises, privatisation usually brings about little or no change in top management". Starr also notes that:

> *Indeed, rather perversely, one could turn the whole force of public choice analysis on privatisation itself: The logic of concentrated benefits and diffuse costs makes it altogether likely that the diffuse efficiency gains of privatisation will be sacrificed in the effort to satisfy the big stakeholders — incumbent politicians and bureaucrats and their allies and supporters (1988, p. 28).*

Taking all this into consideration, Starr points out that "it is extremely risky to generalise about public versus private organisations — and, therefore, about the

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merits of privatisation as public policy — beyond a particular institutional or national context" (1988, p. 30). Starr also makes it clear that when using the term privatisation to refer to some organisation of production processes, it can be considered as follows:

> *Forms of privatisation vary in the extent to which they move ownership, finance, and accountability out of the public sector. The spectrum of alternatives runs from total privatisation (as in government disengagement from some policy domain) to partial privatisation (as in contracting-out or vouchers). As I define the term, privatisation may include policies anywhere along this spectrum (1988, p. 32).*

Starr suggests that "variations in privatisation policy complicate simple-minded predictions of the effects of privatisation on economic efficiency". It depends a lot on how the privatisation is effected, on what sorts of accountability are created when this is done, and on whether the managers in place (or put in place) develop the corporation beyond a short term enrichment, and on whether the specific efficiency programmes put in place are appropriate to the context of operations. In respect of issues of efficiency, and definitions hereof, I explain more about this in my Chapter Six, where I explain how politics and development rely on broader definitions of efficiency than those used by what Starr calls conservative economists. (See especially, Jackson and Carter, 2000, p. 211.)

Starr also notes that in neoconservative thought, which he associates with a school of theorists favoring private property rights, there is a conception that "human action is purely individualistic". The argument is that:

> *The more individuals stand to gain from tending to their property, the better will it be tended. Conversely, the more attenuated and diluted their property rights, the less motivated individuals will be to use property under their control efficiently. Private ownership concentrates rights and rewards; public ownership dilutes them (1988, p. 33).*

In this view, according to Starr, "If returns from the enterprise are low, shareholders will sell their stock and the price will be depressed. In the extreme case, the firm may be acquired by outsiders and the managers may lose their jobs" (1988, p. 33). According to the theory, there is no such check on the dissipation of value by the management of public enterprises. Therefore, privatisation is to be favoured for its way of organising deterrents to misuse of assets. But Starr notes that there are some points at which one can challenge the premises and implications of the property rights approach, as follows:

> *The first point of challenge is that "The theory gives no importance whatsoever to organisational characteristics such as size, centralisation, hierarchy, or leadership .... The theory does not point to any contingencies in generalising about public-private differences; it does not identify any particular conditions or characteristics that might cause public institutions to perform well. The disease the theory diagnoses in the public sector is, so to speak, genetic and incurable" (1988, p. 34).*

From this quotation we can see that Starr is concerned that the theory is over-general.

Starr is worried that the theory works on the assumption that "the public is better off if public organisations or their assets were privately owned and had to meet the test of profitability" (1988, p. 34). But tests of "better off" do not have a standard that is publicly tested.

Starr is also worried that the property rights theory makes assumptions about the market as a form of control that makes corporations highly efficient. But he argues that it is not always the case that "market discipline forces managers of private firms to be more efficient than public managers". He points out that "the theory gives no weight at all to the monitoring capacities of the state, the public at large, and the

various institutions of a liberal democracy, such as the press, that routinely scrutinise the performance of public institutions" (1988, p. 35). According to Starr, the theory has a "dim view of public monitoring". The theory is based on the idea that the more public the enterprise, the less chance that managers will be accountable. But this generalisation does not always hold.

Starr says we must be careful of theories that "indict public ownership and management across the board". According to Starr we should be looking more at case material to be able to make stories that do not force us into this general trend of thinking. I believe that my case is a case in point where it is important to look at it not just by seeing how it fits in with general trends on a global level. (This is explained more fully in Chapter Six, where I place the case in the context of politics and development in Taiwan.)

I can see Starr's point that when one examines the evidence in relation to privatisation with a more open mind than neo-conservative theory, then it seems that "The empirical evidence comparing efficiency in public and private organisations is also more complex than the property rights schools acknowledge" (1988, p. 36). He states that we need to realise that "Many observers have noted the propensity of American managers for concentrating on short-term profits; the property rights school, by contrast, bravely asserts that private firms have sufficient incentive to preserve wildlife and wilderness for future generations" (1988, p. 36). He notes that "The theory ... denies the capacity of voters or politicians to act on the basis of a national interest wider than their own private aggrandisement". But rather than being an advance of science over intuition, the appeal is ironically not made on the basis simply of "the evidence" but is made by those "who are intuitively certain that

whatever government does, the private sector can do better" (1988, p. 37). As I note in my Chapter Six, this assumption can be questioned, and especially when one realises that there are opportunity costs involved in making one decision over another. If one follows one path, one cannot say exactly what the consequences would have been of following another. But one must realise that every decision involves some opportunity costs.

In summary Starr notes that we need to be careful of general theories about the necessary success of privatisation as opposed to other ways of organising workplaces. Starr makes a few more points that are very relevant to my own way of doing my case study. He points out that besides the so-called empirical evidence for efficiency gains (which one can read in many ways and which is not unambiguous) there are unexamined normative assumptions behind the political theory of privatisation. Like the economic and sociological theories, political theories contain empirical predictions as well as normative judgments. This "raise[s] rather different issues from the usual efficiency-minded discussions of privatisation; they demand that we consider the meaning of privatisation not only as a theory but also as a political practice" (1988, p. 38).

Considering the political practices of certain underdeveloped countries, Starr points out that in some cases there is "the penchant for political intervention" that creates "endemic overstaffing ..., extravagant wages, and prices far out of line with market levels" (1988, p. 38). Starr suggests that these governments may be unable to avoid disrupting public enterprises, except by privatising them altogether. He also notes that in much of the world, state enterprise gives the dominant elites too powerful a grip over civil society. "For example, the Argentine military is said to use

its huge network of industrial enterprises as an instrument of patronage and power. In such cases, privatisation may well be justified as a means of releasing society from bureaucratic domination" (1988, p. 39).

So as a release from these forms of domination (and abuse of state power) privatisation seems to offer a viable solution. But despite this, Starr notes that we need not learn the single lesson from this that the poor performance of public enterprise and, more generally, overexpanded public sectors means that that "privatisation makes sense" as a general dictum. He points out that experience is never so transparent. This is because we can look at other cases to see that:

> ...even where state enterprises are generally agreed to be highly inefficient, it is not necessarily clear that privatisation will be a remedy. Moreover, the performance of some state-owned enterprises for example, in Malaysia and France — has been excellent, and it is simply not true that as public sectors grow, rates of economic growth fall. To be sure, the record of central government planning is dismal, but that experience cannot simply be extrapolated to all publicly owned organisations, particularly in states with more autonomous forms of public sector management (1988, p. 30).

The important point to concentrate on, according to Starr, is how the enterprise is likely to be managed and to be accountable to various stakeholders, rather than to focus on whether it is a "public" or "private" organisation. Of course it is true to say that in some cases, for example, even in some aspects of the American public sector, government owned enterprises allow political parties to make decisions that cannot easily be justified in economic terms (or in any other terms, such as public good served). According to Starr's American public institutions at all levels of government suffer from rampant credentialism and proceduralism that hamper the ability of managers to hire and fire, reward, and motivate their subordinates" (1988, p. 32).

This being the case, one needs to take seriously other ways of organising the sector. Ways to make public administration more flexible need to be tried.

Cass's (1966) examination of the players involved in privatising processes points to a similar line of thinking to Carr's, that is, a way of thinking that does not favour one way or another or organising the enterprise, without considering the players involved. Cass does this in the context of considering port privatisation efforts. This is also the view of Van der Ende, who makes an overview of some efforts at port privatisation in various countries.

2.3. Port Privatisation

Van der Ende (1998) notes that in the last decade, a number of countries have undertaken or considered institutional reform in the port sector to improve performance and to reduce the governments' financial and administrative responsibility. Traditionally the supply of port infrastructure was considered to be the responsibility of governments. But shifts in world trends, starting from the 70s (as indicated in the previous section) created a new way of thinking across the globe.

He notes that it is now agreed that under appropriate circumstances the involvement of the private sector, with adequate support and control, can go some way towards creating financial solutions to port management. Van der Ende notes that Malaysia was one of the pioneers in port privatisation. The premier port, Port Klang, was placed under a private footing, and this involved also large investment in an expansion programme. However, alongside this, it was also considered appropriate for the government to develop facilities to ensure trade the growth of the export market. According to Mr Rajasingham's presentation at the UNCTAD's (United

Nations Conference on Trade and Development) intergovernmental group of experts on ports, in October 1993, in Geneva, the government took the view that day-to-day operations (ship and cargo handling) could be left to the private sector. This, according to Van der Ende (citing Mr Rajasingham) was a feasible option in the Malaysian situation, so that investment could be released into the Harbour, while the government did not altogether relinquish its responsibility.

Van der Ende notes that in the case of the Mombasa port, the way that privatisation ensued was by the government offering a management contract for a specific period of time. Then the government and the Mombasa Port could decide which aspects of port operations could benefit from future management contracts. This is another way of organising privatisation — through what Van der Ende calls "privatisation à la carte". That is, it is based on choosing at points in time when a management contract will be suitable. But again this does not take away government responsibility.

By looking at cases like Malaysia and Mombasa, Van der Ende notes that there is not one way of organising port reforms, even when it is understood that some reforms are necessary. He emphasises that "one type of reform will not necessarily have a positive result in all situations". According to him, it is important to consider the steps that can be taken, rather than to think that there is only one path to follow (1998).

Lethbridge and Zvi Ra'anan (from the transportation, water and urban development department of the World Bank) in paper number PS-5 on port administration also locate some considerations that should be remembered when undertaking some privatisation of ports. They note that historically the bank had tried

to encourage autonomous national port authorities, which were judged to be the most appropriate form of administration during periods of heavy port investments. But then these authorities "often grew out of control, became overstaffed and overregulated" (1998, p. 1). The World Bank is now inclined more to support ports where private sector management is being introduced, although not necessarily in all operations. Operations such as stevedoring, the provision of floating craft, and certain aspects of port maintenance are being seen as key activities that lend themselves to privatisation. Canada and New Zealand are cited as successful in this respect (1998, p. 2). Lethbridge and Zvi Ra'anan (1998) suggest that certain aspects must be taken into account when a port invites the private sector to manage and operate a major element of the port. For instance:

1. Ownership of land should preferably be retained by the port authority so as to permit some measure of future government control.

2. If the private operator is responsible for both infrastructure and equipment, the port should ensure that the standards are adequate and that the facility does not deteriorate.

3. The port must be sure that the quality of the service provided is adequate to maintain or enhance its reputation .... Measures must be included in agreements enabling the port to control this and to terminate (or extend) the operating leases.

4. An overriding requirement is that port labour be involved in decision-making well in advance. Labour redundancy schemes or other similar programmes will probably be necessary if a smooth transition from public to private sector is to be achieved.

Lethbridge and Zvi Ra'anan guidelines again show that there is not one way in which privatisation can be achieved, and also there is not a definite road to success. Deterioration can follow and therefore there must be contracts to plan ahead for such occurrences. This means that privatisation cannot be seen as absolving the government of its responsibility. Of course, all of these guidelines point to a more semi-private enterprise than one that is fully private in the sense of having no involvement or regulation by government. The question is about the mix of private/public and the way that the various players will relate (in terms of contracts and other mechanisms).

In considering global trends to privatisation of ports (as also noted by the World Bank report of Lethbridge and Zvi Ra'anan, 1998) Cass (1996, p. 19) suggests that sometimes "Conflicting interests, national self-esteem, attitudes rooted in traditional values and misguided market assessments, have been strong counter-forces". But as regards planning, "the main issue usually was overly concentrated decision-making in central government bodies". He notes that according to Dr Jean Grosdidier de Matons of Washington USA, by understanding the systems of port management as linked to complicated lines of command and lack of incentive to perform, we can recognise why "the moves to privatisation continue to grow apace" (1996, p. 20). But despite the world-wide blaming of public port managers for not being as efficient as those in the private sector, Cass notes that "by the early 20th century, private industry was found to be objectionable or at least inadequate without some public support. In fact in many countries, it was civic dissatisfaction with private ports that led to the creation of public port authorities" (1996, p. 22). Public port authorities were then thought necessary to control the "rapacious practices" of certain private

owners. Grosdidier de Matons also actually urges caution, indicating that it is sometimes felt (and rightly so) that privatisation may interfere with the public interest. If government (and) port authorities are supposed to be the wardens and the trustees of this interest, they cannot hand over the responsibility to private enterprise.

Of course, improvements in profitability have also been suggested as a main reason for privatisation. Governments are sometimes keen to promote an enterprise culture and to improve (ports') access to capital markets. And they may wish to raise revenues, enabling it to reduce borrowing and pursue other policies in respect of taxation and expenditure. They may also wish to reduce the power of trade unions by transferring employment from the public to the private sector.

Cass (1996, p. 23) summarises that the motivations of national governments to privatise or restructure their ports' industry have included the following:

1. The desire to take action against expensive and inefficient port operations which act as a constraint to foreign trade and a recognition that, as a result of inefficiencies, cargo could be diverted to neighbouring countries.

2. The need to introduce the efficiency and know-how of the private sector to port operations thereby improving the prospect for foreign trade.

3. The desire to reduce the demands on the public sector investment budget by eliminating the need to build new port facilities and purchase cargo-handling equipment.

4. The need to reduce expenditure on port labour by removing the public sector from operation functions.

Yet there are a number of perceived drawbacks of privatisation. It greatly increases the risk, for example:

...that the statutory public service functions with which a port administration has been entrusted, may be neglected, since obviously private investors/operators will favour profit maximisation and cost cutting. And as a consequence, they may be inclined to abandon facilities and services which although socially or environmentally essential, are less rewarding, or generate expenditure without providing significant revenue. Moreover, where no (or only a limited degree of) competition exists, there is a strong probability that a public monopoly will be turned into a private one. If this happens, the profit maximisation objective will inevitably induce serious excesses, which could be highly detrimental to port users and seriously damage the port's reputation and future development (Cass, 1996, p. 25).

These were also points raised in my section 2 above, when I spoke about meanings associated with privatisation more generally, and not only in relation to port management. Because of all of these potential drawbacks, it is obvious that there is a "strong school of thought that argues for considerable caution before considering whether or not to privatise" (Cass, 1996, p. 26). And we can add that this also applied to the extent of privatisation. Cass sums up that as he sees it the debate will continue for the foreseeable future. I believe that it is certainly continuing into the 21st century.

2.4. Port Management in Asia: Some Examples (See Chart 2-1: The Map of Asia)

O'Mahoney (1999, p. 52) speaks about the opportunities for container ports that can be identified when considering trading patterns that have been developing in this region. He noticed that intra-Asian trade produced a flurry of activity in 1997 and has been growing since. The most significant growth routes have been those linking Japan and South Korea with Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand. However, O'Mahoney also notes that "in the light of recent economic crises there will inevitably

be a slowdown, if not a reversal, in GDP growth for most Asian economies" (1999, p. 55).

O'Mahoney notes that prior to the acceleration of growth of hub services around the world, port competition has largely been limited to neighbouring ports and between terminal operators at the same port (intra-port competition). The intensity of rivalry is a function of the proximity of the ports to the markets. The intensifying of competition between hub ports is according to O'Mahoney "reflected in the various efforts aimed at maintaining a steady growth in throughput and/or local /regional market shares" (1999, p. 60).

With this background in mind, we can look at some of the efforts of ports in the region to develop their operations.

In considering port management in the Asian region, Cass notes that the "inefficiency and mismanagement in many of the region's national ports compared to the impressive performance of the privately-run terminals in ports such as in Hong Kong and Japan, coupled with the dramatic results emanating from the privatisation of UK ports, were instrumental in inducing some governments to reconsider the organisation and management of their own ports" (1996, p. 30). The effects of poorly managed ports on trade performance had become too obvious. Malaysia was the first country to involve third parties in managing port facilities and the Philippines followed, by handing over the management of Manila's International Container Terminal to a private holding group. Subsequently each country has announced port productivity increases of around 20%. As noted by Van der Ende (1998), Malaysia was one of the pioneers in port privatisation, involving a large investment in an expansion programme. But the government did not in the process relinquish all

responsibility. This is in keeping with Starr's point that in states with different forms of public sector management (1988, p. 30), "public" and "private" are not so far apart.

As Hans Peters of the World Bank, indicates, while appreciating the potential for improving port performance through private sector involvement, governments in various Asian countries were hesitant to divest national port assets to third parties. In Thailand for example, it took the government several years to overcome their objections before being able to involve private parties in the management of the new port at Laem Chabang.

Increasingly, however, according to Cass (1996), severe budget constraints and the demand for adequate port infrastructure and efficient services, started to pressure governments into accepting the notion of public-private partnership in financing and managing the national ports. Recently China (PRC) opened its ports to the private sector, and within 18 months more than US$1 billion had been pledged by local and foreign parties for investment in port facilities. Indonesia is also among those that have begun the process, and Singapore too.

2.4.1. Singapore (See Chart 2-2: The Map of Singapore)

Chen Tze Penn (2000), representing the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) suggests that now that South East Asia is recovering from the economic recession, regional port competition is likely to become more intense. This means that there will be a move towards bigger container ships and "the increasing desire of container lines to operate their own terminals" (2000, p. 1). According to Penn, The MPA has a responsibility to ensure that the shippers will "continue to find it worthwhile to use Singapore as the port of call for their ships and cargo. The MPA

will strive to ensure that the Port of Singapore continues to be highly efficient and cost-competitive" (2000, p. 2). We can see from the way in which Penn speaks about the Port of Singapore that he accepts the need to embrace aspects of privatisation in the interests of increased efficiency of operations. In order to deal with the increased traffic, which continues to increase every year, Relph (2000, p. 1) notes that the MPA put in an investment of US$15 million, which was financed by private investors. Relph (2000, p. 1) explains the Singapore movement to privatisation in these terms.

2.4.2. Hong Kong (See Chart 2-3: The Map of Hong Kong)

Cass (1996, p. 94) notes that no analysis of Hong Kong can be divorced from China (PRC) and the events currently taking place there and due to take place still. Although one can attempt to separate the issues, private sector involvement in China's burgeoning port sector by means of joint ventures between Hong Kong terminal operating companies and state organisations, means that the two are interlinked.

However, it is necessary to note that Hong Kong has maintained a policy of private sector involvement in ports for many years now. Private companies build their own terminals but the Marine Department of the Hong Kong government, which acts as the Port Authority, retains responsibility for vessel traffic management and other regulatory matters, and is also involved in the planning of new port developments. In the past, Cass (1996, p. 95) notes that port development in Hong Kong has come about through commercial interaction between private enterprise and interested government departments. Ever since the first terminals were constructed in the early 1970s, the government granted land sites to the terminal operators — at a price. However, these sites are only leased until the year 2047. Hence, in this respect, the

"private" terminal companies of Hong Kong more resemble temporary custodians of public land of which the ultimate owner is the state (Cass, 1996, p. 96).

Relph (2000) notes that the Port of Hong Kong recently moved back to the second from the top in the world ranking of container ports and appears to have recovered from the effects of the Asian crisis (it is slightly smaller than Singapore Port). Stephen Ip, who is secretary of economic services in the Hong Kong port, suggests that the necessary infrastructure for the continued development of the port is now being managed through setting up industrial estates. The aim is to raise port capacity by 2.6 million TEU by 2004. Hong Kong has formed a Port Development Board (with government representation) to oversee the port's development into the 21st century. The expectation is that the port will be handling some 267 million tonnes of cargo and will have at least 20 new container berths, each with a capacity for some 400,000 TEU by 2006.

2.4.3. Japan (See Chart 2-4: The Map of Japan)

Cass points out that whilst in Hong Kong all the related infrastructure has been financed and operated by private parties under long-term leases, the strategy in Japan (in its most simplistic terms), has been to lease fully developed berths to ocean carriers, which equip and manage them in line with their own needs. Nedlloyd, for example, concluded a 10-year lease arrangement for Yokohama's Daikoku C-2 terminal in 1992 (1996, p. 95).

Takao Hirota, president and chief executive officer of the Overseas Coastal Area Development Institute of Japan (OCDI), suggests that the Japanese port system is already quite privatised compared to many other countries throughout the world. He points out that port authorities in Japan are landlord agencies with no direct

involvement in cargo handling operations (both ship and landside), which are performed exclusively by the private sector. While most of the ports belong to the port department of the relevant municipality, major ports such as Yokohama, Kobe and Osaka belong to their cities, while the port of Tokyo belongs to the Tokyo metropolitan government.

The central government's Ministry of Transport (MoT) is responsible for the overall control of Japanese ports. It is also (through the coastguard organisation) responsible for functions such as harbour master, navigation aids and the control of ship movements, which are normally undertaken by the port authority in most other countries. In addition, the issuing of licences to private industries including stevedoring, freight forwarding, pilotage, and the approval of tariff rates, are also the responsibility of the MoT.

Here again we can see a private/public connection that supports Starr's (1988) view that there is often not a clear-cut distinction between private and public when consideration privatisation in practice. Meanwhile, Cass (1996, p. 97) notes that in Japan, with regard to labour, although quality and productivity are regarded excellent, labour costs (because of favourable working conditions and various restrictions set by the unions), are significantly higher adding to the cost of operations in Japanese ports. Therefore, for the moment at least, even if the whole Japanese port operation system were to become entirely privatised, it would not necessarily mean the end of labour problems as expected by many promoters of privatisation (in the rhetoric of privatisation referred to by, for example, Starr). Since almost all possible and profitable sectors of the port business in Japan have already been privatised, there is little room for, or incentive to, further privatising or to change the present system of

corporatisation. Moreover, the port authority's responsibility for controlling the overall port area cannot be transferred to the private sector, because with public concern for proper water front management growing increasingly stronger, this function can only be achieved by a port authority (representing the government's will).

2.4.4. China (See Chart 2-5: The Map of China)

Ports in China, says Cass (1996, p. 107), are the responsibility of the Ministry of Communications (MOC), and since 1984 the MOC has been undertaking a process of decentralisation of control over them and assisting in the introduction of market reforms. The objectives of the 1984 process were to assist in the self-financing of port operations, to ensure that necessary port investment was financed by internal cash flow and to encourage increasing competition between ports. To make this possible, several joint ventures were set up, as described by Cass (1996, pp. 105-107) and summarised here.

The Shanghai Port Authority (SPA) and Hutchison Whampoa Ltd (HWL) formed a joint venture between their subsidiaries, Shanghai Port Container Comprehensive Development Company (SPCCDC) and Hutchison Ports Shanghai Ltd (HPSL), to own and operate all of Shanghai's container port facilities. The contract was formalised in August 1993, when HPSL injected CNY1 billion (US$120) million in cash and SPCCDC contributed CNY1 billion in assets to the new company Shanghai Container Terminals Ltd (SCT). The 50-50 joint venture planned to invest CNY5.6 billion (US$673 million) subsequently.

Nansha Tung Fat Cargo Terminal, Panyu is another example of port privatisation in the PRC. It is a joint venture between Henry Fok Ying Tung Group

and Fat Kee Stevedores Ltd of Hong Kong. The Panyu local government has only a token 10% stake in the project. Under the agreement, Fat Kee Stevedores manages the terminal operations. Nansha is located at the apex of the Pearl River Delta, midway between Shekou and Guangzhou. In its first year of operation, it has been supported by cargo from the hinterland in the west of the delta, including Shunde, Nanhai, Zongshan, Xinbu and Jiangmen.

Hutchison Whampoa Ltd (HWL), stepped further into China with the recent US$600 million acquisition by a Hong Kong International Terminals (HIT) led consortium of a major stake in Yantian International Container Terminals (YICT). As in Shanghai, HWL has taken a straight equity and profit sharing deal in the new company set up to run the port of Yantian. On this occasion, however, the HIT-led consortium achieved a 73% controlling share, the remainder being held by state company Shenzhen Yantian Port Group Co. Ltd. The Yantian Port Authority was offering investors either equity or leases of the port land.

Tianjin Xingang Sinor Terminal Co. Ltd is a joint venture, 55% of which is owned by the Port of Tianjin, with the remainder divided between P&O Australia Ltd and the Norwegian company, Gearbulk, and was formed to redevelop and run a section of the Port of Tianjin, which was in dire need of refurbishment. P&O and Gearbulk provided two managers with the remainder of the staff taken on locally. The terminal was officially opened in March 1992.

Hong Kong's Hutchison Port Holdings (HPH) has become involved in developing and operating river and coastal ports in the PRC through its wholly owned subsidiary Hutchison Delta Ports Ltd (HDP). Current river and coastal port projects include Zhuha (Gaolan) Port and Jiuzhou Port in Zhuhao, San Shan Port in Nanhai,

Zhuchi Port in Shantou and Gaosha Terminals in Jiangmen. In each port, HPH implements port expansion schemes, the modernisation of cargo handling equipment and is responsible for operating the port. But the links between the ports and the government are still not severed, despite the fact that some operations are performed privately in the various ports (Cass, 1996, p. 116).

2.4.5. Taiwan (See Chart 2-6: The Map of the Port of Kaohsiung of Taiwan)

Taiwan has a population of slightly over 20 million and is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. It lies 160 kilometers (about 100 miles) off the coast of mainland China. The total land area is 36,000 square kilometers (about 22,500 square miles). Relph (2000, p. 1) cover two-thirds of its surface. Kaohsiung is Taiwan's second largest city. It lies on the southwest coast fronting the Taiwan Straits. It has a population of 1.5 millon. The city is also the island's busiest industrial centre. Relph (2000) notes that Kaohsiung is Taiwan's principal port (being the largest in Taiwan). It is rated as third in the world rankings. Its TEU grew from 6.27 million to 6.99 million in the last decade. According to Relph, both China and the port of Kaohsiung are able to grow container traffic, despite the political differences between Taiwan and China at this point.

The functions of the Harbour (as mentioned in documentation prepared by the Harbour public relations, 1999) are as follows:

1. To be a hub with function of international marine transportation centre. (It operates as a worldwide seaborne traffic link with America, Europe, New Zealand, Australia and other Asian countries.)

2. To produce and distribute a base for re-export and high value added manufacturing products.

3. To create external trans-shipment base for the south and the east regions of Mainland China.

4. To be a main container port of Taiwan region.

5. To import port of liquid and bulk cargo in southern Taiwan.

6. To export and import port of general and bulk cargo in southern Taiwan.

7. To be a base to promote prosperous commerce and industry of Kaohsiung.

From my own experience in the Harbour, and from my access to various documents, I can say here briefly that since 1996 there have been attempts to promote actively the privatisation programme of the port. Already, the items such as mooring and unmooring, working boats, pilot, ship bunkering, stevedoring, water boats, leasing of container berth, and both of the bulk and general cargo berths have been open to private enterprises. This went hand in hand with aims to enhance efficiency. Such efforts included building a computer information system to connect the operation system to harbour services. People can get access to various services, such as loading and unloading, storage, visa for ships entering and leaving, and so on via this system now. The system also can be used for on-line application such as ship registration, watering, pilot, and other harbour services. It saves time and operation costs. Also, due to the new computer information system, information about berths, ships and stevedoring equipment are available to ship owners and agents through on-line computer and they do not need to go to KHB in person for copying information and making applications.

Meanwhile, the official aim of the Harbour, besides meeting needs of ship owners and their agents, is to develop an ideal port for Kaohsiung citizens to meet their needs. Plans already have been made to remove the fence around the old

harbour areas to improve scenery of urban areas and meet the need for waterfront recreation. Plans are also made to dismantle five storage warehouses, to set up a waterfront park as well as provide a place for citizens to become familiar with the sea. And a greening programme has been promoted since 1993 to enhance quality of leisure life.

The Harbour, as I noted in my introduction, is also closely linked to the City of Kaohsiung in Taiwan. In the past it has boosted the prosperity of commerce and industry in Kaohsiung. Material imports, products exports and trade expansion all heavily rely on the operation of the port. At the same time, abundant human resources, and the prosperous commerce and industry in Kaohsiung, also contribute to the successful operation and development of the Harbour. Due to a governmental policy to balance regional development, the City of Kaohsiung, in 1979, became a special municipality under the central government. Kaohsiung is an important industrial and agricultural centre in southern Taiwan. In the past years, the Harbour has been transformed from a small fishing basin to today's international port through developing, reclaiming land, increasing port facilities and expanding business operations.

With this brief background of the Harbour, readers can now appreciate the details of my case study as set out in chapter Four. However, before going onto that Chapter, my next chapter explains the approach adopted in my study by looking at literature on both case study research and action research, as my study, I believe, is a special kind of case study. The case subject is examined by considering the processes being adopted to try to change the organisation into a new one through reforms that, however, imply some problems facing especially employees and low-level managers,

but also others. I have tried to organise my study to concentrate on how these problems can be seen and also on creating increased thought about the way in which plans are made for the future of the Harbour.

2.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I provided an examination of some of the literature that has been written on privatisation and its outcomes, in general as a world trend and also in relation to port privatisation. I showed that there are many meanings associated with privatisation, in general and in relation to port management. Traditionally, as noted by World Bank Reports, and by Van der Ende (1998) in his comment on UNCTAD's intergovernmental group of experts on ports (held in 1993), the supply of port infrastructure was considered to be the responsibility of governments. However, trends towards privatisation in many sectors of society, which took off especially in the 1970s, as well as special considerations in relation to port management of operations, led some governments to give contracts to private investors to run ports. But there have been many variations in the way this has been done. Van der Ende (1998) calls this "privatisation à la carte", showing that one can choose ways and that there is not a set menu of how this can be achieved.

Starr (1988), whose arguments I looked at in detail in this chapter, points out that the political movement towards privatisation arose from a counter-movement against the excessive control of government in operations that it was argued could be more efficiently handled otherwise (in private control). Privatisation as a concept became linked in such (political) thinking to promises to create results that were superior to those that could be created by public initiatives. Nonetheless, looking at

the wave of privatisation initiatives brought upon by this way of thinking, there has also now been evidence to suggest that no general theory about the performance of public versus private organisations (without an examination of the details of the case) is likely to succeed. Starr's point was appreciated in this chapter with reference to various examples of literature that he mentioned, and also with reference to some literature on port management, which is the unit that my case study deals with (the Harbour at Kaohsiung in Taiwan). I examined literature on privatisation of ports by taking note of Cass's (1996) study into this, and by supplementing this with other literature that shows that there is not one conclusion that can be gained about whether privatisation leads to more efficient operations. As Cass points out, it can "greatly increase the risk" that private operators will favour profit maximisation and cost cutting without considering more long term effects (1996, p. 25). This is not to deny that benefits can be gained, in particular cases and when done in an appropriate way, from efforts to privatise port operations. Cass summarises some of these benefits, before showing how privatisation efforts were made in various countries in relation to port management. I looked at Cass's position and then concentrated on his view of some South East Asian privatisation initiatives, also bringing in some other literature about these ports. I ended by providing some background into initiatives in Kaohsiung Harbour, which is the subject of my case study.

In summary, the findings from the literature show that one cannot provide any conclusive suggestion about the general importance of releasing ports from state control. There are benefits that some cases can show up, but there is also need for caution. We need to be cautious about applying a political view about efficiency

gains, unless we look at the case in question, including the various players involved in the case, as Cass mentions.

In the next chapter I show how I approach my particular case study (in a particular way) and this then, with this chapter, provides enough information for readers to appreciate the details of my case study examination that I report in Chapter Four. Then in Chapters Five to Seven, I continue to comment on the case, by providing discussions around it in relation to certain themes that can be considered relevant to the case. This also helps to place the privatisation efforts in the Harbour (and the plans for the future) into a wider perspective than has been presented in this chapter alone.
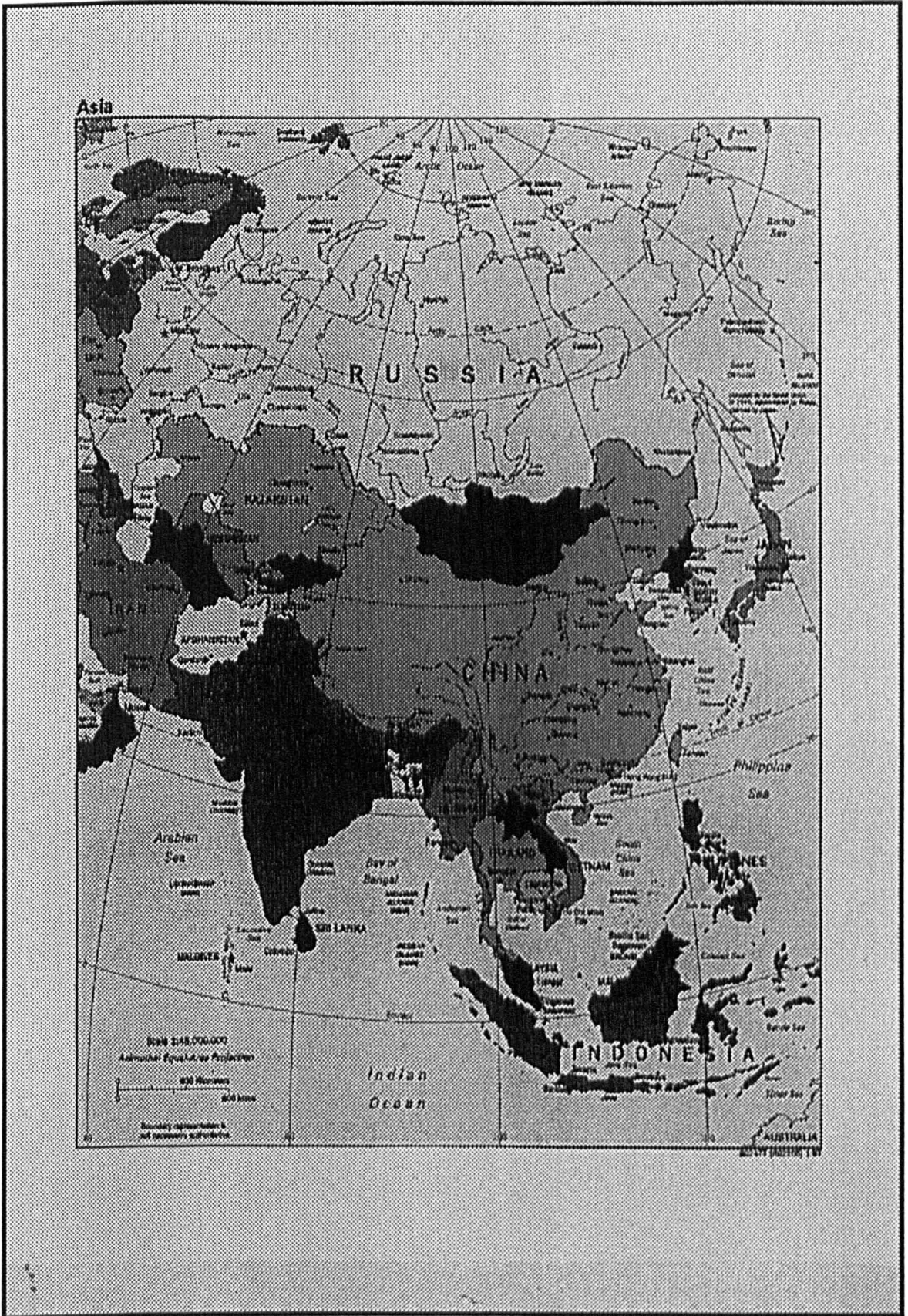
Asia

Chart 2-1:   The map of Asia
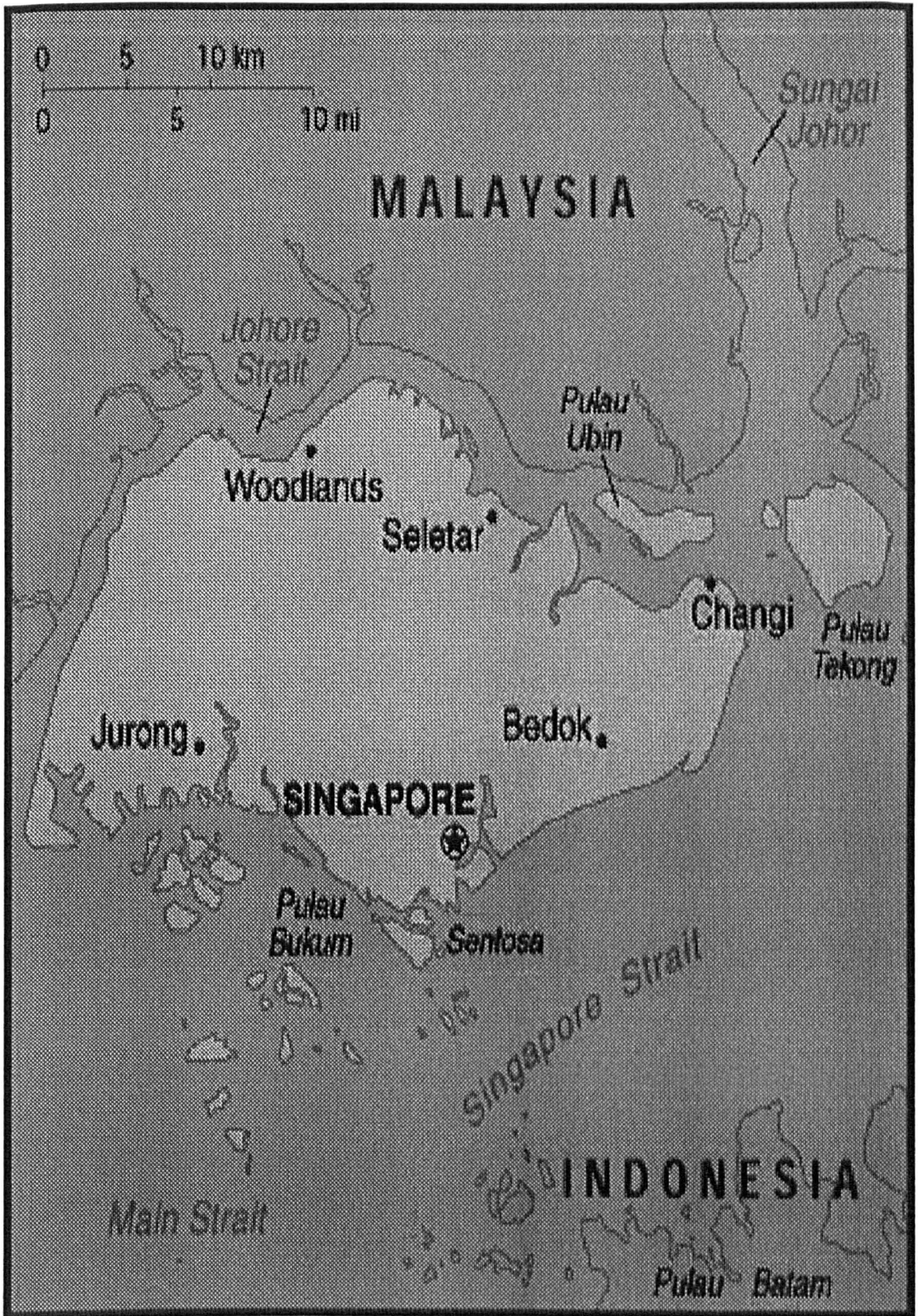
Chart 2-2: The Map of Singapore
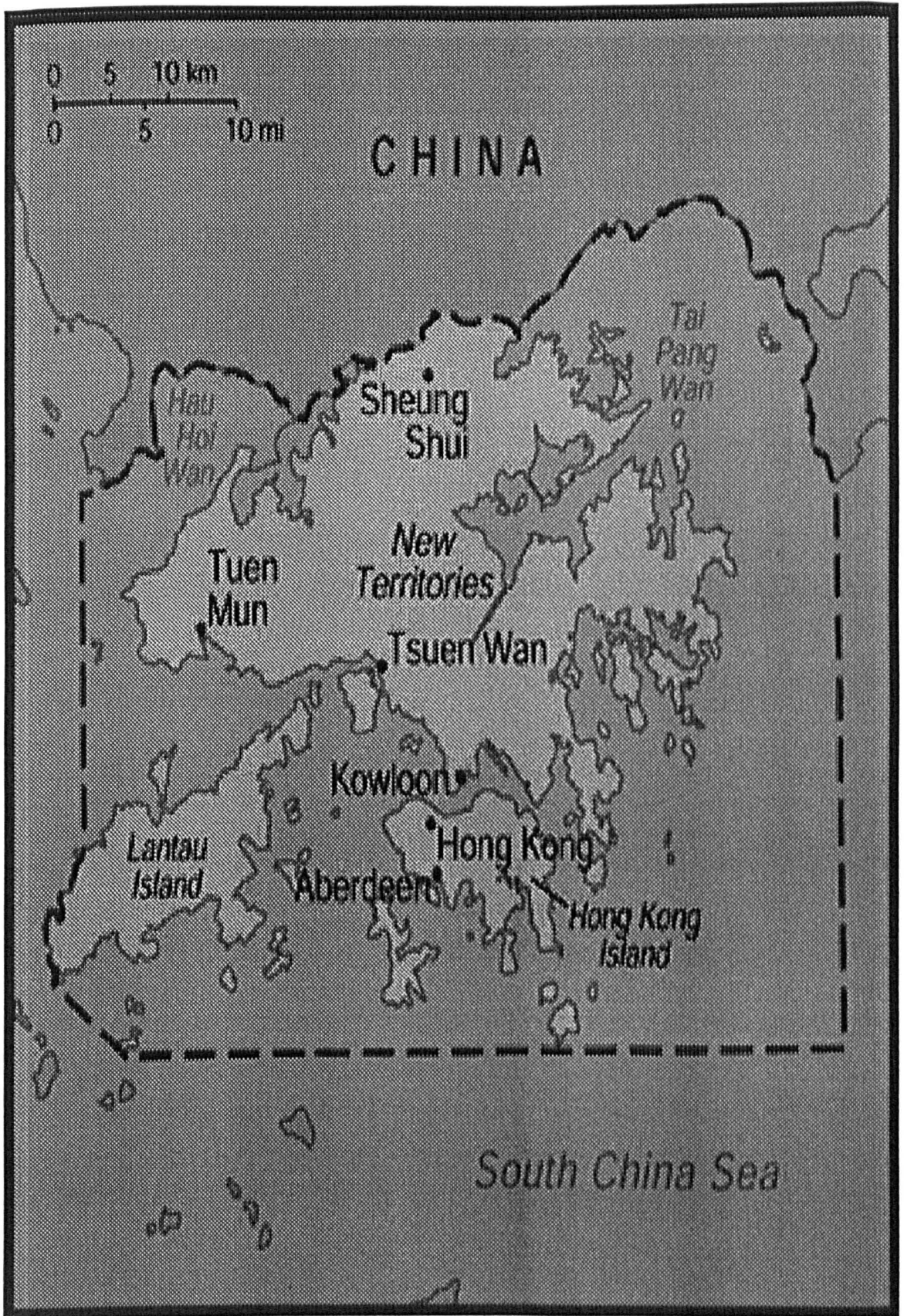
Chart 2-3: The Map of Hong Kong

2-4 Chart: The Map of Japan

Chart 2-5: The Map of China

Hsiaokong Commercial Harbor Area
 Chunghsing Commercial Harbor Area
 Penglai Commercial Harbor Area
 Yencheng Commercial Harbor Area
Lingya Commercial Harbor Area
 Chungtao Commercial Harbor Area
 Chienchen Commercial Harbor Area

Projects Under Construction-Tajen Commercial Harbor Area
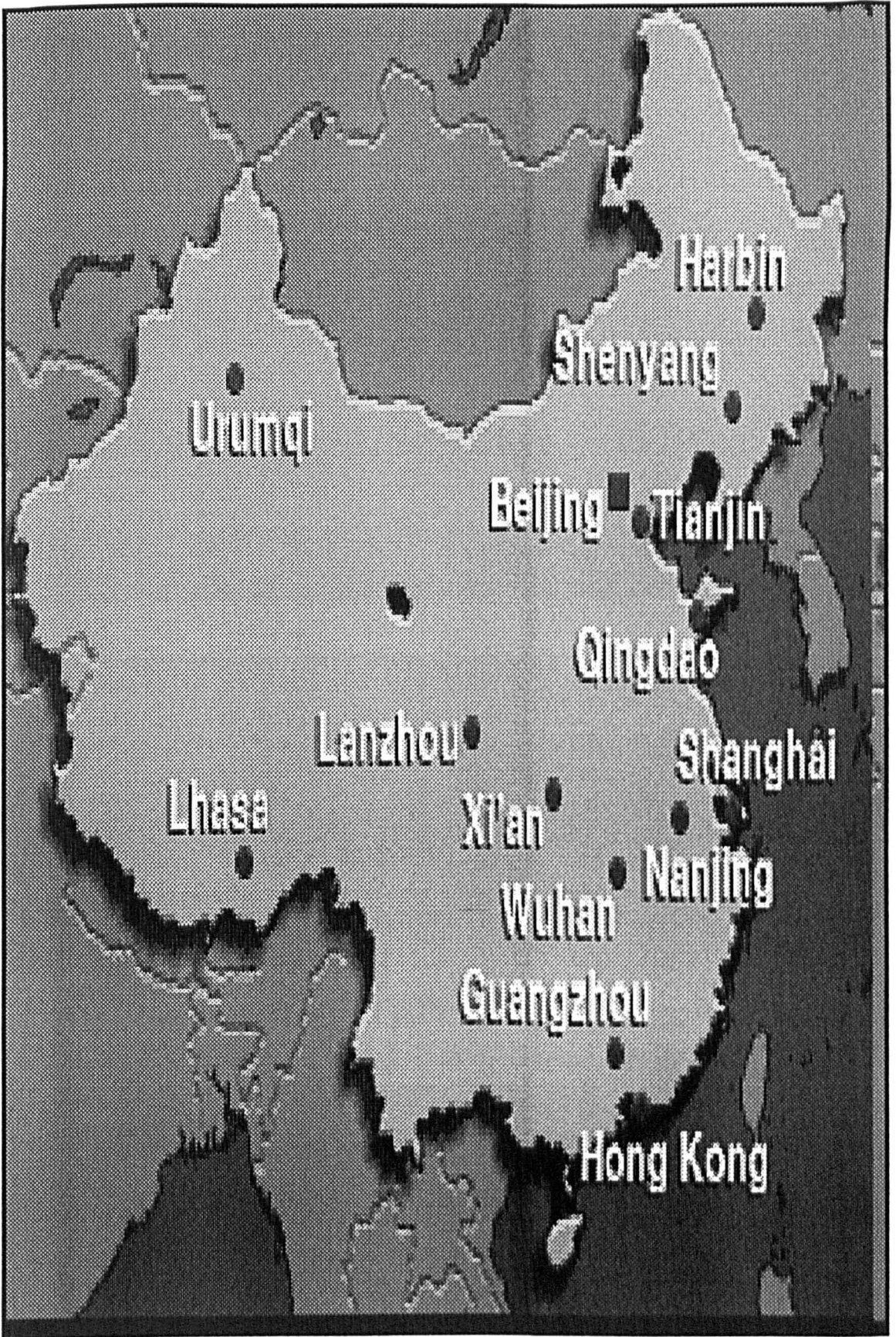
THE MAP OF THE PORT OF KAOHSIUNG
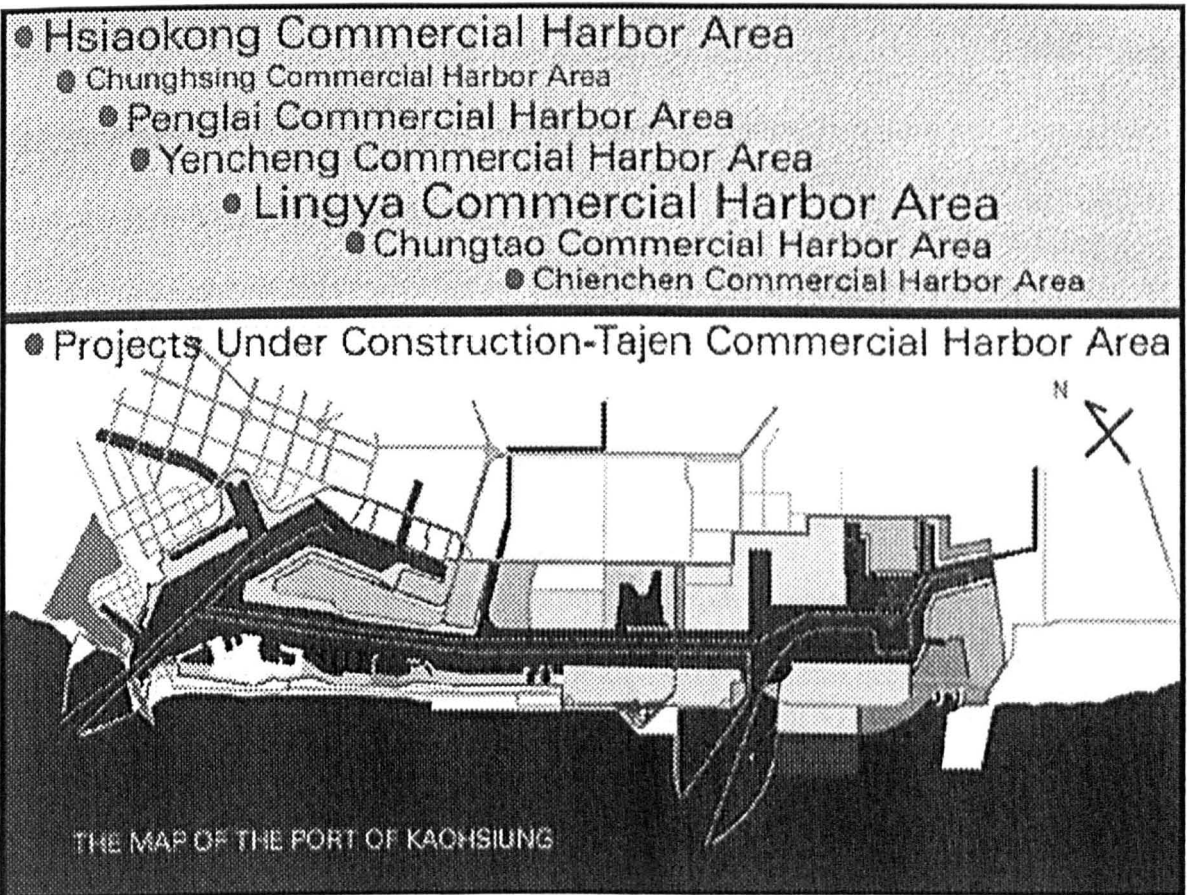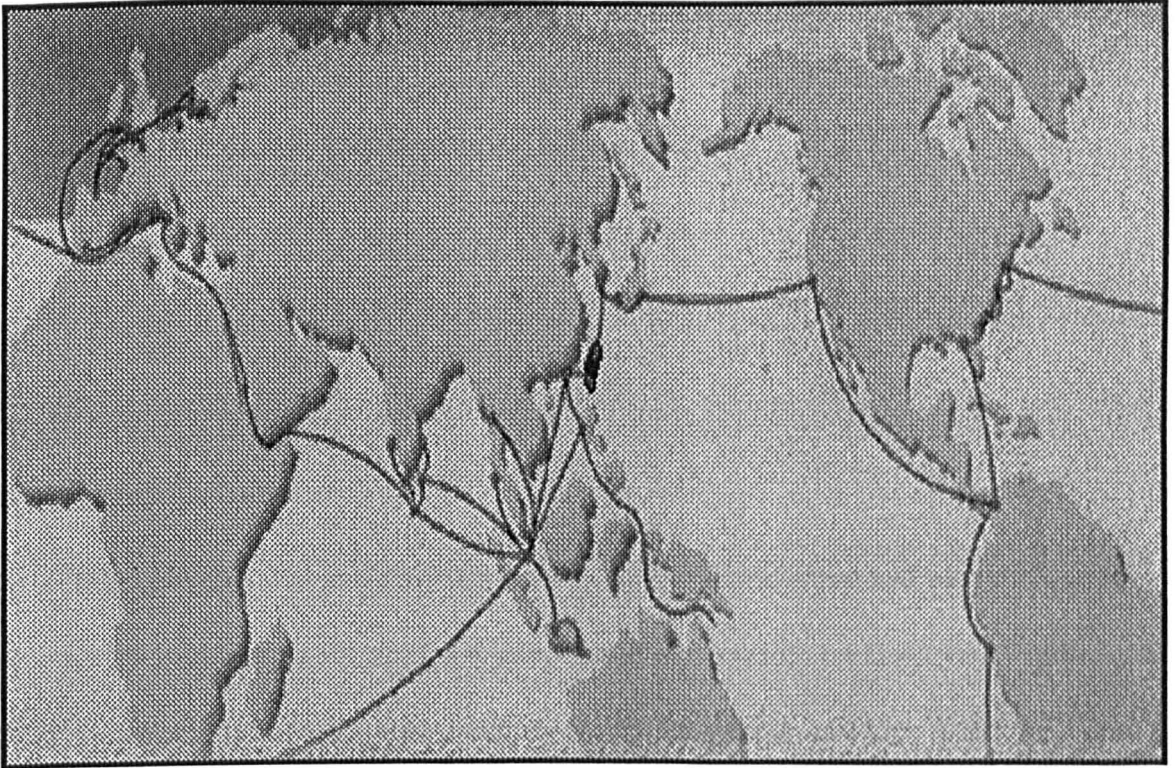
Chart 2-6:The Map of the Port of Kaohsiung

CHAPTER THREE

A LITERATURE REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON

ACTION RESEARCH AND ON CASE STUDY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I explore the relationship between case study and action research. I explain the background for using my own case study research on Kaohsiung Harbour in Taiwan to investigate what case study research can involve and how it can be distinct from action research while still having some similarities with it. I tried to conduct the case study showing that it is possible to do case study research whose practical value can be enhanced during the course of the project even though it does not incorporate fully the principles of action research. For me to use my case study research this way, I am not arguing that this is always how case study research is undertaken, or that it always needs to be undertaken in the way I am doing it. But I wish to show that cases can be investigated this way. My task was to devise my own approach to case study research and to organise my case so that I can explore what is involved in this. My way of conceptualising case study research in my case study is an option that I suggest has not been sufficiently explored in the methodological literature on case study research.

