

**CULTURE,
CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY
IN COMMUNITY
ENTERPRISES AMONG THE TIWI**

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**This research is dedicated to the memory
Of Mr Stanley Tipiloura (MLA)**

For his untiring efforts in assisting the development
of his people. For his friendship, support and
help in starting and contributing to this study.

ABSTRACT

This study reviews factors which have been found to affect the operation of Aboriginal enterprises in Australia and discuss these in relation to three empirical case studies of Aboriginal community enterprises located at Nguiu, Bathurst Island.

In order to provide a framework within which questions concerning Aboriginal management can be made, what is generally known regarding the management and organisational development of Aboriginal enterprises is first discussed. Factors to do with historical and contemporary operations, Aboriginal attributes and the high degree of non-Aboriginal control over Aboriginal organisations are seen to be of major importance in understanding the problems for Aboriginal management and organisational development. Importantly, the integrated social and economic life in communities appears to have a major impact on the success or failure of enterprise operations.

Of particular interest is the impact on organisational behaviour of values associated with collectivist societies. For, in many Third World countries particularistic practises arising from social relationships provide for considerable role conflict at work and constitute a major problem to development. Possibilities for cultural change to alleviate such conflicts are seen to require an understanding of indigenous management and knowledge systems, as well as the basic requirements for effective organisations. In the case of Aboriginal people, these possibilities for development are further complicated by their encapsulated position within the nation state of Australia. Encapsulation, by nation states, is the common situation faced by indigenous people who are politically considered as the Fourth World.

The comparable plight of other indigenous people leads into a discussion of the general nature of tribal cultures as they exist in remote communities of Australia, which is referred

to as traditionally orientated Aboriginal culture. The nature of these collective hunter gatherer societies was shown to be very different from South East Asian cultures.

Aspects to do with resource control, land and the sharing nature of these gift societies, impose unusual strains on management control. The Aboriginal world view is based very much on interactional relationships, as distinct from transactional relationships which are essential to western societies and imperative in economic enterprises. Having provided this general picture the discussion then focused on Tiwi culture. While the Tiwi culture is unique, it has in common with other Aboriginal cultures certain cognitive aspects, values and a similar world view.

Having regard to the initial objectives of this research the research questions encompassed factors to do with historical and contemporary operations, Tiwi attributes and non-Tiwi control. Accepting the theoretical basis of Aboriginal culture and given the methodological problems associated with carrying out research in Aboriginal communities, the three case histories of Nguiu enterprises namely, Nguiu Ullinginni Association, Tiwi Designs and Bima Wear provide a degree of insight into the problems facing Tiwi development.

It was found that these problems were essentially the same as in other remote communities. However, they have not been addressed at Nguiu, as in many other communities, because what is offered for development is training in western skills of management. The specific and integrated nature of these communities needs to be addressed by human resource development strategies which are known to work in similar environments elsewhere. What is ironic in Australia today is that insufficient use is made in the development of our own indigenous people of knowledge gained in other parts of the world concerning similar problems of development.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AEDP	Aboriginal Employment Development Program
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
ALPA	Arnhem Land Progress Association
ADC	Aboriginal development Commission
CDEP	Community Development Employment Policy
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs
DEET	Department of Education Employment Education and Training
ITAFE	Institute of Technical and Further Education
HRM	Human Resource Management
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE PROBLEM

My interest in this area of study grew out of my interaction with Aboriginal students and experiences in the design of Aboriginal management programs whilst lecturing in business management for ITAFE/NTU from 1986 to 1990. Further experiences gained in enterprise management consultancies in Aboriginal communities in the Katherine and Darwin regions in 1989, and my background in social sciences, generated a particular interest in this area of management. Among the Aboriginal communities with which I had worked, the impact of cultural and other factors appeared more important to the successful management of enterprises than, for example, providing functional skill training to Aboriginal managers. These cultural and human relation factors had their origins outside the management of these organisations, yet appeared essential determinants of management practice within enterprises.

Problems of management control and accountability relate more to the over-riding importance of social relationships between Aboriginal people than to organisational roles and responsibilities within enterprises. The decision to pursue research interests in this area was further influenced by work already undertaken on Aboriginal enterprises. As Young (Ellanna et al., 1988: 54) points out, the integrated nature of social and economic life in traditionally orientated communities is an underlying problem for enterprise development, “that in the case of Aboriginal enterprise, failure to tailor the organisation of a project to components such as the kinship system might well mean that the whole venture collapses.” This is due to the importance of Aboriginal kinship

relationships and exchange networks based on reciprocity which, as Young (Ellanna et al., 1988: 60) remarks, give rise to a misuse of enterprise resources and “are generally assumed to be a major cause for commercial failure”. Furthermore, these kinship relationships seemed to be dominated by a few powerful individuals and Aboriginal political groups within these communities. Whilst they appeared to have considerable influence over the Aboriginal management of enterprises, they were not taken into account in their formal management.

Although Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff were aware of this role conflict, there appeared to be little understanding of how to resolve this dilemma for Aboriginal management. The non-Aboriginal management staff provided varying degrees of control in relation to these external pressures on Aboriginal management. However, the apparent lack of effective Aboriginal control over the recruitment and performance of non-Aboriginal management staff appeared to compromise sound management practises. Varying skill levels and differing commitments by non-Aboriginal staff to these Aboriginal enterprises, created situations where some non-Aboriginal staff were either incapable of providing reasonable control or, as in one instance, were accused of embezzling enterprise funds.

Given the extensive problems to do with control and accountability that still exist for Aboriginal management, it seems unlikely that simply providing functional management training will result in significantly increased effectiveness. A prerequisite to any increase in effectiveness is the successful resolution of the conflicting social and formal requirements of control and accountability. Therefore, there is a need to understand and take account of, the nature and dimensions of obligatory kinship relationships as they affect Aboriginal management practise within communities. Indeed, it is argued that resolving this conflict is central to effective management development strategies.

The fact that most Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory are artificial constructs serves to compound the problem. These communities were created by missions and governments during times of welfare and protectionist policies towards Aboriginals. In the Northern Territory this period is comparatively recent with such policies still operational in the late 1970's in many communities. The amalgamation of previously separate hunter gatherer families, clans and tribes from their own traditional lands to the land belonging to one particular Aboriginal group (on which the government or mission established the community), provides for a legacy of difficulties when it comes to control of community based resources.

Traditional lands are very important to Aboriginal people, both in terms of their attachment to it and control of natural resources. Land, therefore, can provide a basis for unequal control of community resources. As Altman (1990: 110) points out, "this is because in Aboriginal practise rights to land can be transposed to rights to monetary resources." Moreover, in these tribally and in many cases linguistically heterogeneous communities, there is a high degree of tension and associated politicking between different Aboriginal factions which provides a political basis for conflict in the control of resources (see, for example, Young, 1988; Wolfe, 1989a; Altman, 1990; Rowse, 1992).

Leaders of such factions are said to gain their power from both traditional custodianship of land and ceremonial activity as well as their expertise in Whitefella business. There is little democracy in this process since ownership and control of ceremonies and land reside within particular kinship and family groups. Gerritsen (1982: 21), in his study of communities in the Katherine region, makes the point that "power (and its benefits, status and prestige — not necessarily money per se) is in control over the lives of one's fellows." The power of such leaders, what Gerritsen (1982: 21) calls dominant men, is extensive in these communities due to the tight kinship, social structures and integrated economic and social life. Given the importance of sharing within Aboriginal society,

and the role of dominant men in controlling access to resources, it seems that the allocative control of resources is at least as important as ownership in exercising power.

Clearly, the underlying kinship relationships and world view in these traditionally orientated Aboriginal communities is vastly different to that of mainstream Australia. As Christie (1985: 10) points out, the essential difference lies in the interactional world view of Aboriginal people as against the transactional world view of mainstream Australia. The Aboriginal world view does not contain a logical connection between perception and abstraction. For example,

an Aboriginal man who says that a particular area of land is his mother is not speaking metaphorically. To him the land is his mother in a literal way most white Australians would never understand (Christie, 1985: 11).

In the Aboriginal world, social activity involves interaction between what are seen to be related elements. Hence, the importance of kinship relationships and in establishing relationships with people in general.

Unlike mainstream Australia, the relationships Aboriginal people have with each other and the environment is not bound by historic time or quantification of the social and economic costs incurred in relationships. Aboriginals live very much in the here and now with the creating ancestors, totemic beings and deceased relatives who are always present. As Christie (1985:11) points out, “numbers, mathematics and positivistic thinking are not only quite irrelevant to the Aboriginal world but contrary to it.” The integration of land, spirit beings, people and trees does not lend itself to dissemination and scientific analysis since the focus is on apparent qualities and relationships between physical and spiritual entities.

This vastly different Aboriginal world view, and the underlying values which give rise to socio-cultural differences such as reciprocal exchange and sharing, is generally assumed to account for many of the problems experienced by Aboriginal people in

managing western styled organisations (see, for example, Young, 1988: 186) Indeed, the problems discussed here are generated by community based organisations, many of which were set up under government and mission auspices with western structures of control and accountability.