My contribution was to explore in practice the possibilities that I suggest can be associated with case study research, so that it does not have value only in terms of theory emergence or theory testing, but can be of practical relevance to participants during the course of the project. To do this, I need to show how case study research is

normally seen and also how action research is normally seen. Then, with this in mind, I show how my own case study research is a way of doing case studies which is neither the "normal" way of doing it nor the "normal" way of doing action research.

Before showing some of the literature on case study research I firstly introduce my approach to my own case by indicating its relationship with action research (and where it differs from this). Action research is normally seen to be associated with two main principles. The first principle is that researchers participate with practitioners to organise a collaborative process of inquiry (as authors such as Bryman, 1989; Fals-Borda, 1991, 1996; Whyte, 1991a,b; Whyte *et al.*, 1991; Gustavsen, 1992; Reason, 1994; Moggridge and Reason, 1996; Flood and Romm, 1996a,b; Heron, 1996; and McTaggart, 1997, have noted). This may be called the participative principle of inquiry. It suggests that as Whyte *et al.* put it that: "... some of the people in the organisation or community under study participate actively with the professional researcher throughout the research process from the initial design to the final presentation of results and discussion of their action implications" (1991, p. 20). Action research defined this way means that a professional researcher cannot take control of the design of the project and must organise the research together with participants. It also means that they must together decide how to look at results and interpret them and also what the action implications of the results are.

In my own case study approach I did not fully incorporate this idea of Whyte *et al.* My own case study research gives the researcher more control in the research process in terms of its design. But my way of doing the research should allow different people to look at the research project and decide for themselves how to act on the basis of it, as long as they are aware of some of the issues that have come to the fore through the

project. During the course of the case study project, I organised discussions with people on individual and group basis to think about issues. But this does not mean that definite action implications were worked out fully together, as Whyte *et al.* have suggested. This leads to the second principle of action research, namely its concern with action.

The second principle of action research is that some form of action must take place as part of the project. This means that the researcher has to become involved in cycles of action and reflection (as authors such as Lewin, 1946; Gill and Johnson, 1991; Whyte *et al.*, 1991; Gummesson, 1991; Reason, 1994; Argyris and Schön, 1996; Greenwood and Levin, 1998; Weil, 1998; and others have noted). The suggestion is that people can learn about the effects of their actions in the actual course of the project and this helps them to act in a better way in future. Lewin (who invented the term action research) states explicitly that it involves a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of action (1946, p. 35). Lewin emphasises the practical relevance of action research to help people to evaluate their actions (1946, p. 36).

According to Lewin, it is not sufficient merely to diagnose problems in society. Diagnosis must be accompanied by experimental comparative studies of the effectiveness of various techniques of change (1946, p. 37). Lewin's idea is that if research is to be meaningful for people in society it must help them to consider the effects of their action, by setting up cycles of action and reflection as part of the action research project. As he describes it, action research must set up experiments in the social field — the experiments are aimed at helping people to plan and to evaluate their plans. Gill and Johnson also note (1991, p. 73) that action research is linked with a kind

of quasi-experimentation in that it is aimed at looking at the effects of chosen actions. However, it does not subscribe to the positivist view of experimentation, as shown in later sections of this chapter (see also Gill and Johnson, 1991, p. 61, where they note that action research advocates "an alternative to positivist social science"). Its view is not aimed at identifying general "covering laws" that explain the relationship between variables, as positivism requires. Nevertheless it does want to help people to plan their actions by considering in whole contexts what the effect of acting might be. This is done by acting and "reflecting in action". This is also well explained by Argyris and Schön (1996).

My own case study research did not aim, however, to set up cycles of action and reflection as part of the project. I was not trying to experiment with forms of action and evaluating their consequences with participants. I did, nevertheless, involve myself in discussion (individual and group) with participants who are involved in Kaohsiung Harbour, as part of my fieldwork. In this way, I suggest that a broader basis for decision-making can be achieved than if the case study research was not undertaken. But exactly how people will act on the basis of the material that is collected in the case study, need not be considered as part of the case study research as I define it.

An additional element of the case study that is relevant to this discussion of my research is that the reason I have access to Kaohsiung Harbour is because I in fact work there. This means that ordinarily I become involved in decision-making as part of my work. However, while I am studying for my Ph.D. I am not involved in this work as such; but am considered to be a researcher. My job description has in fact changed for this duration of my study and I am called a senior researcher. I therefore can declare my research interests to other participants. But I do not want my research to become a tool

for me to try to create what Gill and Johnson call "joint action plans" (1991, p. 61). The people in Kaohsiung Harbour might in any case find this an imposition on them if I tried to set up conditions of creating joint action plans as part of my research. I therefore used my position as researcher to play another role, which I explore in the course of the dissertation. I believe that in this way I also did not exploit the access that I have to Kaohsiung Harbour. So I feel that it is also an ethically sound position to adopt. This is not necessarily a general ethic that all researchers need to adopt. But it is a situation ethics that I believe is appropriate to my relationship with the participants (see also Fielding, 1993, on situation ethics). I also did not feel at this stage equipped with the competence to "manage effectively anxiety stirred up by the inquiry process", as Heron and Reason report that co-operative research with people might create (2000, p. 179). I therefore preferred to tread a lighter path than a full action research process because I understood that I and others might not be able to handle this emotionally. I believe that any challenges that I created for participants had to be handled more subtly than described by those doing action research. I still think I needed personal skills in knowing when and how to add questions that might not have been considered otherwise (without my intervention), and even to bring viewpoints together as a mediator in ways that also might not have been done otherwise.

I suggest therefore that my way of proceeding has certain qualities that normal case study research does not have and also certain qualities that make it different from normal action research. It is presented in the dissertation as an option for research. I do not try to argue that it is the best way for doing case study research (or any other type of study) at all times. Some authors say the strength of doing case study research is for theory emergence (Burgelman, 1985; Sutton, 1987; Bryman, 1989); some say it is

suitable for theory testing (Mitchell, 1983; Yin, 1993, 1994); and others say that it should be linked to action research — especially in management studies (Gummesson, 1991; Argyris and Schön, 1996). I try to show that my way of doing case study research incorporates some features that allow for theory emergence (in terms of exploration of themes); theory testing (though not in the "covering law" sense of theoretical development); and practical benefit to participants (though not in the sense of developing action plans with people). Its value can be considered in terms of these qualities that I tried to draw out in my own case study research.

As Wolcott notes (1995), doing fieldwork is always an emergent process. It cannot all be planned in advance. What can be planned for is the kind of quality of research that one hopes to generate through doing the research. I therefore in this chapter show what kinds of criteria I think can be used to judge the quality of my kind of case study research; and also what capacities the researcher needs if the research is to work.

I set out this chapter by starting with a discussion of some forms of action research, as a kind of literature review of action research. I do this because my task in my research was to develop a form of case study research which can also draw on some of the ideas that have been developed within action research. Therefore, before I can show how I organised my case study I need to show the literature on action research and how it affected my way of doing my own study. That does not mean that my study could be called action research. But it connects up with some of the ideas of action research.

Having offered some view of literature on action research, I proceed to review literature on case studies. This is important to set the scene for my own case study

work. I show what case studies are normally seen as able to achieve and I show where my own case study approach tried to extend these achievements. I provide some detail on the methods I used and also the ideas behind using the methods. I also show what kinds of personal skills I think were required to do the case study.

3.2. Action Research

Although this section is entitled action research as a general label, any general description does not help us to consider properly the variety that exists within the field of action research. Nevertheless, action research as a general concept refers to certain qualities that are expressed in the various forms of its doing. Therefore, it is meaningful to have the category called action research and to distinguish this from other types of research. To set out to show the qualities of action research I begin by looking at how the concept was developed historically by those who wanted to differentiate their work from what other researchers were doing.

Lewin is often considered to be the founder of the term action research, using the term to describe his own work. Lewin suggests that the main feature of action research is that it is aimed at serving immediately the practitioner (1946, p. 34). According to Lewin, action research develops knowledge as part of the process of helping people to act (this was the second principle discussed in my Introduction — the link between research and action). Lewin does not concentrate as much on participation (the first principle I mentioned in my Introduction) as some other authors (such as Whyte, 1991a,b and Checkland, 1981) do concentrate. His main contribution was to show that action research is, as Gill and Johnson also mention (1991, p. 59) "problem-centred". It

is centred on dealing with problems that practitioners are having to face as part of their work.

I show under the first subheading how the idea of being problem-centred is dealt with in Lewin's work, as the founder of action research. Having used Lewin's approach to action research to open the discussion, I then under the next subheading discuss Argyris and Schön's approach to action research and I show that they utilise many ideas from Lewin. This is followed by an account of Whyte's action research, which tries to be even more participatory than that of Argyris and Schön is. This then is linked up with Checkland's approach. I then present Ackoff's approach which can also be considered as an action research approach to systems planning. Finally I show what parts of all of these approaches I adopt in my own approach to case study research.

3.2.1. Lewin's Action Research

Lewin was the first one to use the term to describe his own work. Lewin describes action research as distinguished from research whose aim is to derive knowledge without considering the value of knowledge in helping people to solve problems. Lewin wants "fact-finding" to become part of a plan of action and evaluating of that action (1946, p. 35). In this way people can learn to examine facts as part of the process of learning about the effects of their actions. Therefore Lewin believes it is important to set up certain forms of action as part of the research project itself, as a way of experimenting with conditions and effects in definite situations. As he notes: "If we cannot judge whether an action has led forward or backward, if we have no criteria for evaluating the relation between effort and achievement, there is nothing to prevent us from making the wrong conclusions and to encourage the wrong work habits" (1946, p. 35). He therefore wants to arrange research projects so that people can assess the

relationship between their efforts (in certain actions) and their achievements (what the actions accomplished) so that people can develop better ways of working.

Lewin believes that action research is the best research to serve the practical objective of "improving social management" (1946, p. 36). Action research is linked to the desire to change in a way that will reach certain objectives that are defined by people in practical situations (1946, p. 37). Action research should help decision-makers to have a chance to learn through the research process. Fact finding has the function to provide a basis for planning and decision-making. Cycles of self-evaluating the effects of action are crucial to the improvement of decision-making (1946, p. 38).

Lewin believes that the laboratory experiment is not the right way to gather the kind of knowledge that action research can offer. He prefers to speak about social experiments in the field. One of the examples of this is his experiment on "minority problems" as an example of how people can be taught so that prejudice against minorities could become minimised (1946, pp. 39-40). Lewin did not believe in laboratory experiments because in the laboratory the conditions are too artificial and the complexity of effects of action is reduced to the point that it is meaningless (see also Gill and Johnson, 1991, p. 47). Argyris and Schön note that another reason why the laboratory experiment is not suited to action research is because the aim is not to try and develop knowledge of covering laws but to develop a way of helping people to act in their everyday situations (1996, p. 39). The "context-independence" created by the laboratory experiment is unhelpful for helping practitioners who are working in definite contexts (1996, p. 39). This leads me onto a discussion of Argyris and Schön's action science.

3.2.2. Argyris and Schön's Action Science

Argyris and Schön's view of action research (Action Science) is based on the idea that practitioners must provide the issues of relevance that are considered in the research process. The aim of action research is to create involvement with "practitioners within particular, local practice contexts" (Argyris and Schön, 1991, p. 86). As they indicate, the research must "take its cues — its questions, puzzles, and problems — from the perceptions of practitioners ... [and it] bounds episodes of research according to the ... local context" (1991: 86). They therefore agree with Lewin that it is important for research to be bound up with problems faced by practitioners. They also agree that the point of research is not to create experimental conditions removed from daily life. The point instead is to help people to "design their day to day strategies of action" (1996, p. 37). They suggest that practitioners are always involved in a kind of experimentation and they believe that action science can help them to do this more rigorously (1996, p. 37).

However, they suggest that one barrier to organising experimentation from which people can learn how to design their daily strategies, is that they are too defensive about their ways of thinking. They adopt strategies of unilateral control, unilateral self-protection, defensiveness, smoothing over, and covering up (Argyris and Schön, 1974). These strategies create forms of defensiveness which Argyris and Schön call Model I behaviour. Part of the role of the action scientist is to show people how to overcome this kind of behaviour (Argyris and Schön, 1991, p. 85). The idea is to show how people's behaviours are caused by their defensive reactions, and therefore to create new forms of behaviour, so that Model II factors can begin to operate. Model II factors operate when people learn to address problematic issues in a public way, testing their

ideas out publicly in collaboration with other people. The action scientist can help people to do this by setting up joint tasks which can be jointly controlled, so that in practice people get a chance to experience new forms of behaviour. Group dynamics are assessed by the action scientist to intervene when it is believed that people's thought and behaviour are becoming too defensive (and not open to public testing). In this way action science aims to help people to learn. It also helps to contribute to some more general knowledge about how people learn. So Argyris *et al.* (1985) note that "the action scientist is an interventionist who seeks both to promote learning in the client system and to contribute to general knowledge" (1985, p. 36).

Just as in Lewin's action research, Argyris and Schön consider that the professional researcher has an important role in setting up social experimentation in which people can learn about the effects of their actions in definite contexts of action. The approach is aimed at helping people to recognise their defensive reactions that stop them from learning. Friedman notes that one of the central challenges of action science is to be able to teach people competencies in learning how to learn. It tries to create conditions for learning in action contexts. Friedman argues that to be able to learn with others in action contexts, it is important that people develop the competencies to "treat one's knowledge of a situation as hypothesis rather than fact" and to test these hypotheses through action. He notes that there are different ways of trying to help people to develop such competencies (2000, p. 168). The approach is not as participatory as some other action research is. For example, Whyte notes that Action Science places more control in the hands of the intervention team than participatory action research does (1991a). Whyte believes that action research should not place so much control in the hands of the professional scientist and that the principle of action

research is that it should be participatory. This leads me onto a discussion of his argument.

3.2.3. Whyte's Participatory Action Research

Whyte argues that the participatory action researcher must consciously adopt a strategy in which he or she involves members of the organization "as active participants in the research process" (Whyte, 1991b, p. 5). He believes that together in action all researchers (including the participants in a full research role) can create better forms of action. He is especially against the idea on ethical grounds of using people to "pump" them for data. In participatory action research people decide together what data to collect and they also decide how to interpret it and utilise it as a basis for action. Whyte's idea is that unless people decide jointly how to collect data and what kind of data to collect and how to analyse them and interpret them, the researchers may be "pumping" people without their full participation in deciding the relevance of the research process for them.

Whyte also does not agree with the practice of spending a large amount of time on organising literature reviews of the field of study. He prefers to build up experienced-based knowledge (1991b, p. 10). This is a point where he agrees with other action researchers that it is important to take cues from the local context rather than to develop a strong hypothesis beforehand and then "use" the field to test this. He believes that this is in any case unethical practice. It is more important to create relevant data with participants and later perhaps draw out the theoretical significance of this so that it can be shared with others. This does not mean that he foregoes altogether all literature searches, but he does not consider this as forming a basis for creating hypotheses which

are then simply tested in the field. The field itself must supply themes and patterns whose significance can later be drawn out.

Whyte suggests that it is important when any findings are produced that these are checked with the practitioners involved. This is what it means to create interpretations jointly (1991b, p. 283). There can be some division of labour and sharing out of roles between researchers/participants, but this must be negotiated together. Therefore Whyte argues that for a project to be called participatory action research it must have the interest of the professional researchers and the key members of the organisation. Moreover, the research methods as well as the interpretation of any data created, must be credible to all parties (1991b, p. 277). Whyte also emphasises that when he talks about participation he means that senior members of the organisation should not have almost total control over the definition of a problem, but other members must also be involved in defining the problem as well as reflecting on its solution. The researcher in action research should consider themselves responsible not only to organisational heads, but also to other officials and employees. Working with and through a union is sometimes a way to involve employee participation, which Whyte *et al.* (1991) did in their research.

3.2.4. Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)

Checkland's approach to SSM is similar in many ways to the ideas developed by Whyte (Flood and Romm, 1996a, p. 158). Flood and Romm note that SSM is based on the idea that through the process of involving people in debate new ways of thinking and feeling can emerge, as long as the debate is well structured. SSM is a methodology aimed at organising a well-structured debate between different points of view. It is also aimed at creating in the process relevant systems that can be compared with perceived

realities, so that new systemically desirable systems can be created (Checkland, 1981). In this sense it is a systemic approach. It is based on organising debate with the intention to arrive at systems of action that can be implemented and that people will find meaningful (culturally feasible).

Checkland describes SSM as an emerging process where people learn new ways of working and new perceptions through being involved in the action research project (1981, pp. 146-148). The starting point for Checkland's programme was a criticism of what he called hard systems thinking where an overall objective is assumed to exist in a complex grouping and where the aim was to use science to optimise the chances of reaching this objective. In contrast the "soft" approach could be used in tackling soft, ill-structured problems. As an action research programme SSM research is trying to find out about human problems and also trying to improve ways of dealing with these problems. Systems are seen as human activity systems. Using SSM, problems are not treated merely as technical ones capable of scientific solution. In soft systems thinking, problems and objectives are treated as messy, because different people have different opinions about what the problems are and how they should be tackled.

Part of the methodology is aimed at providing room for different people to see different systems as relevant. It is important that lots of relevant systems are made explicit through soft systems methodology. Then people can compare their different views of these and also compare their ideas on possible transformations, so that finally feasible and desirable changes to the situation can be made. In the process, specific human activity systems are developed into models (conceptual models) so that people are helped to define actions in systemic terms. The system, however, is only as good as the people using and perceiving it — and this is why Checkland associates his position

with an interpretive one, where cultural features are given a lot of importance in the analysis (1981).

When referring to culture, Checkland refers to intangible characteristics that reside in the individual and collective consciousness of human beings in groups (1981, p. 181). When Checkland says that action research must make recommendations that are culturally feasible, he states that people must be able to find meaning in the changes that are recommended (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. 52). The changes must be considered meaningful to those involved.

This is a point that is emphasised by nearly all action researchers, who believe that changes will be implemented only if they are perceived as meaningful by practitioners. Jackson describes Checkland's ideas by noting that "the participants in a soft systems study learn their way to a new conception of feasibility as attitudes and perceptions are tested and changed. Changes that could not have been conceived of because of the culture of the situation before the study began can seem obvious by the time it has finished" (Jackson, 1991, p. 157). In the process of the action research, people learn to debate and they learn new ways of interacting with one another. This is also how Whyte sees the contribution of his participatory action research.

Using Checkland's ideas we can see how the ideas of systems thinking and action research are sometimes associated and we can also see how action research according to Checkland implies taking a "soft" approach to systems — which includes adopting a participatory approach to allow participants to express their views of relevant systems. Bryman also associates action research with looking at wholes rather than offering a reductionist approach looking only at the few variables that are concentrated upon for the analysis. He states that in action research "the emphasis tends to be upon the need

to understand a total system in conducting such an analysis" (1989, p. 178). Bryman notes that to understand a whole system the researcher has to understand all the parts and the way in which they are interdependent in the particular situation. To understand this requires examination of patterns of interconnection in any specific organisation. A system cannot be understood and improved only by focusing on parts. Action research, as noted when discussing Lewin's, and Argyris and Schön's argument, is not aimed at looking for general covering laws by focusing on the abstract relationship between certain variables, but is aimed at gaining a whole understanding of the complexity in particular situations.

3.2.5. Ackoff's Interactive Planning (IP)

Ackoff suggests that to deal effectively with any problematic situation two things are required: "First, we must determine what the situation has in common with other situations that we have previously experienced. Second, we must also know how the situation we face is unique" (1981, p. 62). According to him, Interactive Planning cannot occur without looking for some patterns in the situation which it may share with other situations, but also looking for its uniqueness. This is also what the quality of action research is. The research component lets us compare to look for similarities with what the situation has in common with others and to see under what conditions the same knowledge may be helpful to people outside of the specific situation that is being looked at. Therefore, there is some "common" knowledge that can be drawn from any piece of action research — this knowledge is relevant to audiences outside of the concrete context of action in which the research takes place. The action component tells us that we cannot act and improve unless we know about specific factors and specific interrelationships in the situation that the action research is involved with. This

is more local knowledge that as Argyris and Schön note is about taking cues from the local context and creating designs for acting accordingly. The extent to which we can create "common" knowledge out of doing action research relates to the question of generalization — which is a question that both action research and case study research have to address. But at this point I want to show how Ackoff makes some points that explain a way of linking action research and systems thinking.

Similarly to Whyte and to Checkland, Ackoff suggests that we must study systems by adopting the principle of participation (1981, p. 65). The idea is that in planning the participative process of planning is more important than the product. If people can participate in the process, then they can become more involved in implementation of solutions. This relates also to Checkland's views that implementation cannot take place unless plans (activity systems) are considered meaningful to the participants.

Another statement Ackoff makes is about continuity (1981, p. 70). We must realise that we need continuous planning in order to pursue our plans. This allows people to be aware that their own values may change and also the facts and events that they thought would occur might not occur. So it is a point about the need to be able to adjust plans accordingly. This relates to Argyris and Schön's point that we need to be open to listen to different ideas and to see things differently from what we originally might want. We must not try and defend our conceptions and our values without opening them to dispute. It also means that in action research we must allow new patterns to emerge and must not try to fix things in habitual ways.

Ackoff also makes points about what he calls the principle of coordination and the principle of integration (1981, p. 71). Ackoff makes the point about the application of the idea of co-ordination: that no part of the organisation can be planned for effectively

if it is planned for independently of any other unit at the same level (1981, p. 72). All units must be planned for interdependently. He furthermore makes the point about the idea of integration: that planning done independently at any level of a system cannot be as effective as planning carried out at all levels (1981, p. 73). The solution to a problem that appears at one level may best be obtained by changing a policy or practice at another. This is knowledge that Ackoff gives about organisation and society and that helps action researchers to think systemically as they proceed with their project.

Ackoff's approach is one of using what he calls Interactive Planning to create more co-operations between people towards more future ideals. This ties in with the action research principle of participation in the research project and also with the principle of creating action (planning and evaluating plans). He adds the principle of continuity (to ensure that cycles of action and evaluating are never-ending) and of co-ordination and integration (to ensure that the whole system is focused upon). The principles of continuity and of co-ordination and integration make more explicit what is implicit in many views of action research — which it cannot only look at parts if it wants to create workable improvements for the totality.

3.2.6. Summary and Relevance of Action Research Ideas for My Own Case Study
   Research

Lewin's work on action research emphasises the idea of making research more relevant to the problems faced by people (one of the principles that I mentioned as being important for action research). He still, however, leaves some control of the research process in the hands of the professional researcher (as Gustavsen, 1992, notes). Argyris and Schön agree with Lewin that the aim of research, including action research, is to be able to think about plausible explanations for events that occur.

Argyris and Schön want to be able to use the research process to test plausible alternatives, avoiding "obvious interpretations" (Flood and Romm, 1996b). This means that the project has to be organised to try to achieve this. Although they say that the research must be a collaborative process, they still give more scope to professionals because they are regarded as able to help others to escape from their Model 1 behaviour.

In my own case study approach, although I do not see my role as helping others to move to my way of seeing Model II behaviour, I see research needing to fulfil the task of creating a variety of plausible alternative interpretations arising from discussion with participants and from other sources, for example, documents. To try to achieve this task, I did not try to organise a sharing of research roles with the participants when it came to deciding how to proceed in the research design (as Whyte *et al.*, 1991, suggest should be done). I rather organised the case study inquiry using various methods to create ideas about Kaohsiung Harbour and its operations (including human interactions). My case study methodology consisted of using a range of methods such as documentary research and fieldwork involving individual and group interviews. Of course, if any participants had objections to my use of any of the methods, then I could have adjusted accordingly (because my research was an emergent process sensitive to the situation). But in trying to meet the trust of participants in the way I proceeded, this did not mean a negotiated sharing role as is prescribed by Whyte *et al.* for action research.

Unlike the action research authors whom I discussed who state that action research requires researchers to get involved in the action, I believe I needed to be careful of this. This is mainly because of the role that I already have in Kaohsiung

Harbour, which I believe makes it unethical for me to adopt the role of trying to evaluate plans of action as a researcher who has specific status. Although it might be argued (in the abstract) that collaborative research means that my own ideas for action and my own interpretations of it would be subjected to debate, I recognise that in the context of the situation I would be granted a higher status in my interpretations of what needs to be done. Therefore the abstract idea of participation in thinking through plans and evaluating them, would not hold in practice. I cannot really be considered just another participant, even if we all try to pretend this. Flood and Romm (1996a, p. 145) have already noted that it is possible that people will become too reliant on the scientific results offered by the "action scientist". I feel that this is even more so in a situation where I am a known actor in the situation in normal conditions (although at the moment I have the title of "senior researcher"). It is better for me to sustain consciously a situation where I am not seen as actor who lends status to action through research.

What I believe I could achieve in my own case study research is to use methods which helped gain some ideas which went beyond some everyday thinking; and these ideas I probed with participants. And my record of my interpretations will be available for participants to see. Actually, as can be seen from Chapter Four, a variety of interpretations of the situation can be noted. This means that any one interpretation is not forced onto people. This should prevent people from becoming too dependent on the scientific results offered. It also means that ideas for action that spring from the research do not come across as something that must be implemented. It was more a matter of showing various people how they could reconsider some of the ways they were thinking about situations.

Checkland (1981), Ackoff (1981), and Whyte *et al.* (1991), however, argue that just because the action research is participatory, any results will be generally agreed upon (that is, recommendations for implementation of systemically desirable and culturally feasible changes or of desired future ideals, will be accepted). Therefore they regard the recommendations as not based on some professional authority but based on democratic debate. I aim to show through my own case study research that there is still the danger that any recommendations for action that could be introduced through doing action research in my context (and with me as one of the action researchers) would be too dependent on "the professional". A way around this is to say that the research must become more participatory to ensure that dependence is minimised. While this sounds possible in the abstract, I considered it very difficult, if not impossible, to ensure in practice. And I did not want to run the risk of assuming that it would be possible. Another way for me to proceed, therefore, which I explored my case study, was for me to hold discussions with people and use this together with documentary research in order to come up with ideas and interpretations that I carried into discussions with other participants. However, no attempt was made to create definite action plans as part of the project.

As far as my contribution is concerned, on a theoretical level I aim to show that case study research can allow for theory emergence (in terms of exploration of certain themes that I explore in Chapters Five to Seven). These themes became developed partly through my knowledge of issues arising from the documentary research and partly through discussion (individual and group). In this way themes of relevance to participants emerged and I acted as a carrier of these themes across different interviews

(my idea of systems followed to some extent from that of Ackoff, 1981, even though I did not organise a process of Interactive Planning as part of the project).

As far as theory testing is concerned, I was not looking for "covering laws" as generalisations. In this way I adopt the idea of action research that the search for this reduces the ability for participants to come to terms with local contexts. However, my theory development drawn by using the situation as testing ground was not through action as prescribed by action researchers. Rather it was done through exploration of themes and consideration of how these themes relate to more general literature on the subject. So literature on the subject of cultural learning, political development, systems thinking, and the roles that researchers can play as interventionists, was considered, in relation to the Kaohsiung Harbour Bureau (KHB).

I could not say in advance how this would all be organised. Doing fieldwork is always an emergent process, and involves what Ackoff (1981) calls continuous planning just like other forms of planning. Clark sums up the emergent qualities of action research when he says that it is: "Tentative, non-committal and adaptive; focused on the next stage; evolves the future out of emerging opportunities; has to interpret the present as a basis for asking questions; attempts to comprehend a wide range of factors in a dynamic relationship" (Clark, 1972, p.17). All these ideas about the emergent character of my research process were incorporated by me in my case study approach, even though it was not an action research project. Punch notes that all qualitative research is more emergent than is quantitative research, in any case. He notes that it is impossible to make a definite research proposal in qualitative terms because there can "only be general orienting and guiding research questions" (1998, p. 270). Punch also notes that although some literature can be used to sharpen the focus of the study from

the start, this has to be integrated into the research during the study (1998, p. 271). In my case, the literature that I used to sharpen my focus was firstly literature on privatisation (see Chapter Two) and literature on action research and case study research as methodological approaches (this chapter). But apart from this, the other theoretical development takes place as the study proceeds. Therefore, as seen from the structure of this dissertation, I discuss some literature on cultural learning, political development, and systems thinking later in relation to the case material as developed from the fieldwork.

A number of questions that guided my specific case study fieldwork, deriving from my understanding and interpretation of the literature on action research were as follows:

1. What is the role of the researcher in offering research of practical value to participants?

2. Can commonly held knowledge be attained through action research or is all knowledge only relevant if it responds to the uniqueness of situations?

3. Can emergence be planned for?

4. How can researchers build up relations with people in a way which does not make them dependent on "professionals"?

Question 1.

Whyte *et al.* (1991) argue that a principle feature of action research is that it tries to be participatory, allowing participants to help design the research process, to help define what data is to be collected and how, and to participate fully in interpreting the results. It is believed that through this process, people come together to trust the value

of the process in allowing them all to learn from one another. The researcher is just another participant in this process.

In my own case study approach I aimed to approach this question differently, showing that research can be of benefit to participants without providing or devising definite action plans.

Question 2.

Action researchers believe that some kind of publicly relevant "common" knowledge can be gathered through exploring patterns in local contexts, although they are more interested in helping practitioners in such contexts to deal with problems that they are facing. They therefore are particularly interested in responding to the uniqueness of situations when they help people design actions for their future.

In my own case study approach I aimed to offer an answer to this question which is neither that provided by Ackoff about commonalities and uniqueness (1981), nor that of "normal" case study research. It relates to the potential for theory development through case study research as discussed in Section 4 below.

Question 3.

It is important that researchers are very sensitive to the responses of people to one another and to the researcher, so that he or she can adjust the way of doing the research and also find new ways of allowing a variety of interpretations to come to the fore. The skills that are required here may not be able to be planned for. It involves sometimes raising for more discussion the controversial issues; I could not plan for exactly how this might be achieved. All that I could do was rely on my personal skills that would be required to achieve this. This is explained later in this chapter and in more detail in Chapter Eight.

Building up trust while not letting people become too dependent on the professional researcher to help them is not an easy process in the context in which I was working. I had to work with "management" but also gain the trust, for example, of the unions, and all the time I did not want people to believe that I was trying to force any final view. This is one of the challenges that had to explore in my specific case study research.

In my research I tried not to take only one side in any argument, without showing different interpretations. The action researcher Reason argues that when collaborative researchers proceed they may in fact create disruptions for participants, because their worldviews may be questioned in the inquiry process (1988, 1994). Through the whole process of organising my own case study I tried to explore further some answers to the question of how people's views can be handled sensitively without people coming to rely on any one interpretation as an answer to issues that are raised in the research.

In the following section, I offer a literature review on case study research, ending with the discussion of the same four questions raised in this conclusion.

3.3. Case Study Research

This section presents some ideas from the literature on case study research. As with the discussion of action research, it is difficult to provide a general description of a type of research, because there are always variations of how a type of research is approached. Nevertheless, as in action research, so in case study research, the concept refers to certain qualities that are expressed in the various forms of its doing. I therefore offer a discussion of the literature on case study research, indicating some of the ideas

associated with this kind of research. (This, together with Section 2, sets the scene for my own approach offered in the following section.)

For a period of time in the social sciences, case studies were not given much credibility among social scientists. Bryman notes that this type of research went into decline in the 1960s (1989, p. 170). However, he states that "there has been a slight renaissance for the case study since the late 1970s, as predicted to a certain degree by Daft (1980)" (1989, p. 170). He points out that one of the reasons why case study research was low on credibility-scoring in the 1960s, was because there was the accusation of limited "generalisability" (1989, p. 170). As Burgelman (1985, p. 42) also notes: "Field studies in one setting raise questions about the external validity of the findings". Researchers who believe in the relevance of case study research have to address this question about what is called the "external validity" of results (beyond the unit of study that is chosen to investigate).

However, as Bryman indicates, despite these questions regarding generalisability, which various case study researchers have answered over the years in different ways, "case studies may sometimes be more attractive to practising managers, since their closeness to detail and familiarity with ongoing organisations can be more meaningful to them than the preoccupation with often abstract variables that characterises much quantitative research" (1989, p. 178). According to Bryman, case study research shares with action research the idea that one should not look for abstract relationships between variables as a way of helping practising managers to manage real contexts. If research is to have practical value, then it is better to find another way of doing research than that associated with quantitative seeking for relationships between variables which are isolated in abstraction from their context. With this in mind, and because I hope my

own case study becomes useful for "practising managers", I believe that it is important to pay attention to what has been said in the literature about this form of research.

To organise the discussion about case study research I divide the literature into a number of categories (subheadings), namely: the unit of analysis; the emphasis on more qualitative than quantitative methods; the issue of generalisation; theory emergence; and theory testing. I then give an example of a case study research that was done on Rhine and Rhode Transport (RRT). This example serves three purposes. It serves the purpose of showing what a case study can do. It also serves the purpose of showing what kinds of themes have emerged in another case of the transport business (similar in some ways to the "business" of Kaohsiung Harbour). Finally it serves the purpose of allowing me to show how my own approach to case study research extends the kind of way in which this case study was done. I can show by reference to this example how I organise my own case study differently in some respects.

3.3.1. Case Study Research: Identifying a Unit of Analysis

De Vaus argues that the defining feature of case study research is that it "involves data collection about one case" (1996, p. 6). The definition of case studies is that a particular unit of analysis is chosen to investigate in depth and this unit becomes explored as fully as possible. That is why some authors say it is a holistic approach, because it looks at the unit in its totality. Another reason why case study research can be seen as holistic is when it helps us to see that we should not have a closed set of concepts when we examine the unit of analysis. We can use the term "system" to show that we can look at the system in a specific case, examining levels in relation to each other and considering also their possible interdependence (in terms of the concepts of integration and co-ordination as Ackoff, 1981, notes). We can also examine a variety of

viewpoints relevant to the analysis and in this way also broaden our understanding so that it is more systemic humanly understood.

Yin notes that once the general definition of the unit of analysis for the case has been established, other clarifications become important. As he notes: "If the unit of analysis is a small group, for instance, the persons to be included within the group (the immediate topic of the case study) must be distinguished from those who are outside it (the context for the case study). Similarly, if the case is about services in a specific geographic area, decisions need to be made about public services whose district boundaries do not coincide with the area. Finally, for almost any topic that might be chosen, specific time boundaries are needed to define the beginning and the end of the case" (1994, pp. 24-25). The point about choosing a unit of analysis is to be able to show what the unit is that has been chosen, how the elements within the unit fit together (in terms of integration and co-ordination where applicable) and also how the "outside" environment might impact on the study. (The environment is defined as that which is outside the remit of study at that point in time, but which still impacts on the study.)

Yin notes also that we must remember that researchers normally want to compare their findings with previous research. He therefore suggests that "each case study and unit of analysis either should be similar to those previously studied by others or should deviate in clear, operationally defined ways. In this manner, the previous literature therefore also can become a guide for defining the case and the unit of analysis" (1994, p. 25). So defining a unit of analysis should be done in such a way that theoretical development can take place as a result of the case by being able to relate and compare the unit studied with other units of similar kind. Often in management research an

organisation is chosen as a unit of analysis for this reason. Bryman notes that many examples of cases in the literature take a unit "such as an organisation or a department within an organisation, as constituting 'the case'" (1989, p. 171). He notes that generally places or sites usually provide the focus of investigation (1989, p. 171).

Gummesson states that the important point about whatever unit is chosen, is that it provides "... the opportunity for holistic view of a process: The detailed observations entailed in the case study method enable us to study many different aspects, examine them in relation to each other, view the process within its total environment and also utilise the researcher's capacity for 'Verstehen'" (1991, p. 76). Gummesson's point links up with the statements mentioned earlier about how the unit of analysis is chosen and treated. It is chosen so that comparison with other literature can occur and it is treated in such a way that we can examine it as a whole (as Gummesson describes this) and in relation to its environment (defined as outside the area of study at that point in time).

According to Gummesson, because of the concentration on the details of a specific case, "case study research provides us with a greater opportunity than other available methods to obtain a holistic view of a specific research project" (1991, p. 76). Gummesson also states that this attention to the detail of a specific case means that it can be particularly helpful to practitioners, who need to have a holistic view in considering their way of acting. He notes that "case research is particularly useful when the audience are managers who must implement findings" (1991, p. 76). This idea links up with that of Bryman, who also sees case studies as useful because of their attention to the details of local contexts. Bryman sees the connection to implementation created through the fact that often case studies are connected with action research. He notes

that "Many action research projects are in fact special kinds of single case study" (1989, p. 179). In action research as a kind of case study, there is less preoccupation with "abstract variables that characterises much quantitative research" (1989, p. 178).

Both Gummesson and Bryman note that case studies, in investigating the unit of analysis, tend not to rely too much on quantitative investigation, especially as this implies a "preoccupation with abstract variables". In the next section I explain more about the use of methods in case study research.

3.3.2. Methods Used in Case Study Research

Whatever unit of analysis is chosen to organise the case study, De Vaus notes that "in any particular study a range of methods can be used" (1996, p. 7). He pictures this in a diagram showing that case studies can involve methods such as "questionnaires, interviews (structured); in-depth interviews [less structured]; observation and content analysis" (Figure 1.1, p. 6).

Gummesson and Bryman note a link between case studies and a more qualitative approach in the use of methods. They do not see all the methods suggested by De Vaus used to the same degree and with the same importance in any case study. They suggest that the focus will be more on qualitative investigation. Bryman notes that: "Case studies usually comprise a number of emphases, which distinguish them from much quantitative research in particular. There is a strong emphasis on context; readers feel that they know what it is like to be in the organisation being studied, and this slant provides a frame of reference for both researcher and reader to interpret events. The usually prolonged involvement of the researcher means that interconnections of events can be traced over time, so that processes can be inferred" (1989, p. 172). Bryman suggests that this kind of investigation cannot rely on quantitative methods, as they are

normally understood to be used in other kinds of research. But he also is aware that "not all case studies can adequately be described as instances of qualitative research, since they sometimes make substantial use of quantitative research methods" (1989, p. 170). The important point about the qualitative orientation to research is that it does not follow the traditional research approach based on superficial entry into the situation. Schein notes that: "it is too much to ask of the traditional research process to reveal this [deep] level of dynamics [of organisational life], yet without understanding organisations at this level how can we possibly make sense of what we observe around us?" (2000, p. 235). Schein suggests that in studying organisations (such as, say, a bank), it is necessary to understand the subtle processes of interaction that draw on "assumptions about the nature of work and hierarchy in this bank" (2000, p. 235). Case study research offers a way of seeing what might be "quite invisible to the outsider or to the surveyor with the questionnaire" (2000, p. 235). So the problem with only using quantitative methods such as questionnaires is that much of the substance of organisational life becomes invisible to the method of inquiry.

Overall there is not full agreement about the extent to which quantitative or qualitative methods may be used in any case study. Sometimes, survey research or structured observation or field experiments are conducted in a study, as De Vaus notes (1996, p. 6). However, according to Bryman, there is then very little to distinguish the case study from quantitative investigations if this is what is done (1989, p. 170). The point about qualitative research, as Punch notes, is that it allows "unstructured observation, deep involvement in the setting, and a strong identification with the researched" (1994, p. 84). According to him, "this implies that the investigator engages in a close, if not intimate, relationship with those he or she

observes" (1994, p. 84). Punch (1986, p. 11) notes that sometimes this close relationship is negatively associated with spying and deception. This is especially if entry and departure, friendship and abandonment enter as issues for the participants. These are issues that are not part of "dry discussions on the techniques of observation, taking field notes, analysing the data, and writing the report". But they affect qualitative researchers especially, who often face "acute moral and ethical dilemmas" because a "semiconscious political process of negotiation pervades all fieldwork". Punch (1994, p. 84) suggests that in qualitative research political and ethical issues "often have to be resolved situationally, and even spontaneously, without the luxury of being able to turn first to consult a more experienced colleague". An understanding of methods alone does not equip the qualitative researcher to handle such issues in the field. In contrast, quantitative methods allow the researcher to evade such questions more easily as they are not in close contact with the participants.

Janesick (1994) notes that in qualitative inquiry, by staying in a setting over time, the researcher has the opportunity to organise "multiple views of framing the problem, selecting research strategies, and extending discourse across several fields of study. This is exactly the opposite of the quantitative approach, which relies on one mind-set, the psychometric, and which prefers to aggregate numbers that are one or more steps removed from social reality. The qualitative researcher is uncomfortable with methodolatry and prefers to capture the lived experience of participants in order to understand their meaning perspectives" (1994, p. 218). Janesick therefore believes that the important distinguishing feature of qualitative inquiry is that it involves a different mindset. Also, in the final reporting of the study, there is a different style of

report: for the qualitative researcher, "the story told is the dance in all its complexity, context, originality, and passion" (1994, p. 218).

One of the distinguishing marks of case study research, as seen above, is that it focuses more on certain qualitative methods. Bryman suggests that case study research, in similar fashion of action research, relies a lot on debate and interpretation through debate, which is a "softer" approach to doing research. This softer approach affects the way that the researcher relates to the participants through a different mindset than just collecting data from them to put later into a report about the facts.

Whether or not case studies are combined with a kind of action research project as Bryman suggests, the idea of not wanting to reduce "the totality" to an analysis of abstract variables, pushes case study research more in the direction of a qualitative focus. This does not, however, exclude using quantitative methods if they are seen as helpful in providing extra information that is relevant to the in depth investigation. In my own case study research I show how I use documentary research in both a quantitative and qualitative way. I show for instance that quantitatively issues of efficiency were frequently raised (although I did not create an exact count of this), but meanwhile the term has many different meanings as used by particpants. I focused more qualitative methods such as in depth interviewing on individual and group bases. And I combined this with my experience of working in the harbour that can be called a kind of "observation" method, which, as Schein notes (2000), offers a less superficial form of observation than, say, surveyor's questionnaires.

3.3.3. The Issue of Generalisation in Case Study Research

Bryman points out that one of the main reasons for people losing faith in case studies, especially in the 1960s and early 1970s, is that they have been associated with

"a prevailing view that it was not possible to generalise the results of research deriving from just one or two cases" (1989, p. 170). It was sometimes seen that case studies only had what is called intrinsic value in offering some insight into a particular situation (Stake, 1994, p. 237). The purpose was not seen as theory building. However, Stake notes that at times even a case study researcher may decide to "do just that" (1994, p. 237). Then the study is seen as an "instrumental case study", a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. Stake notes that when used instrumentally, "the case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinised, its ordinary activities detailed, but because this helps us pursue the external interest. The case may be seen as typical of other cases or not" (1994, p. 237).

Punch notes that recently it is becoming accepted that qualitative designs for research can include case studies, whether single or multiple. In single and multiple case studies, the predevelopment of conceptual frameworks differs, depending on how much theoretical preconceptualisation the researcher tries to bring to the situation (1998, p. 271). Bryman states that "the problem of generalisation is often perceived as the chief drawback of case study research". Case study researchers, in the past at least, seemed to be apologetic if they could not indicate how general their conceptualisations would be. Especially when relying on a single case study to organise their research, they often considered "it incumbent upon them to justify their reliance on a single study" (1989, p. 172). Bryman suggests that one does not need to adopt such an apologetic stance. He is aware that "nobody believes that a single case can be representative of a wider population" (1989, p. 172), but he points out that case studies should be evaluated in

terms of the "adequacy of the theoretical inferences that are generated". According to Bryman, one need not use a logic aimed at generalisation (as is used in statistically based generalisation) but logic that "engenders patterns and linkages of theoretical importance" (1989, p. 173). This can be done using the case to think about issues that have arisen in the literature and to make a contribution to this literature. Theory emergence and theory testing are discussed in the following two sections below. For the moment, I want to indicate that some authors have suggested that the logic used to generate findings from case studies is similar to the logic used in experimentation.

Remenyi *et al.* (1998) note that traditionally there have been prejudices against the case study method and that "it has been viewed as a less desirable form of empirical research methodology than surveys or experiments". They note that one of the accusations is that "nothing can be deduced from a single case study" (1998, p. 168). But they note that this accusation "ignores the fact that case studies, like experiments, can be generalisable and used to develop theoretical propositions, even if they do not represent a sub sample of a particular population or universe" (1998, p. 168). They argue that case studies in fact follow the logic of the experiment, which also cannot create external validity from a single study. As they note: "of course, one case study, like one experiment, cannot provide sufficient evidence to be able to make robust generalisations but in business studies this may not be essential" (1998, p. 169).