In the cross cultural situation that characterises these traditionally orientated Aboriginal communities, the Aboriginal world is frequently of far more importance than the western world and permeates community based organisations (see, for example, Altman, 1988; Young, 1988, Coombs, 1989). Therefore, 'who can speak for who' in Aboriginal terms of control and accountability is of major importance to effective Aboriginal management. As noted previously, the lack of culturally appropriate Aboriginal control has been said by Young (1988: 187) to result in the collapse of organisations.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Little has been written about Aboriginal management of organisations within traditionally orientated Aboriginal communities. Yet, given the integration of economic modes of production within Aboriginal culture, it is argued that Aboriginal owned and managed organisations may not be efficient or effective in situations where the control of such does not correspond to appropriate Aboriginal control (Ellanna et al., 1988: 53). Moreover, appropriate control not only needs to be effective and accountable to Aboriginal cultural needs, but also to external funding agencies. For many enterprise organisations on Aboriginal communities still rely, to a greater or lesser extent, on external funding for their continued operation. Those Aboriginal organisations not directly funded from the public purse are still tied into the wider economy and its market forces. The effects of inefficient community stores, such as excessive prices for staple goods, produce hardship in communities where Aboriginal people largely exist on government transfer payments (Young, 1984).

However, as Coombs (1989: 7) points out, Aboriginal society does impose its own forms of accountability on those entrusted with authority. Nevertheless, even where Aboriginal communities incorporate Aboriginal systems of control, there are still problems in some cases as to whether representative political control can be effective for controlling the resources of community based organisations. These organisations may, in Aboriginal eyes, be legitimately 'owned' by specific Aboriginal groups. The need for resources within heterogeneous communities, on the part of tribal and family groups other than the traditional land owners, may result in conflict over the appropriate control of community based organisations. In these situations, existing community organisations may well be controlled informally by such groups. Whether this is the case and whether or not accommodation is made by these groups to traditional land owners is not clear, but obviously of importance in providing a clearer picture of where control actually lies.

Understanding how traditional structures of control and accountability operate and their relationship to community organisations is clearly needed, and is reinforced by the recent House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (1990) report *Our Future Our Selves*. The major recommendation on existing Aboriginal structures for Aboriginal control and management is that:

[g]overnments acknowledge that to give effect to policies of self-determination and self-management it is necessary to reappraise the effectiveness of existing structures and methods of dealing with Aboriginal and Islander people (HRSCAA, 1990: xvii).

The report goes on to say that when establishing structures the general principles that should be observed include that:

structures must be compatible with local Aboriginal aspirations and affiliation: the term "community," needs to be determined broadly to take account of social, historical and cultural linkages (HRSCAA, 1990: xvii).

Differences between Aboriginal communities in terms of cultural, social and historic factors do not provide for any general solution to the problem of constructing appropriate Aboriginal management structures. Communities vary in size and tribal composition, with many communities incorporating different language groups and having varying kinship and social systems. Differing experiences acquired during the history of contact with Europeans, including for some Aboriginal people displacement from traditional lands due to prior pastoral, government, or mission control, adds to this complexity. Given this, the (1990) government report did not consider it appropriate to recommend specific models for community management or organisational structures. Recommendations dealt with general principles that should be observed by governments when establishing structures. As such, culturally appropriate control and accountability of community organisations can be expected to be specific for individual communities.

Furthermore, *Our Future Our Selves* (1990) says little about the importance of accountability as an essential element for effective and appropriate Aboriginal control structures. For example, there is a lack of recommendations which deal with community control and management with regards to Aboriginal accountability. This appears unusual given the extent of enterprise failures attributed to the sharing of goods amongst kin (Ellanna et al., 1988: 60). The need to address this issue was further reinforced by submissions by the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs, which point out again:

that the failure to achieve a balance between the demands of the cultural imperatives of Aboriginal society and the needs of good administration and proper accountability has been the major cause of the lack of success of self-determination in some communities (HRSCAA, 1990: 107).

Moreover, Aboriginal community organisations employ non-Aboriginal management staff who often end up controlling the very organisation that employed them. The

abilities of these non-Aboriginal staff in providing effective management to these organisations relies, in part, on their attitudes towards Aboriginal needs and aspirations, as well as administrative / technical expertise. As Young (Ellanna et al., 1988: 63) remarks, tales of managerial inefficiency and dishonesty abound. The problems of working within remote Aboriginal communities does not always attract the most suitable people. Ineffective control of such employees occurs frequently. Difficulties by Aboriginal employers in judging applicants' qualifications or character are said, by Young (Ellanna et al., 1988: 63) among others, to be due to a lack of education and appropriate training in management. Although generally low levels of education and management skills on communities do pose significant problems for Aboriginal management development, cultural factors are obviously of central importance. Given their significance, and moves towards self-determination and self-management, there is a need to sort out the factors surrounding control and accountability in Aboriginal community enterprises.