They also note that the accusation that case study researchers often create interpretations that go beyond what the evidence suggests, is an accusation that can be met, as long as we realise that "case study research is not an easy option and the business and management researcher needs to be prepared for a distinct challenge" (1998, p. 168). The researcher will have to organise the research in a way that appears

credible and does not seem just to be leaping to incredible conclusions on the basis of thin evidence. They suggest that this means that researchers have to develop the "subtle skills of listening and understanding the nuances in the evidence provided by informants" (1998, p. 168). They also note that the accusation of bias, which implies that only subjective conclusions can be created via the case study, is an accusation that can be levelled at any research. As they note: "bias is everywhere, but attempts may be made to minimise it" (1998, p. 169). By being careful and not trying to offer generalisations beyond what seems credible and what can be defended, it seems that we can recognise that some sort of generalisation is possible. This generalisation may not be as "robust" as when we organise statistical generalisation as is possible from survey research; but it may not need to be as robust as this, as Remenyi *et al.* note.

Yin similarly emphasises that "a fatal flaw in doing case studies is to conceive of statistical generalisation as the method of generalising the results of the case" (1994, p. 31). He points out that it is important to realise that what is being achieved in case study generalisation is not statistically based generalisation as can be done with survey research. He argues that the method of generalisation is "'analytic generalisation', in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study" (1994, p. 31). In terms of the logic of analytic generalisation he also suggests that if two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed. Furthermore, he claims that the results are even more potent "if two or more cases support the same theory but do not support an equally plausible, rival theory" (1994, p. 31). In my own case study I do not intend to create tests exactly of the kind Yin suggests, but to compare with existing theory in a

different way, while still drawing on his idea that analytic generalisation is different from statistically based generalisation.

Yin points out that external validity when applied to case study research refers to establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised (1994, p. 33). As long as one is clear what one is doing and does not confuse this with survey research which relies on statistical generalisation, then this way of generating conclusions can be supported according to Yin. It is important to remember that case studies (as with experiments) rely on analytical generalisation, where "the investigator is striving to generalise a particular set of results to some broader theory" (1994, p. 36).

Gummesson also refers to "the frequent criticism is that case research is inferior to methods that are based on random statistical samples of a large number of observations [as in survey research]" (1991, p. 77). He notes that the lack of statistical validity (using statistical methods to compare large numbers of responses through survey questionnaires) is a criticism which is associated with case study research. He agrees that in case study research "one cannot make any generalisations about how common these types of systems and interaction patterns are. But the possibilities to generalise from one single case are founded in the comprehensiveness of the measurements which makes it possible to reach a fundamental understanding of the structure, process and driving forces rather than a superficial establishment of correlation or cause-effect relationships" (1991, p. 79).

In Gummesson's understanding of case study research, although it lacks the possibility of creating "superficial" correlations and statements of causal connection between abstracted variables, it has the ability to achieve other ways of generalising. This is in agreement with Bryman and Yin. Through my own case study I further

explore what this "analytic generalisation" can involve. I try to add some extra dimensions to this kind of generalisation by showing how broader theory can be created by developing a variety of interpretations and not only trying to test one out for its credibility (this is in accordance with a more interpretive view as taken, for example, by Checkland's understanding of social life, but seen in the context of case study research rather than his action research). My argument about making a contribution to broader theory is organised in relation to what are called "exploratory theorising" as well as "theory testing" — two qualities of "normal" case studies which are explained in the next subheadings.

3.3.4. Exploratory Theorising: Theory Emergence

Burgelman believes that case studies can be used to permit the generation of theory in various ways. They can for instance be used to generate new insights that are useful for building theory, for example, about strategising processes (1985). Bryman makes a similar point when he notes that "case studies are often useful for providing an understanding of areas of organisational functioning that are not well documented and which are not amenable to investigation through fleeting contact with organisations" (1989, p. 173). Case studies can help create insights and understandings through the ability of the researcher to engage for a period of time with the case and to develop understanding of areas such as "organisational functioning". It can also be used to develop insights about issues such as the way that people interact with one another.

Mintzberg (1979, p. 583) offers an idea that is relevant to exploratory research in case studies. He argues that some of his own work on management resulted from small samples — sometimes only following up the activities and interactions of a number of managers. This kind of exploratory work, he argues, needs to be encouraged and often

produces more useful results about the way that management works than does statistically based research. For instance, his own case study research helped him to come to understand that strategy formulation (in the case he examined) was a discontinuous process rather than a rationally planned one as had been proclaimed in the literature. He believes that the categories built up through case study research often have a closer relationship with the organisation's actual functioning than other research is able to accomplish. Therefore he justifies case study research on the grounds that it can introduce ideas and categories into the literature that otherwise would not have been considered.

Bryman goes further than this by suggesting that the idea that case studies can serve exploratory work in generating theory, is closely tied to a specific view of science. It is tied to a view of science "as a voyage of discovery" (1989, p. 174). This view of science differs from a view of science as trying to create a definite view of the world. It implies that we can use cases to explore continually new questions and introduce new ideas, without trying to build up a theory which offers one answer to some topic that is being investigated. This view of how case studies can be used as part of a continued "voyage" is expressed in some ways in the case that I introduce in this chapter as an example of case study research (Section 3.6).

3.3.5. Theory "Testing"

There are also ways in which case studies serve the purpose of testing some ideas that have been developed in theory. They can be used as a kind of test case to see if the results of the studies are applicable in the given case as well. Bryman gives the example of findings from other studies that "have demonstrated the capacity of individuals to invest increasing amounts of time and resources in administrative ventures that evidence

suggests are unlikely to come to fruition. In other words, people sometimes allow their commitment to projects of action to escalate regardless of rational assessments of the likelihood of success or failure" (1989, p. 175). This finding can be "tested" through using case study research to focus on this and to see if the case under investigation bears this out and to what extent. Case studies done with such a kind of focus therefore can aid theory testing (although Bryman does not explain the example under the heading of theory-testing, I believe that it can be seen as an example of this).

Yin (1981, 1993) argues likewise that theories can be tested by setting up comparable contexts to see whether it fits other cases; if it does not, it is likely that the conditions under which the theory operates will need to be specified more precisely. So using a case one can develop theory by considering the extent to which findings from other research studies seem to work in the case or not; and to consider what extra conditions may be needed for them to work.

Yin notes that when cases are being used to develop theory in an exploratory way (as explained in Section 5) or to test theory (as he explains this) it is important in any case that theory development is built into the design of the project. This means that prior to the conduct of data collection, some kind of idea as to how one may want to contribute to theory development has to be constructed (1994, p. 27). Yin sees this as the major difference from ethnographic research, where the need to think about prior theory, is less important. In ethnographic research issues are allowed to emerge fully from the study, whereas in case study research, if it is to serve the purpose of theory development, certain "initial ingredients" should be sought (1994, p. 27). This means that some attention has to be given from the start to covering the "questions, propositions, units of analysis, logic connecting data to propositions, and criteria for

interpreting the findings" (1994, p. 28). Yin believes that if this preparatory work is done "the complete research design will provide surprisingly strong guidance in determining what data to collect and the strategies for analysing the data" (1994, p. 28). This is so that theory development can be expected to take place. Otherwise it is possible that the results are not sufficiently linked up with broader theories in the field.

It is important, no matter how the research proceeds, that when theory development takes place (either through exploratory work or through attempts to use cases as test cases to relate to more general literature on the topic), that generalisation is not seen as of statistical relevance, as Yin and Gummesson have pointed out.

3.3.6. An Example of a Case Study: Importance for My Understanding of Case Studies

In this section I provide an example to illustrate some of the points that have been made in the previous sections and also to take some of them further. The example is a case study investigation of Rhine and Rhone Transport (RRT), by Letiche (1996). Letiche uses the case to show that certain results can be achieved from his case study, but these would be regarded in the form of creating ideas for further thought on the part of those reading the results. He still thinks that his discussion helps to add ideas, even though he cannot give only one point of view (1996, p. 199). He also shows that there is no way in which he can say that one point of view would be more valid than others. He is not using the case to come up with a valid view of what is involved in managing RRT (one internally valid view). Nor is he using the case to come up with one idea about what the management of RRT means for other transport systems or for other management systems (to create external validity by generalising this way).

He is using the case to give us some ideas that we can use to think about the internal operation of RRT and to think about possible application in other areas too. So the study does not aim to provide internal or external validity seen as one picture of the case and/or its necessary importance for other situations. It aims to provide some understanding that offers ideas and questions for us to think about. This use of the case shows that he is using it in a way which is quite exploratory as described in the section on exploratory theorising. But he is using it so that people will realise that exploration means that there is more than one view that can be provided. This is what he means by polyphony. He also is using the case not to create generalisations in the sense of trying to say that results will be applicable in the areas specified.

In this sense he agrees with Remenyi *et al.* (1998) that one must not try to create robust generalisation from case studies.

Letiche shows how one can avoid trying to make robust generalisations, while still offering some views of relevance to wider theoretical literature. He therefore shows how the case can lead to theory development. As far as theory testing is concerned, he is not using the case to try and test out some statements with reference to the evidence of the case. He does not want people to use the case to come up with any one set of statements or set of points of view. This also relates to his views on polyphony. He explains that the case points to certain paradoxes of management and he also explains how his case helps to add some light to issues such as the relationship between decision-making and implementation and how people can work with several "bosses". These are issues in the literature on management which he comments on as he writes up the case. But it is important to note that in the task of writing up the conduct of the case study he does not try to finalise any answers on any of the topics investigated.

To begin with, he indicates that he investigated the case with a specific focus: the focus was on "issues of decision making, (transnational) strategy and organisational culture" (1996, p. 177). This is in line with Yin's idea that one cannot do case study research unless one has some beginning point of theoretical entry. Letiche notes that the methods that he used to organise his study and identify "trends and problems" were the use of interviews with company and industry insiders (1996, p. 177). His method was thus unstructured interviewing which was one of the methods that De Vaus mentioned could be used in case study research (1996). It is also the primary method that I used in my case study.

Letiche creates a discussion on the relevance of the study by suggesting that the case can be used to highlight "a series of managerial problems and paradoxes: if a company's cultural fit (that is, its adaptation to national norms and values) is exceptionally strong, this can be a source of rigidity and ineffectiveness; if a company sells itself exceptionally well in the financial markets this can lead to a severe loss of strategic control; if decentralisation leads to fragmentation, restructuring can become unmanageable" (1996, p. 177). He thus already shows that there is not going to be one answer to theoretical questions that can be provided through the case. Similarly, from my analyses in Chapters Five to Seven, it will be clear that I was not trying to offer one answer to the themes that I found to be relevant around a discussion of the case.

Letiche uses the case to explore further certain ideas about authority in the literature. For example, the literature shows that sometimes in firms that are not bureaucratic, the "authority" that people have may be vague. Letiche suggests that at RRT this is the case. As he puts it: "employees often refer to several 'bosses' in the organising of their work. The division between staff and line authority is vague" (1996,

p. 179). He suggests that the reason why the authority is vague is because employees are not sure whom they should regard as their immediate boss. This adds an extra dimension to the literature on types of authority other than bureaucratic authority. In bureaucratic authority, there is one clear line of command and people know to whom they must report (Weber, 1947). But Letiche shows that this other type of "organisation" means that employees do not know to whom they should report. Therefore the authority of "the bosses" becomes vague.

I show similarly that literature on participation can be enhanced when we consider that cultural distance can be interpreted in many ways even within a specific organisation such as KHB. There is no one cultural regime that decides what the extent of power distance can be such that it is comfortable for both senior managers and workers. I explain this in my Chapter Five. I also show that as far as modernising towards trying to make a more efficient organisation is concerned, that the case points to possibilities for criticising the modern view of efficiency. Although people in the Harbour refer frequently to this as the grounds for privatising more, there is a lot of ambiguity around what the structure should be to create a better Harbour that can serve all the stakeholders. And I show that ways of applying systems thinking can be enhanced when we realise that systems thinking in the KHB can take place by agencies such as researchers in a number of ways, such as a form of case study research being one of them.

Letiche notes that there is a commitment on the part of management at RRT to continuity and stability more than fast profits and opportunism (1996, p. 180). This also adds ideas to the literature on whether "fast profits" is the guiding force that necessarily guides all management decision-making at RRT. According to Letiche, fast profit

making is not the norm at RRT. Nevertheless, he suggests that because of conditions such as is a very strong entrepreneurial tradition among Dutch small companies which provides the large transport corporations with very vigorous sub-contractors, there is proficiency in the transport sector and this applies too to RRT. Although RRT began as a small family business transporting vegetables, it grew to becoming active in:

1. International expediting (accepting responsibility for arranging transport).

2. Transport (actually trucking the cargo).

3. Warehousing (storage of cargo) and distribution.

4. Development and operation of logistic systems.

Letiche attributes the success of this partly to a "strong entrepreneurial tradition" that has been built up in the culture of the transport industry. He explains therefore that as long as there is an entrepreneurial spirit, this seems to be more important for the long terms success of RRT than looking at profit statements every year as a basis for decision-making. This can be shown to be relevant for my discussion of "efficiency" in the KHB as seen from a long-term perspective (as discussed in both Chapters Six and Seven).

As far as relations with employees at RRT is concerned, Letiche notes that The Netherlands is a "highly 'legislated'society" (1996, p. 180). This means that "firms are confronted by rules for work and health conditions, for the level of pay increases, for the costs of the high quality social services" (1996, p. 180). The firm is not even free to "take fundamental strategic decisions without consulting its workforce via the required Workers' Councils" (1996, p. 180). In this way Letiche places the management process at RRT in the context of the Dutch society in terms of its legislation and also its culture of consultation and negotiation.

In my case I place the developments in KHB (and the documents that I examined about this) also in the context of the wider political context. So, for example, I discuss the way that negotiations took place with workers around previous privatisation efforts and I also explain the relevance of the election of the DPP in terms of its party vows.

Another facet of Letiche's study that has similarity to mine is that he observes that at the time of writing his report "almost none of the crucial dilemmas have been solved" (1996, p. 195). Letiche comments that details of people's decision-making are subjected to processes of interaction which are not completed, even though on paper it looks as if arrangements have been made.

Letiche comments on the possibility of creating a sound description of the case that he has tried to describe. He asks: "Does RRT support all and any description? Is there any one point of view which is more valid than the others? When readers are confronted with a series of differing readings, do they accept polyphony (so many observers, so many points of view) or do they think that some form of totalisation [one picture that offers an integrated view] is required?" (1996, p. 199).

Letiche supports the idea that cases should be seen as opportunities to think about questions that have been raised in the literature; and to introduce new ones. This is more advisable than trying to offer a full description of a case to answer a specific question and/or to suggest its necessary generalisability on this basis.

This detailed reference to the example of RRT serves a number of purposes for me. It gives an example of what a case study can do, showing how it can be used in a way which aids theory development. I have focused in my description of the case on how Letiche uses "theory development" in the loose sense of casting light on certain issues, rather than trying to provide full descriptions or to try to provide full "tests" of

theoretical ideas. Letiche expects the reader to consider a range of interpretations of his material. He does not, however, show how he related to participants as he interviewed them. I show how the interviews I undertook were meant to create new ways of seeing issues and also how the issues were experienced by the different participants. So, taking up the general idea of Letiche about the way case study research can be done without providing definite answers or definite recommendations for action, I expand more on this and try to develop a way of doing the case study as well as writing it up which expresses this idea more fully.

Another purpose of my introducing the case was to show what kinds of themes have emerged in another case of the transport business (similar in some ways to the "business" of Kaohsiung Harbour). For example, the theme of how decision-making takes place and who takes responsibility for this; how this relates to commitment to implementation; how views of profit versus sustenance of the organisation are dealt with; how relations with trade unions are considered; etc., are all themes which are relevant to my own investigation. This case serves as a background for me to develop my lines of questioning in relation to Kaohsiung Harbour. Of course, I already, through my own experience of working there, which can be seen as a kind of unstructured observation, have starting ideas too. These, combined with ideas from the literature are the ideas that, as Yin notes, give case study research some focus. However, I must be careful not to focus my investigation too strictly from the start, because then its exploratory function might be sidelined, as Bryman (1989) has noted (and also Mintzberg, 1979, and Punch, 1998).

3.3.7. Summary of Relevance of Literature on Case Study Research (Along with Action Research)

A number of ideas have emerged from my literature review on action research, and case study research, including from the detailed example given of the case of RRT:

Firstly, literature on case study research, as action research, has shown that especially in the context of management studies, it may not be useful for try to generalise about causes in the abstract sense of uncovering relationships between variables. As Henwood and Pidgeon note, this is not the aim of the "naturalist" tradition, which tries to pay closer attention to the context in which interactions occur, rather than to be able to state that X leads to Y as a general rule (1993, p. 15). I agree that this "naturalist" tradition, as Henwood and Pidgeon name it, is suited to the kind of practical purposes that I wish to create in my case study project. How I organised this practical purpose is, however, different from both normal action research and normal case study research.

Secondly, literature on case study research, as action research, has shown that an interpretive focus, where the aim is to try to capture a range of views on any topic, is one way of organizing "theory development". Action research literature focuses on this more than case study research literature does; but the example by Letiche moves also in this direction. I follow up this argument and extending it in my own research, as shown in my reflections also in Chapter Eight.

Thirdly, literature on case study research, as action research, has shown that thinking holistically (systemically) rather than focusing on isolating parts and examining these on their own, helps us to gain a better understanding of contextual features and also a better way of helping people to think about their actions. I utilise some of these

ideas in my own case study, making reference to some ideas on systems thinking for this.

As far as generalisations of results are concerned, I am clearly not looking for "covering laws" as generalisations. In this way I adopt the idea of action research that the search for this reduces the ability for participants to come to terms with local contexts. I also adopt the case study idea that statistical generalisation is not the only credible way to organise generalisation. But in my case I did not see the action component of the project in the same way as prescribed by action researchers. I acted more in line with how Letiche discusses action in the form of raising questions to consider (1996).

Lastly, case study research, as action research, has shown that there are models for doing research that differ from ordinary experimentation or survey research. Researchers doing action research studies (and writing about it) have shown what such research can achieve relative to other forms of research. Likewise, those doing case studies have shown what case study research can achieve relative to other forms of research. This became a useful starting point for me to consider the kind of criteria for quality that I tried to abide by in my own case study research. For instance, in my role as researcher I tried to organise my relations with people on individual and group bases so that they could think about issues from different angles. This requires skills of building up trust; also showing both parties that one does not side necessarily with one or the other; showing that one is open to listen to arguments; etc.

3.4. Bring Together Action Research and Case Study Research Literature

The questions that emerged through my literature review on action research can now be considered again with the material added from the review of case study research. They are as follows:

1. What is the role of the researcher in offering research of practical value to participants?

2. Can commonly held knowledge be attained through action research or is all knowledge only relevant if it responds to the uniqueness of situations?

3. Can emergence be planned for?

4. How can researchers build up relations with people in a way which does not make them dependent on "professionals"?

Question 1.

Remenyi *et al.* (1998, p. 177) argue that the role that the case study researcher adopts may be one of "participant-observation" — where the researcher participates in the work of the organisation being studied. They note that if this role is adopted, it must be done "with considerable care". But they say it is a useful approach "when used in conjunction with other research tactics to obtain a comprehensive view of an organisation" (1998, p. 177). They note that it is not always easy to attain access as a participant observer. As I have indicated, I myself have specific access because I have worked as a manager at Kaohsiung Harbour and I currently am senior researcher there. However, creating for myself a role in which my research activities can be useful without my adopting a role of authority, is something which I needed to explore "with considerable care" as Remenyi *et al.* (1998) put it.

In my case study I did not consider myself as just another participant in this process (as is suggested by participatory action research) — I am a participant with a difference from others', and I cannot hide this. I had to negotiate a role for myself in this context (see also Chapter Eight).

Question 2.

Action researchers believe that some kind of "common" knowledge can be gathered through exploring patterns in local contexts, although they are more inclined to respond to the uniqueness of situations when they help people design actions for their future. Case study research approaches the question of exploration from a less practical angle, and in the process tries to come up with "analytic generalisation" as part of theory development. In my own case study approach I explore the way in which my own agency in the project was linked to helping people to explore new ideas and new ways of looking towards the future.

Question 3.

The researcher must be very sensitive to the responses of people to each other and to the researcher, so that questions of relevance to participants can be explored. Nevertheless a starting plan — what Yin (1994) calls some theoretical focus — can be adopted as part of a design of the project. My initial focus was a concern with the theme of privatisation and how this was experienced (in thinking about the past and future).

Question 4.

As a former "manager" and now researcher my building up of a role for myself where people trust me (including management and unions) is one of the challenges that I explore in my own case study research, focusing on the skills needed to try to develop

and sustain this trust. I explore what are the ethical issues involved in being regarded as a professional researcher in the context in which I am working. My specific role in the organisation as having access as a former manager of warehousing while now being considered a researcher, also places certain ethical commitments on me (see Chapter Eight).

3.5. My Own Case Study Research

As noted from my discussion about emergent planning in previous sections, I could not say exactly in advance what the study would involve and how it would be organised. But the following were my plans that I began with:

3.5.1. Methods

To start with, I planned to do some documentary research in which I would investigate documents such as documents about the history of Kaohsiung Harbour, minutes of meetings that have been held over a certain time and official documents stating plans for Kaohsiung Harbour for the future. These documents (along with my own experience) could give me some idea of the historical context of the harbour (which according to Gummesson, 1991, p. 87) is important for case study research. I planned to use this as the basis to set up conversations with participants about issues arising for them at Kaohsiung Harbour. So my main methods were observation, documentary research, and interviewing (individual and group) in terms of the categories to describe methods that have been offered in the literature. Here I agree with De Vaus (1996) that a range of methods needs to be used. But I think (along with Bryman, 1989, and Gummesson, 1991) that the focus should be more qualitative as a whole.

The way that I chose the participants for organising discussion could also not be planned fully in advance. Mintzberg (1979), and Mintzberg and McHugh (1985), refer to studies based on interviews with a small number of managers. My study was larger than these. I interviewed managers from many different departments at the Harbour and also their staff (see Chapter Four). I also organised interviews with some "top management" (the Director, and the Deputy Director). And I interviewed trade union representatives in the Stevedoring and Warehouse Department (the department where I used to work and where workers are employed who are not paid by the government and where union issues have come up for attention lately due to re-organisation).

I also decided to extend the interviews to cover interviews with the more general public about the Harbour and plans for it. This was to get the wider perspective that case study researchers have noted is part of investigating a "unit of analysis". It has to be investigated also in terms of its wider cultural context. To get an indication of this, I asked students in the colleges which I also direct to tell me their feelings and thoughts on issues that I have identified in the course of the case study, such as deregulation of certain activities of the Harbour and future plans for it in terms of tourism, etc. I believe that this sample is not too "biased" in favour of reporting some special ideas that the students in the colleges feel that I will want to hear — because they do not know what my thoughts on the Harbour are, and therefore they cannot direct their answers simply to please me. I tried to use the skills of attentiveness to new ideas to which Gummesson (1991); Yin (1994); and Remenyi *et al.* (1998) refer as being important ones in case study research. This is so that I can show that I am open to various views and opinions. Along with these residents of the Kaohsiung City, I also interviewed some other residents, to increase my understanding of possible issues of concern.

In summary, the methods I used included a kind of observation (from past experience as well as current observations that I undertook), documentary research, and interviews. The interviews were applied on a one-to-one basis and sometimes on a group basis. I also re-interviewed some people — see Chapter Four for details.

My main ethical principle that I adopted in planning my study was not to let participants feel that I was "ripping them off" (Wolcott, 1995, p. 249) for the benefit simply of doing my own research. I wanted them to feel that they could derive some benefit from the study. So although I did not plan to design the study with participants as is suggested by action researchers, I consulted them sufficiently so that they would not feel ripped off by the way I conducted the investigation.

3.5.2. Organising the Theoretical Discussion

As noted in Section 3.3, Yin prefers to specify some theoretical statements at the outset of a case study inquiry so that the way in which the case proceeds can be used to test these statements (1994, p. 27). He is not inclined towards doing case study research simply to develop what he calls "descriptive theory" (creating theory in a more exploratory way). He wants the researcher to have a clearer idea of some propositions before starting, and to think about how evidence can be used as a way of testing these. However, other case study researchers (such as Bryman, 1989, and Letiche, 1996) do not believe that this is the special strength of case study research and they argue that it does not need to begin with any definite propositions. Following this, I suggest that it was not important for me to start off with any specific propositions that I was aiming to test as if they were a hypothesis in the hypotheco-deductive view of research (as explained by Gill and Johnson, 1991). I used what action researchers call a different approach — as for example described by Flood and Romm when they note

that: "in action research it is regarded as somewhat inappropriate to formulate initial hypotheses and then use situations to test these" (1996a, p. 135). Although not organising an action research project (for reasons explained above) I took up the idea of certain action researchers (and certain people explaining case study research) that there is no special need to identify hypotheses before starting a project. This also ties in with Henwood and Pidgeon's view of what the "naturalist" tradition in social science can offer when it pays close attention to cases and tries to develop theory in a more emergent way (1993).

It is possible to proceed in a case study without having definite theoretical propositions, but with having some theoretical focus, such as the one that Letiche had. My focus on my case was on the experience of privatisation and decision-making around this. So, decision-making; the way decisions are made in the Harbour (especially given the context of it being government owned); the way plans are discussed (e.g. in meetings); the extent to which plans are implemented and what it means to implement a plan; the way in which different participants participate in defining and implementing plans; and the way relations between managers, and between them and other employees, are carried out, were all guiding my research.

Besides this beginning focus for my observations, documentary research and interviewing, I could not say what themes would emerge as extra ones to deal with in the theoretical discussion. The themes had to emerge from the fieldwork itself, and from my creative interpretation of what seemed important to follow up. Otherwise the research would not have been as exploratory as I wanted it to be. As Henwood and Pidgeon note, the point of paying attention to the detail of experience in fieldwork, is to be able to allow ideas of theoretical significance to emerge. One has to be open to allow

this to happen. This is what Gill and Johnson call theory building where they note that "there can be little reliance on literature or previous empirical experience" (1991, p. 119). Even though there may be some literature available on the various topics, it is best to allow themes and ideas to emerge from the data and then to see how this relates to other literature. Otherwise the literature search functions to direct the study too much, as Whyte also notes when he says that he foregoes thorough literature searches as the way of directing the projects in which he is involved (1991a). Without directing the study too much, I wanted to use the skills suggested by Remenyi *et al.* (1998) and others who say that it is important to pay attention to the unexpected in case studies, so that I can be open to new ideas and see what new themes emerge from this.

I was not intending to adopt what Gill and Johnson call a positivist approach "with the aim of developing testable hypotheses and theory generalised across settings" (1991, p. 118). Even Yin's view of what analytic generalisation involves may be too strong in terms of his idea of trying to come up with a set of theoretical statements so that, as he puts it: "The appropriately developed theory also is the level at which the generalisation of the case study results will occur. This role of theory has been characterised throughout this book as 'analytic generalisation'" (1994, p. 30). Yin believes that it is possible to come up with statements whose significance for other settings can be shown. I do not believe that this is necessarily the aim that I needed to accomplish. I did not want to come up either with one internally valid view (in terms of the normal definition of internal validity as referring to the truth about a situation) or with statements regarded as externally valid to some level of generalisation as Yin suggests. I wanted rather to focus on polyphony as Letiche explains it (see Section 3.6).

3.5.3. Skills Required for the Research

While I do not agree with Yin fully in his view of testing theoretical propositions through case study research, certain of the skills that he identifies as important for case study research can be seen to be relevant for my case study too. Yin notes that the demands of case study research on the researcher are high. As he notes: "In actuality, the demands of a case study on a person's intellect, ego, and emotions are far greater than those of any other research strategy". He says: "In laboratory experiments or in surveys, for instance, the data collection phase of a research project can be largely, if not wholly, conducted by a research assistant". This is because, according to him, the activity is actually routinised. He notes: "There is no such parallel in conducting case studies" (1994, p. 55).

Yin explains that in this kind of research there are demands on a person's intellect — the person has to think how they can relate what is being said to them and what they are observing to other cases and other experience and other ideas they have gathered from the literature. This skill I had to utilise and develop in my research. There are also demands on the ego. The researcher must be careful not to push their own ego at the expense of others because that way they can lose others' trust and also they will not be open to new ideas and information. This is something I had to be aware of. There are demands on the emotions. This is similar to what Reason (1994) says about action research that it can be disruptive, not only for participants, but also for the researcher and certain tensions can be created because of this. I also needed emotional strength to handle this in my case study.

Yin also notes that data collection in case study research is not routinised — there is no routine or recipe that can be followed. Nor can one rely on assistants and trained

interviewers to do the data collection, because then one can miss on important points of connection that can only be seen if one is involved in all the research activities oneself. As Yin says, one cannot as in experiments and surveys give most of the data collection work to assistants. This is a major demand therefore on the researcher.

Yin provides a basic list of commonly required skills for case study research which is presented as follows (1994, p. 56):

1. A person should be able to ask good questions — and to interpret the answers.

2. A person should be adaptive and flexible, so that newly encountered situations can be seen as opportunities, not threats.

3. A person must have a firm grasp of the issues being studied, whether this is a theoretical or policy orientation, even if in an exploratory mode. Such a grasp focuses the relevant events and information to be sought to manageable proportions.

4. A person should be unbiased by preconceived notions, including those derived from theory. Thus a person should be sensitive and responsive to contradictory evidence.

Yin notes that all the skills that he has mentioned apply to the use of all methods: from "the inspection of documentary evidence as well as to making direct observations of real-life situations" (1994, p. 57). There is a need in the use of all methods for being adaptive while also trying to be rigorous in the data collection process so that important clues are not left out and important leads are followed up. As he mentions: "the need to balance adaptiveness with rigor — but not rigidity — cannot be overemphasised" (1994, p. 57).

Yin gives an example to illustrate his point about being open to surprises. He says that "researchers studying 'nonprofit' organisations may be surprised to find that many of these organisations have entrepreneurial and capitalistic motives. If such findings are

based on compelling evidence, the conclusions of the case study would have to reflect these contrary findings" (1994, p. 59). This is an interesting example for me because Kaohsiung Harbour is at the moment owned by government, but we have to consider also how it relates to what Yin calls "entrepreneurial motives". This is one of the themes that I pay attention to in my study as I speak to participants around the aspect of efficiency (see Chapters Four and Six especially).

Yin's views on the skills required for case study research are not irrelevant to my own research, as my research was organised so as to extend features of normal case study research. However, this implied that I did not aim to be totally uninfluenced by some of my own commitments (an idea which Yin does not seem to support). I explain more about my own position in Chapter Eight, where I give reflections on my research roles during the study. The way in which I believe my efforts can be judged is related to what Gummesson says are questions that confront hermeneutic researchers who want to establish a credibility for their research. Gummesson suggests that: "a communication problem arises in which language plays a crucial role, the researcher strives to attain clarity and simplicity" (1991, p. 157). This is what I have attempted to do through this dissertation (See also Chapter Nine).

Odman notes that readers must also be given the opportunity to check the documentary and other evidence used in support of any conclusions which are drawn (1979, p. 98). I tried to be careful to arrange this also so that my research can be regarded as credible and any conclusions are not seen as totally subjective leaps. However, creative thinking may be part of doing case study research. As long as the process of arriving at any conclusions is well expressed and documented, the case study research is no less biased than other types of research can be accused of. In the next

section, I indicate some of the quality criteria for case study research that have been identified and which could be used to direct my efforts and later to assess them.

3.5.4. Criteria for Assessing the Research

Gummesson (1991, pp. 160-162) identifies the following explicitly expressed quality criteria for case study research. This section explains these points of Gummesson as I believe that these are important criteria that apply also to my own research. I am indenting Gummesson's argument and then putting my own comments after each indented set of points to explain my interpretation of the criteria.

1. A research project should be conducted in a manner that allows the readers to draw their own conclusions:

   * Well written, intelligible final report.

   * A stage by stage account of the research process.

   * A detailed description of methods and coding procedures.

   * A well-documented and rich description of cases.

   * Cases should be presented (or available on demand) in their entirety in order to facilitate the reader making his own interpretation.

   * Motives for the selection of cases should be stated.

   * Limits of the research project should be clearly explained.

   * The researcher should inform the reader if taboo information has been discovered during a study but is disregarded in the analysis and presentation.

On all these points I tried to proceed in the way that Gummesson suggests. Gummesson also notes that when the report is written it should not offer only one interpretation. Readers should be able to make their own interpretations based on the rich descriptions offered. In Chapter Four I tried to offer a rich description of the

documents, observations and interviews, not putting too much of my own interpretations on these. But I also did offer some way of seeing the documents, etc., so people can read the material and my interpretations and then decide for themselves how further to consider the material if they want to.

2. Researchers should present their paradigm:

* Personal values together with a clarification of how these have developed or changed in the course of the research.

* The values of the system under analysis.

* Theories and models that govern the project together with the reasons for the choice of these theories and models.

* The researcher's pre-understanding.

I have tried to defend my paradigm that I am incorporating in the study. As shown in previous sections, I am not adopting a positivist view of looking for generalised statements about the relationships between variables isolated from the context of the study setting. Yin's idea of testing hypotheses through cases sometimes resembles the positivist view and I show why my case is not proceeding in terms of this paradigm and why I chose not to proceed this way. This is so that readers are aware of what I was trying to achieve through my case study research and why. I must not pretend either that I have no pre-understanding, as Gummesson notes. But I although I have some pre-understanding, I also tried to be open to listen to other points of view; one must be open to surprises and the unexpected in order to build up fresh understanding.

3. The research should possess credibility:

* Correct data.

* Correct rendering of the statements and views of informants.

* Interpretation should be supported by data.

* The researcher should have confidence in the theory and conclusions that are generated in the research.

* Honest presentation of alternative interpretations and contradictory data.

* Avoidance of deliberate or unintentional deception.

* Internal logical consistency; that is, the conclusions should accord with one another.

* External logical consistency; that is, the actors should be able to recognise the reality presented in the report.

* The researcher should present relevant data and information used in the case study.

* A "reasonable" amount of data processing and analysis.

* The researcher should select methods that are appropriate to the problem.

I show in later chapters how I arrived at all my data and also how I have chosen to analyse it. I cannot just offer it in raw descriptive form hoping that others will then be able to make sense of it. Part of my job as a researcher is to make sense of it also. So the analysis phase cannot be left just to readers and participants to do. But I tried to take up the challenge of doing an analysis that allows a variety of interpretations to come forward and which shows discussion and debate and argument as part of the process.

4. The researcher should have adequate access:

* Use methods that ensure access to the processes under study.

As I showed earlier, I have chosen my methods so that access could be ensured. I did not try to organise certain interviews between, say the Director and workers,

because I knew this would be refused and would only create distrust on all sides. I did my best to interview people who had important functions in the organisation in decision-making and also staff from all levels, and I believe that on the basis of my interviews I did gain some ideas about KHB, while also adding new ideas for people to think about (in the KHB and outside of it).

5. A statement should be made regarding the validity of the research:

    * To whom do the results apply.

    * Does other research confirm the findings of the researcher's studies.

    * Do the results bear out the theories and models available in the literature.

This section relates to the issue of generalisation, which I discussed in some detail in Section 3.6. I make an effort in Chapters Five to Seven to relate my research (and my approach adopted) to broader literature on themes that have arisen through the case study project.

6. The research should make a contribution:

    * Contribute to increased knowledge.

    * Deal with relevant problems.

    * Optimise the trade-off between methods and results.

    * Be of value to the scientific community.

    * Be of value to the client (if it is action science).

    * Be made available to the public and to the research community in particular.

Although my research is not action science, I tried to organise it so that it is of benefit to the client. This is the point where my case study research goes beyond "normal" case study research, which is less concerned with trying to arrange for this benefit to the client. But while wanting my research to be of benefit to the client (which

is varied in itself) I did not want to pretend to be helping to create a definite set of recommendations. So I was not involved in organising any action plans as such, as part of the research.

7. The research process should be dynamic:

* During the project, the researcher learns continuously by communicating impressions, hypotheses, and so forth to those involved and to other researchers.

* Research should be creative.

* The researcher should check impressions, etc., with others and thereby gradually express the paradigm and its consequences with a greater degree of precision.

This has to do with the emergent nature of my plan. Of course, I needed some planning but also needed to be open to be creative so that new ways of proceeding could emerge as I started to engage with documents, observations and interviewing. I also had to take care to consider how participants were relating to me as I decided when and how to set up further discussions (e.g. through re-interviewing in some cases and through creating group discussions in others).

8. The researcher should have commitment and integrity, that is:

* Be deeply involved in the project but at the same time should retain a certain distance.

* Have a clearly stated awareness of the research process.

These are ethical issues which as I have noted throughout are important to me, and especially in the specific position that I now occupy in the Harbour I had to handle the project with care.

9. As an individual, the researcher should satisfy certain requirements:

   * Pre-understanding through study and personal experience.

   * Candour.

   * Honesty.

I hoped to manifest a good measure of these qualities as I conducted the project. I do have pre-understanding and personal experience gained through work in the Harbour and I hoped to use this, combined with candour and honesty, to arrive at material that would be credible and would reflect my honest dealing with the data and with the people, especially.

3.6. Conclusion

I explained in this chapter some background for the way in which I conducted my own case study on Kaohsiung Harbour in Taiwan as a way of doing case study research. I showed what methods I utilised; how I approached my theoretical discussion; what skills I need to do the research; and what criteria for assessment I believe could be used to direct and later to judge my project.

I showed by my dealing with literature on the subject of research that it is possible to do case study research whose practical value can be enhanced during the course of the project even though it does not incorporate fully the principles of action research. I showed for instance in my discussion of point 6 mentioned by Gummesson in his list, that although I was not doing action science or any other form of action research, I still wanted the research to be experienced as of benefit to participants. Part of my challenge was to see how this could be done, so that although I am not trying to plan with people I could nevertheless help them to think about their actions in new ways.

I proceeded in terms of a particular paradigm for case study research in that I did not adopt Yin's view of theory testing to guide the case study. I am inclined more towards the hermeneutic view of looking for a variety of interpretations of the material and building up theoretical understanding that way.

As far as the principle of participation in action research is concerned, I did not encourage participation in the design of the project as such, because I knew in advance that I wanted to do some documentary research, some reference to my own experience and observation; and some interviews on individual and group bases. But I needed to be sensitive to adapting my methods in the situation, so that the research could be an emergent process. This was done in the project by listening to participants enough to know if they were prepared to be re-interviewed and also prepared to participate in group discussions.

Normal action research is problem-centred around problems identified in a situation. I did not want to try to use the research to recommend any actions to solve problems. I believe that my role as researcher in the situation would be abused if I tried to accomplish this. Therefore the action component of action research as understood in "normal" action research was not part of my research project plan. My project plan was however, not the same as ordinary case study research either. There were extra challenges to be met in the project, as explored in Chapter Eight.

To summarise, the following picture provides an illustration of how my own case study relates to literature on Action Research and on case study research. This is done by showing how my methodological approach can be seen as part of a similar trunk to these approaches.
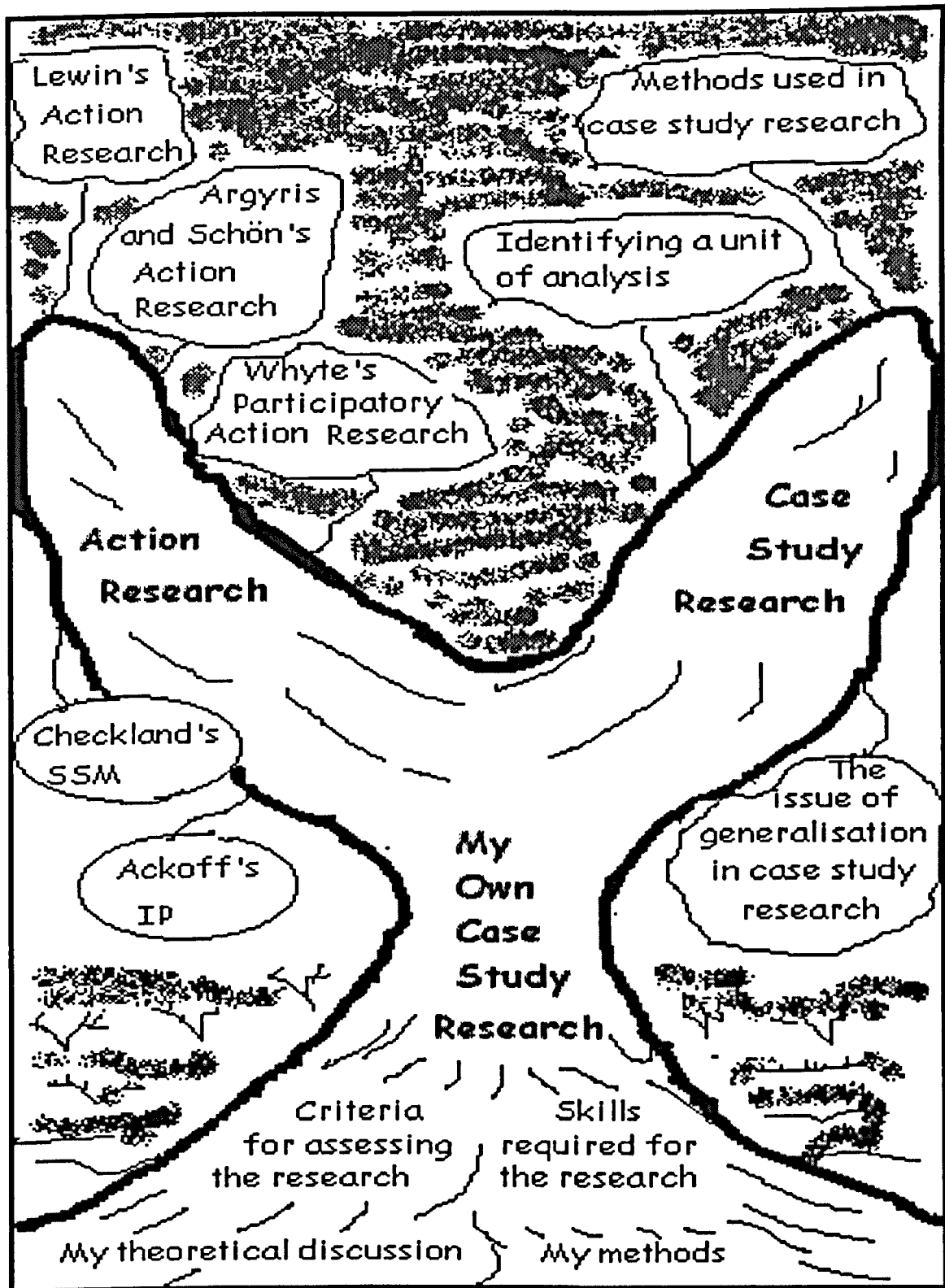
Figure 1: Placing my approach to the study in relation to Action Research and case study research

CHAPTER FOUR

MY CASE STUDY FIELDWORK

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I concentrate on explaining the process and the content of my fieldwork exploration in relation to the broad topic of possible privatisation of Kaohsiung Harbour. As I discussed in Chapter Two, within Asia there are many new developments in port management. This includes from China and from South East countries. In order to compete with the newly arising commercial ports like Shanghai, Shengzeng, and Gaunzou in China, the Ministry of Transportation officially mandated the KHB to conduct feasibility studies of privatisation of the Kaohsiung Harbour since December 1997. Advanced stages were reached in the negotiations, with plans put forward for implementation so that within three years (from 1999) the government would own less than 50% of shares. But in May 2000 another government (Democratic Progressive Party) was elected in Taiwan and this makes the situation now more unknown and uncertain.

Meanwhile, in 1996 and 1997 a process of privatising the dockworker system in Kaohsiung Harbour was already organised and implemented. This went together with some liberalisation of the container operations. The plans to further privatise more operations of the Harbour (as arranged through the feasibility studies mentioned above), met with some resistance from some managers as well as from most of the workers. There were certain worries expressed by senior managers regarding the scope and pace of the planned changes; and workers expressed worries also from

their perspective. I give a discussion of the sequence of events and my way of interpreting them, by looking at some documents, by outlining some of my observations, and by giving some detail on my interviewing in individual and group situations.

The writing up of this chapter is difficult. I have offered some structure into the chapter by first explaining the documents, but making some cross referencing to interviews that helped my to explain the documents further. Then I discuss briefly some observations that I had which also affected the way that I decided to conduct interviews. Then I show how I organised interviews. But sometimes my interviews have affected also what I decided to consider relevant to report upon in the documents that I studied. So although I have first discussed the documents in this chapter, sometimes what I state from the documents was influenced by later processes in the fieldwork.

Wolcott indicates that legitimate fieldwork can be defined by the fact that it involves "on-site research conducted over a sustained period of time and requiring some degree of researcher involvement" (1995, p. 247). I believe that my research can legitimately be called fieldwork rather than just data collection. I was certainly involved in the site as I looked at documents and tried to make decisions as to what would be relevant matters to report upon and my decisions about relevance were in turn influenced by my detailed involvement with participants on-site.

Wolcott suggests that the label of fieldwork "ought to be reserved for circumstances when depth is a reasonable trade off for breadth and speed" (1995, p. 247). I did not try to conduct the research in a speedy manner and I did not try to cover a whole range of variables that may influence people's behaviour in the

Harbour. I chose to concentrate on a topic of what I knew was a matter of concern (from various perspectives) to everybody in some way. This was the topic of the privatisation of the Harbour operations. I wanted to go in depth into this issue and see from various sides how people felt about it and how plans to organise and implement it were being developed (and how various people felt about the process of going through preparation, co-ordination and implementation). Along the way I realised that all the planning could not result in predictable outcomes, as events can occur that make the plans redundant in some way. In the case of the Harbour, as the chapter shows, as soon as the DPP government came into power in 2000, a lot of plans that had been made had to be revised again. Later in the chapter I will suggest that by looking at a process in a longitudinal way, looking at events over time, one can gain insight to the contexts in which plans are made and revised. This is another reason why I believe that my work in the field was a way of adding insight into the experience of life in the Harbour.

Wolcott indicates that another feature of fieldwork is that the researcher needs to "learn something of the way some group of people lives and thinks" (1995, 246). According to Wolcott, fieldwork knowledge:

> ... entails intimate personal knowledge of the contextualised lives of others. If there is no possibility of ever gaining such knowledge, and subsequently being able to use it to achieve some worthwhile action or academic purpose, then the research activity itself does not warrant a claim to be fieldwork (1995, p. 246).

As explained in my previous chapter, I was trying to use my research so that subsequently I could use it to help people to see things from other angles and therefore improve their way of looking at the proposed privatisation. I was also trying to make some statements that will be useful for some "academic purpose".

Therefore I have related my discussion to some literature about privatisation options (and whether it should be seen as making for more efficient governance) and also to debates about what I think my role as a researcher in the process is, as explained in previous chapters. As part of my discussion of my fieldwork in this chapter, I also indicate what I think I have learnt through the case study about themes that may have some more general significance. These were themes that emerged as I proceeded, such as the themes of culture, politics and development, and the relevance of a systemic approach. Finally, in the last section of this chapter, I give some reflections about my own role in the process of conducting the fieldwork, and in interpreting what I think I have learnt that can be of some general significance.

Buchanan *et al.* (1988) explain that there are many practicalities of fieldwork that they refer to as getting on in the organisation so that people will trust you enough to cooperate. There are complex political relationships that cannot be ignored. They explain that this has to do with the relationship between researchers and individual managers (when researchers are interviewing managers) and also with wider political conflicts in the organisation. I found, for instance, when interviewing many managers (senior ones especially) that they spoke as representatives of the group of managers and saw themselves as different from the group of workers as a whole. So the politics of conflict and opposition affected the way in which they spoke to me in interview sessions.

However, in dealing with these political relationships, I did not experience what Easterby-Smith *et al.* (1991) call a putting down process, where respondents tried to put me down as unknowledgeable about the field I was asking them about (1991, p. 62). This is because I already had a role in the Harbour before I started the fieldwork

for the Ph.D. and also later it is known that I will be going back into the Research and Development Office. So at least people when I interviewed them did show some willingness to speak to me and in this sense they did cooperate. Of course, I can never know to what extent people's speaking to me was because they wanted me to carry a certain view over into my research. Moreover, I do not know whether what they said was influenced by the fact that maybe they wanted me to express viewpoints when I later went to interview others. My role as a researcher and also as a participant in the Harbour was not unknown to participants. So they could have been responding to that. I will discuss this aspect of my research in detail in a further chapter when I give reflections on my role as a researcher. In this chapter, I try to give some detail about the process that I went through to do my fieldwork, by discussing documents, observations, and interviews.

4.2. Documents

Besides looking at the literature on issues connected with privatisation of ports in the region, I also examined in detail documents in regard to the way of handling the labour market in the dockworker system.

4.2.1. KHB Documents

Some documents could be found in the public statements prepared for general public consumption by the KHB. The first of such documents I call Kaohsiung Port 1 (KP1). It was prepared in 1996 and it related to privatisation of the dockworker system.

This document indicates that the Kaohsiung Harbour Director believed that there may be dockworker problems as a result of the understanding that it soon would be privatising this aspect of port operations. The document stated that because of these problems, the following had been decided:

1. Workers would be offered job opportunities once the new company took over the dockworker operations; they would also be encouraged to take part in the stevedoring operations.

2. Those workers who were unable to get work with the new company would receive reasonable and fair compensation. Or they could choose other ways that allow them to retire from their work situation.

3. Communication with workers would take place throughout the process of organising the privatisation process.

4. Negotiations would be based on compromise.

5. The programme would move ahead on a mutually beneficial basis.

The KP1 document also states that in order to go ahead with privatisation, the relevant funds would have to be set aside to compensate any workers; and negotiations would be started with the Union (of affected workers).

Another document that I call KP2, made in 1997, outlined the process by which the Harbour planned to implement the privatisation of the dockworker system. This document was a result of a minuted meeting between the Director of the Harbour (Mr Yu) and the senior managers from various departments.

KP2 was prepared for internal use for those involved in senior management. It explained the following. (The document reflects mainly the views of the Director about what should be minutes.)

Some statements from KP2.

1. Firstly, the KHB needed to talk to the Central Labour Affairs Council and a provincial body (of the government) to form a task force to create talks with the Union. Also, the Ministry of Transportation and the Minister of Communications needed to be asked to send representatives.

2. Secondly, in the meantime, it was important that representatives of the Harbour have unofficial talks with dockworker leaders to try to dispel their doubts about the way the process would be undertaken.

I also was able to obtain some documents regarding meetings that took place between representatives of the KHB (chosen by the Director) and the dockworker leaders in formal talks. Eight formal meetings took place. (I obtained these minutes also from the files of the KHB.)

Documents about meetings and their outcomes: KP3.

Documents about these meetings were made widely available. According to KP3, the first three meetings, were mainly explanatory meetings in which it was explained to dockworkers that job guidance would be given to those who wanted it. It was also explained that lengthy discussions had taken place with the shipping companies and that these companies would in fact continue hiring the workers in terms of the basic labour laws.

Five large scale discussion meetings were also held. During these meetings the issues that were discussed were the processes whereby the business was going to

become privatised. The issue of how workers would be compensated if they no longer were going to be employed by the companies, was high on the agenda on all occasions. The Union leaders did apparently accept the reality of privatisation, but they were concerned about the processes that would take place to make it a reality.

However, after the privatisation programme was announced as ready to take place, it caused some fierce protests from the dockworkers (this is again according to KHB records). On 11 September 1997, they petitioned the Legislative Yuan Transportation Committee.

The Harbour dealt with the petition as follows:

1. To win the support of the Union, six different meetings were arranged in which supervisors from each work unit were called in to explain again the process to the workers and to listen to their views and try to stem the opposition. The workers indicated that they were concerned about their labour contracts and also their health insurance.

2. As a result, another meeting was arranged with the Labour Affairs Council, the Labour Health Insurance Department, and the Union to negotiate matters of concern to the workers. An agreement was reached. On 15 October 1997, both the Minister of Transportation & Communications and the Transportation Department Director came to the Harbour to hold a final compromise meeting with the dockworkers.

The final letter of agreement contained the following particulars:

1. Work on the Kaohsiung dockworkers pension and severance fund provision would be done so that a total of over NT$11, 033, 630, 000 would be made available.

2. Training for relocated labourers would be provided.

A KHB document meant for public consumption (KP4) indicating the way in which the process took place contained the following statements.

Some statements from KP4.

1. During the privatisation process, the relationship between the KHB and the Union had to be clarified.

2. The contractors for stevedoring had to be liberalised (rather than remain in government control). 34 ratified operators were installed, including 14 for container operation, and 14 for general cargo and bulk cargo operation in which 6 operators undertook both types of work.

3. The major increase in container traffic volume thus could be dealt with.

4. The cost of the reform did not put a strain on the government budget.

5. Regular evaluations of the process (by the KHB negotiation team) as it became implemented were also noted to have been helpful.

6. The policy of privatising the dockworker system at the same time as opening the stevedoring operations to contractors was recorded to have contributed to the success of both processes.

The rationale of the process was described in KP4 as being a step closer to internationalisation, as it was perceived that the global trend is towards privatisation. It was noted that since this process had now gone through, further adjustments and business promotion was being considered by the Harbour.

The fact that the Director of the Harbour perceived the success of the privatisation process in the terms expressed in KP1-KP4, became an impetus for him to press ahead with further privatisation plans. (This was also indicated to me by him in the first

interview that I held with him-Interview 10a discussed in Section 4.4 below.) My interviews/discussions with the Director are explained in that section. But before I began interviewing the Director (in 1999), I also obtained minutes from further sets of meetings in which the Director wished to discuss the process of further drastic changes with the senior managers from all the relevant departments. These I call KP5.

Some information from KP5.

The main point was that the Director now wanted to press ahead with further changes. Meetings were arranged to discuss these with senior managers from the following departments:

- Harbour Management.

- Shipping and Navigation.

- Business.

- Engineering.

- Mechanical Equipment.

- Personnel.

- Secretariat.

- Accounting and Statistics.

- General Affairs.

- Property and Assets.

- Data Processing Centre.

- Research Centre.

- Office of Labour Security.

- Stevedoring and Warehousing.

- Harbour Construction and Maintenance.

- Ship and Machinery Repair.

- Staff Training.

- Civil Defence.

- Au-Ping Harbour Office.

- Ma-Kung Harbour Office.

- Harbour Police Office.

The departments in the Harbour that were excluded were the Research Centre, the Office of Government Ethics, the Environmental Protection Division, and the Cross Harbour Tunnel. (Although a rationale could be given for this by the Director, this could also be questioned as explained through my interview process with him.) In any case, these senior managers were not considered as necessary for the continued discussion of processes of reorganising the structure of the harbour, including plans to privatise it.

Three sets of meetings took place during from 1998/1999 to discuss these possible plans. One set of meetings was held in the period from June 1998 to September 1998; the second set was held from January 1999 to June 1999; and the third too place in June/July 1999.

Actually, from subsequent interviewing done by me, I realised that the minutes of the set of meetings held in 1998 and 1999 (KP5) do not reflect the extent of the clashes that took place between some of the senior managers and the Director regarding the amount of needed changes and the pace of them. From subsequent interviews/discussions with some of the managers, I was able to ascertain that there was not one view on the process of continued privatisation. (This is discussed in my section

on interviewing senior managers.) Some documents of these meetings (KP6) give the following conclusions:

Some information from KP6.

1. The KHB needs to recognise that there are many of obstacles to be solved in transforming a sate-owned bureaucratic organisation into a private profit-making enterprise.

2. The eventual goals should be:

   (1) To downsize the manpower in order to save the personnel expense.

   (2) To get financial independence from government audit system.

   (3) To operate along with market orientation.

   (4) To minimise the administrative restrictions.

   (5) To professionalise all levels of the management personnel

   The minutes indicate that a process was already in progress to organise the necessary meeting of goals. The process contained three phases, which are a preparation phase, a coordination phase, and a discussion phase.

1. Preparation Phase: Three meetings had already been held by the KHB Privatisation Implementation Team (KPIT) in the last three years, and the Director of the KHB had chaired all of them. The participants included the deputy director, some division chiefs, supervisors and union representatives. These meetings contained explorations of the role and mission, structure and organisation of the future privatised bureau.

2. Coordination Phase: The KPIT concluded that the future Bureau would be either a state-owned enterprise, which the government would share 51%, or a purely

private company that the government owns less than 50% share. However, during the co-ordination phase, certain disagreements were noted.

3. Discussion Phase: The merits and demerits of the pros and cons were noted (KP6) in the following terms: People who supported that the government owns 51% shares are Chiefs of Personnel and Storage. And the merits are follows:

(1) It would be less time consuming, and the whole process could be done in a relatively short period of time.

(2) It would face less resistance if the personnel cut could be reduced to the minimum.

(3) The government could still be in some level of control to prevent its future management from conflicting with the government policy.

(4) It would take less effort and time to liquidate the liability and assets.

(5) It would serve the national interest if the bureau could cope with the government policy.

People who supported that government own less than 50% shares are the Secretary General and Chief of Harbour Engineering Division. They thought that the merits of this proposition are:

1. It could relieve the Government from a financial burden.

2. It could separate the ownership from the operation. The people who really run the day-to-day operations are mainly technical staff.

3. There is a precedence can be followed, which is the privatisation of the China Telecommunication Corporation, and many other examples of governments not trying to control a half share. (There were also many examples of joint ventures

in harbours in the region, such as for example, Singapore and the Phillipines, but it could not be said conclusively which would be better for Kaohsiung.)

Through all of these sets of meetings held in 1998/1999, as expressed in KP6, all sides agreed that a market orientation would be the only principle of business running, which is the only way to increase competitiveness in the region. But there were differences that could be seen between those who wanted to take a more moderate road and wanted the process to be more slow, and those (including the Director) who wanted to quicken the pace and make much more drastic restructuring, including more downsizing. (From other documents and personnel records it could be ascertained that al personnel who had retired since the Director took over in 1996 as Director, were not replaced. Therefore, there had been significant reductions in staff over the years. My research indicated that from 1996 to 2000, more than 2000 staff had left and not been replaced. The Director believed as expressed in the minutes of the 1998/1999 sets of meetings and in my interviews with him, that still more downsizing could occur. I explain this in my discussion of my interviews.)

In July 1999, all participants representing different group interests were brought together. As a result of these, a preliminary organisation has been established and even an implementation plan has been formulated. All documentation was also been sent to the Ministry of Transport in 1999. Advanced stages in the negotiations were reached. The agreement from the various meetings was as follows:

1. Both approaches are accepted by a sequential order. In the first three years the government will own 51% shares of the privatised KHB. During this period of time the KHB will prepare for all necessary means to transform to a civilian corporation that government would own less than 50% shares.

2. There will also be established a formal privatisation implementation team including:

- Administrative and Legal Division.

- Financial Liquidation Division.

- Asset and Liability Liquidation Division.

- Manpower Exploration Division.

- Strategic Planning Division.

3. There will be established a new organisation in charge of the harbour security.

In March 1999 Ministry of Transportation has approved the KHB Privatisation Implementation Plan, the KHB will be transformed to a state-owned business first, then a private cooperation afterward. In July 1999 the KHB Privatisation Implementation Team formulated a time-frame of the whole Privatisation process, which starts at the end of year 2000 and will conclude at the first of January in 2002.

Meanwhile, the Director had re-organised already some departments as part of the re-organisation of the harbour structure. A number of departments became combined and their chiefs became sub-chiefs of the new combined departments. The structuring was as follows:

- Harbour Management still included the same structuring as before.

- Shipping and Navigation combined with Harbour Construction and maintenance.

- Business combined with Property and Assets.

- Engineering combined with Mechanical Equipment.

- Personnel remained unchanged.

- Secretariat combined with General Affairs and Staff Training.

- Accounting and Statistics combined with Data Processing Centre.

- Office of Government Ethics remained unchanged.

- Research Centre remained unchanged.

- Office of Labour Security combined with Environmental Protection Division.

- Stevedoring and Warehousing remained unchanged.

- Ship and Machinery Repair combined with Cross Harbour Tunnel.

- Civil Defence, Au-Ping Harbour Office, Ma-Kung Harbour Office and Harbour Police

   Office remained unchanged.

Although the restructuring of the Harbour Departments was apparently not relevant to privatisation plans as such, they reflect the Director's view of the importance of drastic changes needed in the Harbour and they were seen as such by many of those who I interviewed.

During 1999 to 2000, I conducted many interviews/discussions with staff at all levels of the organisation, based on my understanding of the documents that I have mentioned above. These are all discussed in my section in interviewing. I also did some observations (for example of some meetings which I attended but did not speak in), which are explained in my section on observations. But before I go on to mention these other research parts of my research, I need to continue with the documentary research discussion, because on 20 May 2000, another set of documents became relevant. On this date, Mr Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was elected as the new President of Taiwan. Mr Frank Hsieh, who had been Kaohsiung mayor from 25 December 1998, now became Chairman of the DPP also. He is the DPP party chief. The documents from the DPP were also therefore collected by me, as the new government had a completely different idea from KMT. The KMT (under the chairmanship of Lien Chan) lost the central government power in May 2000.

Mr Hsieh has indicated publicly that he does not want to see the privatisation plan of Kaohsiung Harbour to go ahead as has been planned by some of the people at the Harbour (as mentioned in the documentation above). The Democratic Progressive Party has a different idea. It wants instead that the Harbour becomes part of the City of Kaohsiung. This will give the City more status, and Mr Hsieh wants as mayor of the City to keep the interests of the Harbour together with the interests of the City. No suggestions for privatising or for joint ownership have been made by him as yet. Some statements from the relevant party documents are summarised by me (and translated) below.

4.2.2. Some Documentation from the Democratic Progressive Party

The following are some statements expressed in the document (by founding members of the party): DPP1.

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was established on 28 September, 1986. It expresses the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them. The KMT represents more authoritarian rule than the DPP and was essentially created in a period of colonial rule under martial law. However, several decades of tang-wai (opposition), along with socio-economic and both domestic and international changes politically eventually paved the way for the formation of the DPP in 1986 (though illegal at the time — political parties were outlawed under martial law). Proposing people's self-determination, the DPP appealed to ethnic Taiwanese, long regarded by the KMT's mainland constituency as inferior, second-class citizens.

Many of the DPP's founding members, and a significant number of the party's current leadership, include family members and defense lawyers of political prisoners and dissidents who were willing to risk their freedom and their lives to transform Taiwan's political situation. Only one year after the DPP's founding, the government abolished martial law, thereby legalising political parties. Institutional and legal reforms spurred on by the DPP followed, transforming Taiwan's political structure, including the first comprehensive parliamentary elections in 1992 and direct democratic election of the President in 1996.

The DPP has been at the forefront of movements demanding social and political justice. Socially, the DPP championed social welfare policies involving the rights of women, senior citizens, children, labour, indigenous peoples, farmers, and other disadvantaged sectors of society. Politically, the DPP has lead and won battles for free speech, free press, the freedom of association, and respect for human rights. Furthermore, the DPP distinguishes itself from the ruling KMT in its domestic social policies, anti-corruption stance, and efficient government. Internationally, the DPP advocates greater integration into the world community that is aimed at enhancing the prosperity and security of Taiwan.

Despite the relative youth of the party, strong election results reveal that the DPP has earned the confidence of the people. The world had its eyes on Taiwan in March 2000 as the Taiwanese people went to the polls and cast their votes for a new president. The DPP made history and finally realised its dream of becoming the ruling party. 14 years after its founding, the DPP realised the historical mission of political party rotation, and achieved a peaceful transition in government.

Since landing itself in the spotlight as the ruling party, the DPP continues to search for comprehensive and coherent policies of national and international significance. With a broadening array of policy positions the DPP continues its efforts to improve the welfare of Taiwan's peoples.

These statements from the DPP are very relevant for my study because they show that with the new government, there are different commitments and different interests that are now brought into the discussion about privatisation of Kaohsiung Harbour. Although it can be said that the KMT Labour Ministry did offer some protection to labourers (e.g. the dockworkers previously working for Kaohsiung Harbour, because these were labourers of the government). But what workers were worried about, was whether after privatisation they would be well protected. Likewise, with plans for continued privatisation, the same worries held. Because firstly DPP shows commitment to labour issues and secondly that it does not at first want to privatise Kaohsiung Harbour too quickly (this is not in the plans at present), this election of DPP and its party promises make a difference to how events will turn out. Also, what is also important is that the election of the DPP as the ruling party means that people in Taiwan (the majority) seem to be in favour of a less authoritarian form of governance. This is likely to affect the way in which decisions are handled also in the Harbour. I discuss this when I discuss political issues in the harbour in terms of the cultural factor of power distance. But one interpretation of the party document is that the cultural climate in Taiwan has moved towards a different political way of operating legitimately, and this is interesting in terms of what it means for participative planning within the Harbour. Further documentation in this regard, that also affects

my way of handling my interpretation of the case study, can be found in the DPP policy guidelines, as follows:

The DPP has also established some public policy guidelines. These guidelines show, along with the DPP1 document extracts, that there is a concentration on development and welfare, and that this means that authoritarian leadership in Taiwan may not be a culture that is politically acceptable. It may take some time before the culture of democracy gets processed in Taiwan (and including in ways of conducting Harbour policy). But the document also allows me to report on my view of some of the ways in which the process of planned privatisation was organised in 1998 to 1999. I include here the sections that are relevant for my later discussion.

Some DPP Guidelines: DPP2.

Taiwan requires an accountable and transparent government as the new basis for national development. At the dawning of the new century, Taiwan must strive to cultivate a peaceful and stable atmosphere to foster development, and establish a modern democratic government. This is in order to increase Taiwan's economic competitiveness to meet the challenges of globalisation, create a dynamic and plural civil society, and foster a living environment that enables sustainable development.

To grasp the direction of Taiwan's development in the next millennium, an examination of the global environment as a whole is necessary. There exists a clear trend towards globalisation. Such a trend includes the intertwining global economic networks that have crossed boundaries to bring world competition in various fields. In addition, the decreasing role of the state as a controlling agency has meant a shift in the relationship between the central government and its citizens from hierarchical authority to cooperation. Moreover, environmental issues have now emerged as

transnational issues and are no longer viewed in opposition to issues of economic development. Furthermore, there is a clear change in the operation of international politics. In the new multi-polar world, competition amongst nations has shifted from a strictly military level to a realm of "comprehensive power", which means the focus of national security has expanded to encompass not only military security but economic and social security as well. To effectively respond to these changing global trends, Taiwan must find a new mode for development.

In the spirit of reform, the Democratic Progressive Party is prepared to accept this difficult challenge. With full responsibility and maturity, the DPP is committed to work hand-in-hand with the people to complete the historical task. In essence, we have adopted a new approach to governing that involves these fundamental values:

1. Bottom-up public participation process in politics.

2. Responsibility and accountability.

3. Proactive and comprehensive risk management.

4. Political decisions based on the people's practical daily living experience.

Under half a century of KMT authoritative rule, there existed numerous obstacles to Taiwan's national development. These include enmity across the strait; Taiwan's diplomatic isolation; a chaotic political system and corrupt political culture dominated by criminal gangs; a handicapped financial system; vague industrial policies; distorted social development; unfair allocation of resources; excessive destruction of the environment and inadequate national land planning. These historical obstacles must be

overcome so that we may establish a nation that strives in international competition and create a fair, secure and normal basis for development.

We present the DPP Year 2000 Policy Manifesto in order to meet the challenges of the new century and to fulfill our new responsibilities. The DPP 2000 Policy Manifesto represents a contract with our fellow citizens for opening a new era of comprehensive national reform. We hereby outline five pledges for the next century:

1. A Security Network with Regional Cooperation and Interdependency:

In line with the global trend of regional cooperation, interdependency, and the complication of geopolitics, Taiwan's national security should focus on developing a multilateral security cooperation network. Along with this Taiwan must increase its profile in regional affairs by engaging in a diversity of issues, such as trade liberalisation and democratisation, to compensate for Taiwan's international political isolation. Furthermore, we must maintain an efficient yet credible deterrence force to preempt any belligerent action towards Taiwan. Finally, we must strive for pragmatic, equal and harmonious cross-strait relations in order to bring about general normalisation.

2. Partnership in Government with Decentralisation and Broadened Participation:

The core solution for government reform, at all levels, lies in the adjustment of government functions. To respond to the trend of globalisation and rapid changes in society, the current centralisation of money and power must be adjusted. Economic power and political decision-making must be distributed to local governments and the people. It is important to increase the extent and breadth of democratic participation

and local autonomy. In the area of public finance, improvements must be made regarding: first, a balance of decision-making authority and financial resources between the central government and local authorities; second, just and fair tax programs which would abolish outdated preferential tax treatment and subsidies. By developing efficient, accountable, transparent and just new government, we must re-build public confidence in government, to reinvigorate the positive energy of society. In the next century, we will make the government become the partners of the people, the communities, and the society at large.

3. Knowledge-based Economy with Technological Innovation and Transparent Competition:

The core solution to the problem of securing a safe economic system lies in both the normalisation of the relationship between politics and business and the increase in economic and industrial competitiveness. Supervisory measures should be established to monitor financial reform, risk management and warning systems should be established, and fairness and transparency should be strengthened to enhance the normalisation of government-business relations. In terms of industrial policy, it is crucial to place an emphasis on technology innovation, development of knowledge-based industries, trade liberalisation, active promotion of industrial innovation and adoption of modern technologies, and continuing education and training of human resources. We also emphasise the crucial role of the small and medium sized enterprises to continue their pivotal status in Taiwan's economic development. Assistance should be provided in strengthening international marketing skills, upgrading old-fashioned industries and decreasing the adjustment cost in structural

changes. In order to encourage industrial development, the government must dedicate itself to improving the environment, increasing transparency and efficiency, and providing sufficient basic infrastructure.

4. Active Civil Society with Dignity:

The core solution to the problem of social reform lies in three steps: the improvement in the quality of education of citizens, provision of equal and fair opportunity for individual development, and providing an environment of a diverse and self-confident civil society. Through a well-rounded educational policy, we could cultivate creative citizens who are capable of independent thinking. Through a solid social welfare system, we could guarantee our citizen's livelihood and invest in our human capital. Through a good labour policy, we could coordinate labour and capital to increase the competitiveness of our industry. Through a family policy of gender equality, we could make families gardens of individual growth. Through our community policy initiated on cultural development, we would shape the new values of a new Taiwanese civilization. It would be a civilization in which citizens identify with the land where their livelihood is based upon and where their citizens enjoy full participation in public affairs. We would cultivate a democratic and progressive society, which offers equal opportunity to its citizens and possesses great creative energy.

5. A Secure and Sustainable Living Environment:

The core solution to improving the quality of the environment lies in maintaining a balance between economic development and environmental conservation. The adjustment of economic structures should take into consideration the following:

standards for sustainable development; integration with international environmental protection trends; and the encouragement of low energy, low pollution, and high value-added industries. We would promote an environmental tax and offer economic incentives for green industries, in order to seek a win-win situation for industry and the environment. At the same time, it is important to encourage public participation in issues relating to environmental protection and the quality of living; establish mechanisms for negotiation and democratic decision-making on environmental issues; strengthen the implementation of environmental evaluation; institute a fair and reasonable national land-management plan; and ensure balanced and harmonious sustainable development.

The year 2000 is a crucial year for Taiwan. With a careful examination of global trends and the domestic environment, the DPP proposes a new vision for the development of our country into the next century. We are confident that only our party is capable of fulfilling this historical new responsibility.

Of course, the policy guidelines are still sufficiently vague that we do not know what possible implications they can have for the details of whether in future plans will be made to privatise the Harbour operations. But at the moment, there are no such immediate plans. Competition and global processes may lead in the direction of decisions being planned about ways of either organising joint ventures with business or completely privatising. But it is also possible that efficiency can also become a result of processes that are not dependent on seeing the Harbour solely in these (private) terms. The new mode of development referred to in the policy guidelines could open the way for other discussions about possibilities.

The fair, secure and normal basis of development referred to in the document is also a vague term. But there are certain commitments that can form a basis for discussion about this. It is interesting that the government indicates that it wishes to devolve some powers of central government to local government. This is interesting because the Harbour is part of local government and would therefore have some space to find a way of developing the local community. Of course, all of this depends on the way in which policy guidelines become interpreted by the various interested parties and the way in which they decide to act. The idea of a living environment is also important for the Harbour. The potential is for the Harbour firstly to upgrade its responsiveness to Tourism so that members of the local community can participate in enjoying its presence; and also the importance of environmental protection is emphasised by the DPP. These are also matters that I discussed with some members of the community when I did my interviews and therefore I will continue these matters under that section.

What I have shown in this section is that the documents of the DPP support certain ideas that allow me to make some more sense of the interviews that I had with participants both inside the Harbour and in the community. I discuss these all when discussing my interviews, which allow me to make more sense not only of the DPP documents but also of all of the other documents that I have so far mentioned in regard to Harbour affairs.

Before I go to discuss the interviews in depth, I need to mention a few observations that I had. These are observations of a few meetings where the Director called people to make suggestions regarding improvements in Harbour organisation.

4.3. Observations

I attended a meeting (1999) where the Director called people to make suggestions regarding the running of the Harbour. I did not actively participate in the meeting. But I did observe the way in which the interactions took place.

First the Director mentioned that he would welcome some suggestions regarding Harbour organisation.

No one spoke and so the Director stated that plans needed to be made to make the Harbour more competitive in the global market, and he required the cooperation of all of those working in the Harbour. Then he explained that he was willing to take any suggestions from anybody in regard to this subject.

He explained furthermore that it was important to reorganise the workers' times and if possible to cancel certain jobs if people came up for retirement. That means, such people probably would not be replaced but their jobs would be redistributed and reorganised.

At this point one of the leaders of the workers decided to speak. He said that it was not necessary to think that it was important to cancel more jobs. He said that he does not like the idea of having to reorganise in this way.

The Director was unable to see what the leader was saying.

The leader did not understand why the Director did not understand the point of view of the workers.

The Director got very angry and there was no continuation of the discussion.

The Director later complained to the senior managers about the fact that the workers did not have any good suggestions.

It seems that the Director and the workers have clashing viewpoints and are unable to meet with their views or reconcile their views at all. There is an oppositional situation that can be observed in the interactions between these two groups of people.

The Director when he makes decisions likes to make them on his own.

I for myself do not know whether this Director would be interested in pressing forward with decisions of his own making. But in any case, it looks to me that because these two groups of people (with the Director as representative of top management and the worker leader representing worker views) have such differing interests, it is impossible for them to interact properly. There is a lot of angry emotion on the part of both sides.

I also observed from my own interactions with the Director (when I discussed another issue with him in regard to the China Harbour and its way of organising) that he did not have a happy face when faced with new suggestions. (This was before my actual formal interviewing with him in regard to my case study research.) I therefore had to act carefully with him when organising my interviews and in future when I conduct my research role I also will have to make suggestions in the form of a report that he can read and decide how to handle on his own.

These observations of mine influenced the way in which I decided to conduct my research role during my whole case study. I decided that I would have to take the role of middleman between various sides and try to put the point of view of one side over

to the other and vice versa, to see if they could gain a better understanding of different views. But I still do doubt whether the sides can ever deal with this very oppositional pattern of interaction. Nevertheless, I still believe that there is some scope for perhaps getting some better understanding. Especially now that it is recognised by the different sides that the DPP is not in favour of complete privatisation (at least in the short run), new discussions around different issues can emerge. In my own research role, when I return to the Harbour, I can speak to various people and can make suggestions on the basis of the ground that I have prepared through my Ph.D. Research. Because I will have prepared the ground through many interviewing processes and through showing that there is not only one right way to think about reorganising the Harbour, I am hoping that I can contribute in a positive way to making people more understanding of differences. Before I explain this further, I need to show how I conducted my interviews and what their contents was.

4.4. Case Study Interviews (Individual and Group Interviews)

In all my first set of interviews as explained in the discussion in this section, I began by mentioning to the interviewee that I was interested in the subject of privatisation. I explained that as a researcher I was investigating all aspects of this, including the human aspect as it affects the people and how they experience its possible effect. I explained that I would be asking questions but that they also could add any questions and thoughts that they wanted to. I then asked them to introduce themselves and the discussion proceeded from that point on. I also explained that sometimes I would probe their answers to allow them to say more about the subject. I also indicated that from my point of view, I was not trying to control the interview

and that I wanted them to treat it more as an exchange. Easterby-Smith *et al.* note that the term "interview" sometimes implies that there is a "formal structured interrogation" (1991, p. 78). I did not want to give this impression, although it is possible that because they saw me as a researcher, they still treated the interview/discussion as a formal occasion.

In my interviewing on an individual basis I tried to make the person feel at ease to talk about any aspect of privatisation that they wanted to and also to talk about issues that they thought were in any way related to this. Therefore, any ideas on the future of KHB, even if this future was not to include further privatisation, were open for discussion. This is because although the privatisation of dockworkers had taken place at the time I did my first set of interviews (1999 to 2000) the time-frame for further privatisation of other activities was due to start only at the end of 2000 and to be put properly into effect in 2002. A preliminary organisation has been established for this, and an implementation plan has been formulated as well. And all related documentation has been sent to the Ministry of Transportation for approval. Nevertheless, I believed that there was still scope to consider different futures, or at least to understand different views on the proposed/planned future.

The interviewees included Director of the Bureau, Harbour Master, Division Chiefs, Sectaries, Desk Staffs, supervisors, low level management personnel, warehouse personnel, harbour workers, and Union leader. Additionally, I also interviewed local residents for their perspectives of the privatisation of the Kaohsiung Harbour. I chose some different occupations of residents for this sample (some teachers and some students, an engineer, and a lorry driver in the City).

After beginning the interview according to the information mentioned above, the question and answer sequence followed a lot from how I considered best to conduct the questions, based on previous answers given. I did not follow a pre-set format to conduct interviews. I also wanted it to look more like a conversation, so that people would feel free to answer how they felt but also to join in a discussion when there were contentious matters.

Fielding, who promotes qualitative research, notes that in order not to transport what he calls an outsider's view onto the situation in the interview, the interviewer should not structure the discussion too much in terms of their own interests. Therefore, although I wanted to discuss issues relating to privatising and organising the management of the Harbour, I still tried to make the interview look more like a "conversation" (Fielding, 1993, p.157). This is why I call it sometimes interviewing/discussion (rather than just interviewing). At the end of each interview I thanked the interviewee for his or her time spent on this.

I explain the format of the interview (and summarise it as I explain it) by using a question and answer format. "Q" represents my question and "A" represents the interviewee's answer. Of course, this is my own translation and rendition, as the questions and answers were in Mandarin. It is based on my notes that I made during the interviews. When I put something in italics in the write-up of my interview, I am showing my immediate interpretation of the process of the interview at that point, that I am recording as a brief view of what I thought was very important from that interview.

The first interview that I conducted was with the supervisor of the R&D (Research and Development) division. The R& D was created in 1996 when the new

Director (Mr Yu) came to work at the Harbour. The R& D concentrates on researching the cases of other ports in the world to suggest some executive decisions that could adjust the KHB organisation. The R&D derives its power to conduct research directly from the Director of the KHB. I chose this (for my first interview) as the department is charged with the responsibility of thinking about improving the operations and management of the Harbour, through doing relevant research. I thought that it would be important to see what this department manager believed in regard to privatization

1a. First interview with first Interviewee: Mr Haung, Chun-Yun Supervisor, R&D Division, KHB (30/08/99).

Q:

Would you please introduce yourself and the role and mission of this office?

A:

I've been working in the office since 1987, now I am a supervisor in the R&D office. The R&D Division is part of the Office of the Director of KHB, its major mission is to study consistently the way to improve the operation and management of the KHB. At the same time, we also consistently collect information of the other international commercial harbours the way they operate and manage their day-to-day business. We analyse and evaluate the information to serve as a reference for the purpose of improving our operation and management.

Q:

Is the R&D Division the leading agency in charge of the privatisation process of the KHB?

A:

Yes.

Q:

So, do you mind simply introducing me to the whole process of the KHB privatisation?

A:

We have been conducting the feasibility studies of the privatisation of the KHB since 1996. During the three years process we have been collecting and analysing information, reporting to Director on a regularly basis, convening meetings among different agencies, which their day-to-day operations and functions were more or less involved in this business. And we have eventually formulated the KHB privatised organisation system chart, their business orientation and functions.

Q:

I gather from my attendance of some meetings that not everybody is in agreement with the process and its perceived outcome.

A:

Actually, both approaches have now been accepted to some degree. In the first three years the government will own 51% shares of the privatised KHB. During this period of time the KHB will prepare for all necessary means to transform to a civilian corporation so that government would own less than 50% shares. This is a slower time-frame than initially proposed, and we are preparing the way for it to take place by 2002. We have therefore established a formal privatisation implementation team including:

- Administrative and Legal Division.

- Financial Liquidation Division.

- Asset and Liability Liquidation Division.

- Manpower Exploration Division.

- Strategic Planning Division.

And we have been busy establishing a new organisation to be in charge of the harbour

security.

Q:

Do you foresee any difficulty and barrier in this process?

A:

There has been no precedence in this kind domestically that could serve as a reference

for us. Therefore all the issues have to be coordinated and communicated first, and as

you might know, there are vested interests among agencies like the size and the

function of each agency that needs to be solved in order to reach a consensus.

Q:

Would there be a balance of interest between the working rights of the employees and

the downsizing of the KHB after the privatisation?

A:

Yes, it is one of our major concerns during this process. We have encouraged some

of our employees to retire earlier by providing financial incentives.

Q:

Do you think that they are satisfied with this solution?

A:

As far as I can tell, they are much happier than when we first began the research

process of investigating this as a feasibility study. I do not believe that we can ever

reach the point that they will be completely satisfied, but the Harbour management also has had to compromise on our way of seeing the process and its outcome.

As I interpret this interview the R&D manager believes that the privatisation process was decided by taking into consideration various interests. When I asked him whether the vested interests of workers were also considered, he noted that provision had been made for them. He together with other managers had already formulated a business chart for the new business and he was quite keen to see that it become implemented in time.

Later, after conducting some other interviews, I went again back to him and asked him about how fixed he thought the plans needed to be. That meeting was a short one, in which he explained to me the following:

1b. Interviewee: Second interview with R&D Supervisor (02/10/99).

Q:

I have spoken to a number of other people, including Mr Lin, Chung-Nan who is President of the Labour Union. He suggested that decisions should be made more open to public discussion, otherwise there will be strong resistance to the implementation of the plan. *(Here I made clear that my question to him was based on interviewing previous interviewees.)*

A:

Yes, I agree with him that there would be less resistance if the personnel cut could be reduced to a minimum.

Q:

And do you think that the government still should have some control, even after the privatisation plan as you foresee it happening does take place (2002)? *(By asking this*

question, I turned the interview to this aspect that had been mentioned in the first interview in regard to plans, to see how aware the interviewee was about possibility for the plan not being realised.)

A:

I believe that in whatever way we organise the privatisation, the government should still have some level of control. This is so that when we in future start to manage the Harbour as a private business, we do not come into too much conflict with the government. We need also to consider that the government wants the Harbour to be competitive in terms of the newly arising commercial ports like Shanghai, Shengzeng, and Gaunzou in China. The Ministry of Transportation therefore mandated the KHB to conduct feasibility studies of privatisation the Kaohsiung Harbour since December 1997. I have been involved in this and I can see scope for continued cooperation with the government.

From this second interview with the supervisor of the R&D Division, I recognised (and I think he did too) that the plans were not yet finalised and that cooperation with workers and also with government personnel (especially in the Ministry of Transport) still needed to be created.

To get some idea of the way the leader of the Union saw the issues and also to allow him to reflect with me on what other people were saying about privatisation, I held an interview with him, as follows:

2a. Interviewee: Mr Lin, Chung-Nan, President of the Labour Union, KHB (02/09/99).

Q:

Would you please introduce yourself and the Union?

A:

It is my third term to serve as the President of the Labour Union since 1993. The function of the Union is to secure the rights and improve the interests of the employees of the KHB. Additionally, to maintain the harmony between the employer and employees is also one of our major work.

Q:

During your participation in the process of the privatisation of the KHB, have you found any thing that would have infringed on the interest of the Union?

A:

I will make two points about this question.

1. First, for the survival of the Kaohsiung Harbour, the privatisation is inevitable. There are four international commercial harbours in Taiwan; there must be reasons for the government to pick the Kaohsiung Harbour to privatise first. Kaohsiung Harbour is the third largest Harbour in the world, for the purpose of increase the competitiveness, the KHB has to set up an example for the privatisation.

2. Secondly, we realise that there must be pain in this process. For instance, who do you choose to cut, how the seniority to be counted, and how the welfare programmes be preserved, etc. We have fought for all the issues during the process, and we strongly suggest that all the decisions and all information from the central government have to be made publicly, and there shall not be any dirty work behind the scene.

Q:

What's your perspective on the future of the KHB?

A:

Well, I think there are merits of the privatisation. They can be thought of as:

1. Improving the competitiveness.

2. Blending the entrance of World Trade Organisation (WTO), the operating capacity of Kaohsiung Harbour will increase dramatically.

3. Releasing the government financial burden by reducing the expense of personnel maintenance.

4. Accommodating the future operational uncertainties more easily.

   However, we need to prevent certain things in this process, such as:

1. Sacrificing Union's interests without consulting Union first.

2. One consortium dominates the operation of the KHB, which contributes to a situation of monopoly.

3. Unbalance among the functions of each agency.

   By taking care of foregoing issues, I am very optimistic about the future prospect of the KHB.

   After I had discussed with some workers about their continued worries regarding privatisation, I decided to interview again the Union Leader. This time I asked him to consider whether he thought that the worries could be accommodated.

2b. Interviewee: Second interview with Union Leader (27/09/99).

Q:

I have conducted now some interviews with several workers and they seem to be worried. I can indicate, without mentioning names, some of the continued concerns. For instance, some workers are worried that wages will be once the KHB changes the management system and becomes company owned. Workers are also worried about

welfare, pensions, etc., also under the possible future management system. And some are worried that they could become retrenched when the KHB changes the management system and because they have children studying at University, they cannot afford to take early retirement.

A:

The Union Leader has the job to try to protect all of these interests. However, I do find it difficult at times to raise these issues with the top management of the Harbour. As you know, when the process of privatising the dockworkers was taking place (1997) we did organise a petition, and the government did then set aside some funds for that process to operate more equitably. Also, so far, no jobs have actually been cut in the Harbour, except when packages are made for early retirement. This means that many people who have worked in the Harbour for more than 25 years become quite well off as they can take a package and then go and find another job. However, the younger people are most upset because they do not have this option. I know that the continued uncertainty is making many of them worried and I am trying to raise this as an issue whenever I get the opportunity. At the moment we are protected by government law because we are government office holders. So even though some people get angry when I raise this issue (for example some of the management), I believe that it is important that I keep it in their minds so that in future they discuss plans with us rather than leaving us to feel uncertain.

Q:

Do you think you can prevent decisions taking place behind the scene and then being communicated to you without your involvement? *(By asking this question, I used*

what Easterby-Smith et al. call giving ideas or suggestions by asking interviewees to think about something, 1991, p. 80.)

A:

In the past we have managed to fight for more public openness and actually more consultation before decisions are made. I do have some hope that the process will no go ahead unless at least some compromises are made. Perhaps I am more optimistic than realistic. I do have some hope.

A:

I appreciate the additional time that you have spent discussing your views with me. I will also be holding some interviews across different levels and your views can become known that way. Meanwhile, I understand that you are in preference of more consultation.

My next interview was with a staff from KHB's General Business Division.

3. Interviewee: Mr Chen, Chung-Lung, staff member, General Business Division, KHB (14/09/99).

Q:

Do you mind introducing me to your academic and professional backgrounds?

A:

I have been working in KHB since 1991, I was sent to Holland (Rotterdam) in 1997 to learn how they manage their harbour business. Currently, I am just a desk staff in the Business Division, KHB. I was interested to see that when I was in Holland, the mission statement of the port of Rotterdam were threefold in terms of the importance; firstly to maintain and increase the employment level; and by that to foster the social profit and the regional income; and by that to contribute to the financial needs of the

city. The concern of the port authority as I saw from their papers when working there was to have a fluent, safe and environmentally acceptable navigation; to plan the construction and maintenance of infrastructure and equipment; and to provide good labour conditions within local, regional and national frameworks. So, as you can see the idea was to measure the management and development of the port in terms of quantitative and qualitative values.

Q:

Is Rotterdam a port that is privately owned?

A:

When I was there, it was part of the public sector and private sector. This was also the case with the port of Amsterdam. But the major concern was how to make the port a good motor for the national economy. The aim is to foster port development. The government does have some investment in the port. And it checks that port action is compatible with general policy such as environmental protection, and zoning, etc.

Q:

You seem to have learnt some ideas for managing when you were sent to Holland. What do you think is applicable here in Taiwan?

A:

I realise that in Holland the improvement of the port is seen as related to improvement in social profit, which includes a qualitative component as well as a quantitative profit. The qualitative component is to increase employment levels so that more work can be provided to people by a well-functioning harbour. Also, environmental thinking is quite important and the idea is to increase the pleasure of

people in the Environment. Therefore we are also setting up plans to have a major Tourist attraction through Kaohsiung Harbour and I am sure that you are aware of these plans for the leisure principle.

Q:

What are you in charge of now and what is your role in the whole privatisation process? Do you feel that quantity and quality can be served by privatisation.

A:

My job is to take care of the business of leasing the warehouses and the piers. In the process of privatisation I followed the instructions to negotiate with the other businesses and sign contracts. I was very much involved in the decisions about whether or not and to what extent privatisation plans should go ahead. But now as you know we are in the business of leasing, and I undertake these business operations to the best of my ability. I also was involved in some of the planning towards making the Harbour a tourist friendly place.

Q:

Will there be any barriers to implement the privatisation that you can envision at this movement, and what are you going to do to solve them? *(This was a focused probe in which I tried to focus on the aspect of what his role could be in developing the Harbour.)*

A:

Based on my experience in the last couple of years, there were different requirements from different customers, which always contributed to end up with different contracts and increased working burdens. After privatisation, I suspect the situation would be much worse, inasmuch as we have to release all the warehouses and piers for public

bidding, therefore, I would suggest to invite someone with legal specialty to get involve in the privatisation process, to standardisation the contract in order to avoid the future contentions.

I realised from my discussion with Mr Chen that although he had gained some experience and new ideas from Holland, he did not feel that he could say too much in terms of whether or not privatisation should go ahead. He did foresee some problems that he thought could be dealt with legally.

The next set of interviews that I concentrated on was to interview some people from the Stevedoring and Warehousing Department. The S&WD working situation is to manage the intake of all the ships in the docks. It is the biggest department in the KHB with about 500 staff who work there (as at July 2000). I started with Mr Haung, Shiou-Chin, personnel staff member, Stevedoring & Warehousing Department, KHB. I conducted this interview because of his involvement in personnel affairs. I thought this would be interesting in terms of the impact of privatisation plans on this.

4. Interviewee: Lee, Le-Haung, Secretary General, Stevedoring and Warehousing Department, KHB (09/09/99).

Q:

Mr Lee, would you please introduce yourself?

A:

I've been working in KHB since 1965, during this long period of time, I started from the lowest level clerk in a warehouse to chief of a section, chief of a division, to Secretary General today, totally 34 years.

Q:

Since you are such a high level official in KHB, I feel extremely interested about your perspectives on the issue of privatisation?

A:

Since the Director of KHB, Mr Yu took the job in February 1996; he has taken a lot of efforts to prepare for the transformation of the KHB into a private own enterprise. In the end of 1997, the KHB has completed reform the organisation of the Dockers Union. It is the first step for the KHB to walk towards the privatisation. Actually, to privatise the KHB is an irreversible trend. Nowadays, most advanced international commercial harbours have already been privatised, to a large extent. Therefore, for the purpose of increasing the competitiveness and improving the operation efficiency, to sever the government control is imperative, and has to be done as soon as possible. There are always obstacles for any change, but these would be overcome eventually.

Q:

Do you think that in the whole process of privatisation the KHB makes everything clear and understandable to all its employees? *(This is what Easterby-Smith et al. call a focused probe in which I focused on this aspect of privatisation, and implied that perhaps it is not so clear what it can mean to workers.)*

A:

The government always makes policy circumspectly and deliberately. The KHB is one of government agencies as well, that means we have to make and implement the policy cautiously. When we considered the approaches of the privatisation, we have invited all level representatives from the Union and each department to discuss with us, we consulted their ideas and listen to their concerns, and eventually the consensus

could always be reached by understanding and compromising each other. Then we reported to Transportation Ministry and made the policy, which we have to implement it accordingly. The first phase will be accomplished before the end of year 2000; by that time part of the departments should be privatised. For instance, the S&WD will be the first Department to be privatised then the others will follow and gradually the whole KHB will be privatised. Having said that, you can easily tell that we take care of our employees.

Q:

Do you think there will be barriers ahead and how will you overcome them?

A:

To face the difficulties is inevitable, downsizing the manpower, adjusting employees' mentality, and the pressure of making profit, etc., are just some of those. However, we will try our best to defuse them. For instance, we will focus on personnel training and provide earlier retirement incentives to solve the manpower-cutting problem. And the similar way will be taken to solve the other problems.

Although I probed a little bit in this interview, I did not feel too much at ease to do more probing. I had the impression that the interviewee was aware that the questions I asked were influenced by information received from some of my other interviews and that his interests were not in line with a totally open interview. As Easterby-Smith et al. note, some organisations (and some staff) may be hostile to "totally open interviews" in which I could probe any viewpoint expressed (1991, p. 82). I did not want to create hostility at this point, as I still wanted to preserve my status in the organisation as someone who could listen to views, without seeming to be too confrontational.

As Easterby-Smith et al. note, building up trust when one is a researcher in a field situation depends upon how one builds up various relationships during a span of time. I hoped that at that point I was able to recognise any effect my way of interviewing could have "on the nature of the relationship formed" (1991, p. 82).

Having reached this point in the interview I decided to move on to speak to a person connected with personnel (S&WD). I started with Mr Haung, Shiou-Chin, because of his important involvement in personnel affairs in the Harbour. I thought this would be interesting in terms of the impact of the privatisation plans on the work in his department.

5. Interviewee: Mr Haung, Shiou-Chin, personnel staff member, Stevedoring & Warehousing Department (S&WD), KHB (16/09/99).

Q:

Would you introduce yourself and indicate of what you are in charge?

A:

I was transferred to my current position in 1992, now I am in charge of the personnel affairs in the Stevedoring & Warehousing Department.

Q:

What is the role you play in the process of the privatisation?

A:

This Department used to have more than one thousand stevedores in 1992, now the number of employees is less than six hundred. Why is that? We have been prepared for the privatisation for a long time, there were people leaving for whatever reasons, we have been asked not to fill any new one in. During the last couple of years, we absorbed the shortage of the manpower and merged the function of some divisions in

order to avert the pain of the privatisation. However, we do need to sell or release some business to private corporations like the docks and warehouses. But the most important issue is how to depose of the existing stevedores. Unfortunately, it is beyond this Department's authority, we follow the order, we don't make policy. We will, however, fight for the best interests for our people should we think it is necessary.

I did note probe the interviewee further, but at a later time I invited him to attend some of the meetings with workers in the warehousing department in the harbour. That is discussed in my group interview.

My next batch of interviews was with workers from various departments, and with various working jobs and experiences. I did my choices through a randomly selected process. I took a list and took names randomly off the list.

6. Interviewee: Mr Ma, Lung-Sheng, clerk of Warehouse No.7, S&WD (06/09/99).

Q:

Introduce yourself, please.

A:

I've got in the bureau since 1986. In the every beginning, I was lowest level worker in the warehouse, and then I passed an examination in 1985, which promoted me to be a clerk in charge of the Warehouse No.7.

Q:

So what is your day-to-day work?

A:

I am directly in charge of all cargo come in and out Warehouse No.7

Q:

What is your understanding of the privatisation the KHB?

A:

Oh! Yes, I know that very well. In order to compete with the other international commercial harbours in this region, we have to be privatised as soon as possible. However, there is one thing that I do care about, which is if they don't want me any more, they have to help me to find another job. You know I am 42 years old now, it is very difficult for me to get another job. Anyway, I do want to stay here.

Q:

Are you familiar with your colleagues' perspectives of the privatisation?

A:

Yes, their thinking is as same as mine. And most of them are concerned that it is necessary to consult them before the KHB puts its plan into action in order to reduce resistance.

7. **Interviewee: Mr Tang, Yin-Ming, worker, Yenchen Warehouse, S&WD (7/09/99).**

Q:

When did you start working here? Could you introduce yourself?

A:

I was born in 1959, and I have been working in this warehouse since 1982. Now my job is to take care of the paper work.

Q:

How much do you know about the KHB privatisation, inasmuch as you are stop your work of KHB in these years. I feel especially interested in your point of view. *(This*

mentioning of his status was done by me to encourage him to speak, otherwise it is quite possible that he would not want to express an opinion to me as a researcher.)

A:

I realise that the whole process was started in 1996, but I rarely know the details. I have been told there would be an employee's assembly in the near future to announce everything in detail. I believe I would understand that sooner or later.

Q:

What's your major concern on this issue? *(This was a drawing-out probe to draw out more of his views about concerns for the future.)*

A:

Well, I hope I still can hold the job after privatisation. I am more than 40 years old now; it is not easy to start a new job at my age. Therefore, if they do want me to leave, I hope I can at least get some kind of job training in advance.

8. Interviewee: Mr Chang, Zei-Hsuing, Supervisor, Warehouse No.7, S&WD (08/09/99).

Q:

Can you introduce yourself, please?

A:

I have worked in KHB since 1967, right after I accomplished my military service. My current position is a supervisor, which means I am the head of this warehouse.

Q:

Mr Chang, you are a mid-level official in the KHB, what's your perspective of the privatisation?

A:

Though I have been working in this bureau for 32 years, I know little about policy level work due to most of my career is on the front line. I do understand, however, to enhance our capability to compete with the other harbours, we have to reduce some operational cost, and the way to reach the goal is to privatise the KHB. Nevertheless, all the measures being taken by the KHB in this regard shall take the employees' interest into account in the first place. No matter what the KHB can do, consulting, communicating, and compromising with the Union, to take care of the interest of all employees shall be the first concern.

9. Interviewee: Mr Chen, Custom Broker (10/09/99).

Q:

Would you please tell me how long you have been in this business? Please introduce yourself.

A:

I've in this business for about 12 years, basically, what I do is to provide the paper work services to shipping companies who need debark or embark cargoes in Kaohsiung Harbour.

Q:

What's your experience on doing all the paper work with KHB?