1.3 ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES

Community enterprises discussed here are those characterised as market enterprises such as community stores and other small retail and art related enterprises. Aboriginal enterprises located in Northern Australia are characterised by physical isolation, a small scattered population and poor communications. These factors are common to all enterprise development in remote areas and are responsible for high freight costs. These costs, when passed on to consumers, account for some of the difference in prices paid for goods in remote communities and urban centres (Young, 1988: 184). For example, the Northern Territory Department of Health's Consumer Price Index for 1992 shows that Aboriginal communities close to Darwin paid an average of 30% more for a standard basket of groceries than did people in Darwin where prices are still higher than in southern cities.

Costs associated with physical and demographic factors are exacerbated by the resource poverty of a population which, outside of the main urban centres in Northern Australia, is predominantly Aboriginal and supported in large measure by social security payments. Given the high cost of basic food and low income, such poverty inhibits the growth of many enterprises and also inhibits competitiveness. For example, agriculture and pastoral enterprises in remote areas, with difficult terrain and a harsh climate, have considerable trouble competing with other areas of Australia which have environmental and locational advantages. Under these circumstances it becomes difficult for farmers to compete with those of North Queensland (Young, 1988: 185).

Apart from these general factors to do with isolation and small markets, there are two basic issues which need clarification before considering specific factors affecting Aboriginal enterprises. The first is, “the appropriate definition of enterprise and hence of failure and success” (Young in Ellanna et al., 1988: 53). Since many of these enterprises were not set up to make a profit in the first place, what constitutes a profit needs to be looked at carefully; and not only against the economic history of enterprises. For many Aboriginal community enterprises were started by Whitefellas for assimilationist training and job creation, as well as for Aboriginal social and cultural purposes. Many Aboriginal enterprises in central Australia exhibit a continued importance for social and cultural objectives (Byrne, 1988). Given the human/land responsibilities of Aboriginal people, it is not hard to see why in enterprises such as cattle properties profitability may well take second place to Aboriginal objectives of community and cultural integrity in re-establishing control over traditional land. Yet, increasingly, fiscal information is used by government funding agencies to evaluate the effectiveness or performance of these enterprises. However, there is little evaluation by these same funding agencies, or input from the Aboriginal owners of these enterprises, as to the progression of social and cultural objectives.

The second issue, “is the need to recognise that economic modes of production [including enterprises] are firmly embedded within Aboriginal cultural and social

structures” (Young in Ellanna et al., 1988: 53). This means that there is little or no separation between work and social life, giving rise to considerable role conflict at work between the needs of sound management and the pressures to conform to cultural norms and particularistic practises. Moreover, whilst the enterprises discussed here are said to be Aboriginal owned and controlled, who or what groups within communities own or control these enterprises? Furthermore, how much of this control is really vested in Whitefella managers and external organisations will be seen to be ambiguous (Rowse, 1992).

This ambiguity is reflected in the operations of these enterprises, for whilst many community enterprises have become profitable many are not. Enterprises such as stores which depend on the local market are likely to succeed only if they have a monopoly (Ellanna et al., 1988: 29). However, there have been considerable reported failures and poor financial performance from community stores even when operating in a monopoly situation where there is no obvious reason why they cannot make money. Government funding organisations have attributed these failures to two major factors:

[t]hey attribute most of the blame to management — inefficient, or unscrupulous, shopkeepers who do not recognise financial failure until the final crunch comes. They also blame Aboriginal social customs, such as giving goods freely to relatives, or employing people from one or two specific families as store workers, for the poor financial performance of stores (Young, 1984: 80).

These two groups of factors which affect enterprise development, those to do with non-Aboriginal management and those to do with Aboriginal attributes, are taken up later in discussing the management of community enterprises. However, as Young (1988) has pointed out, a third group of factors, — those to do with the history and development of enterprises — sets the background to community enterprises operations.