A:

It is in both the KHB and shipping companies' interests if the KHB can improve its administrative efficiency. For shipping companies' time is money, if all the paper work can save days to complete the cost will be reduce dramatically, at the same time

it would also win the KHB a good reputation. The KHB still needs a lot of efforts to improve its administrative efficiency.

Q:

So, what are your suggestions on this issue?

A:

I wish I could list all of them, but there are few:

1. The employees have to adjust their mentality in order to serve their customers better.

2. Streamline the administration in order to shorten the time-consuming custom application process.

3. Simplify the ID application procedure in order to increase the convenience of the people who try to do business with KHB.

4. Discipline the warehouse workers in order to improve their work efficiency.

5. Computerise the entire paper work and simplify the application procedure.

Q:

Do you realise that the KHB is going to be privatised?

A:

Yes, I have heard, but not clearly in detail. However, I do feel optimistic about the future of the privatised KHB. The KHB has become too bureaucratic recently. I believe the privatisation is the only way to improve its competitiveness.

Q:

How do you see the odds of its success? *(Here I was implicitly probing his view that it would necessarily be successful.)*

A:

I hope it will be successful, and hope it will happen as soon as possible. In today

business environment, the loser will be the last to adjust the tempo to fit the trend.

Q:

Are you aware that there are, however, many possible trends that can be followed, as

a way of becoming less bureaucratic?

A:

The main point is to find a good way to become less so. Otherwise I wonder if we

can be competitive in the markets.

After conducting these various interviews, I interviewed the Director in

September 1999, asking him to explain his views. Before I list this interview, I should

say something about his background. There is only one director in harbour. The past

history of him is that he came to work 01/02/1996. He worked before for a

Taiwanese shipping firm for eight years in the UK before becoming director of

harbour. After the UK experience, he worked in the Taiwanese government for six

years (communication department). Then the government sent him as director to

Harbour. He is all-powerful (and can dismiss staff if he wants).

10a. Interviewee: Mr Yu, Director of the Harbour (29/09/99).

Q:

What are your plans for the future as Director of the Harbour?

A:

To make profit for the government, we need less staff; staff must work more

efficiently and be more versatile; they must be able to do more than his/her own job.

They must be trained to do more than one function. Also, that means that if someone

is not any more there (on holiday or on leave) someone else can take over the function more easily.

Q:

How do you think we might save on staff costs? *(Here I used the style of ordinary probing to allow the director to speak about how he thought staff costs could be saved.)*

A:

We can automate the harbour and offices (for example, so that the computers can be used to coordinate the work from various departments), to do the work with less staff. All staff must become computer literate.

Q:

Do you think we can provide a good service to customers that way?

A:

The service to customers will be better if there is less paperwork for them and only one department to deal with (in Chinese: only one window). Also staff's work should become more efficient; there should be less loss of time through simpler and more efficient work-procedures.

Q:

Do you think this can only be done through further privatisation?

A:

I am trying to promote actively the privatisation programme of the port.

Currently the items such as mooring and unmooring, working boats, pilot, ship bunkering, stevedoring, water boats, leasing of container berth, and both of the bulk

and general cargo berths have been open to private enterprises. And I am interested in more changes still.

Meanwhile, I would like to say that I think we have been very successful in making services an automatic service. Starting from February 1996, the computer information system has been built to connect operation system to harbour services. People can get access to various services, such as loading and unloading, storage, visa for ships entering and leaving, and so on. The system also can be used for on-line application such as ship registration, watering, pilot, and other harbour services. It saves time and operation costs. We have already made a lot of progress there.

Q:

What are your plans for making the system more efficient?

For me, efficiency today means that we:

1. Produce manifest data and traffic statistics.

2. Print manifest and container data on site for promotion of paper-less operation.

3. Establish communication channels for consumers

4. Establish customer service centre for ship owners, agents to hear their opinion for improvement.   .

5. Largely implement ISO-9002 system to assure service quality.

In this interview with the Director I did not express any of the concerns that some of the workers had, as I was worried that in individual interviews names might be mentioned or asked. But following some group interviews which included a group of workers from the warehouses, a group of junior managers (supervisors) and a mixed group of workers talking with their manager in one group, I did do a further

two interviews with the Director, in which I mentioned some of the concerns from all the group interviews.

The first interview with the Director was followed firstly by an interview with the Vice-Director and then by some interviewing of local residents to get their ideas about the Harbour. I selected the resident interviewees in a purposeful way to try to get a spread of occupations and interests. (And later I held some group interviews with people from the Harbour, followed finally with the extra interviews with the Director, 10b and 10c.)

11. Interviewee: Mr Dan, Yu-Yi (02/10/99).

Q:

Can you tell me a bit about your relation to the Harbour?

A:

I graduated from the Taiwan Ocean University in 1964 and then went to work straight away in KHB. I was at first a junior staff member but after spending 30 years here I am in this position (since 1997). In fact I started as a worker in the docks (recording information), so I know a little bit about their work. By the way, I also spent two years in America studying for my Masters degree.

Q:

In your position, can you talk about the KHB in a future way?

A:

You know, I think that most of the Harbour staff recognise that the organisation needs to be reformed. I know that many of the workers here are concerned that for the same level job in private companies in Taiwan they get less pay; so they are afraid if we become more like a company. Recording goods in the warehouses is like a clerk

job and for that same level of job in Taiwan they may not get the same pay as here. When the Director came to work here (1996) his duty was to see if he can improve the harbour organisation, so I can see why the workers are worried if he tries to change it towards more privatisation. They don't really like the Director's policy partly for this reason.

Q:

Do you think that there is a way around this?

A:

Well I think that basically the Director is a good leader, so it can be that solutions get generated. There is not very good communication between the Director and the workers, though, because the workers think that the Director is in too high a position to speak with. The Director also meanwhile has other duties to the government. The Director and workers are in a situation that does not allow the workers really to speak about their worries to him. This is partly because they have different interests and partly because here in Taiwan it is not really acceptable practice to try to do this.

Q:

Do you agree with the conclusion of the 1998 and 1999 discussions which led to the 1999 decisions about the future way of the KHB?

A:

Yes, I did agree, because it is the trend in the world to try to pursue the best benefit to remain competitive and I worry that if we cannot be competitive in the global situation we might not retain our position as third in the world even. I think we need this, as the Harbour is an important part of our City life. I know that no one of the

workers will be forced to retire so I think that at least that should not be a problem. And existing contracts with workers can also not be changed under Labour laws.

Q:

Do you think that the future of the KHB will be more successful if we follow the agreements from 1999 arrangements for the future? *(Here my focused probing was meant to imply that we do not know how successful we will be and what makes a more successful policy.)*

A:

I think that as long as we act professionally we can be very successful. We have a good location in Asia, good dock facilities, and also a good leader to design the future for leading us. But of course I am not sure exactly how we can move towards the future. In fact, we all have to consider a good way forward for us all.

From this interview I found that the Vice-Director showed that he had some understanding of some of the concerns of the workers regarding their pay and welfare and he could put it into a perspective in relation to work in other sectors of Taiwan. He was also aware that the design of the future still had some way to go and was not complete as a plan.

My next set of interviewees on an individual basis was with some of the population living in the City. I started with some students from a high school (Lee Ching Ho Lous high school of Taiwan). I then moved on to a college graduate, and then to some teachers and some other residents of the City. The following are some extracts of the various interviews. (I have kept anonymous the names of the students on their request.)

12. Interviewee: student 1 (14 years old) (26/01/2000).

Q:

What do you think about the image of the KHB? What do you think of the Harbour?

A:

Oh, about the Harbour, all I know is that there are many dockworkers who get work there and there are also lots of boats that I often see in the Harbour.

Q:

How many dockworkers do you think work there?

A:

I cannot be sure. Actually I do not know. But I am pleased that lots of people it seems to me get work in the Harbour. The Harbour provides work to people.

Q:

Do you think it is a good employer?

A:

I do not know that very well either. I am sorry I cannot give you more information about my image of the Harbour.

The student did not seem to want to talk more about the Harbour but at least I realized that he thought one of its roles was to provide work to people.

13. Interviewee: student 2 (16 years old) (26/01/2000).

Q:

What do you think about the image of the KHB? What do you think of the Harbour?

A:

Yes, I have thought about this and I think that it is important for the Taiwanese economy, because of the import and export of goods — that all helps to improve the Taiwanese economy. I may want to work one day there myself.

Q:

Why do you say you might want to work one day in the future in the Harbour?

A:

Yes, I like it, because as a child I always liked the sea. I like to be near the sea and to work near the sea. I hope that I can choose my job in the future. Then I will choose to work in the Harbour.

Q:

Have you thought what kind of job you would like there?

A:

I have not thought a lot about that. I think I would like to be an office worker of some kind there. I have heard that the office work there is quite well paying.

Q:

So the Harbour has an image in your mind of being near the sea and getting a good pay.

A:

Yes, and I hope that in future it can provide that for me.

I did not question this student further about the possible impact of more privatisation at KHB. But I found it interesting that like the other student he thought it important that the Harbour could be a good employer. That was one of its roles in

the City. Next, I interviewed a college graduate and I began the interview by asking about his experience of living near the harbour.

14. Interviewee: Mr Wang, local resident for seven years, college graduate (27/01/2000).

Q:

How do think about living nearby the KHB?

A:

Though it is the third biggest Harbour in the world, it is so polluted, there is always oil floating on the surface of the Harbour, which make you feel very uncomfortable. Meanwhile, the KHB is part of the City of Kaohsiung geographically, but it is not under the jurisdiction of the City Hall, which I think it is very unreasonable.

Q:

What is your perspective of the privatisation of KHB?

A:

There were so many failure precedents of the privatisation of the state-owned enterprise; I hope this one will not follow. There is one thing that the authority shall pay more attention, which is that the consortium dominating the public business shall be avoided.

Q:

Do you understand the privatisation policy in detail?

A:

Well, I am not aware of that.

Q:

Do you have any suggestion for the future privatised KHB?

A:

Oh, yes, there are several:

1. I hope they can pay more attention to the environmental protection.

2. I hope the KHB can provide public leisure facilities for local residents as a feed back.

3. I hope they can improve their administrative efficiency.

4. There is always traffic jam around KHB, especially during the rush hours; I hope the KHB can do something about it.

5. Finally, I hope the privatisation very be a successful one.

   I found it interesting that in this interview the interviewee suggested that even when the Harbour becomes privatised, he hopes that environmental protection will not be forgotten as an important goal. He also wants the public to benefit from leisure activities. With this stated, he says he hopes the privatisation can be successful. He reminds the researcher that it is possible that it will not be! Because of these kinds of suggestions, I knew I should also speak to some more people in the community to get an idea of how they see the potential for the Harbour.

15. Interviewee: Mrs Shen, teacher at college, living near the Harbour for 10 years (28/01/2000).

Q:

What does living near the KHB mean to you?

A:

Sometimes I am pleased that there can be prosperity for the city. But I think citizens in Kaohsiung have also needs for more waterfront and recreational activities.

Q:

Are you pleased if the Harbour also develops into a larger port?

A:

I am worried that Harbour operations should not become too close to the urban area, as this causes pollution. The operation of the Harbour creates urban development but I hope that it can be more environment friendly.

Q:

 Have you ever thought about the port activities becoming owned by a company altogether?

A:

I have not thought about that. As long as the government can still be in charge of environmental affairs I think that the way of organising the Harbour can be made in many ways.

Although the interviewee said she had not thought about the Harbour becoming owned by a company, she considered it important that environmental issues were taken care of somehow.

16. Interviewee: Mrs Su, teacher at college, living near the harbour for six years (28/01/2000).

Q:

What does living near the KHB mean to you?

A:

I am proud to be living near the Harbour, which is one of the top three Asia-Pacific ports. As you know, it is strategically placed in Taiwan and it provides a world-wide

seaborne traffic link with almost all the major ports in the world. I am really pleased that my city is associated with such importance.

Q:

You seem to know quite something about the Harbour.

A:

Yes, I know that the government is planning to develop the Harbour as a Transit Centre port in the Asia-Pacific region. I realise that they also want to make sure that it continued to be an effective port.

Q:

Have you thought about ways that it can be made effective?

A:

I have not thought about the ways, but I know they need to create a good management to deal with the Harbour activities.

Q:

Do you think that the government can create a good management to continue to make the Harbour such an important one in the world?

A:

I think that it is very important that there is professional management. But I do not know exactly how this can be achieved.

This interviewee mentioned mainly her pride about the Harbour as the third top in the world. That was important for her; any management that could sustain that was acceptable to her.

17. Interviewee: Mr Chen, teacher at college, living near Harbour for four years (28/01/2000).

Q:

What does living near the KHB mean to you?

A:

Living near the Harbour makes me realise that there are many important decisions to be made for the future of the Harbour and the City.

Q:

What decisions do you mean to speak about?

A:

I know that change from government-owned to privately owned has been planned. But I also know that there are many things that must be solved. For example, it is important to think about how the adjustment of the organisation of the Harbour should take place, including the worker system. Cancelling contracts and making some staff become retired are some things that might occur in the process.

Q:

Have you any suggestions for the Harbour?

A:

No, actually I do not have concrete suggestions. I only wish that when any organisation system is changed, including that of the Harbour, we need to consider many, many things, and we must not lose sight of these things. But meanwhile I also realise that the Harbour must not fall behind in its world ports position. That is also something that needs to be remembered as a goal for Harbour development.

Q:

Do you think that the goals are compatible?

A:

I think that I would like to see that the Harbour at least continues to be very important in the world as a goal. And in the meantime, it is also important that it provides for workers in a satisfactory way. I hope that the government can realise both these goals.

This interviewee indicated that he was aware of the difficulty of decisions that had to be made in connection with the future management of the Harbour.

18. Interviewee: Mr Tang, Lorry driver, living near the Harbour for 20 years (31/01/2000).

Q:

From your perspective, can you tell me something about your experience of the Harbour and its development?

A:

I can say that as a driver I think that there can be some more cooperation with Kaohsiung City government to work on planning of a transportation system in Kaohsiung. The external routes to Kaohsiung Harbour are congested. A convenient transportation system for Kaohsiung Harbour area with a purpose of reducing the impacts on transportation and urban development needs to be developed.

Q:

Do you think that there has been a continuity between the planning of further Harbour developments and the urban planning?

A:

The Harbour planning is I suppose designed according to the need of operation and relevant regulations. But the planning fails to take urban planning into consideration; therefore, it brings some problems of compatibility.

Q:

What do you think is a solution to this?

A:

I think if we can redevelop the Yencheng district and Lingya district as waterfront recreational and commercial areas while we readjust the port zones, then there can be a redevelopment of the harbour area.

Q:

Did you know that there are plans to create an integrated port building in the multifunctional commerce and trade park" issued by Kaohsiung city government for the future?

A:

Yes, that has been publicised and I think it is a good idea. I think that there is a lot of scope for commerce and for leisure activities connected with the Harbour. I would like to see the government put some of these ideas into practice.

19. Interviewee: Mr Csiu, engineer, living near Harbour for 15 years (01/02/2000).

Q:

From your perspective, can you tell me something about your experience of the Harbour and its development?

A:

Since I have been here, I have seen the Harbour tour activity become open to the public. There has been a ferry service established mainly for tourists. I think there can be an establishment of more facilities for waterfront recreation.

Q:

Do you think that the cruise trips should be put on in order to make more money for the Harbour, as part of the development of its operations?

A:

I am pleased if it makes money for the Harbour as I am part of this city and it gives some prosperity. It is also valuable if people can enjoy cruises.

Q:

Do you think that plans for privatising the Harbour operations will make it more efficient in serving customers?

A:

It is difficult for me to say what effect privatisation could have on the development of the Harbour area. The boats are in any case owned by private operators, for tourism purposes. But it is the government who collects the money from their operation. As I see it, however an economical arrangement is worked out, should be of benefit to all the different people involved. What is important is that more recreation options are given to Kaohsiung citizens and arrange port tours on holidays for citizens to promote the waterfront recreation.

Through these interviews, I had obtained some ideas from citizens about ideas for the Harbour, that I could carry over into later discussions with the Director. But before this, I also did some group interviews, as mentioned below.

Group interviews with workers as a group and junior managers as a group (all working in the warehouses) and with workers and managers as a single mixed group:

I chose as the people to organise group interviews with, a selection of people working in the docks, a selection of managers (junior management) and a section of supervisors (also of warehouse personnel). I organised the group interviews in 2000. Altogether I included low-level workers' group interviews, managers of warehouse group interviews, and groups consisting of workers and supervisors together. I also interviewed the Chief of the KHB from 20 January till 6 March 2000, after having done some group interviews. And later again at the end of March of that year, I did another interview with him. The second interview with the Director was especially influenced by my group interviews; and the Director was aware of this as it was made explicit that the workers had some worries. But because it had been expressed in group interviews, it was not possible for the Director to have any reprisals. Every person had remained anonymous. This is not to say that the Director would want to make reprisals against worries expressed in group interviews. But I felt that this was important from an ethical point of view. As Easterby-Smith *et al.* note, it is important for researchers to recognise that interviewees can possibly be harmed by indirect disclosure of information (as disclosed by a researcher) (1991, p. 82).

In the group interviews, I tried to set up a process in which the people involved could see that talking to me as a researcher they could learn about themselves and about ways of looking at the future for the Harbour. Easterby-Smith *et al.* note that even in ordinary interviewing (individual) this can take place (1991, p. 81). I found that I wanted to offer some benefits or advantages in exchange for their participation.

I wanted to let the people involved talk to one another and to me to gain a "better understanding of their organisation and their role within it" so that we could also explore together different views about the organisation and roles in it. Easterby-Smith *et al.* note similarities between this aim and action research, where researchers involve themselves in definite actions. But in my case, as explained in detail in Chapter three, I did not see that I was involving myself in specific actions. Rather I was inviting discussion on actions that had taken place and I was helping people to reflect on what that could mean for them and for their organisation. For instance, the critical incidents around the privatisation of the dockworker system, were used as an opportunity by me to probe this in various ways in individual and group interviewing. Easterby-Smith *et al.* explain that in using critical incidents (in ordinary interviewing processes to supplement the process) "respondents may be asked to track back to particular instances in their work lives and to explain their actions and motives with specific regard to those instances" (1991, p. 83). I did not really refer to definite critical incidents, but the incidence of the privatisation process of the dockworker system was well known to them.

20. The group interviews with workers as a group (20/01/2000).

On 20 January 2000, I conducted an interview with eight workers of the warehouse. I organised the arrangement of speaking so that the interviewees could speak their minds freely. I gave each of them a number in the order they spoke; namely W1, W2, W3, etc. Before the meeting I had asked them not to discuss matters beforehand.

Good morning everyone. I am pleased to hold this meeting as I think we have an opportunity to mention ideas and examine them as a group. Let us begin now.

W1:

I am worried that my wages will be cut when the KHB changes the management system. I will then find myself in a difficult position.

W2:

Fifteen years ago, in 1985, I started to work for the KHB. At the moment the morale is very low as we had some unanswered questions, such as pay, welfare, pension, etc., when the KHB changes in the future the management system. I hope that the KHB authority will make public their policy about these matters and inform the employees.

W3:

I am working for the KHB since 1971. We are aware that our wages are higher than in other similar professions at the same level, but what will our wages be in the future?

W4:

I am working for the KHB since 1981. I am 47 years old, with two children. One is studying at the senior high school, the other at the university. I would like to know how many workers will be retrenched when the KHB changes the management system.

After one hour I asked all the participators to discuss the above-mentioned questions. The aim was to come to conclusions. The following became clear:

1. The harbour workers feel uncertain about the future in connection with the coming change of the management system.

2. They also fear that many workers will lose their jobs in the near future.

3. They wonder how the change will affect their contracts.

4. The question is, will the wages for the workers remain the same or will they be changed?

5. Finally, what will be the rules in connection with retrenchment and retirement?

The conclusions that the workers came to in the group were obviously not clear ones about the future. The conclusions expressed their concerns for the future. With an understanding of this, I then organised the group interview with the junior managers.

On 15 February 2000 I had a meeting with seven warehouse managers. Here again I gave each a number in the order they spoke, namely M1, M2, M3, etc. They were also asked not to discuss the matter with anybody else beforehand.

21. Group interviews with warehouse managers (15/02/2000).

My opening statement:

Good morning everyone. I am pleased to hold this meeting as I think we have an opportunity to mention ideas and examine them as a group. Let us begin now.

M1:

I am working in the harbour since 1964, the last ten years as a manager. We know that the KHB wants to change the management system from a government department to a "public legal person in law"; that means that the government will own 51% of the shares.

As the KHB does not make public what is going on, the efficiency in the workplace is affected.

M2:

I am working for the KHB since 1962; my position is now a manager of the warehouse. Since 1990 the Bureau controls the number of people working in the harbour and has the power to streamline the organisation, which means it can reduce the number of people working in the harbour. This worries the workers and affects their efficiency.

They asked themselves the following questions:

1. What course should the employees follow when the KHB changes the management system?

2. Will workers, before they will be retrenched, be given the opportunity to train for another special skill?

3. How will welfare for the employees be affected in the new organisation?

M3:

I am working in the warehouse since 1965. Now, most of the workers have a wait-and-see attitude. Some young workers hope for an increase in wages, but the older workers are more interested to find out the rules for retirement and for early retirement.

M4:

I am a vice-manager since 1995. I think that most of the workers want to hear about their job-security after the change of the management system. As the KHB does not give any assurance on this point, many workers are confused.

After about fifty minutes I asked all the participators to discuss the above-mentioned questions. The aim was to come to conclusions. The following became clear:

1. After the change of the management system, what will the welfare element for the employees be?

2. What will the rules about the right of the employees to retire be?

3. How can the work efficiency be improved in the new organisation?

These three questions were not posed by people as ones to be answered immediately. They were mentioned as ones that the managers recognised did not have an easy answer. What is interesting to me is that they felt that efficiency is affected if there is not sufficient communication between workers and senior management when decisions are made in regard to the future of the Harbour. I did not try to direct too much this discussion. I mentioned from my point of view at this point that I had some opinions, but I did not say these too forcefully. I wanted just to show that there could be another opinion. From my point of view, if workers could be trained to be more educated more to deal with their jobs in a different way, and they could be paid according to that, they could work commensurately with pay.

However, they are less educated and are considered in an alternative (lower) camp. So it is difficult for them to decide any differently about their jobs. If their concerns can be considered, we would know better how to begin to answer the questions raised in the interview. I concluded the interview by mentioning that this is also another way of seeing the situation.

If I want to summarise the common concerns between workers and junior managers they are:

1. How can efficiency in the workplace be improved?

2. What will motivate them to work better?

3. How will they think about the new organisation in the future?

4. Are workers only interested in their pay-packet?

5. How many will leave the new organisation?

From my discussions with these groups of people, I decided it was important to bring together some of the warehouse workers with the managers to discuss their concerns.

The meeting took place to take forward the abovementioned, as follows:

22. Group interview with workers and managers (25/02/2000).

On 25 February 2000 I had another meeting, now with 15 persons, of which eight were workers and seven were managers. I gave the workers numbers W1, W2, W3, etc., and the managers M1, M2, M3, etc., according to the order they spoke. The aim was to get common views on subjects discussed in the workers' group interview of 20 January and the managers' group interview of 15 February.

My opening statement:

Good morning everyone. I am pleased to hold this meeting as I think we now can come together to look for ideas about our working together. Let us think about the points raised in previous meetings as follows, as I think we have ascertained these as being relevant.

1. The uncertainty in the workplace in connection with the change of the management system in the near future, is something we cannot ignore.

2. How will workers feel and think about the new organisation?

3. How can the efficiency of the workers be improved?

4. How many people will be retrenched by the new organisation?

5. Will the wages for the workers change or stay on the same level?

6. What about the rules when employees want to retire?

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7. Will there be still welfare for the employees in the new organisation?

The participators said the following about these seven points.

W1:

I hope that the KHB will inform every department about what is going on, and that the workers will keep their job in the new organisation.

W2:

I agree with W1's view, because nobody knows the planned situation; all we know that we could lose our job, even those who have been working for many years in the harbour.

M1:

I think that people in general do not like to be retrenched in the new organisation. I hope that we can improve our work efficiency by mechanisation and by simplifying the paper work.

M2:

How many people will still be working when the KHB changes to "a public legal person in law", and what about work contracts, positions, payments, etc. I think that most employees are worried about all this.

W3:

I simply hope that the KHB will give the employees the right to choose about their future.

After this, we had a discussion lasting about half an hour.

The following points became clear:

1. The authority of the KHB should explain and let all employees understand the situation about the planning for changes in the future.

2. The hope is that new machines would be bought to raise the work efficiency in the harbour and to deploy workers in a reasonable way.

From this it seems that the workers are not against bringing in machines to raise work efficiency. But they are concerned that their own conditions need to be carefully thought about so that their contracts are secured. Also, only if they want to take retirement, they should be urged to go, but not otherwise.

As far as their pay is concerned, they work for what they are paid. They are, however, concerned when decisions about the future of the Harbour are made without asking them their feelings and thoughts. On the basis of all of these discussions, I re-interviewed the Director twice, as follows:

I interviewed Mr Yu, the director of KHB, on 6 March 2000. (This was my second interview with him, called 10b)

10b. Interviewee: Mr Yu (06/03/2000).

Q.

How are you, Sir? I have conducted interviews with groups of workers and with groups of managers in January and February. And I can give you some of their answers on two questions.

1. After the change of the management system to a "public legal person in the law", what will be the position of the employees in connection with their job security, pay, welfare, etc.?

2. How will the new organisation work in the future?

A:

The major object of the new organisation is to improve the work efficiency and increase the competition power in the market. The target is not to retrench staff and

the KHB will not dismiss any employee. But if somebody wants to retire early, the harbour will compensate financially the person.

By the way, here in the Harbour of Kaohsiung we have spared no efforts to extend our business horizon in line with government policies.

In particular in recent years we have attempted to improve efficiency, boost competitiveness, and we have attained the objectives with a number of break-throughs and have innovate measures, including notably the following:

1. To privatise harbour operations and to simplify the handling of necessary papers.

2. To complete the enforcement of reasonable systems in hiring stevedores.

3. To enforce flexible harbour tariffs.

4. To establish information operation systems.

In the new organisation we will try to go forward continuously for a top quality policy of "excellence break-throughs for added competitiveness to cater for total customer satisfaction". And when the organisation begins to operate this way, we will make known information about the function and the policy to the public.

Q.

Yes, I see. So you mean that the authority will not retrench staff in the new organisation.

A:

No, we will not retrench staff if they are unwilling to take retirement or to leave. But we also want to ensure that we can create customer satisfaction in all areas of our business.

Q:

What about plans for transforming the Harbour's image in the city to also look after the residents and other tourists? By the way, some of the residents are worried about the port pollution.

A:

Yes, the pollutants enter into the harbour through the river; thus, there are many units involved in the pollution control and it is difficult to have all work together and decrease the port pollution. I am pleased to say that there is a Committee of Kaohsiung Port Pollution Control. I expect that it can work together and solve pollution problems. I am in favour of that.

I am also pleased to say that there is already an established waterfront recreation zone for the citizens. But there are ways to improve, for instance, we need to create a fence around the operation area and we need to promote our greening programme in the Harbour area. I am in favour of these ideas.

I thanked the Director for the interview. I did not probe more his ideas in this interview. I realised that he was aware of the concerns of some of the residents and that these were being considered.

A third interview with the Director was also possible because when I visited London and Felixstowe harbours with the Director, I spoke to him further about the future of the KHB in his opinion.

10c. Interviewee: Mr Yu (29/03/2000) (in London Port office).

Q:

What do you believe now will be the future of the KHB?

A:

The KHB held so many meetings to discuss the Harbour's future with the government and now the position is going to change, so I do not know what the future brings. The DPP candidate said before the elections that if he wins the election he will combine together the Kaohsiung city government with the Kaohsiung Harbour. Now that was the election outcome and I suppose that is what will happen.

Q:

Do you think that will be a major change for the Harbour? *(I asked this question as an explanatory probe to get more of an explanation of what made the Director say the previous sentence — Easterby-Smith et al. 1991, p. 80.)*

A:

The Kaohsiung city government is a local government that needs to worry about the City. But the running of the Kaohsiung Harbour is professional work. I hope that the city mayor does realise that we are professionals and that we need professionals to run the Harbour. I do not want them to interrupt our Harbour business. I still also want it to become a privatised business so that we can run it without too much interference.

Q:

Do you think that the way the London Harbour is organised is a possible way for Kaohsiung Harbour? *(I asked this question as a way of getting the Director to say more about his views on Harbour organisation. It was what Easterby Smith et al. call a "drawing out" probe, 1991, p. 80.)*

A:

The London port does not belong either to government or to a private company. It is run by a committee which controls and decides things. I personally prefer the way the

Felixstowe port is organised. The company controls the docks of the port and all port matters so as to pursue the largest company benefits. This means that things can be organised according to the market price and it makes it more competitive.

Q:

What about the strike that is taking place among the Felixstowe dockers against the management working ideas? *(This could have been interpreted as confrontational unless carefully stated by me. Therefore I put the question in a not so clear fashion, to allow the Director to speak in any direction he chose to interpret the question.)*

A:

Felixstowe management have now developed proposals for flexible working contracts with labour, but Union officials are angry that the changes will be detrimental to the majority of employees. According to the Union, workers will be hired on conditions inferior to those of existing employees. New shift arrangements will be less favourable, because people who used to work overtime will not be hired so much. Preference will be given to contract labour instead of overtime work. But the Director of the Harbour thinks that they can still come to an arrangement. He mentioned that "It is a complex deal".

Q:

So you think that ownership by a company is better?

A:

I do not say it is always better. But I prefer to see that the Harbour is run efficiently according to professional ways of organising it. I am worried about the future of the Harbour at the moment. Things are very uncertain.

Q:

What do you think that all of the planning that we did on feasibility studies since 1997

for privatising KHB?

A:

We spent much time in so many meetings. But is it my job to try to organise and plan.

We need to plan for the future as far as possible.

Q:

Do you think our planning maybe could be more flexible so we can adapt when new

political factors come into the picture?

A:

I do not know if that is possible. We could not see ahead. But maybe we need to think

about how to interact differently with our political environment in future. In the

meantime I will try to explain my position from a professional point of view and I wish

to influence decisions that way.

My discussion with the Director concluded my fieldwork investigations as far as

this stage of my casework was concerned. I think that during the long process of

collecting documents, observing and interviewing, I achieved some of my aims which

were to organise a case study that was not like a traditional case study. I explain this in

my conclusion.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I explained the process by which I organised the fieldwork. I

explained how my documentary study began with documents about the privatising of

the dockworker system, and with documents about meetings regarding future plans

for increased privatisation of other Harbour activities. I also explained some of my own observations about interactions taking place in the Harbour around these issues. Finally I concentrated on explaining how I proceeded with the interviews, to explore more about people's views on all the issues. In my interviews I had to be careful because I did not want to lose the relationship with any of the people that I interviewed. I wanted people all to see me as a middleman who could listen to various viewpoints. This was also important so that after conducting all the interviews people themselves could also respect that I had tried to create various viewpoints and not just support any one side of the story about privatisation and its possible success. I chose my sample of respondents to my interviews so that I could get some appreciation of a variety of perspectives and also so that I could have an influence on the some of the main players in the system. For instance, it was imperative to hold interviews with the Director, the Vice-Director and the senior managers of departments such as research and development and of the general business division, as their views have a powerful influence on the direction of decisions. I also needed to interview the Union leader as what he believes about the organisation is also important, because of his position as an official workers leader. I wanted not only to listen to all these views but also to act as a middleman sometimes so that I could show up other views as I spoke to people about their own views. Apart from my interviews people who because of their position have much influence in the direction of decisions, I also did interview with people who also have ideas that can influence the persons who are making the top decisions about the direction of the organisation. Therefore I did a lot of interviews with workers, junior managers and group interviews also. These interviews were done to let people communicate across their

ideas and also they had the function of letting me later mention views to the Director without having to mention names of individual people. Also, because both workers and their managers were involved in the group discussions and some shared ideas took place in the meeting, it would have some more strength I thought when I mentioned it to the Director. So I chose my activities and their sequence with the idea that I can add new ideas into the organisation at different points, without threatening anybody's material position.

When I interviewed people I did not follow the practice of just trying to listen to views. I am aware that many researchers suggest that the interviewer should try to ensure that participants speak their own minds. Of course, I wanted people to be able to speak freely. So that is why I tried to structure the interviews so that people would feel free to speak. But I also wanted to use the interviews as an opportunity for people to recognise other views on the subject. So therefore sometimes I probed to show that doubt could be put on what they were saying. My italicised points during the interview show how I used various probing techniques so that I could bring awareness of the continued doubts about the subject. I sometimes also in the form of a question made it be known that I had a different opinion, or at least another way of looking at things. The respondents will have known that I was doing this in a subtle way. I did not want to confront them openly as this would be like shaming them. Also, they therefore may not cooperate with me in future when I return as the official research officer to do further research. So I could not threaten this possibility for continued cooperation with me later. For all these reasons my interviewing was a mixture of asking questions and using some subtle probing of various kinds to pick up

more information but also to show some doubt about the subjects being spoken about.

It can also be noted that I did not begin every interview with the same type of introduction. This is because in Taiwan people expect to be approached differently depending on the position that they are in within the organisation. So I respected that that was how they probably felt. If I had tried to open the interview with all people in the organisation in the same way, people would think I was acting dishonestly and hypocritically.

I believe that my way of conducting the case study lies somewhere between ordinary style case study research and action research, although the definition of these two types of research cannot be clear cut in any case.

Remenyi *et al.* note that as a general rule "case studies are a preferred research tactic when ... the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on some contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (1998, p. 187). In the case of my study, this general rule applies in the sense that I could not control how outcomes would occur and also I wanted to study the phenomenon of privatisation as it is taking place and as it is experienced in a particular setting. Of course, as in other case studies I also wanted the case to be offering some ideas that could be of interest not only to the people in the organisation that was my unit of analysis. So I wanted to expand the knowledge about ways of thinking about privatisation in relation to other ports and even other services (for example). Remenyi *et al.* note that in developing knowledge from case studies this is not a matter of creating a statistical analysis which then represents a conclusion to the study (1998, p. 187). Certainly my case study tried to develop rather an argument and story that could be engaging to people

who wanted to look at my report. This is the only form of conclusion that I hope to create. Remenyi *et al.* explain that an exemplary case study should, among other things, "be composed in an engaging manner" (1998, p. 186). I have tried to write up this case in a way that readers can look at it and find it engaging. Therefore I used the system of first putting documents in the first part of the chapter in terms of my summary of main points, then mentioning some observations that put a context for readers to see something about my perspective on some interactions. And I wrote up the interviews according to a sequence (that I recorded as I conducted them in fact), showing readers how I proceeded by putting my procedure and my rationale in italics.

Apart from doing a kind of collection of evidence through the detailed involvement in the fieldwork, so that I could write up an engaging report after that, I also tried to introduce some ideas from the action research literature about the aims of action research. As noted in my Chapter Two, I did not follow the typical action research idea that the researcher must help contribute to the planning of action; nevertheless I followed some of the spirit of action research texts in some way. Dunning-Lewis makes an interesting point when discussing the conduct of research through intervention in real world affairs (1999, p. 175). He states that "there is much dispute about the nature of action research". He also says that it is an understatement of Bryman to mention that "what is and is not action research is a definitional problem of considerable magnitude" (Dunning-Lewis, 1999, p. 175). In other words, he notices that Bryman says that action research cannot be easily defined and he says that this statement should not be understated. Dunning-Lewis says that a minimum requirement of action research is that it "involves a collaborative effort between researcher and collaborating organisation" (1999, p. 175). He says that there are still

many things that are optional, for instance, even whether and how many organisational staff participate and whether the outcome of the project is advice, organisational learning or practical change", can all form part of a defined action research project.

In the case of my research, I did believe that I could offer some kind of organisational learning through the way in which I constructed the case investigation. So the outcome fits Dunning-Lewis's view of potential outcomes of action research projects. But Dunning-Lewis suggests that for a project to count as action research a minimum requirement is that in the first place there is a collaborative effort occurring. I do not believe that it is very helpful to speak of my project as action research in the sense of creating from the start a collaborative effort between me and others in the organisation. Notwithstanding that, I believe that I did make some conscious intervention in real world affairs, even by the process of letting other people begin to view things through a more multi-view than their original view. Actually, it is very difficult to judge at the end of a project in any case what kind of learning has occurred, if the aim is to create learning. This is especially if one is involved in a case without being able to say to people that one is actually trying to organise some learning in the cultural climate. If I had come up with an agenda of cultural change as I started my process, it is very likely that many people in the organisation, of all levels would have started to mistrust me, and started to become much more defensive when I asked them to further elaborate on their ideas and especially when I subtly questioned their answers.

Argyris and Schön (1996) state that it is possible to organise action research to help people to deal with their defensiveness. They believe that they can train people

openly to talk about their fears and worries so that they can set up an open communication across the organisation and in that way create organisational learning. In my research project, I did not find that I could immediately ask certain people to talk about their concerns in open discussions between what seemed to be oppositional groups. For instance, from my interviews with the Director and Vice-Director, and from some of my observations, and from my understanding that I brought with me from my own experience, I thought that it would not be feasible to ask certain people to try directly to set up more direct confrontation. I preferred to use my own subtle form of challenging ideas so that people could gradually realise another point of view, without having to do this in front of people in a direct relationship of challenge. Therefore I used the probing technique in my own way and in a way that could fit in with something that people could find more or less familiar. I believe they would be shocked if I tried to do the discussions in a different way and this would not be fruitful for continued relations either between myself and people or between the various other individuals and groups.

I must emphasise that I wanted not to endanger the relationships between myself and others and also between the individuals (as individuals and as members of groups). The reasons for this were so that I could contribute to developing a way of people realising that they could see the whole process of change in the organisation from many angles. And they could think of ways of handling it that was not the same as when I first began my investigation. Punch suggests that one of the characteristics of an intrinsic case study is that the study is undertaken "because the researchers wants a better understanding of this particular case" (1998, p. 152). I must say that although my case study was focused on the particular case, it was not with the

intention only of my understanding it, but also with intentions of contributing to its development. Therefore, I believe that this case study, focused on the particular case of the Harbour, is more than can be expressed in Punch's definition of an intrinsic study.

Punch also notes that one can organise an instrumental case study. In that situation, one examines a particular case "to give insight into an issue or to refine a theory" (1998, p. 152). This is similar to Yin's view (1994) that case studies can be organised to have specific analytic results in terms of the development of theory. This is also related to the idea that one can create analytic generalisations from case studies (Yin, 1994, p. 36). I agree with Punch and with Yin that any generalisations that can be created from case studies are not mechanical ones like the ones created by using statistical techniques in survey type research (Punch, 1998, p. 155). However, I did not organise my case study with the intention of testing a theory and it is not instrumental if that is the definition of an instrumental case study (Punch, 1998, p. 152). I did the study firstly with the intention of contributing to the organisation which hosted the study (and of which I am member) and also with the intention of making some statements about it in relation to other port situations where privatisation has been considered and sometimes implemented. I tried to investigate the phenomena connected with privatisation in the actual life context in KHB in a way that help me to contribute to the particular case and also to contribute to the literature about privatisation of ports as part of the process of economic and social development. By comparing my case with other literature about these topics I can tell a story about my case and at the same time make larger points about the issue studied.

Actually, by telling my story about the study, and showing multiviews in the process of telling the story, people reading the study can see if it helps them to appreciate issues of relevance for people in KHB and also for other people considering the themes that I take up in my story. The themes that I take up (in following chapters) are as follows:

First theme:

The first theme that I explore in my story is the theme of learning and particularly cross-cultural learning. In my case, there were a few people (who were influential) who brought cultural ideas from countries outside of Taiwan. For instance, the Director and Vice-Director, as well as the person in charge of business development, had studied or worked in places overseas (USA, UK and The Netherlands). I am studying in Hull (for my Ph.D. study) and reading many books of literature from overseas ideas about privatisation. So I discuss the issues of learning across cultures in an organisation, using the case study as material in the next chapter (Chapter five).

Second theme:

Politics and development is another theme that I explore in my story. This is a relevant theme because it became clear through the case that the different political views about the role of the Harbour in the process of development of the City were important in affecting the way that decisions about the operation of the Harbour will be made. Because the Harbour is now still part of the government in large part, and its Director is a government employee, the government thinking (and the political party now in power) is relevant. I explore the relevance of politics and development in this case in my 6th Chapter.

A third theme is the theme of systemic planning in the context of the Harbour. This theme is relevant because I was trying to study the Harbour by looking at various parts in their interconnection, rather than just doing an analysis of them. Punch notes that in case studies often attempts are made to "preserve the wholeness, unity and integrity of the case" (1998, p. 153). I show why the case study research needs to involve some systemic thinking, otherwise superficial descriptions without offering a view of complexity or allowing others to appreciate complexity is the result offered. In this case, I tried to do this in addition to thinking about ways in which systemic planning could be done by the concerned people. I explore this theme in the 7th Chapter.

Summary:

The roles of me as a researcher and participant trying to steer a path between ordinary case study research and action research is a very important issue for me to consider. My commitment was to help the authority of the KHB to know that the employees worry about their future, but I was aware that I cannot solve these problems by offering some recommendations; and I also cannot even arrange discussions in the same sense as required by the action research literature. So what contribution could I make? I reflect on this in detail in the 8th Chapter.

Through my reflections on the case, it may lead the way how to show some other researchers how humans can use case studies and Action Research to create a new method of approach that is possibly applicable in other situations where researchers find that normal case studies and normal action research do not help them

in their particular circumstances to make a relevant contribution that is relevant to participants and also feasible for the researcher.

CHAPTER FIVE

CULTURE AND (CROSS-) CULTURAL LEARNING

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I take a theme and explore its conceptual development by using the case study as an instance to help me to explore the theme. The theme that I consider is that of culture and cross-cultural learning. I believe that the case study can help me to explore this theme as part of the theoretical contribution of my study. Weick (1994) points out that in organisational contexts culture is a high source of reliability (1994, p. 159). People can benefit from what has previously been operative and from trials and errors that they have accumulated. They become used to operating within the culture of rules and expectations. However, Weick notes that there is often a contradiction when one tries to design a culture which allows for some centralisation and some decentralisation (1994, p. 159). In such cases, although people would like to have a chain of command to handle difficult problematic decisions, people also need some flexibility in being able to respond to a crisis, so as to change direction. I believe that the situation of the Kaohsiung Harbour is a case where on the one hand there seems to be a kind of central authority (the port authority) with a government-styled approach to dealing with situations, but on the other hand there seems to be some need felt to be able to change directions to be flexible and to be able to think how to deal with world trends to privatisation. Weick notes that a system "in which both centralisation and decentralisation occur simultaneously is difficult to design. And this is where culture comes in. Either culture or standard operating procedures can impose order and serve

as substitutes for centralisation. But only culture also adds in latitude for interpretation, improvisation, and unique action" (1994, p. 159).

This chapter takes Weick's point about culture standing on the one hand as rules and operating procedures and on the other hand as an opportunity to improvise and take unique action. The way in which I examine this point in the chapter is by looking also at whether culture in the Harbour can be activated to work with this contradiction. I explore this by looking at my own role as working between different cultures and also by seeing how other movements between cultures can occur. Gergen (1995) refers to the idea that we should not consider there being one definite culture that always is dominant in any situation. He talks about the "fragmented character of cultural languages". He notes that even when we refer to culture there is not just one set of rules. There is a variety of complex relations "among various cultural and sub-cultural groups", and these are in a process of transformation as they collide with one another. There is thus not "a singular discursive regime" (Gergen, 1995, p. 36). I explore this statement of Gergen by considering the cultural dynamics in the Harbour, and I also try to offer new information around conceptions of culture.

Meanwhile, Du Gay (1996) suggests that while there was a dominant managerial discourse in the 1980s and 1990s — the "enterprise culture" and the "excellent firm" — the terms of the discourse still had to be translated into operational terms. New ways of thinking that go against strict bureaucratic styles of working were supposed to be accompanied by seeing, feeling, and acting based on the market and its natural entrepreneurial qualities. But the discourses that were created in the process were "inherently unstable" (1996, p. 38). Du Gay made these statements on the basis of his detailed ethnographic research in retail organisations. These were based on the

managerial logic introduced to satisfy the customer through market principles. I compare this argument about the enterprising culture in which people are called upon to be flexible in accordance with demands of the market, to the situation in the Harbour as lived by the people involved (through my case study exploration).

Reed (1998) adds to this point when he suggests that the tactics which senior managers enact — such as quality management (consider the Director's view on using ISO-9000), and customer awareness (consider the views about the need to cater for the customers in terms of market demands) — are necessarily "contextual, relational and pragmatic" (1998, p. 203). Because of their pragmatic character, they often cannot deliver what they hope to achieve. I explore also this idea of Reed's in the context of the Harbour, by showing how my interviewing with senior managers and with others allowed me to highlight for attention the pragmatic way in which planning is undertaken. I also show how the cultural conception of power-distance can also be contextual and relational, rather than fixed in a definite formation. To make this point, I extend and modify Hofstede's view of power distance to some extent.

This chapter looks specifically at Hofstede's conception of power distance when examining the relations between top management and others as a cultural variable. It tries to see what happens to the variable when there is a dynamic interplay between cultures and subcultures, so that it is difficult to isolate a single cultural discourse. By showing the contradictions, tensions and variability in the context of Kaohsiung Harbour, I hope to add some new thinking about the variable of power distance as seen by Hofstede as one characteristic of culture. I also show how a researcher who uses a form of case study approach such as mine, can add to the dynamic of the culture in a

way that is different from, for instance, just doing a survey and trying to observe culture in that way.

I start the chapter by making some reflections about my role in the cultural dynamic (as I see it). I do this by taking some ideas from Usinier (1998).

5.2. Culture and (Cross-) Cultural Research

In discussing international and cross-cultural management research, Usinier asks:

What is more natural is to use our own culture as an interpretive framework, because it is a system of preconceptions and prejudices which allows a short cut to conclusive findings. In this respect, qualitative research is as susceptible to bias as quantitative, and in some respects even more so, because the researcher is directly in charge of interpretation and bears even greater responsibility for possible biases. One may wonder whether "doing what comes naturally" is not simply built in the researcher's own background and/or in favourable circumstances. Some personal backgrounds can be useful for cross-cultural research because they are multicultural and multilinguistic in nature .... (1998, p. 137).

There are many points that are made here by Usinier. One point is to suggest that a researcher who has not got multicultural background will find it more difficult to appreciate another way of thinking when they do cross-cultural research. From my own perspective, I believe that I have some multicultural background due to my being a member of the Kaohsiung Harbour and due to my also having studied for some time in the Phillipines (two years) and the UK (four years). I also have attended many conferences internationally where I have learnt ideas about organisation, including cultural patterns in different organisations, especially in regard to the way plans are made for future developments of the organisation.

Usinier states that it is useful if the person trying to recognise different cultural patterns has some kind of "inside" knowledge of the cultures, because "most of the

cultural fabric is invisible, like the immersed part of an iceberg, while cross-cultural research situations involve encounters between instruments from one culture and informants from another, employees and managers from different cultures, etc." (1998, p. 137). He suggests that the first phase when doing cross-cultural studies is for the researchers to ask themselves what kind of "foreign" elements they may be adding into their study when they approach the organisation, and whether the ideas may be foreign to. I myself had to ask these questions all the time, because I was trying to do a special case study in the sense of subtly questioning certain ideas that people were expressing in the interviews. I had to be careful not to introduce too many foreign elements into the discussion, but on the other hand I was trying to keep a dynamic going so that there would not just be one dominant logic that any person or group of people would stick to without thinking of what other cultures/logics can offer.

I had to undertake a self-assessment of my part in overlaying certain underlying concepts and theories as I interacted with the various people. But I did try not to overlay too much of my own logic into the internal logic of the people interviewed. So I tried to follow through their own logic as I posed questions following directly from their own. The way in which I posed questions always was an immediate follow-up from something that they had said previously and, from my point of view, could be seen as a natural question that could be asked at that point. The phrasing of the questions, as I noted in Chapter Four, was done in a way that would allow them to think again about an attitude that they had towards a certain concept of practice.

Usinier suggests that when researchers operate cross-cultural research they are still "bound to produce a certain kind of research in line with the local scientific consumer culture, for instance, the dominant, national and professional culture of the

supervisor and members of the dissertation committee" (1998, p. 137). Actually, I found that when doing my investigations in what I saw as a cross-cultural domain between myself with some cultural resources picked up from study elsewhere (away from Taiwan) and others (some of who also did have some experience outside of Taiwan), I was not just following the professional culture of what is called science. That was because I was trying to create a form of case study that is not the same as traditional science. So in that way I also question whether there is one scientific culture that moves people as researchers to act in a certain way. I believe that while there may be a dominant research culture, there are also many varieties of ways that can become accepted for doing research. As in organisations, where Gergen notes that there is not just one "discursive regime" (1995), this can also be the case in the research situation, where there are some possibilities for creating new forms of research.

Usinier notes that the "quality of the academic system depends on the relevance of the intellectual debates, on the soundness of the theses advanced, and the quality of arguments, data or theory brought in favour of them" (1998, p. 138). He suggests that "open debates will make a academic system stronger in the long run" (1998, p. 138). So, even if we could say that there may be a dominant logic that is dominating the culture of acceptable research, it is also true to say that it is constructive to think about other ways of doing research. My way of doing research is to add into the cultural tradition a form of case study research that is more active than is traditionally understood in the research literature. I tried through my own case to make a contribution to the dynamic of the culture of research by introducing new ideas and ways of working.

Usinier proposes that one practical solution for investigating worldviews in a culture that one is investigating is to concentrate on the way that participants use language, as cultural ideas are reflected by language. Fortunately, being a native Taiwanese citizen, I was able to interview native speakers in the local language and was able to check with them the meanings that I thought they were trying to convey. But words often have multiple meanings and I am aware that possibly the words could be understood differently by me than was intended by the speaker. However, I also tried to follow up my questions with other ones that followed from what speakers had said, and I did not notice confusion from speakers as I did so. What I noticed is that words that are used the same, often had a different slant depending on who was being interviewed. For example, the meaning of the word "efficiency" showed to me that there were different subcultures of response to this word. I explain this more in my chapter on politics and development (the following chapter).

Usinier notes that one reason why we can understand across cultures even when they seem to be far apart is because "world views have a large degree of intersection" (1998, p. 143). He refers to Fisher (1988), who was a distinguished scholar in the field of intercultural relations, and who recounted a conversation with a Latin American friend about the words used in English and Spanish for business relations. His friend first remarked that in English the word "business" is positive. It connotes the fact of being "busy" and emphasizes doing things. Expressions such as "getting down to business" highlight people who have a responsible concern for their work. The word efficiency seemed to me to have a similar kind of feeling between the people interviewed. For top management it had the feeling of being busy and getting down to business. For some others it had a meaning associated with fear of new contracts, fear

of benefit changes, etc. But in all cases it was seen as a necessity, though interpreted in different ways.

The word "professional" also had many meanings across the subcultures. While the Director and Vice-Director in the Harbour made use of the word in a positive sense of the term, it did not seem to have the same experiential meaning for others. And again, the "for money" orientation "hides the fact that economic rationality is very far from being the sole source of rational behaviour in business exchanges" according to Usinier (1998, p. 144). One could see different attitudes towards money and the market coming up in the interviews, specially also when interviewing some customers/stakeholders from the local community. What is interesting also to me is that the experiential meaning has strong emotional connotations attached to its use by speakers. So for instance, I observed when I saw the meeting between the Director and some of the workers that both sides became very angry at the lack of understanding about the others' views of the way progress for the Harbour can be created. Glaser *et al.* report similar expressions of intense emotion around issues relating to people's interactions in organisations. So they remark about the anger felt by employees when they feel that no communication is "coming through on what's happening and until they read it in the paper they do not know it was being considered" (1987, p. 189). Their work involved a survey as well as in-depth interviews to examine employee conceptions of the culture of communication. The high emotion that they report was also observed by me through interviews coupled with my own observations. I observed the emotional feelings of the Director too who felt that employees were not sufficiently aware of the need for developments in the Harbour (see my section on observations in the previous chapter). Glaser *et al.* report that in the cultures they examined (with

reference to a survey done on 195 employees in a division of a company in the Pacific Northwest and some follow-up interviewing with 91 of them), that certain themes could be extracted (1987, p. 186):

1. Top management and also supervisors are experienced by employees as not listening to or valuing their ideas.

2. There was limited interaction between departments and divisions, that caused misunderstanding.

3. Meetings were experienced as too informational, and as not involving enough interaction and decision making, employees are often unclear about where the organisation is headed to supervisors rarely give recognition to workers of their good work.

Glaser *et al.* note that they found that employees are sensitive when nothing happens to their ideas after they are communicated. If they could be listened to, Glaser *et al.* believe they would feel less frustrated, and a higher morale would come about (1987, p. 187).

Clearly, Glaser *et al.* 's ideas about this organisational culture was that the feelings that were created in the organisation and the way that the culture was oriented do not allow for communication across views, was experienced as frustrating especially for employees. The question that I am interested in is whether this sense of frustration at not being able to participate in decisions about where the organisation is heading and how people should do their jobs, is something that can be regarded as applicable equally in, say, Far-Eastern ways of thinking about work.

What I was trying to do through my interviews was not only study these cultural (cultural and subcultural) expressions, but also add some ideas in the process, to create

a more cross-cultural flow of ideas across the interviews (with myself bringing some cultural resources from outside of the Harbour and from listening to a variety of voices in the Harbour). Of course, this approach to cultural investigation can be attacked for a supposed absence of criteria of scientific validity. However, my work in this field was an experiment in seeing if one can create some cultural movement. By doing this, I was trying to institute a specific relation between myself as researcher and others in the organisation and in this way create new approaches to seeing power distance between researchers and others and between managers and others. The question is whether I could add ideas to the cultural experience of power distance.

5.3. Power Distance and Far-Eastern Ideas on This

Usinier argues that for "Far Eastern peoples, who value keeping their emotions private and even secret, a very direct mode of communication does not seem appropriate. A more indirect form of communication is preferred, whereby one relies on intuition to guess the meaning of what others want to say" (1998, p. 158). Usinier argues that in many cultures there is more of an acceptance of less direct forms of communication than open forms. He suggests that according to Weeks *et al.* (1987) "Many cultures rely on silence, and consider it more constructive and praiseworthy to refrain from speaking rather than to discuss an issue" (Usinier, 1998, p. 158). This being the case, then, it would seem that I need to be careful not to try to institute the direct form of communication that Glaser *et al.* recommended as more in keeping with the values of those involved in the Pacific case as mentioned in Section 2 above (at least as far as Glaser *et al.* 's view of the employee requirements on the culture would be in order for their motivation and morale to be enhanced). Glaser *et al. 's*

recommendations may be very culturally specific to that setting and cannot be transferred mechanically to other settings.

Although feelings in the case of the KHB could be high in the way of experiencing changes of the Harbour either from the side of the Director and senior staff or from the side of others (e.g. warehouse managers and workers in the warehouse), this does not mean that the recommendations supported by Glaser *et al.* in their case study would be a suitable way of creating a change in organisational culture.

To explain how there may be cultural differences that have to be considered when doing case study research, including my form of case study, I refer to Leung's comments generally on the way of thinking of the Chinese in relation to political participation. He notes: "Despite the deprivations which manual workers face at work and in their lives outside the workplace, the number of industrial strikes (commonly taken as a reflection of ... labour's capacity for collective action against management) in Hong Kong is surprisingly low by international standards" (1996, p. 43). He notes that a number of writers have viewed this "working class nonmilitancy as an incidence of the traditional Chinese passive orientation to politics, subservience to authority, and proclivity to nonaggression and compromise in interpersonal relationships" (1996, p. 43). He goes on to state that this is linked to a mentality of "don't rock the boat" (1996, p. 43).

Leung also notes that this broad conception of the cultural mentality in the Chinese generally and in Hong Kong in particular, hides the fact that members of the working class "were the main participants in the three large-scale disturbances that have occurred in post-war Hong Kong" (1996, p. 43). He agrees that these outbreaks are not sufficient evidence for us to make general conclusions about the thesis of

subservience and proclivity to nonaggression mentioned above. But he points out that in any case we must be aware of contingencies that can provoke usually quiescent people into "bellicose action" (1996, p. 43).

Similar remarks can be made in relation to the situation in Taiwan generally and Kaohsiung Harbour in particular. While one can perhaps isolate some factors that show that the cultural climate is different from other cultures, when one examines the contingencies of the case one realises that there are tensions and contradictions in the culture. For example, while the workers are not completely clear about how they might want to participate in the decisions regarding the future direction of the Harbour, they recognise that there needs to be progress and even progress towards efficiency, as part of the development of the Harbour and the City. But feelings run high when they think that their concerns are being left out of the question.

Nonetheless, this is not to say that they expect an open involvement in strategy formulation. They accept that on some level they have to go with what the authority suggests; and my observation of the anger felt by both Director and workers on the occasion when they were brought together, need not be seen as an expression from both sides that the power distance should be lessened in the sense that there would be more of an equal and open communication. But I believe that there are still contradictory elements in the culture, because in some ways the Directors (especially the Vice-Director) accept that changes cannot move forward until a proper negotiation is made with the workers. And also in some sense workers do recognise (from individual interviews and also through their Union leader and also when they come together with their immediate supervisors) that changes are bound to happen of which

they cannot intervene other than to protect their immediate concerns and to mention these concerns to others.

So what does it mean even to speak of the power distance as a feature of the culture? That is, if we recognise these contradictions in ways of thinking about the communications across the groupings in the Harbour, then how can we speak of a common culture? In the first place, I should mention that as I see it we can locate a kind of oppositional way of thinking between the various people who identify themselves not so much as individuals in the Harbour, but as part of some collectivity. The collectivity to which they see themselves, interestingly was not always the collective as Harbour, but more the group to which they saw themselves as belonging more immediately, in terms of their concerns. Thus, for instance, the Director associated himself and the senior team as the people who were charged with having to take the Harbour forward to be in keeping with world trends. He saw that he was part of the group of planners. The Labour leader and the workers and to some extent the supervisors see themselves as in some opposition to these plans — if the plans mean that their work situation (contracts, welfare, etc.) will change in an unfavourable way for them. Because of what I believe could be seen as orientations to a specific grouping, rather than to "the KHB", this gives me the impression that we can speak of a power distance being perpetuated in the cultural way of thinking. However, there is room for a dynamic between this cultural view of power distance (as described by Hofstede, 1980) and other views.

I turn to Hofstede's views on culture and the measurement of power distance, and I give a discussion of this with reference to the Harbour .

5.3.1. Power Distance as a Feature of a Culture

Hofstede (1980, 1991) refers to five different variables which may vary from culture to culture in national and organisational contexts. These are: power distance (high or low); masculinity versus femininity (as cultural features referring to degree of toughness or tenderness); individualism versus collective orientation (referring to aloneness or togetherness); uncertainty avoidance (as a variable that can vary between wanting to take risks or trying to avoid them); and (as added in 1981) short term and long term thinking as a variable (1991, p. 64). I have chosen in this thesis to concentrate only on the first of the variables (power distance) in order to consider the question of what it means to try to measure an orientation to leadership of organisations, in this case the Harbour in Kaohsiung. I examine Hofstede's treatment of power distance as a variable.

Hofstede argues that culture is a kind of mental programming (1991, p. 4). People carry with them, "patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting which were learned throughout their lifetime". These patterns are like mental programmes; they are a kind of "software of the mind". Once we understand this software, we can understand how people's reactions are "likely and understandable" (1991, p. 4). The source of people's mental programmes lies in the social in which they have grown up. For example, Hofstede refers to the family, neighbourhood, school, youth groups, workplace, and community. According to Hofstede, when we speak of culture, we are speaking about a programming of the mind that is learned from the social environment, rather than inherited. "Culture" refers to a collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another (1991, p. 5). Hofstede

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notes furthermore, that when he speaks of "national culture" he means the predominant mental programmes that predominate in a country (1998, p. 5).

According to Hofstede (1991, p. 237), even though we can speak of cultures having certain qualities, learning across cultures is possible. However, restrictions do apply when trying to create such learning. One restriction relates to the variable of power distance. Hofstede mentions that when seeing co-operation between nations who score high on power distance, this becomes difficult because the co-operation itself depends on the "whims of powerful individuals" (1991, p. 237). This shows that according to Hofstede, power distance has something to do with allowing the whims of powerful individuals to determine the direction of decision-making. This needs further explanation, as follows. Hofstede argues that sometimes decisions have to be made that apply across intercultural contexts, for instance, in creating treaties that relate to the sustainability of the natural environment. He notes that in such cases we may need international economic cooperation (1991, p. 241). For these issues, especially Hofstede argues that when there is too much power distance at play between the parties, it is difficult to imagine that cooperation is possible. In such cases different orientations that people may have to power and power distance should be put on the table so that they can be discussed rather than just be a part of one accepted culture.

So Hofstede does not see culture as necessarily fixed and unchangeable. But he does see it as something that can be seen as an ideal type that helps us to understand different mentalities. He suggests that we can create an exaggeration of a way of thinking that forms a concept as an abstraction. Then we can look at case studies to see if they resemble the abstract type created (1980, p. 33).

Hofstede is aware that to study a culture and isolate its typical characteristics is a process that can be done in many different ways. He notes that one of the ways of studying the cultural variable of power distance in organisations is to organise a survey around the question: "How frequently are employees afraid to express disagreement with their managers?" This can be chosen as a central question measuring "Power Distance". This is the way that Mulder (1976, 1977) has studied it. Power distance is then seen to refer to "the degree of inequality in power between a less powerful Individual (I) and a more powerful Other (O), in which I and O belong to the same (loosely or tightly knit) social system" (Mulder, 1977, p. 90).

Hofstede notes (1980, p. 73) that this definition of the construct of power distance correlates well with employee sense of control over work goals, and it also expresses the preferred type of leadership that employees expect. The scale measuring power distance thus includes items asking about the kind of "preferred manager" that workers would expect (1980, p. 74). In cases where employees tend not to prefer the consultative manager but to vote for the autocratic (which in their eyes does not have a negative connotation), this is seen to measure a cultural mentality of high power distance. This distanced interaction is preferred by both partners, the superiors as well as the subordinates: superiors maintain a large power distance, and this is regarded as acceptable by subordinates.

Hofstede was involved in computing an index created to measure these preferences across 40 different countries (1980). It measured the scores of people based on three questions:

1. Nonmanagerial employees' perception that employees are afraid to disagree with their managers.

2. Subordinates' perception that their boss tends to take decisions in a persuasive/paternalistic way.

3. Subordinates' preference for anything but a consultative style of decision-making.

Hofstede makes it clear that when computing these scores, the results are based on how subordinates feel about their superiors. Hofstede believes that when organising the measure of power distance it is important to question subordinates, "who can be supposed to be better judges of power distance than their more powerful superiors" (1980, p. 76). He believes that it can be assumed that people will be more accurate in describing others than in describing themselves (1980, p. 76).

Hofstede says that based on his studies of 40 countries we can locate definite differences among cultures, although this does not mean that every individual in the cultural context will have the same kind of orientation. There are also several variables that can contribute to scores on the power distance index. For example, he notes that in many countries (including Taiwan) education is by far the dominant factor in affecting the power distance index (1980, p. 77). He notes that the correlation of the occupation's power distance index (PDI) with the average years of formal training is an amazing $r = -90$. (r refers to the Pearson's computation of correlation). There is also a tendency for managers (e.g. even junior ones) to produce lower PDI values. He summarises that low PDI values occur only for highly educated occupations in low power distance countries. That means that in such countries less-educated, lower-status employees hold more "authoritarian" values, according to Hofstede's surveys. He suggests that this is a function of the wider cultural context in which "parents emphasise their children's conformity to external authority" (1980, p. 80). In the national environment children's obedience is emphasised. Hofstede states that country

Power Distance Index scores (PDI) are clearly coupled with values about the exercise of power (1980, p. 93). That is, it is acceptable behaviour for superiors to adopt an attitude of looking powerful and as entitled to privileges (1980, p. 94). The idea in such countries is also that those in powerful positions have a very important influence in the direction that the system of organisation takes. As he summarises it: "Change the top person and you change the system. This is a popular 'solution' in organisations, although in reality problems often survive after leaders fall" (1980, p. 95).

So Power Distance (which can vary from low to high) is a variable that refers to the way that people rely on leaders to take top decisions and to take responsibility for this. When there is a high power distance then there is a high value placed on obedience to superiors and dutiful compliance with their directives. Such obedience is based largely on the fact that the person occupies an authority position. People are unwilling to dissent from their superiors.

However, as shown by Leung even though one can argue that for instance in many Chinese cultures, subordinates may accept a feeling of powerlessness in regard to powerful superiors (especially those employees who are less educated), and even though dissent is not regarded as acceptable behaviour, this does not mean that this is a general rule that applies at all times and in all contingencies. This is a factor which must be considered by those who are trying to present new ideas (for example, ideas about lower power distance as a value) within some cultural context. Even though the concept of "culture" can be taken as referring to a measure of people's attitudes and feelings, it is not something that is so fixed that it applies in all contingencies. It is true to say that people may in such cultures feel uncomfortable at first in thinking about adding ideas into the culture, but this discomfort is not applicable in all contingencies.

Argyris (1993) takes up this point to some extent when he notes that it is only in what is called (by him and Schön) Model I type behaviour that individuals are so fixed in their views that they cannot imagine changing their attitude (1993). People therefore react to others by trying to defend their own ideas. This is instead of allowing these ideas to be opened to further examination. Double loop learning is where individuals learn to question the theories-in-use (habitual cultural ways of thinking) that they have been using (1993, p.10). In order to create productive learning as double loop learning, individuals must learn that others can bring in new data and new logic to show a different angle on any situation (1993, p.11). So processes of learning are contingent on people being open to new avenues for inquiry.

I suggest that although I could not organise the organisational processes of facilitating everybody to challenge people's theories in use by questioning their validity claims in the way that Argyris suggests is possible, I could try myself to bring in some new data and some new logic into the situation. So in that way I tried to encourage what was making less of a power distance between those in authority from whom dissent is normally seen as unacceptable, and others. But the way that the principle of more participative management is encouraged must be consistent with the predominant cultural characteristics of the country of application, otherwise, in any case, the application cannot be successful. However, relying on the authority of leaders to be the final knowers, is also not really always a solution, as there are some ideas that can be brought into the thinking about the future of an organisation that could be based on more participative management. I explain more about my ideas on this in my chapter on systems thinking (Chapter Seven), where I discuss some concepts from Ackoff's ideas

on Interactive Planning (1981, 1999) and I show how I think they could apply to some extent in the case of the Harbour.

But that should not mean that readers must assume that I believe that lowering PDI scores in particular situations (where possible) is necessarily a desirable occurrence. Hofstede actually notes that in considering whether certain cultural values are less valuable or appreciable in some way (for example, the value of accepting power distance as a strong gap between people on a hierarchy), there are no absolute values for judging this. So we cannot say from some absolute standpoint that it is better always for workers, for example, to be able to be listened to in a more consultative style of management. It is possible that another arrangement will be accepted and can work in certain contexts for the people involved. However, we saw in the case of the KHB that despite the acceptance of some power distance between the groupings of management (especially senior management) and workers, this can at times cause anger on both sides. For example, the Director may expect the workers to have some understanding about why decisions on the future of the Harbour are necessary. He does not want them to think it is only his whim that is creating these decisions. He wants them to think that it is professional conduct of his to carry the Harbour in line with world trends, to keep up with world competition. So he does not want his leadership decisions to be accepted only because he happens to be in the authoritative position to make them. If workers cannot see his logic, he becomes frustrated. Conversely, from the workers' point of view, they are angry when they think that the Director is acting on whim without listening to different concerns that they can add. So they too are not following the general rule of the high PDI score which suggests that they do not want to be consulted at all when it comes to decisions about creating strategy for the

Harbour. This is an important point at which I believe that I can show that the culture of high PDI contains parts that are not a clear discursive regime (to use the words of Gergen, 1995). My case shows that one must look at the contingencies of any situation to see to what extent the PDI measurement of culture helps us to understand the particular context. In the context of the KHB situation of planning for privatisation programmes, the generally high PDI score for the country shows cracks that require a detailed examination of the case being considered. Also, of course, this shows that the PDI score may not be something that is unchanging anyway. So, based on what happens in the Harbour, where very contentious decisions are being made that affect the life of everybody connected with the Harbour, new ideas about power distance can seep into the culture. This is especially because in the government of the country the DPP is come into power with new ideas on what legitimate governance is. This also can affect the culture in the work situation in the Harbour.

In terms of the discussion above, we can say that somebody wanting to suggest new values (for example about the way power can operate) can play a part in trying to see if these values become accepted in any way. I think this can be done by working with the cracks in the cultural expectations, and in that way helping people to recognise new ways of interacting. The abstract question of whether a person studying a culture should bring their own values into the picture when they report on the way it is functioning, can be replaced with a more concrete question of how people in the situation respond when one tries to add new ideas and values. So far, I did not get the feeling that people were uncomfortable with any interventions I made in conversations. But this is because I believe that I am culturally sensitive to the places where there are cracks in the culture anyway.

In the case of the Harbour I showed that even though Hofstede would expect to find that superiors maintain a large power distance, and that subordinates tend to prefer a decision style that is nonconsultative (based on the country index scores), judgements about people's preferences need to appreciate the contingencies of specific situations.

Although Hofstede acknowledges that power distance as measured in the PDI index is a characteristic of social systems (and organisations), not of individuals, he still does not explain so much about how the characteristics as measured by the survey can tell us about contingent features where the index might change (to a different outcome). So, for instance, on the issue of privatisation, if workers were asked questions based on this definite set of events that have taken place in the Harbour since 1996 (as they see it), it is possible that a different index would be arrived at using the same items used by Hofstede. That is, these are items based on the three questions mentioned by him as crucial. I look at these again by considering his survey method in the next section.

5.3.2. Looking again at Hofstede's Survey Approach to Examining Culture

Hofstede was involved in computing an index created to measure these preferences across 40 different countries (see 1980, p. 75). It measured the scores of people based on three questions. We can now return to these questions and consider in a new way, based on the above discussion, the survey approach that he used. His major questions (items) were meant to ascertain:

1. Nonmanagerial employees' perception that employees are afraid to disagree with their managers.

2. Subordinates' perception that their boss tends to take decisions in a ... persuasive/paternalistic way.

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3. Subordinates' preference for anything but a consultative style of decision-making.

The problems with the survey method to measure PDI are as follows:

1. When participants answer the questions, they are not given definite contingent events to think about that allow them to place the questions in that specific context of contingency. So they therefore can answer Hofstede's items either by thinking about their general attitude or by thinking about some particular contingency that does not refer to other contingencies where they may have a different response.

2. Relating to the power index, even if people do not have a very strong subjective sense of equality as felt by the participants (that is, as would be measured by a low power distance as meant by Hofstede (1980)), their experiences can vary from situation to situation.

3. A survey approach such as that used in the Hofstede approach to measuring culture, is a static measure of a culture at a point in time, and based on participants' feelings about their response to power at that point. It cannot tell us about ways in which they may feel in a specific concrete context not mentioned in the survey and it also cannot tell us about how people can change their attitude based on some person's valuable intervention (that they see as valuable).

For example, we can consider the question of concern with pay in the KHB. The top management prefer efficiency and flexibility to adapt to the market. But workers may then start to view management as manipulative rather than helpful. Nevertheless, through a process of speaking around different definitions of efficiency and adaptation to markets, new understandings can develop and the contexts of interaction may change. Distance then can also take a different meaning in this context, as people see

that they can work together in a way that they had not thought possible. This means that power can be thought about and experienced in new ways in contingent situations.

I believe that one of the advantages of my case study approach was that it did not try to study in a static or decontextual way the cultural features of the KHB in Taiwan. The study tells us that phenomena relating to power distance are hard to measure through a survey, even when one is trying to ascertain broad trends in a country or organisation. The broad trends do not tell us about how people can act in definite contingent situations when they face decisions. This applies to both superiors and subordinates. Superiors may not want to rely on their authority through the position that they occupy in an organisation or social system. So for instance, we saw that the Director and Vice-Director both referred to their professionalism when I interviewed them about future directions of the KHB. They referred to this to justify the decisions that they wanted to make. And subordinates in specific cases also do not want to leave the responsibility for decision-making to people in positions of authority. So we saw in the individuals interviews and group ones that the workers said they would prefer some more involvement in some of the decisions (in some way, although the way was not clear to them).

Some theorists are worried that when one view of any feature of social life prevails, for example, the feature of power (and power distance), then we have a "single reality system". Gergen explains why he thinks we should keep in mind a broader perspective: "Mutually annihilating competitions come about largely through the broad dissemination of a single reality system". Gergen says that if we have a single reality system when we view power, then we can follow the unquestioned view that wealth, victory, high office, and so on are valuable and important for people as such.

But he says that this assumption can be questioned by people in a society/culture. This assumption is part of the view that those in authority just want to become more competitive against others to enhance their own position. But Gergen states that such assumptions of the effective and the good should always be placed in question (Gergen, 1995, p.47). My own case study shows that we can place this in question, especially from my third interview with the Director it became understood by me that the Director was very worried about the future of the Harbour, which he saw as under his control and direction. He did not want the Harbour situation to fall down in global port management. But this was not just because of his own position and wealth. He wanted to ensure a kind of professional management of the system, so as to develop as best as he could make it develop. Once we can see this motivation of the Director we can see that power distance for him means that it is a high responsibility placed on him.

Gergen wants research to be undertaken in a way that we can "expand the range of relevant perspectives to explore the realities of the dominating groups, as well as those of still other groups whose realities may differ" (Gergen, 1995, p. 47). In exploring the realities of the different groups (appreciating their perspectives) people can come to learn more about what is involved in occupying different positions and they are able to think about issues in new ways. The idea of dominant and subordinate also can be changed because in the discussion people will learn about how they want to (re)organise their relationships. This learning is not enhanced when on the one hand it is assumed that the groups occupying executive and managerial functions are always wrong and exploitative. But on the other hand it is useful to explore to what extent their ways of leading can lead to specific practices, that cause concern for others. A desirable outcome cannot be decided beforehand, as it depends on the people involved,

and their views, including their views about what factors are important to them in creating ways of working that will be acceptable.

But if people learn to appreciate different perspectives and different values, that will make conflict processes where at least each party does not devalue another's perspective. I tried through my case study to create conditions for people not to devalue other ways of looking at the situation and assigning value to various ways of seeing it. This is because I believe that there should be opportunity for those who see things differently and who value different things to enter the situation without it having to be what Leung calls "bellicose action" (1996). Bellicose action is based on becoming very angry with other parties who cannot see one's perspective. The anger is experienced as frustrating. I found that in my case study I could try to design a way of letting people gradually understand different perspectives, so that they could become less bellicose in relation to one another.

Foucault (1984) suggests that there is never a point when power will not be operative in some way in human interaction. He also questions whether people can rely on rational argument to make a better society. That is, he questions whether the rational use of professional logic can be used to carry situations to become better for the people concerned. In the case of the KHB Foucault could therefore question the power of the Director and Vice-Director in terms of what actually happens in the exercise of power and how they manage to create decisions. He suggests that power is intentional, in that its exercise has intended results, but there is overall no necessary coherent strategy. Its effects escape intentions (Foucault, 1984, p. 187). Power is intimately connected with knowledge. Foucault argues that power relations lead to the development of knowledge, and knowledge enables the exercise of power. So, for

instance, it is important to see how the Director and Vice-Director refer to their expertise in managing to keep the Harbour in line with world trends.

Foucault sees that language and its effects can operate in definite ways. For example, with reference to the KHB, we can think of language rules that are commonly used in the language of senior managers and also of junior ones and even of workers that state that one must work efficiently and productively to earn a wage. We can also realise that the trade unions can find it difficult to get information about the profits of the organisation in terms of its surpluses. Although this is not open deception, it is power used in the realm of information.

Foucault argues, however, that there is no point in trying to eliminate power and its effects in human relations: "To say there cannot be a society without power relations is not to say either that those which are established are necessary, or ... that power constitutes a fatality at the heart of societies" (Foucault, 1984, p. 223). But the analyst who is examining varying uses of power can focus on strategies that have power effects and the analyst can also identify how people try to challenge the effects of power when it disturbs them. I have tried to show in this chapter that instead of just studying strategies used by people to exercise power and (from the other side) to challenge it, the researchers can involve themselves in the situation to help people to find some way of working that is less frustrating to them all. This is a very difficult process and I do not pretend to have perfected a method for doing this. But I have tried, in a situation where it would normally be considered difficult to look at the power distance and its effects, to develop a way of looking as well as intervening.

5.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I paid attention to the relationship between patterns that can be seen as linked to national development of culture, and (cross-) cultural learning by focusing on a theme that I considered important to explore, related to issues of communication across power distance in the KHB.

In my study I tried to recognise the variety of cultural responses to the management of the relation between people in organisations as social systems. Brocklesby and Cummings point out that when one is operating with ideas that one brings to the situation as a researcher, the question of cultural bias cannot be ignored (1995). They also note that there are cultural constraints in trying to apply some kind of approach, for instance, say, a softer approach in a culture that is more oriented to harder thinking. However, I argued that there are also contradictions in cultural discourses that can be drawn upon to show up to people, in subtle ways, new ways of approaching their organisation. In that way, the researchers can play a role in creating some cultural learning as they involve themselves in moving across different cultural expectations.

Brocklesby and Cummings point out that a further complication regarding ways of generating cultural learning arises because subconscious cultural influence take the form of long-held beliefs and assumptions that do not encourage individuals to embrace new theoretical and philosophical positions (Brocklesby and Cummings, 1995, p. 242). Therefore, asking people to reflect critically on their cultural heritage means that we need to understand the deeper ways in which cultural heritage becomes part of people's make up. Heritage can be questioned only by people critically reflecting upon it. But first they need to recognise its operation. Nevertheless, as a heritage comes into operation in definite contexts of interaction, it can also change. I believe that the

situation facing the KHB in this time of its development is a contingent one where people are interested in reflecting upon the way in which they can conduct their interactions between managers and workers in particular.

My suggestion is that one way of helping people to reflect on the ways of handling the particularities of the privatisation process and decisions around this, is to ask questions following on from what they have previously said, while showing that the previous answer does not deal with the new matter. If this can be done during the interview, then it already sets the pace for later when people come together again to discuss ideas and positions. I do not claim to have set in motion the kind of cultural learning that, for instance, Argyris and Schön speak about when they undertake an action research project in which they develop a contract with all participants to be prepared to learn and challenge one another (1996). But I think that I did set something in motion that is different from the situation in the Harbour before I began with the research. I did ask questions to people that would not normally be asked (because of what Leung, 1996, calls a culture that accepts and praises silence in many interactions). Whether or not this was perceived as a favourable intervention, I believe that no-one became angry at my intervention in this direction; and that through my intervention, I developed the possibility for the organisation developing through more open listening to various ideas. I think that the multiview that I tried to institute by showing up different points of view in the individual cases of interviews and in the group interviews, is a way of what Yang and Tsai (1998) consider conducive to development, rather than just growth along a technical path. I personally believe, also from my interviewing of many participants (but also from other sources, e.g., literature reviews) that we have reached a stage in Harbour organisation where more interactive

thinking can be beneficial for all stakeholders. I discuss this idea in Chapter Seven, after first offering a context of this discussion by referring to the wider context of thinking about politics and power in Taiwan (with reference to implications for the Harbour).

I showed in the chapter with reference to the case that in relation to the issue of privatisation, there are strong feelings in the Harbour and that these give rise to complex relations along the dimension of power distance. While Hofstede's survey measurement of power distance in Chinese cultures (including Taiwan) suggests a preference on the part of subordinates to be silent about decisions made by management and to accept that the management must use authority to lead, this cultural expectation can be in a process of transformation. When Gergen says that there is not a "singular discursive regime" that is operative in any social situation, I say that at least we can see that in the KHB situation, where feelings sometimes run high in regard to matters of concern to people, one cannot speak of one single discursive regime. So Gergen's view of culture speaks more about the KHB situation than Hofstede's announcement of cultural values that can be measured. Nonetheless, Hofstede's surveys can tell us something about general Chinese culture and about Chinese culture in Taiwan (and more specifically in KHB), as long as we realise that what it tells is something very abstract and also very static. It cannot tell how the people in a contingent situation will react to one another. The process of transformation of a culture can occur through contingent instances of change of expectations.

Du Gay has suggested that a dominant managerial discourse in the 1980s and 1990s was the discourse of enterprise culture and excellent firm. I showed that in my case this kind of discourse was referred to especially among top management, but

others (some junior managers and some workers) also used similar language to show that they wanted the KHB to excel in world markets. However, once this abstract language is translated into definite actions, then more flexibility can come forward. This is what I mean also by saying that contingent instances make a difference to the way the discourse becomes seen and acted upon.

The changes in KHB in regard to operation of power distance when making decisions related to issues of privatisation, could also be furthered by changes in the wider society, particular in regard to the election of the DPP. When accepting the DPP's manifesto in regard to ideas of democracy, it means that new ideas also can be used by people who wish to participate more. They can therefore also participate in thinking about the efficiency, growth/development, etc., of the Harbour in the City This affects decisions in the Harbour because it is government-owned, and as stated in Chapter Four, one way of reading the documents means that government changes are likely to have some profound effects on ways of thinking about the Harbour.

I explain more about the case in the next chapter (Chapter Six) by referring in more detail to the conceptualisation of politics and development in Taiwan.

CHAPTER SIX

POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I take the theme of politics and development and explore this by using the case study as an instance to help me to examine the theme. This is another instance of the theoretical contribution of my study through the examination of the case and considering of issues arising from it. All developments in the harbour are closely linked up with the political developments in the country, and particularly in the Kaohsiung local politics. As mentioned in my documentary section in Chapter Four, the authority that is given to the Director to take responsibility of the Harbour, is tied to his position as a government representative. Therefore, although he has some flexibility to decide when to arrange meetings to discuss new ways of developing the Harbour, he has to hold these meetings by inviting the relevant persons and ministries from the government. The view of the people in the ministries, as representatives of the government, affects the way negotiations proceed. And although in 1999 agreements were made about the future privatisation of the Harbour, including details about the sequence of events, these agreements are now put on hold because of the change in government.

Jackson and Price (1994) suggest that in many countries, the decision to privatise and how to privatise is something that evolves incrementally rather than being something that is rationally planned based solely on the evidence of success of privatisation policies elsewhere (1994, p. 14). They suggest that it can be a policy

that is adopted almost accidentally, that then becomes an end-in-itself, without considering difficulties in implementing it or difficulties in making it work. In the case of the Harbour, from examining the documents regarding all the meetings that took place over several years to reach agreements with the relevant ministries, I believe that there were many questions that could not be justified as conclusive one way or another. This is one reason why it is not clear what direction the government might take when considering the issues around privatisation of the KHB.

Jackson and Price note that justifications for privatisation as presented by governments when they want to justify their policies to sell off assets, are founded on "economic arguments that greater competition would result in improvements in efficiency" (1994, p. 14). However they note that when one can never be sure that the achievements will be as expected; and that the efficiency will result. For example, it is noted by them that when control is put into private ownership, that some privatised companies' performance improves but others do not. Also, Bishop and Kay (1988) and Thompson (1990) could not find significant improvements in productivity when they measured companies prior to privatisation and post privatisation. They also noted that change of ownership as such is not a necessary condition for efficiency. So the assumption that change of ownership from government-owned enterprises to company-owned ones are needed to increase performance is something that has not yet been proven rationally on the basis of existing evidence. This being the case, the decision often rests on how the government of the day is perceiving that political benefits can be gained by making one or other policy.

The case of the Kaohsiung Harbour shows that now that a new government has been elected, there is new thinking about the justification involved in privatising or possibly not privatising. It seems that with the new government, they are not measuring the benefits of privatisation just in terms of performance indicators such as productivity, which in any case is difficult to know in future whether a fully privatised company can make improvements differently and better from one that is still in part controlled by the government.

Jackson and Price suggest when looking at the literature that "change takes time and needs to be carefully managed. The sequence through which changes will be implemented needs to be carefully considered .... Most important it takes time to re-orientate and train the population to accept the new system and to work with confidence within it" (1994, p. 19). Jackson and Price suggest that in any cases, it is preferable, when introducing reforms, to make the private sector accountable for its decisions (1994, p. 18). Whatever happens in practice, it should not be considered an obvious assumption that to design a privatisation system is to necessarily design a more efficient system that can be accepted by all the people involved and concerned as being an improvement. As seen in Chapter Two, the tendencies for privatisation of port management involved in creating a process of decentralisation, is to allow authorities involved in port management to make financial and professional decisions without too much political influence from the outside. Planning and control can be devolved to economic units once these are privatised. But transferring public enterprises into the private domain can also result in some destabilisation. For example, the case of the Kaohsiung Harbour suggests that destabilisation can occur if needs are not met, such as pollution control, provision for leisure activities in the

City, provision of an appealing place for people to walk in, and even provision of a stable workforce who believes that they are working for a collective enterprise. Jackson and Price make a statement that "private efficiency can drive out social efficiency and active socio-economic policy" (1994, p. 25). They also point out that in the whole globe the dynamic effects of competition can in any case serve as a stimulus to making efficiency improvements (on many levels including social levels), without pursuing a privatisation agenda. They note that "privatisation is not a panacea. It can create new problems while solving old ones" (1994, p. 25).

The case of the Harbour is a case in point when, if we look at the way the decision-making proceeded towards the 1999 agreements, we can see that there were still continuing disagreements from people at all levels in the organisation regarding both the scale and the timing of privatisation processes. The way the discussion went did not result in all the parties' accepting the urgency of the privatisation; or in seeing how much of it should be put into operation. This means that whether or not it can go ahead, is not just a matter of economic planning based on the facts of what is more efficient. It also is a matter of how political events impact on people's preferences.

This chapter takes up the point about privatisation processes being part of wider political events, by looking at politics and development in Taiwan, remembering how the new government emerged with different political intentions to the intentions of the previous one. I start the chapter by offering some background to political developments in the country. Most of the material comes from the book by Shu-Chun Wang on the ROC and its history (2000). This constitutes background material for my later discussions on politics and development in terms of their impact on the Harbour in Kaohsiung.

6.2. Some Changes in Taiwan

The history of Taiwan after 1949 is one of rapid and sweeping change over a short period of time. Following 50 years of Japanese colonisation, an influx of around two million soldiers and civilians from the Chinese mainland turned the island into a frontline of the Cold War. In the five decades that followed, intensive economic development turned the island into one of the world's largest economies, and rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and modernisation dramatically transformed the lives of the island's residents. Following Japan's defeat and surrender in 1945 at the conclusion of World War II, Taiwan was retroceded to the Republic of China (ROC) on October 25 of that same year. After having been occupied by the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, Manchus, and Japanese, Taiwan was finally under Chinese rule again (Shu-Cun Wang, 2000).

6.2.1. Economic Transformation

When the ROC government moved to Taipei in 1949, the economy of Taiwan was still trying to recover from the heavy Allied bombing that had occurred during the war; the few industries remaining included sugar refining and some textile manufacturing. In the initial years, two factors stabilised the situation and laid the foundations for a future economic take-off: aid from the US and the land reform programme. From 1951 to 1965, large amounts of economic aid came from the US as part of its Cold War efforts to preserve a valuable ally in Asia. Much of this aid was used in the agricultural sector. Programmes that sent Taiwanese abroad for education were directed at rebuilding the economy. The land reform programme, completed in 1953, reduced land rents, distributed public land, and purchased and resold land from

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large landlords. Farmers were supplied with fertiliser, seeds, pesticides, expert advice, and credit. By 1959, 90 percent of exports were agriculture or food related. According to Shu-Cun Wang, after land reform policies and economic assistance had laid a solid foundation for the economy, various policies of the 1950s and 1960s led to the take-off of the 1970s. These are sometimes reported elsewhere in the development literature (see also Lee, 1991, p. 30). The China Year Book, 1972-3, reports that there were many liberalisation policies adopted in the 1960s that contributed in several ways to encouraging small and medium enterprises to be established. Taiwan reached its economic take-off in the 1960s, encouraged by such policies which offered important incentives. This helped create opportunities for many people and to get a good distribution of opportunities. The "import substitution policy" aimed at making Taiwan self-sufficient by producing inexpensive consumer goods, processing imported raw materials, and restricting other imports. A policy of "export promotion" was also adopted in the late 1950s and continuing throughout the 1960s. Taiwan as a labour-rich island began to expand activity in light manufacturing. Export processing zones, free of bureaucratic red tape and with special tax incentives, were set up to attract overseas investment. Soon, Taiwan had secured an international reputation for itself as an exporter to the world (Shu-Cun Wang, 2000).

Shu-Cun Wang reports that between 1962 and 1985, Taiwan's economy had an average annual rate of nearly 10 percent, over twice the average economic growth rate of industrialised countries during this period. Equitable distribution of income was a major objective in the government's economic planning. In 1953, the average income of the top one-fifth of families was estimated at 20 times that of the lowest one-fifth. In the 1980s, this 1:20 ratio was reduced to a range of between 1:5 and 1:4,

indicating a highly equitable distribution of income. The economic structure of the nation shifted from reliance on agricultural exports in the 1950s to light manufacturing in the 1960s and 1970s, to high technology and chemical product exports in the 1980s and 1990s. Chiang, Ching-Kuo (1910-1988) oversaw the economic take-off and initiated the democratic liberalisation of the polity. Rigg notes that the outward looking strategy of export oriented industrialisation is what allowed Taiwan, along with the other newly industrialising countries of East Asia, to achieve a consistently high level of economic growth (1991, p. 188).

Another significant economic trend, beginning in the 1980s, was the rise of investments by the ROC business community on the Mainland Chinese. Following the lifting of the Emergency Decree in 1987, non-government civilian contacts between Taiwan and the Mainland Chinese were allowed. By 1998, Taiwan's business sector had invested over US$13 billion on the mainland, according to official ROC statistics (Shu-Chun Wang, 2000).

Within this economic climate, the Harbour at Kaohsiung is well placed to handle trade not only within the region of South East Asia but further abroad. Taiwan's take-off into an industrialised economy was secured through a process that did not merely imitate US policies, but also drew on original ideas emanating from government support of certain incentives. Because of this, and because of policies in the past of the government towards providing incentives for economic prosperity, there is still an idea within the political culture that economic prosperity cannot be divorced from political decision-making. Therefore, politics and forms of governance are discussed in my next section.

6.2.2. Politics and Forms of Government

Much of the following information comes mainly from L.F. Lee's book on The Chinese Dynastic Chronology (2000). Clearly, L.F. Lee is a known member of the DPP and therefore we can read the history with this in mind. However, he provides an indication of the way in which political developments proceeded towards more democratisation of the political system, and towards the election of the DPP.

Lee notes that what is interesting about politics in the ROC is that already in the 1950s there were moves to make local government take more part in the affairs that affect them. Beginning in 1950, all of the chief executive and representative bodies under the provincial level were directly elected by the people, and in the following year, 16 county and five city governments and councils were established. In June 1959, the first Taiwan Provincial Assembly was established, thus extending political participation from the county to the provincial level.

Following the death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975, Yen Chia-kan briefly served as president until Chiang's son, Chiang Ching-Kuo was elected in 1978. Under Chiang Ching-Kuo's rule a process of democratisation began, starting with the lifting of martial law in 1987 shortly before his death in 1988. The first major opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was formally established on September 28, 1986, marking the beginning of multiparty democracy in the ROC. Chiang Ching-Kuo's successor, President Lee Teng-Hui, continued to reform the political system. Under his administration, press freedoms were guaranteed, opposition political parties developed, visits to the mainland continued, and revisions of the constitution encouraged. The democratisation process peaked with the election of the president,

the first direct election of the head of state in the history of China. On March 18, 2000, the second direct presidential election was held, with five pairs of candidates contending for the positions of president and vice-president of the Republic of China. In a tight, three-way race, former Taipei City Mayor Chen Shui-Bian of the DPP narrowly defeated his rivals with 39.3 percent of the vote. He was closely followed by former Taiwan Provincial Governor James Soong (independent) with 36.8 percent. Vice-President Lien Chan of the KMT trailed at a disappointing third, with only 23.1 percent of the votes. The Central Election Commission (CEC) is responsible for conducting national elections and supervising local elections in the Republic of China. The second direct election of the president and vice-president was the most important task of the CEC in 2000.

The election brought 82 percent of eligible voters to the polls, and also ended the KMT's five-decade hold on the presidency. Unfortunately, economic development over the past five decades has also taken a heavy toll on the living environment. Increased prosperity and greater democratic participation have brought about demands for a better quality of life. Anti-pollution protests have been common since the late 1980s. Trying to pursue a balance of democracy, prosperity, equality, and a high quality of life, including environmental protection are what are now involved in considering processes of further development.

As noted in Chapter Four, the Democratic Progressive Party documents suggest that the party is dedicated to developing also social and political justice in the form of welfare policies involving the rights of women, senior citizens, children, labour, indigenous peoples, farmers, and other disadvantaged sectors of society.

Internationally, the DPP advocates greater integration into the world community that is aimed at enhancing the prosperity and security of Taiwan. These two commitments can be seen in some tension as they impact on issues of how the Harbour of Kaohsiung should become organised.

DPP shows commitment (in its documents) to labour issues and seemingly also does not at first want to privatise Kaohsiung Harbour too quickly (this is not in the plans at present). This election of DPP and its party's promises make a difference to how events will turn out. Also, what is also important is that the election of the DPP as the ruling party means that people in Taiwan (the majority) seem to be in favour of a less politically distant form of governance (see also the comments on power distance in Chapter Four). This is likely to affect the way in which decisions are handled also in the Harbour. The cultural factor of power distance takes on a special character when one links it up with the DPP party commitment to democracy and also to the welfare of possibly disadvantaged groups in the society. Rigg adds a point of relevance when speaking about Singapore's government that encourages a greater degree of discipline and self-sacrifice. He notes that in that paternalistic attitude, it is argued that "the subordination of the individual in the interests of society as a whole, has a strong basis in Confucian ethics and East Asian culture" (Sikorski, 1985, pp. 183-185, as quoted in Rigg, 1991). But other authors have criticised this justification for a more authoritarian attitude in relation to individuals. Rigg says that this attitude does not have many lessons to hold for "other developing countries of the world" (1991, p. 199).

Within the KHB in Taiwan, decisions are often justified on the basis that they are created by those who have to take responsibility for them in terms of creating extra competitiveness on world markets (see, for example, interviews 10a,b and 11).

However, in all the discussions moving towards questions of privatisation, actually many people at all levels of the organisation were involved; and although anger was often expressed by people through feeling that the other misunderstood them, there was still an understanding that everybody's concerns needed to be considered as relevant in some way to the decision-making (see for example, interviews 2b, 10c, 11, 20-22). Dunford and Palmer (1998, p. 218) indicate that displays of emotion within an organisation can signal that there is an important issue that needs attention. They say that instead of seeing this as a non-logical realm, it can be considered as showing up issues of deep concern for people. If this can be accepted in Kaohsiung Harbour within the way of thinking about the future direction of the Harbour, then this is a sign of creating development that meets the interests of the various people involved.

From their policy documents, the DPP commitment is to help Taiwan to cultivate a peaceful and stable atmosphere to foster development, and establish a modern democratic government. This is in order to increase Taiwan's economic competitiveness to meet the challenges of globalisation, create a dynamic and plural civil society, and foster a living environment that enables sustainable development. The DPP is also committed to encompass not only military security but economic and social security as well and to try to find a new mode for development. But in the meantime, the Taiwan unemployment rate, according to official statistics, was 3.19 in October 2000 and that is the highest that it has been from the year 1985 to 2000. The DPP is trying to find a way to turn this around, and to introduce new policies, also to show that the DPP situation is different from the KMT situation. This is one reason why DPP now wants to design the KHB under better government control in the City, as this was also part of its election vow.

Speaking about South East Asia more generally, King (1999, pp. 49-50) notes that "national plans and strategies are usually 'populist' in tone; the government presents itself as working on behalf of the nation as a whole to secure benefits for all". King notes that "a plan or strategy [produced by a political party] is an expression of general popular acclamation, even though in practice it may not receive support from all the nation's constituents" (1999, p. 50). This description of policies and strategies would seem to fit with the DPP vows mentioned above. Robertson suggests, nonetheless, that while we can accept that polices and plans are symbolic mechanisms to try to draw people together, they also have to be translated into concrete activities (1984, p. 3). Robertson suggests that in practice, the organisations that implement policies are usually "characterised by a much more eclectic, pragmatic ... pattern of interests, issues and activities" (1984, p. 5). And he also notes that government departments can choose to modify aspects of policies or even to ignore them. Robertson suggests that this can imply a favourable adaptability and he suggests that in the South East Asian region economic successes have been created through pragmatic and adaptable approaches to specific issues. We can think here of the case of Taiwan's take-off, where the government was able to make use of the opportunity to use the labour-rich resources to encourage small and medium enterprises, which formed the background to the initial take-off to an industrialised country. But there is no clear rule that can be followed to translate government vows to prosperity for all into practice. That is why in the case of the KHB, we cannot tell in advance how the DPP policies and vows as mentioned in their documents may become linked to strategy making for the future of the Harbour. What is important, however, is that the election of the DPP points to people's desire generally for a

government that is more democratically inclined. This can have an effect on the culture of power distance within the Harbour.

To make some sense of the way in which the political developments in Taiwan make a difference to decision-making in KHB, I discuss the question of modernisation as seen from a number of angles and I look at possibilities for creating a new mode of development, also in terms of ways of looking at the Harbour's contribution to development. To do this, I first give some discussion on ways in which modernisation has been approached in development literature.

6.3. Aspects of Modernisation Theory, Ways of Criticising It, and Other Views

To put this discussion in context, I would like to note that the DPP won the election of Taiwan President on 18/03/2000. At this point the Taiwan Government (DPP) replaced most of the KMT's policies from 20/05/2000, including policies to manage the four international ports of Taiwan. The DPP hopes to hold "people minds" towards their policies, which differ from the KMT attitude towards the harbours, and which offer a different approach to their development.

In Section 6.3.1-6.3.2, I give some details on politics and development generally according to modernisation theory and also criticisms of modernisation theory.

6.3.1. Modernisation Theory to Understand Politics and Development

Gardner and Lewis (1996) discuss the collection of arguments making up the so-called modernisation theory. They point out that while this kind of argument was "most intellectually influential in the 1950s and 1960s ... it continues to dominate

development practice ..." (1996, p. 12). The modernisation theory is based on the idea that development is to consist of modernisation, essentially industrialisation. We can see that this description of modernisation theory shows that it assumes that there is one target of development: Western style development. The path is to follow the so-called development route followed by the countries of the West, namely to develop the institutions that can support economic growth. Modernisation theory is sometimes also associated with what is termed developmentalism.

Developmentalism views the world as progressing from an undeveloped state to a developed one. The move is supposed to take place as follows: In the economy, there is new technology, commercialisation of agriculture, industrialisation and urbanisation. The family loses its function as a unit of production. Family authority declines and people get recruited to institutions on the basis of their education. In the political system, political disturbances increase during the process that is called modernisation. There is a need for reintegration through new institutions like democracy with political parties (Chodak, 1973, pp. 54-65). I concentrate on showing in this chapter that political development can take different paths, and that some kinds of research can contribute to generating development by concentrating on the processes rather than the institutions of society as such.

In modernisation theory, it seems that the institutional framework is what is focused upon (namely the existence of, say, a party system in government) rather on what the actors do with their system. In showing the contribution of action research to political development, I show that the focus is by contrast on what actors do with the system. The focus is therefore a more action-based perspective.

6.3.2. Some Criticisms of Modernisation Theory

There have been many criticisms of this kind of theory. One criticism has come from a perspective which wants to highlight processes of involvement in defining development paths. Rahman (1991) is of the opinion that the processes by which people are enabled to take part in exercising initiative and making decisions, is more important than any outcomes reached. Development by definition (once he has chosen this focus as his value) means that processes of mobilising, taking initiative, etc., have to be valued. This is one of the areas where action researchers (which Rahman defines himself as being too) have tried to make their mark in thinking about and practising new approaches to development. King notes that this orientation of researchers becoming involved in processes of development can be considered an "activist" position (1999, p. 45). He notes that the agencies involved in promoting development have often accepted the desirability of researchers' taking this stance. This, he notes, has "coincided with a shift from top-down development planning to one which tries to encourage 'participation' and planning from below" (1999, p. 45). King notes that encouraged by this attitude on the part of governments, researchers as activists have served as "knowledgeable mediators, advocates, and arbiters" (1999, p. 145). King also notes that with this shift, there has also been a tendency to move towards "more pragmatic, problem specific strategies requiring ... local level knowledge" (1999, p. 145). Instead of making grand theories about institutional structures that do or do not serve development, people concentrate on what can be done in specific circumstances in terms of how they can create opportunities.

Long's writing (1990) on the actor-perspective in development work starts from a similar critique of modernisation theory. Long also concentrates on the way that

actors can participate in processes of development. He notes that many modernisers have values which, however, they do not put up for further scrutiny and challenge. For instance, they visualise development in terms of a progressive movement towards technologically more complex and integrated forms of modern society. Then, clearly, the focus is on outcome reached, and this is the target of the development path. The outcome is a progressive movement towards a technologically more complex modern society. Slater sums up what this modernisation style of thought involves. He suggests that it implies that people in all societies try and copy the West on the score of creating economic growth through increased competitiveness (1993, p. 105).

6.3.3. Looking at Development through the Concerns of Local People

The actor-orientation described by Long concentrates on the way people may exercise initiative in process of decision-making and in that way contribute to creating development along the lines of their felt concerns. Taking this line of thinking I suggest that although Taiwan did try to follow an industrialised-linked development path, it did so in a specific way in the past that did not reflect a straight imitation of Western-styled economic movement. I show that the way in which people continue to consider the development path of Taiwan, needs to concentrate on this aspect of processes of decision-making. As far as decision-making in the Harbour goes, there is a lot of controversy around the way that the consequences of broad policies of privatisation are felt by those involved with the outcomes. Therefore, there is no recipe that can be followed as a model to be borrowed from other countries. In the specific situation, people need to decide how to handle the future direction of the Harbour in terms of what it can contribute to development, understood as involving many facets.

Before spelling out in more detail what I think my case study may contribute to thinking in this way, I need to indicate that the actor-perspective is not the only one that has arisen as a critique of modernisation theory. The other kind of critique came from what was called dependency theory.

6.3.4. Dependency Theory

Amin (1990) concentrates on showing that countries must be careful not to become linked to the world economy in such a way that the relationship is exploitative. They should accept their unique elements and also they must try to be more self-reliant. He sees this argument concerning self-reliance as linked up with what is called dependency theory. The suggestion is that dependence itself leads to underdevelopment. Authors of dependency theory emphasise that unless countries are self-reliant they will be exploited by other countries in the world system. Development means working out ways of developing in each country. This argument is linked in some way to the actor perspective, which says that general models can become a way of reducing variety in all social development. It is important to pay attention to specific cultural and historical traditions. However, dependency theory has been applied mainly to an understanding of African and Latin American countries. In such countries, the elites of the government have been argued to be harnessed in the interests of a new imperialism. A parasitic state bourgeoisie forms the dominant class, liaising with imperialist interests in the centre of the world economy (Hyden, 1985). The results, according to Hyden, are a weak state incapable of supporting meaningful economic development. Only the groups with direct personal ties to the state are able to have their needs met. This analysis of Hyden, while offering a caution to Taiwanese citizens who need to hold the government accountable, is only a

potential issue so far, as the elites cannot easily be argued to maintain an underdevelopment of Taiwan.

6.3.5. A Relevance for Modernisation and Dependency Theory

I do not intend through this thesis to deny wholesale the relevance of either modernisation theory or dependency theory to consider development in Taiwan. These approaches have been able to offer concepts that help us to consider some aspects of development. For instance, modernisation theory has been able to suggest that industrialisation offers a path to development which may allow the so-called less developed countries to compete on the world market. It shows the possible consequences of trying to remain outside of patterns of industrialisation. It highlights that all countries have to take into account the issue of how they intend to relate to these world markets.

Meanwhile, dependency theory concentrates on what countries need to do so that they do not become caught up in relation of excessive dependence, so that they become exploited within the wider world economic system.

Sometimes, however, the views of modernisation theory and dependency are contradictory, and then each set of decision-makers has to decide which of the insights seem to be most helpful in dealing with a specific issue. For example, dependency theory suggests that as far as possible the less developed countries should break their ties with the international conglomerates because this leads to a relationship of dependency being reproduced. This suggestion flows out of the idea that relationship with the centre necessarily leads to reproduction of dependencies. However, I believe that this has to be decided on a case by case basis, and that the decision needs to be aware of both the modernisation theory suggestions and the

cautions offered by dependency theory. It is important not to reproduce one's dependencies, but it is also not always possible to develop without some involvement with countries in the so-called centre.

Apart from these insights that may be offered by modernisation theory and by dependency theory, much can be gained through the actor-perspective (so-named by Long, 1990). This can be followed up with a specific way of doing inquiry (research), that King labels as activist. The activism of researchers can take many forms. I already showed in Chapter Three how action research is an obvious way of doing activist research. But as King notes, there are other ways that activism (involvement in development) can be organised by researchers. King also adds the point that researchers should realise that development is a political process and that every individual anthropologist (social researcher) "has very difficult judgments to make about when and how to participate, whether or not to criticise policies, programmes and projects and when to hold fire" (1999, p. 48). As shown in Chapter Four (and also to be dealt with in more detail in Chapter Eight), I took a line of being actively involved by being part of an organisation in the country, while undertaking a research role in it. This was one way of doing the mediation that King speaks about.

6.4. Political Development: Looking to the Future

I think it is important for a researcher to remember that development is primarily about getting processes that let people make long-term policies that have some future vision. It is not just a matter of, as modernisation theory believes, getting a modern economy strengthened by a multi-party democracy. Modernisation theory treats political aspects of society simply by saying that there is a need for reintegration of

political life through institutions like political parties. But I cannot see that this alone can be a measure of political development. I suggest, however, that dependency theory also does not tell us enough about how the political process can be improved. Dependency theory concentrates too much on how new economic relations must be established so that vulnerable countries are not so dependent in the world market. I suggest that Slater has a point when he says that development means that we cannot rely on dependency theory solutions (1993, p. 93). The idea of a rupture (with Western patterns) understood through dependency theory does not help us to think about how political processes can be improved in Taiwanese society. King also points out that although it is helpful in some way for academics to "scrutinise and criticise" it is not helpful to ask endless questions without facilitating the creation of some workable solutions. This requires that academics "engage in a learning process". Part of this is the "promotion of local points of view" (1999, p. 47). But King notes that sometimes when trying to promote and encourage local thinking around an issue, the researcher can come into conflict with certain people (for example, government personnel). The art here is to try to still "keep the lines of communication open" even while at times offering challenges to certain ideas for programmes and policies (1999, p. 48). As shown in Chapter Four, this is how I tried to proceed in playing my role in the process of development of the Harbour as part of the process of development in Taiwan.

Meanwhile, as far as the process of privatisation is concerned, and the idea of some modernisers that market forces require further privatisation, Hirst and Thompson note that "there is no reason to believe that market forces will invariably prevail over regulatory systems" (1998, p. 186) They suggest that although it is a

common idea among extreme globalisation theorists that "the major companies will benefit from an unregulated international environment", this point can be argued against. For instance, it can be argued that "stability in the international economy can only be had if states combine to regulate it and to agree on common objectives and standards of governance" (1998, p. 186). That means that it is not necessary to think that by leaving the decisions in the hands of owners of companies, one can get a stable situation on a world scale. They also suggest that it is an advantage if the operation of enterprises are embedded in a distinct national culture in which "managers and core staff have common understandings that go beyond formal training or company policies" (1998, p. 186). As they describe it, there are advantages in running enterprises where a core of workers put the company first as a form of identification. The advantages can be from the perspective of developing a kind of mission with which people can genuinely identify (1998, p. 186). We saw that in the case of the KHB, there is a risk that if the Harbour is not seen as part of the City, but just as another company, that the workers will not feel that they need not contribute more than the minimum. There is also the possibility that the company will not be committed to the necessary education for them to be able to increase their skills, so that they could be paid commensurately. But if it is part of the City, training programmes can be more readily out of government funds. This is also because otherwise if there are less trained people, they can become unemployed and these statistics will be part of government responsibility.

Hirst and Thompson suggest that even in the USA, there are advantages of companies being enmeshed in "networks of relation with central and local governments" (1998, p. 187). For instance, they suggest that it is important in the

USA that the Federal government is a "massive subsidiser of R&D and also a strong protector of US firms abroad" (1998, p. 187). These kinds of links in the USA teach us that we should not think of severing links with local and central government in the KHB either. For instance, if this were the case, where would the investment in R& D come from to further develop KHB? As I am to be a research officer, this is a question that directly I can become involved in considering. It may be possible that monies would not be set aside for this, unless there was a definite link with the City in the case of KHB and with the more central government too.

In the following chapter I try to show that a kind of participative systems thinking can be used to practice the actor perspective to development mentioned in this chapter. The perspective that I use to make sense of my involvement in the Harbour is that of systems thinking as developed by Ackoff. Although I do not suggest that I followed the steps of his Interactive Planning (IP) process, I suggest that I followed certain of the principles (and can continue to do so in my continuing practice).

IP can fit in with the following commitments of the newly elected DPP, that I take up in the following chapter, after discussing some other systems approaches.

1. Bottom-up public participation process in politics.

2. Pro-active looking for opportunities for development.

3. Political decisions based on the people's practical daily living experience.

I also believe that following the DPP vows for a partnership in government with decentralisation and broadened participation, it is possible to move towards

developing an efficient, accountable, and transparent new government. To draw on the government's commitment to become the partners of the people, the communities, and the society at large, I will show how IP can be used for this kind of purpose. I also show that the term efficiency understood in the sense of IP is not a matter of growth alone, but what Ackoff calls development (which he distinguishes from growth). Ackoff mentions that as far as development of a corporation is concerned, the quality of work life that it provides its employees and also the importance of thinking about the environmental movement, are more important than the "profit-and-loss statement" (1999, pp. 44-45).

The new government has indicated a commitment to "encourage industrial development" while at the same time "dedicating itself to improving the environment, increasing transparency and efficiency, and providing sufficient basic infrastructure" (DPP document mentioned in Chapter Four). It also has expressed a commitment to a secure and sustainable living environment. Jackson and Carter (2000) indicate that efficiency can have very different meanings in different kinds of thinking about growth/development, especially when one is interested in the quality of the living of the people (including future generations). The adjustment of economic structures should take into consideration the following: standards for sustainable development; integration with international environmental protection trends; and the encouragement of low energy, low pollution, and high value-added industries. At the same time, the government (DPP document) notes the importance of encouraging public participation in issues relating to environmental protection and the quality of living to create "harmonious sustainable development". The KHB is well placed to provide a

fulcrum to consider how these vows of the government can be translated into such practice.

Jackson and Carter (2000) suggest that normally, unfortunately, in contemporary socio-economic conditions, "money is the almost exclusive measure of increased efficiency. This means, inevitably, that intangible goods, such as education, health, the environment, either get price tags or get excluded from efficiency calculations" (2000, p. 210). They suggest that because these intangibles are excluded from measures of efficiency, economic decisions exclude these considerations. However, they also note that, in the case protection of the natural environment, there are movements to include such intangibles in corporate decision-making. Corporations are "facing increasing public pressure about their approach to depletion of, or damage to, the natural environment. The favoured proposed solution to this has been the idea of 'pollutor pays' " (2000, p. 210).

Jackson and Carter point out that in deciding how to measure efficiency, and how to justify decision-making in terms of concerns of efficiency, there are many interests involved and often some interests are "enforced through power" (2000, p. 209). That means that it is not a rational process based on rational calculations alone. Nevertheless, there is still scope for people to raise concerns that they have, such as, for example, concerns about the environment, as we have seen from the example of polluters paying. In the Taiwanese context, this issue as raised by certain citizens (also as expressed in some of my interviews with residents of the Kaohsiung City) is not ignored in planning (as seen from the third interview with the Director).

But what Jackson and Carter also note is that it is very difficult when making decisions about efficiency how to decide which course of action might be more

efficient than another. So, for instance, when considering further privatisation of the KHB (and the pace of change), we can realise there is no "absolute measure of comparative efficiencies. The decision between two options is a matter of human judgement; to claim that one's chosen option is optimally efficient is a statement of faith" (2000, p. 208). The estimate that one course of action (and its pace) is necessarily more efficient than another would be:

> ... *depends crucially on being able accurately to predict those costs that did not occur: the forecast is susceptible to all the uncertainties that have been identified about modelling and about efficiency, and has the additional vulnerability that it is not a model of something in existence against which it could be checked but a model of something in the future that does not happen! (2000, p. 208).*

So we cannot know if we did not privatise further, for example, whether the management would be more or less able to create a climate of development that meets the concerns of the variety of the interests involved (including employees and other stakeholders). We do not know whether a management that is privatised would, for example, have a longer-term vision than a more-government regulated KHB. We can only know this in retrospect in each case in question. Jackson and Carter call this the opportunity cost of the decision. As they note: "The true opportunity costs of a decision would have to be based on the actual costs of the choice that is forgone when a decision is made" (2000 p. 208). Jackson and Carter conclude that "Organisational life is characterised by frequent changes in procedures, and so on, all designed to improve efficiency, yet the effects are barely demonstrable. Most attempts to increase efficiency are really no more than acts of faith" (2000, p. 211). Applied to KHB, it means that it is very difficult to be able to say one way or another what the outcomes of each plan would be in terms of future of the Harbour and the City (and country).

In the following chapter I explain how all these ideas might be possible to reflect upon through a type of systems thinking. The ideas that are gained from my discussion of the KHB using systems may also help other researchers to consider the value of different systems ideas. At least I hope that it will be understood that development has many dimensions and that it cannot be equated only with economic modernisation and multi-party democracy. I show that having a systemic outlook means that we need to consider various aspects of a total system and the way that they form a chain of specific events.

6.5. Conclusion

I attempted in this chapter to show that political development is an important aspect of development and that economic indicators of development are not sufficient to measure or make assessments about a country's development. I hoped moreover also to show that political development is linked up with the processes by which people in society can make a contribution to decision-making processes in the society. I aimed furthermore to show that because of this focus, some styles of activist can be relevant in aiding the process of development in Taiwan.

Through my concentration on the actor perspective that I clarified in the chapter, I want to mention that, as Booth points out, this does not necessarily imply a micro-focus on individual decision-making (1994). Long (1990) also makes a case for an actor-oriented focus which avoids such individualism. Modernisation theory and the dependency theory differ from the actor-oriented ones in that the former are theories which mainly operate to show how institutions of societies become structured, while

the latter concentrate more on processes occurring in the society and ways in which actors constitute these processes.

When political aspects of development are looked at in modernisation theory and dependency theory it seems that this is still done with a major focus on how the economic and political dimensions of society may be related — especially how political processes may retard development because of the political policies which are adopted. However, an actor-orientation looks more at the way in which the actual decision-making processes in society are developed. It concentrates not so much on the policy but on the way in which any policies are constructed in the first place (and the way they are treated when they are implemented). This is the aspect that I explored with reference to the KHB.

I recognise that Taiwan is often seen as a newly industrialising country which differs from other so-called developing countries in many respects. I suggest that activist research is a process of continuing development by trying to make improvements by allowing inquirers to examine issues in conjunction with those struggling with issues in their ordinary lives. This is a useful way for research to proceed to aid development, rather than pretending to be a process of neutral observation. In the following chapter, using some ideas of systems thinking. I show also how I follow closely some of the arguments that have been presented by Ackoff in his discussion of Interactive Planning (1981, 1999). I also consider some criticisms that have been levelled at Ackoff's ideas, especially criticisms made by Jackson (1982), regarding it being a regulative approach.

I show that while Ackoff's approach may be regulative to some extent, this could become a way of shifting people's responses so that they become more forward

looking. I argue that with reference to the Taiwanese situation, it is very important that people do develop a forward looking perspective, otherwise their activities are likely to continue on a trend in an unreflected-upon way. The follow what Jackson and Price (1994, p. 14) call a following of policies accidentally, so that their implementation becomes an end-in-itself instead of it being something to consider in terms of choices involved. Or, as Jackson and Carter indicate, they do not consider the opportunity costs of implementing the choice made (2000, p. 208).

Of course, there are criticisms that Ackoff, like other softer thinkers, cannot really deal with processes of conflict in the society. Again I try to show that it may still make a contribution in the way that it tries to allow these conflicts to be addressed through a more future-looking perspective, focusing on opportunity costs and concentrating on development rather than just economic growth. (The next chapter takes up these arguments further.) This is not to say that I see Ackoff's suggestion for using IP as the only possible way in which activist researchers can make a contribution. But it offers some perspective on the situation that allows us to link up with an actor's point of view of development, and to consider how one could open up reflection on the future without just following existing trends in the globe.

I realise that criticisms of the actor orientation are based on the idea that economic interests can come to dominate any supposed participation in decision-making towards the future. This is often linked up with the Marxist position that says that economic influence on the state leaves the poor still poor, because the rich can exercise more power. I suggest that whether this criticism applies to a country, depends on the conditions in the country. Therefore, an analysis of the detail of the

case of the KHB country is more important than to make general statements such as this.

I believe that it is important, through case study research (such as my own case study), that we explore how the actors themselves see their role in economic and political development and also how the actors themselves may allow themselves to be influenced by other people's concerns. It also would let us see that there are maybe some leaders and some who might want to use politics and politics to get wealth, but that there also may be other people who see things differently. It means that power is not seen as something that is always used just to get more power or more wealth. Even if it is used sometimes this way, the people concerned might also be worried about possible future visions for their country. In Taiwan, there are often very personal ways in which messages about people's concerns are taken up in policies. So, for instance, the strong display of emotion mentioned in Chapter Four around concerns connected with privatising as a world trend, can be followed up to allow people to reconsider their responsibilities. In the Taiwanese culture, it is sometimes appreciated that high office is seen as a leadership role that carries a lot of responsibility. Then, seen this way, it is not about competing to get the high office just in order to get more power and more wealth for managers and other seniors. One can get both more power and more wealth this way, but politics can also be a way of thinking to create a future vision through a mingling of perspectives. This is where Ackoff's style of planning has a strength that can be relevant to looking at the KHB and its future, as discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RELEVANCE OF SYSTEMS THINKING

7.1. Introduction

To begin with, in this chapter I present a brief outline of developments in Systems Thinking leading up to some arguments that I find relevant to my examination of the case of KHB. I give a brief history of types of systems thinking as the theme of such thinking is one that I want to use to reflect on my involvement in the case study.

Traditional systems thinking is characterised by what is called a hard approach. This perspective emphasises objectivity of the observer in observing a natural or social system and control of people who can find out the goals of the system and then act to bring about desired states of the system (Jackson, 1991). For instance, Jackson states that traditional operational research as a hard approach "seeks to employ systematic and rational procedures to optimise the efficient functioning of systems and to maximise their performance" (1991, p. 88). As noted in previous chapters, this view of systems can be questioned already by challenging the concept of efficiency that they work in terms of. For example, Jackson and Carter explain that it is often a matter of faith whether we decide that one course of action rather than another is likely to create better outcomes, taking into consideration also the opportunity costs of not following other courses of action (2000, p. 211).

There is also a tradition of systems thinking that Jackson calls organisational cybernetics, which challenges the idea that we can predict outcomes, but which still looks for ways of maintaining the identity and viability of systems. This is the

cybernetic argument developed by Beer (1966, 1974, 1979, 1985). Jackson (1985) notes that Beer's cybernetic approach is such that variety engineering strategies can fulfil two requirements. The first requirement is that the organisation should have the best possible model of the environment relevant to its purposes. The second requirement is that the organisation's structure and information flows should reflect the nature of that environment so that the organisation is responsive to it. As Jackson states: "For Beer, a system is viable if it is capable of responding to environmental changes even if those changes could not have been foreseen at the time the system was designed" (1985, p. 40). The system is designed to be responsive to its environment. Variety engineering is meant to achieve this. As Jackson notes, there have been various challenges to the assumptions on which Beer's approach to systems rests. For example, other types of systemic thinking challenges Beer's orientation, wishing to emphasise the active construction of the social world by human beings. That means not only that human systems are based on human activity (e.g. Soft Systems Thinking; Critical Systems Thinking), but also that social systems cannot be objectively defined as being one thing or another. The definition of the system depends on how it is viewed and dealt with. Jackson notes that we could just as well look at systems in another way, not through the lenses of Viable Systems Modelling (VSM). For example, it is just as legitimate to regard the organisation as a "social grouping" (2000, p. 176). As seen when I discuss some soft systems thinking ideas, the human element of systems and the way in which the people interact as they define their situation, is another way of looking at systems. That way of looking focuses more on organisational cultures, as I explained this in Chapter Five. The requirement to create a satisfactory organisation, is to try to create some negotiation

between different viewpoints and value positions. This is what soft thinking is more concerned about.

Critical Systems Thinking (CST) suggests that people should be aware of the way in which they are seeing the system and what the consequences of seeing this are (Flood and Jackson, 1991a,b; Midgley, 1996a,b; Romm, 1995; Flood and Romm, 1996a). Instead of seeing systems as made up of interrelated parts functioning to be responsive to changes in the external environment, we concentrate on systems thinking as a statement about the way we are looking at systems. This also means that a general theory of organisation is not needed to look at all forms of organisation in the natural, biological and human worlds. It is suggested that physical systems, organisms and societies may not be the same (they have unique properties), but also within social systems there are many ways of viewing them.

In this chapter I examine the history of systems thinking in terms of what I see as points that help me to think retrospectively about my involvement in the KHB. The discussion also shows up some aspects that I derive from my case study to make comments on some of the arguments of various systems thinkers.

7.2. A Brief History of Systems Thinking in Terms of Relevance to KHB

As noted in the Introduction, the main assumption that one can identify in this kind of thinking is the assumption that there is a way of selecting an efficient means of achieving a known and defined end. Hard Systems Thinking as applied to the KHB would suggest that it is possible to determine what structure (for example, a privatised one and a particular way of privatising) would be best designed to create efficiency.

Cybernetic Thinking also assumes that a design for efficient response to information flows internally and externally can be created. Flood indicates that "cybernetics found its home in the management sciences in the guise of control theory, systems engineering, and more recently, information theory" (2000, p. 135). Cybernetics allows for the control of the responses to the environment through processing of relevant information. Cybernetic models represent phenomena "conceptually, diagrammatically and/or mathematically" (Flood, 2000, p. 135). It thus has a quantitative orientation, similar to other engineering approaches. Silverman notes that in social research quantitative and qualitative orientations can embody different ideas about how to study the social world. He notes, for instance that "the quantitative researcher might study the relationship between the efficiency of an organisation and its management structure" (1993, p. 5). But a more qualitative approach suggests that "what is 'efficient' and what is the management 'structure' cannot be separated out from what the participants in the organisation do themselves. So, 'efficiency' and 'structure' are not stable realities but are defined and redefined in different organisational contexts (e.g. internal meetings, labour-management negotiations, press releases, etc.)" (1993, p. 5). This idea of Silverman fits in very well with my own way of reporting on the documents and the observations and interviews of my case study. As I explained in previous chapters, there is not one way of seeing efficiency. The different interviewees all agreed that efficiency was important, but they had different meanings associated with this; and they were not all clear about whether one or other structure would create more efficiency and in what sense. This was also partly through my active probing, where I believe I was able to point out subtly to participants in individual and group situations that there is not clarity on this. Also, now that the DPP has been elected, it is quite possible that press releases

will stress more the contribution of the KHB to making a better City in Kaohsiung, so that definitions of an efficient KHB will change accordingly. The meeting of needs of citizens in the City will start to be mentioned more. So soft thinking, which suggests that we cannot easily define either efficiency or management structure without seeing how the people involved define and create this, is more aligned to my way of dealing with my case study.

Soft Thinking prefers to work with the different perceptions of systems that exist in all people's minds. Multiple perceptions of reality are explored and encouraged. For instance, Checkland's Soft Systems Thinking encourages learning so that an accommodation can be reached among participants involved with a problem situation (Jackson, 1991, p.161). Ackoff's Interactive Planning, which I discuss in more detail in another section, encourages people to look forward to an idealised future, so that they can organise activities without continuing accidentally on trends that they have followed in the past.

Critical Systems Thinking developed historically as an attempt to point to the strengths and weaknesses of different strands of systems thinking (Jackson, 1991, p. 203). Critical Systems Thinking was launched in the early 1990s with Flood and Jackson's book Creative Problem Solving (1991b). This book suggested a way of using CST for intervention purposes (called Total Systems Intervention, that is, TSI). TSI primarily involved the making of a grid that could be used by interventionists to decide when to use what methods (and underlying theories) as appropriate to the problem context they were dealing with. Various cells were created in the grid and methods placed accordingly in the cells, suggesting when the methods could be put to best use. This grid had some links with a similar one created by Jackson and Keys

(1984). Jackson and Keys note that a practical implication of their grid is that "if the analysis is taken seriously, it will lead the problem solver to ask, what methodology is appropriate to this problem context" (1984, p. 483). Problem solvers must take care in identifying the problem context so that they do not act inappropriately in applying a methodology that does not suit the situation. Therefore the problem solver has to be aware of "different paradigms in the social sciences" and must try to look at the problem through the different paradigms before deciding how to view it (1984, p. 484). Jackson suggested that it is possible to extend the grid developed by him and Keys to be able to think also about coercive situations where there is fundamental conflict, and people's only way of working together is through the exercise of power (1991, p. 29). Therefore, in Jackson's view the classifications developed by him and Keys should be extended. This is what was achieved in Jackson (1985a, 1991) and in Flood and Jackson (1991b).

TSI has been changed since its beginnings, based on some challenges. Criticisms of this approach by, for instance, Midgley (1995) and Gregory (1996, led to different interpretations of the meaning of TSI and also modifications of TSI. (See, for instance, Flood and Romm, 1996a, and Jackson, 2000.)

Gregory argues that in the original TSI, Flood and Jackson's approach did not show how learning can take place between methodologies or other points of view. She therefore developed a learning theory. She called this a discordant pluralist approach (1996). Theories and methodologies were not to be seen as static. They could change as people learned across them. She believes that this kind of thinking can be encouraged. It is the task of CST to encourage this. As far as how this can be done

practically, she suggests that in practice people should be encouraged to "judge critically the diverse perspectives" (1996, p. 57).

Midgley (1996a,b) developed an argument about creative design of methodologies for each intervention situation. Midgley suggests that syntheses of methods can be created in specific situations to fulfil what the researchers and participants find as relevant to their concerns in that situation. Midgley explains how researchers can be flexible and responsive during interventions by synthesising different methodological approaches (1997, p. 249). He explores ways of mixing of methods to create creative syntheses. The synthesis moulds the different methods into a new form that is appropriate for that unique, local context.

In a certain way my own case study approach is a case in point of synthesising the ideas from Action Research with ideas from Case Study research into a new approach that is relevant to my specific circumstances as I see them in the KHB. I am not following either a normal Action Research approach or a normal case study approach. I am synthesising ideas from both approaches into a new approach for this situation. (See also Chapter 8 for further reflections on my role.)

Flood and Romm (1996a) concentrated in their critique of TSI on the consciousness and responsibility of those involved in interventions as they draw on different ideas and methods. As long as interventionists are able to loop between different ways of seeing issues that arise, and do not become stuck in any one way of seeing the issues, they can be called triple loop learners, according to Flood and Romm.

Jackson also now emphasises a flexible approach. He states that some of the criticisms of TSI were justified when they were made (2000, p. 374). He has produced a more contemporary version of CST in his latest book. He agrees in that book that the

modernist narrative of progress through increased performativity of systems, can be challenged (2000, p. 349). He also takes stock of the postmodernist view that "systems practice can take different forms in different situations and be interpreted differently by different users, [and] each use should exhibit conscious thought and/or emotional response about how to adapt to the particular circumstances" (2000, p. 348). I have shown in previous chapters that my case study is a flexible use of both action research and case study research that is adapted to my specific involvement in the situation, as I see it. I also have shown that it is not just a matter of my own conscious thought, but also my emotional response to what I considered a feasible role for me to adopt, even though still emotionally challenging as it is not an easy role to play in combining case study with a more active approach. I also showed that I considered the emotions of the people involved also when implanting my specific approach to the case study.

I now can go into a little more detail on the various systems approaches, before explaining the appeal to me of Interactive Planning (IP) in this case. I should note that I see the value of IP not so much in terms of its suggested steps to follow, but in terms of some of its principles regarding planning as interactive rather than reactive or preactive planning. I agree with Gregory, Midgley, Flood and Romm, and Jackson, that we all do not need to see or use the methodology in the same way. We can use what we find relevant, as long as we can account for this to the people involved, which may include different audiences (Romm, 2001). In this case, I did not use IP as such in terms of Ackoff's steps to create participation, but I still think that some of the principles of IP were valid and appropriate for the case. The case also shows that participation does not need to be as direct as IP suggests it must be. Even though participation is not so direct with people joining together in processes of consultation, it can be organised indirectly

through, for example, an advocate of different views or a mediator laying this role, as King (1999) suggests. (See the previous chapter.) I explain more about this when discussing Ackoff's ideas on systems thinking. Before this, I give an outline of types of systems thinking.

7.3. Hard Systems Thinking

Hard Systems Thinking developed in the 1960s with a number of quantitatively-oriented approaches. Each approach relied on the use of computer models to explore the behaviour of specific systems with clear systems boundaries. Hard Systems Thinking is the "engineer's contribution" and Checkland suggests that they are all involved in trying to engineer outcomes according to desired goals (Checkland, 1981). These approaches try to engineer optimal goal-seeking strategies for manipulating complex systems through systems techniques. Overall, the hard systems methodology is normally based on a presumption that the goal is understood, and problems have solutions. The problem arises out of some technical error that needs to be corrected in the system. The problem itself is clear and the task is to try to find the solution that will correct the dysfunction. A systematic approach to engineering design is by means of model building. Systems engineering involves the total task of conceiving, designing, evaluating and implementing a system to meet some defined need is one which persists throughout accounts of the activity (Keys, 1991). Jenkins (1972) defined systems engineering as the science of designing complex systems in their totality to ensure that the component subsystems making up the system are designed, fitted together, checked and operated in the most efficient way. According to Jenkins, the purpose of systems engineering is to ensure the optimal use of resources.

Systems Engineering is based on the idea that one can look at an entire problem as a whole, in context, and compare alternative choices in the light of their possible outcomes (Quade and Boucher, 1968). Systems engineering is systematic in the sense that it proceeds by rational and well-ordered steps. There is a desired state, S1, and a present state, So, and alternative ways of getting from So to S1 can be examined with a view to making a rational choice between them. But as Jackson and Carter note (2000), the main problem with such a "rational" approach to the world, is that it avoids the question of opportunity costs, the uncertainty involved in deciding what might have happened if a path had not been followed, and the values and interests that also affect the way that people look at actions and outcomes.

Operational Research follows the tradition of systems engineering in that its purpose is to help management determine its policy and actions scientifically (Beer, 1966, p. 92). Operational research can be characterised as the application of scientific methods, techniques, and tools to problems involving the operations of a system so as to provide those in control of the system with optimum solutions to the problems.

A well-structured problem that can be dealt with by Operational Research should have unambiguous objectives, firm constraints, and establishable relationships between cause and effects. Operational Research is defined as the use of science to improve the operation of a system so that those responsible can create optimum solutions to problems. Operational Research has many critics. Some of the criticisms arise because critics are worried that objectives may become reduced to a unitary set of agreed objectives (Jackson and Keys, 1984). Moreover, it is argued that Operational Research does not deal sufficiently with uncertainty in systems (Keys, 1991).

Operational Research has been largely confined to problem situations where uncertainties are low. Evidently one of the significant sources of uncertainty is conflict. In conflict situations, parties will adjust their behaviour to take account in advance of possible opposing maneuvers, and then in response to the situation which actually materialises. Conflict operates at different levels. For instance, disagreement can occur between independent parties with irreconcilable interests. Analysis is used not only for individuals but for organisations which are aggregates of individuals. Decisions and actions emerge out interactions between a variety of actors. Each may have an individual perspective or world-view through which the actions and statements of others are interpreted. What the constraints are, what the priorities should be, what the problem actually is, may be perceived quite differently (Checkland, 1981; Eden *et al.*, 1983).

It has been argued that Operational Research fails to see the world in which decisions get taken or problems get resolved as being peopled by human beings and by groups of them who may have different perceptions of problems springing from their different interests and concerns. Ackoff argued that because of this weakness in OR, it had no future unless it would be able to change itself. So he created an argument called "The future of operational research is past" (1979).

This led onto the development of different approaches to systematic study. Firstly, I discuss Beer's cybernetic approach, which links up with what Jackson and Keys (1984) call a more complex view of the relation between the parts of the system. In the next section I show how cybernetics developed as a systemic approach.

7.4. Organisational Cybernetics

Beer provided guidelines for looking at problem situations in organisations and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation through what he called a viable systems model. Beer says that this model is relevant to "the profession of regulation, and therefore of effective organization" (Beer, 1985, p. x). His proposed Viable System Model (VSM) can deal with complexity and therefore help management of this complexity.

The model is made up of five functions, which may be labelled: implementation, coordination, control, development/intelligence, and policy. The implementations comprise operational elements with their managers. Implementations and their management are the primary activity of the organisation. It is what the organisation does (Beer, 1985, p. 128). Each operational element is considered to be a viable entity in its own right. Viability means that survival in the long term of the whole system can be assured. Coordination ensures that there is an efficient and stable use of resources to perform operations. Control is an audit and control function that maintains relatively stable equilibrium between the interdependent parts. Control deals with vital information about problems that can arise in implementation that coordination is not able to cope with. The development function is meant to receive and deal with information about the total environment. This comprises the internal and external environments. The development or intelligence function forms a link between the internal processes and the opportunities and threats in the external environment. Finally, policy deals with strategic decisions in relation to setting goals for the system. It receives all relevant information about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and on the basis of this information, reviews and modifies policy.

Beer's VSM aims to design or redesign organisations to ensure their viability. Systems identification takes place by considering what the system does. Jackson explains that applied to all systems, including the management of transport systems, what the cybernetic model tries to achieve when it is applied to organisations is "an increase in efficiency and effectiveness. This will occur whatever the nature of the organisation involved" (1985, p. 38). But Jackson notes that in making this claim for cybernetics and in using the model to pretend to achieve efficiency in clearcut terms, it can "inevitably legitimise the position of those who already have power" (1985b, p. 38).

Jackson argues that cybernetics could have some relevance to the management of transport systems because it "sets out a number of strategies that can be used by managers in order to balance the variety equation for organisations ... [that is, strategies] aimed at reducing the variety of the external environment" (1985b, p. 40). According to Jackson, "basically, because of the great complexity of the environment, managers will have to break down an organisation's goals into sub-goals and allocate these to different sub-systems. These sub-systems will have discretion in relation to the achievement of these sub-goals, thus absorbing some environmental variety. Managers using the planning technique set priorities which clearly determine which parts of the environment the organisation needs to give its attention to" (1985b, p. 40). This is a useful device that managers can use to ensure that they concentrate on important features of the environment that need to be handled. Also, VSM can be used to design the system so as to ensure that only the most vital information percolates through to top management levels. This means that managers are not dealing with issues that can be dealt with elsewhere in the system. And another useful

design tool of the VSM is its encouragement to develop information systems aimed at providing managers with the richest possible flows of useful information (both internally and externally, without overloading the top management).

However, despite these ideas that Jackson notes may generally be relevant for those concerned with the management of transport systems, the problem is that in the case of the KHB it is difficult to decide which aspects of the environment should be responded to and which information should be used to help the making of the strategic decisions regarding the scale and scope of privatisation. As Jackson and Carter note when speaking about efficiency and as has been shown in Chapter Two in regard to the literature of examples of privatisation, it is not clear what lessons can be learned from this. It is also not clear how the world trends should be interpreted when thinking about the necessity for privatisation as an option to deal with world market forces. Therefore, although it is possible to develop rich sources of information, the information still needs to be interpreted. Within the organisation of the KHB itself, as we saw from previous chapters, there are many ways of interpreting the necessities, right from senior management to lower levels of staff in the organisation. Even if they could all be involved in System 5 in Beer's model, or at least some of their representatives, the conflict between views would not make decision-making between choices an easy process of just collecting and dealing with information.

Jackson (2000, p. 174) agrees that "if the stakeholders in a system have agreed about the purposes to be pursued, and those purposes are embodied in System 5, the VSM offers a means of pursuing the purposes efficiently and effectively". But they still would need to agree on what they mean by efficiency and therefore there is likely

to be continuing conflict. Ideally, they need to take into consideration others' concerns about this, even if they are expressed in emotional language. Jackson seems to refer to this idea when he says, referring to Checkland, that: "perhaps too much emphasis is placed upon organisations as logically designed structures of communication and control, and not enough on organisations as processes in which different perceptions of reality are continuously negotiated and renegotiated" (2000, p. 175). Jackson suggests that it is possible that "if the social world consists of antagonistic class formations, with some groups exploiting others, the VSM does provide too convenient a vehicle for increasing the power of dominant groups" (2000, p. 175). I showed in my discussion of the KHB in Chapter 4 that many of the participants interviewed did feel that there were some antagonistic formations and that they had different interests. However, they also believed that they could try to understand the others, without assuming that they could come to perfect understanding or agreement on the issues of concern.

Beer has argued that the VSM can be used to help people to come to democratically defined goals. But he has not shown how the VSM could be used to help people to get past their disagreements (Brown, 1996; Romm, 1996a,b). Cybernetics is more an approach that wants to help managers in their task of managing viable organisations, as if it is possible to determine their goals. Therefore, I think that Flood and Jackson's (1991a,b) view of cybernetics as managing complexity in contexts where there are not very different views, is still applicable to a large extent; and I believe that the context in the KHB could become a situation where VSM could be misused if it was assumed that the information coming from internal and external sources was easily interpreted.

It should also be remembered that in dealing with the question of the KHB there is much ambiguity around how we can and should develop the organisation. Instead of trying to make the situation become unambiguous, we can realise that we can try to work with the ambiguity. Weil notes that the kinds of management structures that are being developed and propounded in some circles as "efficient and effective", are often based on the idea that private-sector management is "good" while public sector (not-for-profit) management is "bad" (1998). But as we saw in Chapter Two, this is not all that clear anymore, with many experiences of "bad" management of privatised sectors. She states that public sector managers face dilemmas about how to organise the organisation, and it does not help matters when they are put under pressure to regard the problems that they face as solvable neatly and efficiently. This fits in with Checkland's idea that the situation should be recognised to be more messy than a situation where "correct" ... action can be determined, as Weil states it (1998, p. 57).

7.5. Soft Systems Thinking (SST)

In his book on Soft Systems Thinking (1981) Checkland launched a critique of all hard approaches (which included also an implicit critique of any approach not concentrating on human perceptions and interpretations). The soft approach was meant to be applied in poorly structured situations, which he calls messy ones. Meanwhile, models used by systems thinkers are to be seen as intellectual constructs rather than as descriptions of any definite situation. The models are built with the intention of developing people's understandings via debate structured by comparison between models and perceived reality.

Checkland notes that in hard systems approaches "an objective or end-to-be-achieved can be taken as given" and "a system is engineered to achieve the stated objective", in the Soft Systems approach, this is not assumed to be the case (Checkland, 1981, p. 318). The soft approach holds that the world is problematic, but that people's views on problems can be brought together to achieve some accommodations relevant for action. The concept of Systems Thinking changed here from seeing systems as things with objective properties to seeing systems as defined by human attention, especially when focusing on systems in social situations or human affairs.

Flood and Carson (1993) argue that according to this view, "system" is the unique creation of a person or group, and is a representation shaped by particular interests and purposes (Flood and Carson, 1993, p. 9). Therefore, a system is not an object in the objective world, but only a subjective image of that object in a human's mind. "system" is a word in our language, that helps us to look at things through a certain orientation. What is done in soft systems thinking is that "system" becomes an intersubjective device to generate and support mutual understanding, learning and dialogue in social situations. The idea of system is used to organise the participatory process that helps people surface their views and concerns. This transfers systemicity from the objective world to subjective human minds and emphasises the interactive aspect of the notion of system.

Soft Systems Thinking formulates systematic methodologies to accommodate different ideas and concerns and to maintain relationships through open and meaningful dialogue. Rather than seeking operational solutions, this way of thinking emphasises the continuation of human relations (Vickers, 1983). I explain this in more detail with

respect to examples of two methodologies developed through the Soft Systems Thinking approach.

7.5.1. Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)

Checkland (1978) proposes a systems methodology capable of intervening in problem situations to tackle unstructured problems. Whereas systems engineering, systems analysis and operational research largely take a functionalist approach to rational intervention in human affairs, assuming that real-world problems can be formulated as a search for an efficient means of achieving objectives known to be desirable, Checkland's (1981) Soft Systems Methodology is interpretative. As Checkland (1981) says, the emphasis of soft systems methodology is not on any external reality but on people's perception of reality, on their mental processes rather than on the objects of processes.

The systems which are modelled in Checkland's methodology are not systems which exist in the real world. Therefore, the models cannot be used as a basis for manipulating the real world in the same way as engineering-type models are used. In Checkland's methodology, models are used to structure debate among the various actors concerned with the problem situation.

According to Checkland (1981), the methodology itself can be summarised in terms of seven stages or activities. In the first and second stages a problem situation is analysed and a "rich picture" of the situation is built up, based on the way the various actors perceive aspects of the world to be problematical. The third activity involves the preparation of what Checkland calls "root definitions" of some of the systems which the actors believe are relevant to the problem situation. This also includes the analyst who may be brought in to help to structure the debate between participants. Each root

definition reflects a different way of looking at the problem situation; it embodies one particular worldview. Worldviews express people's way of looking at their world and its problems. The next activity (activity 4) involves constructing "conceptual models' of the systems that have been defined. They give a view of human activity systems that could be created to activate the root definitions of systems. The thinking about these activities is then brought into connection with people's everyday activities in activity, where comparison are made with what was perceived to exist in the real-world at stage 2. The conceptual models are used to structure a debate about change among the actors in the problem situation. The actors become aware of the relationships between their own worldview and those of others. Stage 6 enables the analyst and various actors to consider changes which are both desirable and feasible. Once some accommodations have been reached on what feasible and desirable changes to make, the analyst in stage 7 helps people to devise actions to implement those changes.

Checkland and Scholes (1990) note that one can start analysis at any of the seven stages of the methodology's cycle. In fact the stages do not have to be followed. They are just guidelines. It is more important to adhere to the principles of the methodology. The aim is to use systems models of human activity systems to generate processes of debate leading to desirable and feasible improvements in the eyes of the participants.

Soft Systems Thinking is a kind of change management process. Guangming, Clarke and Lehaney suggest that although there is a high failure rate in trying to use systems thinking to address complex, changing organisational problem contexts, there also has been some success (1999, p. 61). Success is defined according to soft thinking in terms of the way participants perceive that there have been improvements.

But Gonzalez wonders how one can work alone with perceptions, which are not necessarily descriptive of what is out there (1999, p. 321). He asks, "How can you manage a business based only on people's perceptions?" Isn't there danger for both naive or deceitful, but eloquent and imaginative, actors to misguide 'accommodation'? Gonzalez notes that this is a concern as expressed from the point of view of the belief that there are systems out there to be managed. This is a first trend that he identifies in the systems literature. Meanwhile, from the point of view of a soft approach there is another trend of concerns. In this trend, one would ask: "How dare you, Mr Manager, impose your point of view claiming 'true' knowledge about reality? What makes your knowledge about things 'out there' better than my knowledge based on my daily experience in the shop floor?" (1999, p. 321). Gonzalez notes that this is the perspective of a soft approach that suggests that there are always a variety of points of view.

Once it is accepted that the points of view cannot be united into one by deciding what is "true", then the question arises as to how to act and how to intervene. In soft systems thinking what is stressed is the personal qualities of the agents, with special emphasis laid on managers who can take a lead in developing a participative culture. In the case of the KHB, I believe that my particular role in trying to help people to think again about their point of view in relation to other ones, could be considered personal qualities brought into the situation by, in this case, myself as agent working with other agents. Byrne and McMorland note that in many cultural situations, "collective learning is not yet a well developed attribute of social engagement". They say that they "take seriously Peter Senge's dictum that development of the capability of collective learning is important for human evolution (Senge, 1990). Can such a

subjective endeavour be deemed serious research?" (1999, p. 481). They note that often it is not called serious research to try to develop capacities for collective learning. However, soft systems thinkers such as Checkland regard it as a more robust way of dealing with social situations (than an engineering approach, such as in the first trend identified by Gonzales explained above).

In considering the value of soft systems thinking, Checkland and Scholes state that their soft systems methodology that they have developed is generally useful in all messy human situations. But they state that users of SSM should use it flexibly. When users use SSM, it "will always emerge in use in a form which its users find comfortable in the particular situation they are in" (1990, p 58). They state that "mouldability by a particular user in a particular situation is the point of methodology" (1990, p. 58).

But I still have some questions to ask, namely: How general is the statement that SSM is applicable in all messy human situations? Do all messy situations have enough in common for this general statement to be true? Are there conditions that it would not be true? Must everybody just mould SSM so that it becomes usable in the situation they face? When Checkland says that the research programme had the outcome of developing a methodology for messy situations, he means all messy situations. Some researchers may claim that Checkland's SSM is only suitable for some messy situations, but not all. For example, Jackson (1982) says that Checkland's SSM is useful mainly to deal with reform of systems but not situations where more radical change is needed. Maybe in the process of looking at the KHB in Taiwan, for example, I suggest that SSM might be less usable than Ackoff's Interactive Planning, which is more forward looking towards generating futures different from current trends. Ackoff's Interactive Planning is a good way to help people to develop some future vision. I see that in the

KHB Ackoff's ideas may help us to consider more the kind of way I pursued my case study, and can continue into the future. Therefore, it seems to me that many of Ackoff's ideas are very relevant at this point in time for me.

I have tried to point out so far in this chapter that there is no one way of doing systems thinking. SSM may be one way and may work in some cases. There may be cases where other approaches could also be used. The opportunity cost of using one to the exclusion of others is of course impossible to determine. It is not a matter of being able to make a fully rational choice, but also to find something emotionally appealing. I find that I can find more emotional support from IP at the present time. The system can be seen in many different ways and can be improved via research in many different ways. System must not be an abstract term. We can understand the term system if we use it in a definite situation or case, so that it gets some content. The content depends on the way we look at the system in a specific case and also how we can think of improving it.

What does systems thinking mean then? Systems thinking may be used as a general term to show that we are trying to look at things as part of a whole. We are trying to look for a lot of connections between the parts that we are looking at. By introducing soft systems thinking we realise that we can see more variety in systems and not just to look at system, subsystem, suprasystem, and their relationships. More content can be given to the term system when we engage with systems in this way.

Having explained why I believe a soft approach is particularly helpful in looking at the case of KHB and reflecting on my role in the case, I must explain how I see the relevance of Ackoff Interactive Planning (IP).

7.5.2. Interactive Planning (IP)

Ackoff develops another soft approach in which he suggests that objectivity should be seen as resulting from the interaction of many individual subjectivities. It is "value-full", being full of the concerns of all the stakeholders involved (Ackoff, 1974, pp. 20-21). Stakeholders are any persons who might be affected by the way the system is being designed. "Interactive Planning" is, among other things, participative planning in which all those who can be affected are given an opportunity to participate. The interactive planner and stakeholders participate in designing an "idealised future" for the system with which they are concerned. Ackoff considers it important that people should concentrate on developing a vision of a future that they would like to share. Ackoff states: "The method of Interactive Planning involves idealised design" (Ackoff, 1974, p. 228). Ackoff states furthermore (1981) that problems should be dissolved by designing a desirable future and inventing ways of bringing it about. People can share in this common project.

7.5.2.1. Ackoff's Suggested Points for Systems Thinking and Some Criticisms

Ackoff suggests that we must study systems by adopting (applying) the principle of participation (1981, p. 65). His suggestion is that in planning the process of planning is more important than the product. Participation in planning serves organisational development. It also makes it possible for individuals to satisfy their own and others desires. The next statement he makes is about continuity (1981, p. 70). We must realise that we need continuous planning in order to pursue our plans. This allows people to be aware that their own values may change and also the facts and events that they thought would occur might not occur. So it is a general point about the need to be able to adjust plans accordingly. The third point that Ackoff makes concerns the principle of

coordination and the principle of integration (1981, p. 71). Ackoff makes this point about the application of the idea of co-ordination: that no part of the organisation can be planned for effectively if it is planned for independently of any other unit at the same level (1981, p. 72). All units must be planned for interdependently. He also makes this point about the idea of integration: that planning done independently at any level of a system cannot be as effective as planning carried out at all levels (1981, p. 73). He states that the solution to a problem that appears at one level may best be obtained by changing a policy or practice at another.

Ackoff's discusses the need for IP to deal with all of these aspects of systems, while we pay attention to what is unique in the situation. A difficulty is that it is not always clear that all the general ideas about systems that Ackoff refers to are valid in every situation. For instance, it is not guaranteed that participation always will lead to better serving of the organisation or of the individuals; it is not guaranteed that planning must always be continuous, and it is not guaranteed that co-ordination and integration works the way Ackoff says. Some of the statements of Ackoff may be too much generalisation.

I do not suggest that the statements are unworthy of thinking about. I just suggest that sometimes we need to look at the specific cases to see if the statements are applicable. For example, it could be the case that participation will not really lead to a better situation for the people, because there are too many interests that are clashing with each other. This is one of the criticisms given by Jackson (1982, p. 21) of Ackoff's IP. In such a situation, maybe Ackoff's approach to participation cannot work in the way he expects. Maybe when some people push their power, the value of participation is not so high. The question arises whether the KHB case is a case in point

where power is pushed in the direction of some future, such as a future of continued privatisation on a large scale. However, the situation is not so simple as saying that this is a mere pushing of the power of certain interests, because we could argue that some of the people who hold this view believe that this is valuable for the organisation (see Interviews 10a,b,c and 11, for instance, in Chapter Two). Of course, it is possible that they were saying this to me in the context of my interviewing. But it is also possible that when they think of other ideas, they realise that we can reconsider this future direction. This is the impression that I got in my probing, namely that there is scope for relooking at the future of the KHB, especially also in the new political context of the DPP election. As I explain in earlier chapters, I can see much relevance for Ackoff's approach in the context of looking at the KHB at the moment.

However, according to Jackson (1982) Ackoff ignores the real imbalances in power and wealth at the political and economic levels of society. This can mean that irreconcilable conflicts do exist between groups who have clashing interests because of their positions. We saw in the case of the KHB that groups do seem to divide themselves and there is a loss of understanding, as they do not see across to the other's point of view. Nevertheless, if we modify Ackoff's approach and use it more flexibly, then there are many ideas that are still relevant to gaining some understanding of the KHB and its potential. According to Jackson (2000), critical awareness is tied to understanding in general about methodologies and their strengths and weaknesses. It allows people who are going to use methodologies to be critical in regard to the use of them. A critical use of methodology can be done by deciding how to use it more flexibly, as other critical systems thinkers have also noted.

Critical systems thinking (CST) is important because it requires researchers and interveners to consider the consequences of use of the approaches they employ. This means that people think about what might happen if they use a methodology. For example, if they use a harder methodology to look for optimum performance, what effect will this have in the system? Will people in the KHB believe that there is an optimum way of creating efficiency? And will they then force some solution on the grounds of its obviousness? Or, if they use a method based on viable systems diagnosis, they must consider whether this might have some effect (for example, it may lead to attempts to look at the environment in only one way). Or, if they use a softer methodology hoping to create debate, what effect might this have? Will it make people believe that they must seem to be decided through the debate? And is this effect desired? This is why CST criticises some of the hard and soft approaches if they are used uncritically.

Ulrich (1983) argues that when criticising these approaches we can realise that anybody has the capability of thinking about the consequences of plans that may be made by "experts". His Critical Systems Heuristics (CHS) is capable of providing guidelines for people to think through consequences for themselves of the adoption of any plan (1991). We can see that from the KHB case, many of the managers (at different levels) and workers were aware of the consequences for them of increased privatisation. They had emotional reactions to this that cannot just be called irrational. They are based on their concerns, and need to be taken into consideration. Ulrich emphasises that there is no need only for a few people to define what needs to be done. Therefore, CSH has concentrated on providing some questions that can assist citizens to interrogate action plans. Ulrich argues that CSH can be organised in conjunction

with IP (1994). I suggest that the case of the KHB is a case where one can suggest that IP can have some value, although its interrogative power is more through the agency of the researcher (myself) in this case taking the lead in probing people to reconsider their beliefs and values and the trends that they are following.

However, Jackson (2000, p. 245) suggests that "Participation is essential to interactive planning, philosophically because it provides the justification for the objectivity of the results and practically because it generates creativity and ensures implementation". Jackson points out that in Ackoff's IP methodology the participative principle is primary. He also suggests that "Perhaps because of its significance, Ackoff plays down the obstacles to full and effective participation" (2000, p 245). According to Jackson, Ackoff gives the impression that getting participation from start to finish of the IP process will not be too problematical. But, Jackson asks:

> *Will the powerful be willing to forgo their dominant position and submit their privileges to the vagaries of idealised design? Even if interactive planning can be started, another problem will be encountered.... We cannot realistically expect that less privileged stakeholders will be able to participate equally in the planning process. Whatever help the analyst can give to less fortunate groups, the various stakeholders will enter the interactive planning process with widely divergent informational, political, and economic resources (2000, p. 245).*

All these general comments that Jackson notes about IP can be seen to hold to some extent in the case of the KHB. The various participants did not all enter the situation of my intervention with equal power as I interviewed them, and nor could I really use my own power to help create a consultation process among them in free debate. Nevertheless, "participation" could be argued to take many forms, and to generalise about it being full of obstacles, may prevent us from looking for the opportunities that may be presented in the intervention situation. I tried to look for these opportunities, and although I did not implement IP in the way that either Ackoff

or Jackson describes it, I think that some of the ideas of Ackoff are still relevant for my examination of the case and for learning lessons from it.

7.5.2.2. Some Ideas of Relevance from Ackoff's Approach to IP

Ackoff distinguishes IP from preactive and from interactive planning. He notes (1999, p. 105) that "Preactive planning is top-down strategically oriented planning. Objectives are explicitly set but tactics are left to the discretion of individual units. Such planning has two parts, prediction and preparation, of which prediction is the more important" (1999, p. 105). Ackoff notes that the important assumption of this approach to planning is that prediction is possible. He notes that: "If a prediction is in error, even good preparation for what it predicts may be in vain". We saw in the case of the KHB that with all the variety of effects that might take place with further scales of privatisation and with suggested paces for it, it is impossible to know what might happen if one course of action rather than another takes place.

In contrast to preactive planning Ackoff suggests that responsiveness (interactive) planning consists of building responsiveness and flexibility into an organisation, so that it does not need to act as if prediction of effects is possible. I find this a relevant idea to consider when one considers that none of my interviewees would have been able to predict what the outcomes of various courses of action might be. Therefore, I find that it is important to be more flexible and sometimes I suggested this subtly when interviewing some of the participants (see, for example, my interviews 10b, c, and 11).

Ackoff also notes that IP is different from Reactive Planning. Reactive planners "try to do well enough, to 'satisfice', to enable the organisation planned for to survive. But they do not try to develop long-term strategic plans. Strategic planning is

long range planning, Tactical planning is shorter range" (1999, p. 102). Planning at the corporate level needs to be strategic, and forward looking. "Interactive planners try to do better in the future than the best that is currently possible, to 'idealise', to enable the organisation planned for to develop. An organisation develops when it increases its ability and desire to satisfy the needs and desires of those who depend on it, its stakeholders" (1999, p. 111). Ackoff is not saying here that everybody will become interactive planners. But he is suggesting that it is better if they can be so. This is what defines an organisation's development. In IP, the process of people participating in interactive planning is helpful because together people can define what they would like their organisation to become. But because organisations and their environments change continually over time, "planners should explicitly formulate as many as possible of their relevant assumptions about what will, will not, can, and cannot change. They should monitor these assumptions continually. When they are found to be in error, plans should be modified appropriately, that is, adapted to changing assumptions" (1999, p. 112). In the case of the KHB we have seen how quickly the political environment of the Harbour changes in view of the DPP election, and also how quickly people are called upon to reconsider the role of the KHB in Kaohsiung City. Also, world trends are showing that there is no simple solution to either privatising or not (and to what extent). (See Chapter Two.) Therefore, as Ackoff notes, "adaptation must be continuous if the effectiveness of plans is to be maintained or, more important, increased" (1999, p. 212).

Ackoff advises us that "by the time we find solutions to many of the problems that face us, usually the most important ones, the problems have so changed that our solutions to them are no longer relevant or effective; they are stillborn" (1999, p. 4).

This is also an important advice for the participants of KHB. Ackoff also notes that: "In the context of a strong paternalistic culture, conflict can be resolved by the intervention of a strong father figure, whose command, 'Give the apple to your sister', would be respected without much hard feelings. To appreciate the power of this type of leader, recall that such American corporate giants as Ford, DuPont, General Motors, and IBM owe much to their paternalistic founding fathers" (1999, p. 40). This shows that according to Ackoff we cannot generalise that paternalism (as reflected in power distance, for example) is necessarily an impossible way to deal with potential conflict. We know that in the context of the cultures of the KHB, there is still some tendency to power distance, and this is mixed with other tendencies. Therefore, the kind of participation that is culturally feasible, is different from some of the other applications of IP. For this reason, I believe that my way of acting as agent in the case in question (in the research undertaken and in my continued role as researcher when I return after my Ph.D. study), can be a way that fits in with cultural trends while also moving people to rethink about their future way of relating to others and their views.

I also believe that Ackoff's statements about development are very pertinent to my study, as shown in previous chapters. Ackoff states that: "Development is better reflected in quality of life than in standard of living. Therefore, the level of development of a corporation is better reflected in the quality of work life it provides its employees than in its profit-and-loss statement" (1999, p. 44). We saw that in the case of the KHB there were many concerns raised and not all could be converted into profit and loss statements. Many of the interviewees were aware of the tension between quality of life and a strict profit-and-loss way of costing the efficiency of the

KHB. And I believe that the discussions that I had with participants also helped to draw attention to this tension, although I tried to do this in a subtle way on all occasions.

Ackoff notes that there are movements in the world not only to define development as economic growth. He suggests that "there is currently a widespread belief that quality of life is being sacrificed to increase standard of living. This belief is accompanied by a willingness to sacrifice standard of living to improve quality of life, a willingness that is reflected in the environmentalist movement". We also saw in the report on the DPP documents, and from interviewing of residents in the City and also from subsequent interviewing of the Director of the Harbour, that these are issues that also are important for people organising plans to think about.

Although Ackoff has made some useful points that I consider relevant for an understanding of ways of looking at developments in the KHB (with myself as part of these developments) he has still been criticised for his "soft" approach. For instance, Jackson notes that it can be difficult to mobilise people in such a way that they believe that they have interests in common. He states that according to a more objectivist approach the subjective beliefs that people have may not necessarily "coincide with their objective interests. Permanent reconciliation of conflicts between stakeholders might need to be in terms of objective and not merely subjective interests". These objective interests refer to interests deriving from their position in the society. Jackson notes that this criticism of Ackoff (based on the notion that people have some objective interests that have to be identified and addressed) is from a structuralist perspective that Ackoff does not share. We saw in the case of the KHB that many of the participants themselves think in terms of their identification with a

group that has different class position from other groupings in the KHB. But they still seem to recognise that there is some space for talking about how the future of the KHB should be planned for. In my case of my intervention, I tried to bring people into thinking again about developments by considering the concerns and experiences of other participants (and of myself).

7.6. Conclusion

From the discussion offered in the chapter, we can isolate certain ways of thinking, by labeling harder, softer and more critical systems thinking. Hard Systems Thinking can become successful in dealing with the engineering type problems. It can apply its engineering principles smoothly where there is agreement among stakeholders about the objective to be achieved and the need to find an efficient method of achieving it. Hard Systems Thinking views systems as organised wholes in the objective real world. Meanwhile, in organisational cybernetics, components and contributions in the system can be identified, relationships, communication and feedback mechanisms within the system can be modelled, and the objectives of the system can be defined and the system designed to achieve objectives being responsive to internal and external information.

However, systems thinking of these sorts can be problematic, especially if we focus on systems in social situations, where different participants have different interests and presumptions. The formulations of systems engineering, operational research, cybernetic designs are less successful when problems are less easily defined; as for example, in the case of the KHB where agreement over what is at stake is not apparent. Soft Systems Thinking opens up a new perspective on the way systems ideas can be used for problem resolving. I showed in the chapter that Ackoff's soft approach

has many ideas that I believe can help us to appreciate developments in the KHB and also to use these as opportunities for rethinking the future and ways of planning for it, also in view of the newly elected DPP with new ideas for the future of the KHB made possible.

Critical Systems Thinking tries to make good use of the strengths of all the ways of seeing systems that had been developed within the systems tradition. It embraces critical and social awareness, and requires interventionists to employ a range of ways of thinking about any situation, rather than just one way. Critical Systems Thinking has enriched our understanding and ability to tackle a more broad range of issues embedded in social affairs than any one of the approaches on their own. Schecter (1991), summarising the contribution of CST, stated that Critical Systems Thinking has brought greater theoretical depth to discussions about systems intervention. It has produced a framework for the development of all the different systems approaches; and also allowed them to be used flexibly and creatively. I believe that CST has the basic commitment to look at a range of theories with the purpose of increasing the possibilities for the future while also looking after the environment. It allows people to develop their critical appreciation of issues while also learning all the time from different theories and different practical applications.

My own application of case study research with a systemic (and interventionist) perspective allowed me to add some ideas into the systems literature, as I have done in this chapter. For example, more statements about why the hard approach to efficiency can be criticised; why the soft approach to participation can include advocacy and mediation roles on the part of analysts; and how flexible use of methodologies can be accomplished, were contributed through my case. Specifically, I also added some ideas

on how we can see some of Ackoff's ideas on systems and on development as relevant to the understanding of some cases (in case study research such as my own) without it having to include a full use of IP as action research. I showed that I could still benefit from some ideas of IP in conducting my case, extending it beyond "normal" case study research, and creating a methodology that was feasible for me to utilise. I call this my special case study approach and it fits in with certain ideas developed by Critical Systems thinkers about the need to be appreciative of local contexts when developing and using methodologies.

CHAPTER EIGHT

REFLECTIONS ON MY RESEARCH

ROLES DURING THE STUDY

8.1. Introduction

As noted in Chapter Three and as expressed in detail in Chapter Four, my case study utilised a number of methods, namely, analysis of some documents, observations of certain interactions, and, primarily, interviewing of people in a one-to-one contact and in group situations. In Chapter Three, I explained why I chose to conduct mainly a qualitative approach to the study and in Chapter Four, I explained my actual use of all the methods that I employed. As noted by Hartley (1995) a useful technique in case study research is to "use interviews with a variety of informants in the organisation. These may range from semi-structured to relatively unstructured ... following issues as they become pertinent to the research" (1995, p. 209). This is the technique that I adopted, as I proceeded from interview to interview and also to the group interviews. However, as Hartley notes: "A case study, ... while often including qualitative methods, cannot be defined through its research techniques (1995, p. 210). Hartley indicates that besides the techniques used in case study research, which do not as such distinguish case studies from other forms of research, it is important for researchers to consider how they can develop theory from case material: "Although case studies may begin with (in some situations) only rudimentary theory or a

primitive framework, they need to develop theoretical frameworks by the end which inform and enrich the data and provide not only a sense of the uniqueness of the case but also what is of more general relevance and interest" (1995, p. 209).

This is also what I tried to achieve in my case study, as I hoped to obtain some understanding of the processes involved in the decision-making in the KHB and how people took part in them and responded to them. Hartley points out that "the distinction between interviews carried out as part of a case study and interviews carried out as part of a survey is a matter of degree, but in the first situation interviews are used more to explore and probe in depth the particular circumstances of the organisation and the relation between organisational behaviour and its specific context, whereas in survey interviews the emphasis is likely to be primarily on comparisons of the prespecified phenomenon across organisations (or groups within the organisation)" (1995, p. 209). As noted in my previous chapters, I did not take a prespecified phenomenon and examine it across different organisations. Rather, I took the phenomenon of privatisation and looked at how it became a reality for people in the organisational setting of the KHB. From this, I was able to draw out themes later that I tried to develop by relating these themes to wider literature on cultural learning, on politics and development, and on the relevance of systems thinking when organising planning towards the future.

In order to develop a starting point for the investigation I began (Chapter Two) with an examination of the phenomenon of privatisation as a global trend as a focus for my research, while within the research I tried to let participants speak about any issues of concern to them in relation to this topic (which was clearly of interest to all

the interviewees). And I also utilised the material as a source to help me to think about themes relevant to the case, as explored in Chapters Five to Seven.

But aside from using techniques as expressed by Hartley and aside from trying to develop theory as also noted by Hartley as important for case study work, I believe that I played other research roles, not normally included under case study research. These extra roles I call additional in the sense that they are not normally included in discussions of case study research (see Chapter Three). In this chapter I reflect on all of the roles that I played in my case study.

8.2. Some Reflections on My Case Study Approach

One of the important features of my case study approach, as I explained in Chapter Three, is that I recognised that I could not deal with my possible biases by trying to eliminate or minimise bias through the use of standardised tools for data collection (as, for instance, advised by Campbell, 1969, p. 411). I did not adopt the opinion that I could become value-neutral, leaving out my own political or emotional attachments. Johnson and Duberley (2000) mention that "the assumption in many research texts that positivism only applies to quantitative approaches to research is open to considerable question" (2000, p. 58). The fact that I used a case study approach could fit in with a positivist approach if I was looking for a neutral way of understanding the material that I came across and making general theory out of it. Johnson and Duberley point out that "ethnography is often wedded to the notion of realism and thus whilst ethnographers might discuss how their subjects socially construct their realities, this constructivism is not applied to the ethnographic process itself" (2000, p. 58). However, in my case study approach I adopted the view that I

was part of the construction of the worlds that I was investigating. I did not want to give the impression to whomever reads my report that my case study gives "a clear unmediated record of a knowable world. It is washed by a thick spray of objectivity" (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 7). I realised that *I* could not wash out my own ideas or feelings about, for instance, the importance of letting different viewpoints be expressed so that there was not one dominant view.

Rosaldo (1986) criticises ethnographers who try to make unwarranted claims of objectivity. I hope to sidestep these criticisms by remarking on my own involvement in bringing forward certain data and in creating theoretical interpretations. But more than this, I hope to show that I added an extra dimension that allows me to say that I helped the participants as I conducted the research, so that I could develop some discussion on important issues that created high emotional responses (see Chapter Four). This is where my case study approach started to take on some characteristics of action research.

8.2.1. My Special Case Study Approach: Some Links with Action Research and Some Differences

Greenwood and Levin point out that a quality of action research is that at all times "the results are adjusted to each other … to ensure the continued relevance of the research process to the needs and interests of the local partners and to keep the broader research questions being addressed fully in view". They note that "The goal is not an a priori definition of a problem that is then studied by an objective outsider; it is the ongoing collaborative definition of problems relevant to the research partners and the development of information and analyses that enable them to address the defined problems effectively and democratically" (1998, p. 94).

I believe that my case study incorporated some elements of Greenwood and Levin's understanding of action research. The needs and interests of the participants were kept fully in view by me as I proceeded with the interviews. I proceeded in a very unstructured way, taking answers and using these to develop more questions, and also to probe in different ways when I thought that views could be subtly challenged. This was done in nearly all the interviews (see my italicised comments in all the interviews in Chapter Four). I also tried to bring some participants together to express views (and to develop these) and I used myself as mediator moving between the different research occasions. For instance, after interviews with workers I interviewed the trade union leader and after interviews with groups of workers and managers I interviewed again the Director. I also used my knowledge of local residents' ideas in my last interview with the Director. I do not claim that I helped the participants to "address defined problems effectively and democratically", as Greenwood and Levin say that Action Research does (1998, p. 94). But I do say that I tried to introduce more of a cultural set-up where it would be possible for all people to mention concerns and where these could be listened to properly by others.

Greenwood and Levin note that "Action researchers weigh the knowledge of local people much more heavily than do orthodox researchers. Action researchers are deeply sceptical about the transcendence of professional knowledge over all other forms of knowing" (1998, p. 95). In my case study I was interested in all the participants' views and experiences of privatisation, but I also believe that my wider literature study on this (Chapter Two) helped me to mention issues in the interviews that people otherwise may not have considered. So I think that I had to utilise knowledge of the experience that has been recorded in the past about, for example,

privatisation and efficiency, to help me to bring new ideas into the interviews, and therefore to set questions from particular angles. I did not try to avoid professional knowledge that has been collected by other researchers. But I realised that this knowledge was not sufficient on its own to help me to analyse the particular case. Although I appreciated the local knowledge, I also appreciated ideas that could be brought in from reading other literature.

Greenwood and Levin note that on ethical grounds, Action Research is "not a technique applied by a professional researcher to other people. This means that action researchers visualise research processes in unique ways, and use these visualisations to help keep the processes moving in useful directions without imposing an overall direction from above" (1998, p. 96). My own case study also was concerned with how I could relate to participants without them feeling that I was imposing my views or my methods to extract information from them. But I found that creating a research process with the aim of creating action plans, also did not fit in with what I considered ethical. The participants may have thought I was trying to create recommendations for action with them and I could then have abused my role in the KHB if I tried to do this. I recognised that I could not win the trust of any of the parties if I acted as if I was using the position I had in the Harbour to help to create some action plans. My position of which people were aware was as a manager who later would also join officially the R&D department at the end of my Ph.D. study.

But although I did not make any action plans with participants, I still think that I followed a certain principle of Action Research, as expressed by Greenwood (1985) who says that it is important to explore the space between "the possible and the actual". There are many possible worlds that can be created and what happens is that

historically some become unrealised. This is what the concept of evolution means, according to Greenwood. So I was helping participants to recognise that there is not one necessary way that needs to be followed in keeping with world trends. There are many ways in which trends can develop, and this depends on the action of the people involved. I followed much more the actor perspective on development (as I explained in Chapter Six) in order to proceed with the research, and in order to understand the process of development in which I was involved.

This brings me to an additional point. Although I was not trying to create any action plans, I was still an active intervener in the Harbour, just alone by asking the questions that I did. Woodilla explains well how I understand my role in the process of conducting the interviews. She notes that "On one level, meaning is the effect of interaction between listener and speaker, because each word is said in a particular way. But meaning also depends on reflections of the listener on all the other instances in which the word has been used" (1998, p. 39). I realise that the meanings of the terms that became used in the interviews, by both myself and by others, were partly created by the way we were interacting. Also, when I spoke I sometimes asked questions from angles that the listeners had not before mentioned. So by doing that I was creating some new meanings. At least I was showing that there is not only one way of looking at the meaning of words.

Gee (1990) explains that in organisations, it is often the case that "What each person says, feels, thinks and does is … indebted to the social groups to which s/he belongs". Woodilla also notes that "thinking, speaking and valuing that are accepted as instances of particular roles by specific groups of people. Conflicts arise when words chosen by the speaker to be understood in one discourse are interpreted by the

listener from within the ideology of another discourse" (1998, p. 40). I find this interesting because it implies that the conflicts that I noted in, for instance, my observations of interactions and that I explained in my analysis of the experiences around power distance (see Chapter Five) arise because different grouping give different meanings to same words. So, for example, the word professional leadership can get many different meanings depending who are using the term. The Director and the Vice-Director both used this language in my interviews with them (although they also realised that it is not easy to decide what a professional way of acting is in the context of the uncertainty of outcomes linked to privatisation).

It seems that in my case study I was dealing with people who spoke to me as if they were, as Hardy *et al.* say, engaged as representatives of groups in organisations rather than as individuals (1998, p. 82). I did not try to change people's speaking to me from out of perspectives of identification with groups. But I did try to show perspectives from other group situations, as I introduced these into my discussions with participants. It seemed to me that people had developed attachments to some kind of group identification. That is why I did not at any point try to bring together the Director/Vice-Director and senior managers with any of the other staff and warehouse managers. I believed that this would be too emotionally stressful for people, also because of the expectation of power distance as explained in Chapter Five. But although I appreciated this expectation, I also explored cracks in the regime of power distance. This was done through the way I acted as mediator of views and helped different groups to appreciate the others' views as something that needed to be dealt with in their thinking and feeling.

8.2.2. Involvement through Theorising

Broekstra notes that "theories are often said to be ways of looking at the world" (1998, p. 155). The word is "derived from the Greek theorein, meaning 'to view' or 'to look at', a theory is, as it were, a self-constructed lens through which an observer views reality" (1998, p. 155). This may seem an uninteresting definition of the meaning of theory. But when it is combined with a view of the researcher as looking in a certain way, we realise that we cannot be innocent about how our looking can affect the people about whom we are theorising. When we consider that theorists can develop theories about, for instance the relationship between certain structures and becoming a more efficient organisation, we realise that the theory can impact on the world. So, for example, Reed (1998) notes that often senior managers enact some theories without realising it. As he states: "the tactics and discursive routines with senior managers enact — such as quality management, customer awareness and team-working — are necessarily contextual, relational and pragmatic" (1998, p. 202). Reed suggests that all these theoretical ideas still need operationalising, and in practice they can come to mean many things. As such, "the re-imagination of organisational identities and the retooling of organisational control systems are fated to deliver far less than they promise". (1998, p. 203). Reed finds this interesting because it shows that the discourse that the top management often creates can lead to unkept promises. What I did in my case study was try to allow the various participants — from all levels of the organisation — to think again about the substance of the promises that drives to efficiency through privatisation could deliver.

I did not want to provide a theory that could be used by the participants internally to decide on a definite course of action that would be assumed to be

successful. And I did not want out of my case either to make some generalisations. I wanted to show up some of the complexities around the everyday decision-making and around interpretations of outcomes in regard to privatisation matters.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) point out that there are very many ways in which researchers doing qualitative work choose to deal with their role as researchers:

> *Qualitative data occur in a variety of forms: There is not a single type. Data can take the form of fieldnotes, interview transcripts, transcribed recordings of naturally occurring interaction, documents, pictures, and other graphic representations. There is no single way of approaching those materials. Tesch (1990), for example, identifies no less than 26 analytic strategies, all of which can be applied to qualitative data (1996, p. 4).*

So I do not think there is a standard way in which one can try to develop theory from examining case material. Strauss (1987, p. 7) also points out that qualitative researchers "have quite different investigatory styles, let alone different talents and gifts, so that a standardisation of methods ... would only constrain and even stifle social researchers' best efforts". I believe that one of my gifts was to organise my research so that I could help the participants not just to use discourse but also to realise that there are other ways of seeing things that I could bring to the interviews as a kind of mediator.

Huberman and Miles (1994, p. 429) suggest that "data display should be viewed as an organised, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and/or action taking". This is interesting because in this instance they note that the information can be used either to help people to draw conclusions or to take action. In the KHB I was not really trying to help the participants either to draw definite conclusions or to create definite action plans. But I was trying to add an activist

component into the research by letting people think again about plans that seemed to follow trends more or less accidentally (see Chapter Six).

Dey (1993) suggests that categorised or coded data can be analysed in terms of the patterns and connections that emerge. He suggests that "Connecting concepts is the analytic equivalent of putting mortar between the building blocks" (1993, p. 47). In my own case study I tried to connect concepts as I proceeded with the research, so that I could carry my understandings from one interview to another and also to the group interviews. According to Dey, this is, at least in principle, systematic and developmental, in that it builds up as the research proceeds. The distinct feature of my process was that I was not just trying to build up my own analysis. I was also trying to make a conscious intervention to help participants to see things from different perspectives. Denzin (1994) has said that it is the characteristic of some qualitative approaches that they should "emphasise multiple perspectives and multiple voices" (1994, p. 510). He suggests that the overall task of research is to produce richly detailed narratives of personal experiences. In the case of my research conduct in the KHB I did not just try to record personal experiences of the Harbour and specifically decision-making in it. I also tried to see if I could develop people's perspectives through my way of asking questions and through my way of mentioning ideas. (See my various forms of probing as discussed in Chapter Four.)

In describing his view of qualitative research, Denzin notes that when getting involved in interpreting events in people's lives, explanatory models are not at issue. One is not trying to explain why one or another sort of outcome has come about, by seeking causal explanations of it. This does not mean that no theory generation is possible. This takes a lot of "creative intellectual effort". I believe that my discussions

in Chapters Five to Seven provided some evidence of the effort I made to create some contribution to theorising. But as Coffey and Atkinson note "there is [not] but one model of theory building" that needs to be applied in all cases of qualitatively-oriented research. Coffey and Atkinson do not believe that "the researcher needs to commit himself or herself to the production of only one kind of idea" (1996, p. 145).

I have shown that there is a variety of ways in the literature of indicating how researchers can relate to participants during case studies and develop theorising that involves intellectual effort. There has not been much discussion in the literature on qualitative research of the emotional stresses that can be relevant for researchers doing such research; this literature belongs more to a discussion of Action Research, where it is recognised that emotional skills in challenging participants (and in accepting challenges) are all important. My combination (synthesis) of case study and action research required me to draw on many skills, ranging from interpersonal ones to intellectual (analytic) ones as I proceeded with the research.

Romm (1997, 2001) indicates that however research occurs, researchers need to try to earn trust as they proceed (and also as they write their results). It is very difficult for me to report on how I believe that I built up trust among the different groupings in the Harbour (as people identified with groups). Readers should be able to look at the details of my case as reported in Chapter Four, to see how I conducted my interviews and how I acted as a kind of mediator between viewpoints, so that during the process and also in the reporting of the case, there is not one dominant view that is given priority. This fits in with Yang and Tsai's suggestion that:

In the multi-functional society, people have gradually been cultivated with multiple ways of thinking. 'Twisting the minds' is one of the multiple ways of thinking. If one's mind can be twisted to think another way, one

will be able to sort out more possible solutions to a problem (1998, p. 386).

Yang and Tsai note that there are various ways of thinking about what a "harbour" is. I believe that I did show through my own case study that there is not one way of looking at the development of KHB and its role in the City and in Taiwan more generally. Many perspectives can be brought to understand its development. These perspectives can be brought out by showing some of the ways of thinking about it by some members of the Harbour and by some residents in the City, and by combining this with wider literature about themes relevant to the various participants. I believe also that the report that I have made through this dissertation can also be used further by both participants in the KHB and by others in other harbours to think about ways of developing their plans. I have suggested (Chapter Seven) that a kind of IP in principle is a way of thinking about development that allows people to consider "more possible solutions to a problem" (Yang and Tsai, 1998, p. 386). Actually, as Ackoff notes, the problems then become seen in a new way so that the old issue of, say optimal efficiency, can be rephrased. I showed through the research process that there are many phrasings of this "problem" and that this implies that there are also many solutions or ways of tackling the development of the KHB.

8.3. Conclusion

In this chapter I commented on how I found I proceeded with my own case study research on Kaohsiung Harbour in Taiwan. I suggested that my study is an example of trying to organise case study research that has practical value to participants during the project even though it does not incorporate fully the principles of action research. My methodological contribution in the study was to explore the doing of case study

research so that it does not have value only in terms of theory development, but can be of practical relevance to participants involved in the inquiry. My way of doing the case study is, I believe, neither the "normal" way of doing it nor the "normal" way of doing action research. I showed in this chapter where my study has some links with action research but also where it differs. I called my approach special (an unusual case study) for this reason.

When I started my study of the case, I did not really involve people in deciding how to conduct the inquiry. And I also did not call on them to help create a report. Nor did I ask them to think in detail about action implications of what they were saying about their experience of the development of the Harbour (in the past and towards the future). However, at all stages in the study, participants were aware of my own activities as a researcher, so I was not trying to do the study covertly. My way of doing the research as I proceeded through different stages (looking at documents, making observations, and doing interviews) did not come up with objections from participants. All interviewees volunteered to join the interviews and I managed to obtain interviews at all levels of the organisation. I was able not only to do interviews once, but sometimes to re-interview. And I was also able to get together some groups of people to discuss relevant issues. Meanwhile, as I conducted all the interviews I did not take a passive role. I actively questioned the people whenever I believed this was possible without disrupting the relationship between the participants and me and without people becoming upset with me (and my research role). I think that if they became upset this would affect my continued involvement in the research (as a student at this point) and also my continued involvement later in my official job in the R&D department. This is

the job assigned to me when I return to the KHB after my Ph.D. study, although previous to this I was working as managing the warehousing of the Harbour.

While not disrupting any relations with participants during the research, I believe that I opened channels (slowly) for people to think again about the future development of the Harbour. I also think that I utilised some cracks in the power distance expectations that people have in the Harbour when it comes to strategic decision-making. I enabled people to see that they could think together more about the long-term decisions that are made for the Harbour. In Chapter Five, I explain how I used my own varied cultural backgrounds to look at the cultural expectations of power distance while also trying to create some cultural learning around different ways of practising power relationships. In Chapter Six I explained how I believe that development can take place with actors taking part in strategic decision-making, and in Chapter Seven I explained how systemic thinking can be developed in the context of the KHB.

I know that I brought some of my own commitments to the study, such as a commitment to create multi-views (see Yang and Tsai, 1998) and a commitment to create more interactive planning than reactive or preactive planning (see Ackoff, 1999). However, the way in which the multi-views were created and the way that I could work with IP were adapted to the situation of the research as I interacted with various participants and used interpersonal skills for this. So my own commitments could not just become imposed. I gather from the way that people still respect me and are willing to talk with me that they did not find my behaviour too obtrusive. I cannot measure this objectively but I can sense it as I relate to the participants.

I also hope that in my role officially as an R&D officer in the Harbour when I return there in that role, that I can carry forward some of the openings for

communication that I believe I created through this research. *This position I also will*
have to handle with care so that I do not impose any particular way of communicating
or of handling future planning upon the relevant people (assuming I have some power
to do this). Meanwhile, in the case reported upon in this dissertation (and available for
participants), I can say that I took a more active role than just collecting information
and reporting on it. But I also took a less active role than some action researchers
recommend (see, for example, Whyte *et al.* 1991). This lesser activity, however, can
also be considered as being as active as I thought I could be without causing people to
become suspicious of my intentions. In the future I also will consider how I can adopt
my researcher role in the R&D to continue to create trust in my way of doing the
research.

CHAPTER NINE

GENERAL CONCLUSION

9.1. Summary

I have now finished the process of discussing my handling of the case study that I was involved in. This chapter gives a summary of what I would like to emphasise about the study. Firstly, it is important to mention that in my case study research of KHB, I chose to avoid making superficial descriptions of the Harbour without offering a view of complexity or allowing others to appreciate complexity in the results offered through the study. I do not wish my study to be associated with such a result. Because I wanted to offer richer descriptions than quantitative research can afford, I chose first of all to use a more qualitative approach to the inquiry. I read from the literature on case studies that they normally are more qualitative in their orientation to research. (See Chapter Three.) Meanwhile, in addition to creating a qualitative approach to the inquiry, I also wanted to utilise my position in the KHB to let participants think again about the future direction of the Harbour. I did not try simply to represent different people's views and to offer an analysis out of that. I realised that such an analysis would not in any case be objective because whatever questions were asked by me would create certain responses in the participants as they tried to think about what I was saying and to give some answer. They would also be wondering about my own purposes in asking questions from the position that I had in the Harbour (warehouse manager but in suspension while I conducted the case study).

Therefore, recognising that I should not pretend to be neutral in collecting information, the second point I want to emphasise is that I chose consciously to take an active part in my case study approach to the investigation. I was active in probing in a certain way so that I could subtly challenge viewpoints as people expressed them and so that there would in the end be some learning by participants as well as by me as I proceeded with my study.

I began my investigation with some of the documentary sources that guided my discussion of the background to the Harbour, combined with my own experience of work in the Harbour (warehouse manager), and combined with my literature study on privatisation of port activities. I then went on to consider the relevance of some of my observations of interactions in the Harbour in relation to the question of privatisation. And then using this background I began my interviewing of participants at all levels in the organisation and also some local residents. When organising all of my interviews, I used various forms of probing as discussed by Easterby-Smith *et al.* (1991, p. 80), using these in the context of active (but subtle) challenging of some of the answers given by interviewees during the interviews.

I do not argue that how I approached my case study research is necessarily always the best way to do a case study. But in the circumstances in which I saw myself placed, and in terms of certain commitments that I had towards developing multi-views and also to developing cultural learning by learning from other ways of planning, this was a way of doing a case study that worked as I have explained it in this dissertation. It did not meet with objection from the participants.

9.2. Conclusion

My study was a way of securing some rich descriptions of decision-making activities relating to the development of KHB by using multi-angle information, from documentary sources and from my interviewing. I paid much attention to the experiences and issues mentioned by KHB-Taiwan's employees. The direct communication with the interviewees helped me gain much more first-hand and comprehensive information about the subject matter than quantitative methods would have. Regarding internal validity, I suggested (Chapter Three) that internal validity is not a concern for descriptive or exploratory studies, whether they are case studies, surveys, or experiments, which are not concerned with making causal statements. Therefore, the present study does not address internal validity as if it means of trying to come up with some definite statements about the operation of the KHB. More important was to develop an understanding of KHB that helped me and other people to explore the part played by actors in the continuing development of the KHB.

As for external validity, which refers to the power to generalise the findings of the study to other ports or other organisations in the process of (further) privatising, I acknowledge that the rule of generalisability (the issue of external validity) of survey research cannot be applied to case studies because survey research relies on statistical generalisation which is derived from testing a large sample, whereas case studies rely on a different procedure (Yin, 1994). Despite the uniqueness of KHB in Taiwan, I could still rely on showing external validity to some extent. This I did by exploring some themes that are relevant to the development not only of KHB but also to other organisations. The themes were: cross-cultural learning, politics and development, and the relevance of systems thinking for development planning. I tried to offer a

discussion that is relevant to different organisations when I spoke about types of ways of handling efficiency and also ways of handling professionalism as a manager and as people concerned with the decisions made by managers.

Some of my substantive research questions were the following:

1. What is the importance to people in the KHB of the changing Taiwanese political, economic, and social situation that serves as the impinging environment of KHB in Taiwan, especially in relation to world trends towards privatisation of many port activities?

2. How has KHB-Taiwan been coping with and responding to changing environments, for example, changes brought by experiences from other ports who have privatised activities and changes brought about by changes in the party governing Taiwan (and Kaohsiung City)?

3. How may KHB in Taiwan develop a way of looking towards the future that is not preactive or reactive (but more interactive involving many views and many people's concerns)?

As can be seen if one compares these with my (bulleted) starting questions mentioned in the General Introduction to this dissertation, these questions become better specified as I proceeded in the study. That is, they are more specified now than when mentioned in the General Introduction.

Other research questions (connected with my involvement in the case) were:

1. How can I as a researcher make an involvement in the situation that will be satisfying to the various people, while also challenging some of their views as they express them?

2. How can I as a researcher play roles in the situation that let me and others recognise that I cannot abuse any power that I have as a researcher?

3. How can I use ideas from the literature on case studies and on action research to develop my own way of doing the study of KHB?

Again, if one compares these with the (bulleted) questions I raised in the General Introduction in relation to my role, one can see that I refined the questions as I proceeded in the study.

If I could make a contribution to answering the first three (substantive) questions, then I could consider that I was helping to develop some insight into the KHB and also at the same time helping participants also to do so. But I did not want to make the contribution as a lone theorist doing an analysis. Therefore I found it important also to combine my own theoretical interest with the last three research questions, which was how I could conduct the study in a certain way. In Chapters Three and Four I showed how I tried to develop my case study with the background of these questions in my mind. I have reported a lot of detail in those Chapters about the case and my relation to it so that readers can see how I tried to do the case study in a particular way that I found fitting for my situation.

My answers to the first three questions are given through the discussions I created in Chapters Five to Seven. In those chapters I showed the following:

In the KHB at the moment there is not a singular discursive regime about how planning should take place. It is reported in some literature (for example, Hofstede, 1980) that Far-Eastern countries (and organisations in them) operate with a relatively high power distance. But I showed by referring to some other literature (for example, Leung, 1996) that the culture of power distance (even when this refers mainly to

answers from the middle classes in surveys of their attitudes) can vary across situations and even in an organisation it can vary depending on the issue that is being considered. I explained this not only with reference to the literature and experiences as reported by Leung and others, but also with reference to the experiences that I analysed from the KHB. Specifically in relation to privatisation issues at the KHB, the expectation of high power distance does not carry across all circumstances, as we saw from my observations of some of the interactions between the Director and others and also from some of the ways in which people responded in my interviews. The Director even did not want his strategies to be seen as just getting legitimacy from his position as Head of the Harbour (and government representative) and some senior managers, managers and staff in the warehouses also do not want to give legitimacy in this way when it comes to certain decisions.

In presenting documents to the outside world, KHB of course wants to promote the image that it is a responsible and efficient organisation creating prosperity and quality of life for residents in the City and for the rest of Taiwan. KHB-Taiwan built up its reputation as third largest Harbour in the world. But its future development is not certain, and sustaining the image of being responsible and efficient is not an easy process.

Having discussed issues of efficiency and professionalism by referring to my case material, I moved onto a discussion of what I regard as the importance of developing new ways of handling power distance in the context of strategic planning. At the organisational level, it can be seen that leaders need to exercise some form of "managerial" decision-making in order to ensure a satisfactory level of performance. Control is a means of checking progress to determine whether the objectives of the

organisation are being achieved. It involves the planning and organisation of work functions, and guiding the internal activities. Control provides a check on the execution of work and on the success or failure of the operations of the organisation. However, as I tried to show in my discussion of efficiency (Chapter Six), there is no one proper managerial model for all organisations or at all times in an organisation's history. Decision-making around what it means to create "an efficient harbour" can be exercised in different ways. Control by direct order, or by proceduralism, or by participation are all forms that managers need to be aware of as possibilities. I suggested that in the current set-up in KHB in Taiwan and in Taiwanese social and political atmospheres, it would be fruitful for everyone to treat the space between the actual and the possible to think about new ways of planning for the future.

As for my discussion of systems thinking (Chapter Seven), which I used also to help me to put KHB in a holistic perspective, I suggested that the soft approach to messy situations gave some insights about the way in which managers could benefit from organising participation. I suggested that this was a way to manage tensions so as to build a system of organisation that could be regarded as meaningful to participants and stakeholders. I suggested that this approach to planning has advantages over hard systems thinking and cybernetics. In the current times in KHB in Taiwan and Taiwan more generally there is scope for utilising such a view of systems. But it should not be used in an uncritical way, as critical systems thinkers have pointed out. I showed in what ways we can see the relevance of systems thinking for considering the case of KHB and also in what ways the case of KHB helps us to look again at debates in the literature about systems thinking (including systems thinking).

In Chapter Eight, I summarised how I approached my whole study, by paying attention to my roles as a researcher. I explained that I did not try to conduct the study using standardised tools for data collection. Although, as *Johnson and Duberley* point out "ethnography is often wedded to the notion of realism and thus whilst ethnographers might discuss how their subjects socially construct their realities, this constructivism is not applied to the ethnographic process itself" (2000, p. 58), my own kind of ethnography (through the case study) was more active than this. Specifically I did not try to wash out my own ideas or feelings about how I should relate to participants. I decided to relate to them by trying to let them appreciate a multiplicity of ways of approaching privatisation issues. I did not try to do this through a straight action research approach, but tried to develop my own approach to the case study.

In my concluding chapter (this one) I have commented on how I regard my own efforts at doing the case study. The following diagram summarises a way of looking at the study in terms of the concepts that I have developed through the dissertation in regard to my approach adopted.
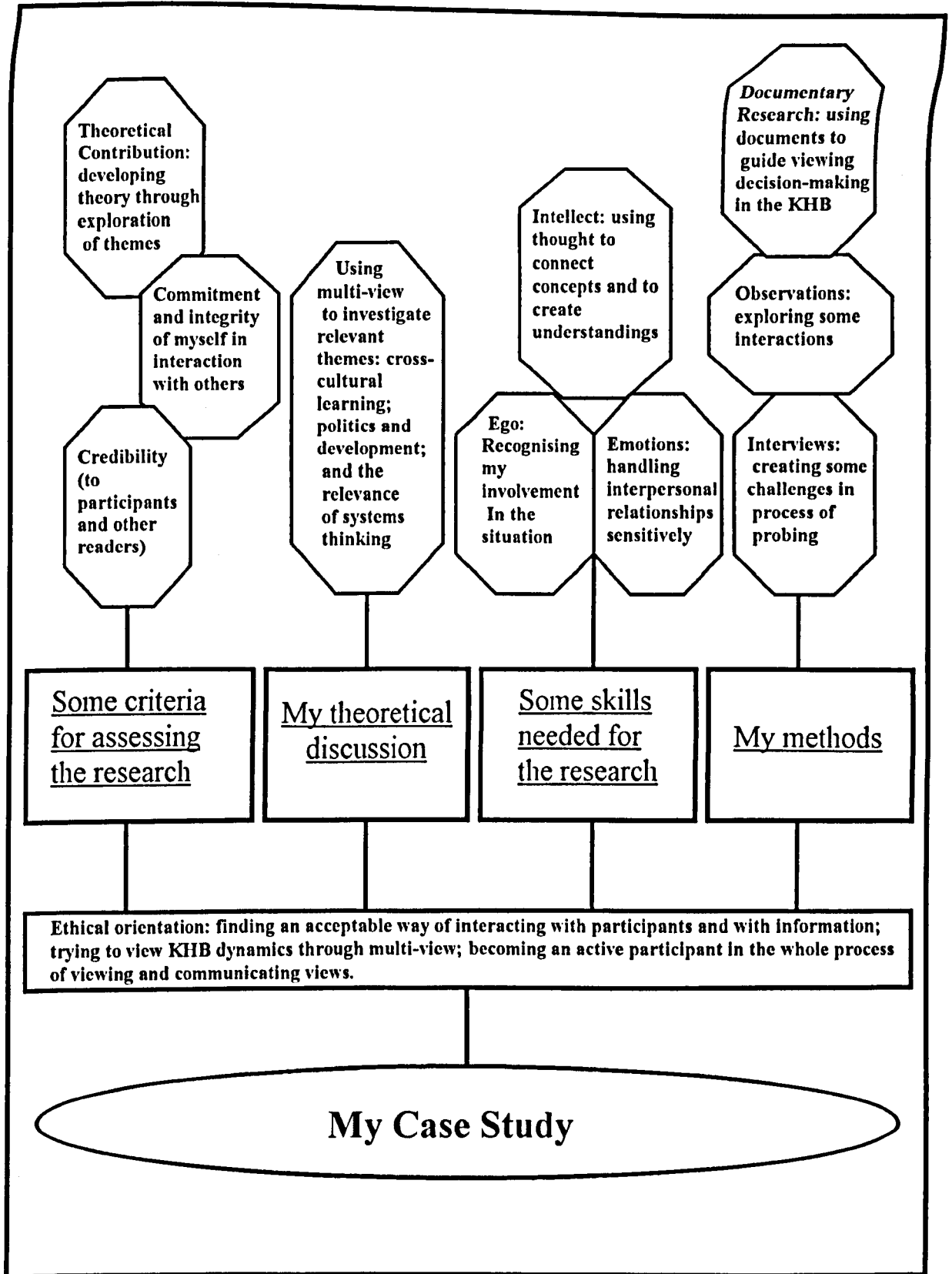
Figure 2: Various concepts that can be used to look at my research

APPENDIX

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS RELATING TO THIS STUDY OF KAOHSIUNG HARBOUR BUREAU (KHB)					
Year / Month	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Jan	Obs, D	Obs	Pri	M_2	I_I, I_G
Feb	Obs, D, ND	Obs	D	M_2	I_I, I_G
Mar	Obs, D	Obs	D	M_2	I_I, Obs
Apr	Obs, D	Obs	D	M_2	
May	Obs, D	Obs	D	M_2	G
Jun	Obs, D	Obs	M_1	M_3	
Jul	Obs, D	Obs	M_1	M_3	
Aug	Obs, D	Obs	M_1	I_I	
Sep	Obs, D	Obs	M_1	I_I, Obs	
Oct	Obs, D	Obs	D	I_I	
Nov	Obs, D	Obs	D	D	
Dec	Obs, D	Obs	D	D	

Key:

ND	New Director (Mr Yu) takes over the Director job in KHB
Pri	The starting of privatising of the Dockworker System
M_{1-3}	Important meetings around various subjects of KHB privatisation
Obs	Observations by researcher
D	Document collection by researcher
I_I	Individual interviews
I_G	Group interviews
G	Government change (from KMT to DPP) in Taiwan

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