1.3.1 Historical and Contemporary Factors

There is little disagreement among writers on Aboriginal development as to the basic problems affecting economic and political development of Aboriginal people in Northern Australia (see, for example, Young, 1988; Coombs et al., 1989; Wolfe, 1989; Altman, 1990). These problems began due to the implanted nature of Aboriginal communities and the subsequent control exercised over them by Europeans. This has produced an ideology of economic development that has been well expressed by Coombs *et al.* (1989) in relation to the East Kimberley region. Much of the economic development that has gone on in this region, like so many other areas of Northern Australia, has provided little benefit to its Aboriginal inhabitants unless they have been able to establish some legal claim over their land. Moreover, there has been little input by Aboriginal people in general to their own political and economic development, including the development of community enterprises.

As noted previously, many community enterprises were started by missionary and government organisations in the 1950's and 1960's to provide a training ground for Aboriginal incorporation into the cash economy of the dominant society. As Stanner noted in 1971:

their presumption was that, since the development of European society in Australia had made it impossible for Aborigines to be themselves, it was equally obvious that the most practical thing to do was to allow and persuade the survivors to become like us. It seemed to be honest and the decent thing to do. In the climate of the times no one, or at any rate, very few, saw it for what it was, a moral impertinence of the first order (Stanner in Wolfe, 1989: 14).

As Altman and Dillion (1985: 6) points out, assimilationist policies are recognised as a failure in terms of effecting sustainable development of remote communities due, to two main causes. Firstly, a development ideology that Aboriginal people did not share,

based upon misplaced expectations that Aboriginal people would change their economic and cultural values. To a large measure, as has already been discussed, these Aboriginal values and way of life are still very much intact in remote communities.

Secondly, most of the lands reserved for Aboriginal use have limited economic value; the very reason they remained un-alienated. Most towns in mainstream Australia have a core of work available in industries which are the rationale for the towns' existence in the first place. However, this is not the case for Aboriginal communities. As Bern (Loveday and Webb, 1989: 167) correctly points out, “the impact of this fundamental difference should not be underestimated, for these communities are, therefore, directly dependant on governments for their survival.”

Although the economic enterprise possibilities for most Aboriginal communities are poor, many communities only having a store, there has been considerable development in the Aboriginal arts and craft industry in recent years with some communities setting up art and craft centres and/or production facilities. However, most of these enterprises were set up by non-Aboriginal people and incorporated within western organisations such as the Northern Territory Community Government Act, or under Commonwealth or Northern Territory Association Acts. Hence, the development of these enterprise organisations has reflected the importance Aboriginal funding agencies have placed on western organisation structures and bureaucratic control over Aboriginal development. For example, the constitutions of many of these organisations include western notions about community participation and membership requirements, as well as enterprise and developmental objectives. There has been little concern as to the fit between these western styled organisations and Aboriginal ways of controlling resources, even though these enterprises are now supposed to serve as vehicles for Aboriginal self-management and self-determination.

Changes in Federal Government programs, and policies espousing self-management and self-determination, in the mid 1970's provided a push for the development in

communities of Aboriginal owned and controlled organisations. This was paralleled by the instigation of Community Government in the Northern Territory which allows Councils to set up enterprises. Due to the lack of economic opportunities in communities, the Miller (1985: 17) report recommended that enterprise development should be funded even if there was no prospect for immediate commercial viability as “the promotion of income generating activity is essential to the development and economic independence of Aboriginal people”. Enterprises are also seen by the Northern Territory government as the only way that communities can encourage reasonable revenue raising (Wolfe, 1989a: 73).

The major reason for incorporating community enterprises is to access government monies for training and infrastructure development. Yet how these structures are supposed to fit what has been said of Aboriginal social organisations is unclear. For example, how membership of incorporated organisations and their governing committees, which operate community enterprises, correspond to the factional nature of communities is not known. Yet, in many cases, they are expected to represent the combined interests of the community. Government agencies are still the principal source of funds for many enterprise or organisations, but access to such funds is much more complex than for those seeking enterprise finance in the non-Aboriginal sector (Ellanna et al., 1988: 51). This complexity has much to do with the bureaucratic proliferation of Aboriginal programs that was initiated in the 1980's, which placed decision making about funds and programs remote from communities. This has caused, for example, the separation of the funding and monitoring of training and development programs within individual community enterprises.

There has been little correlation between training programs, associated costs and their impact on organisational development. Criticism from the Miller (1985) report of the inappropriate and ad - hoc nature of much of the organisational and management training provided to communities has been reinforced by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs reports (HRSCAA, 1989; 1990). These

reports stress the need for comprehensive long term and community based approaches to development. For, there has been little Aboriginal input into management training or organisational development in communities. While Aboriginal self-management and self-determination has become the rhetoric of government, Whitefella management and Whitefella training is the order of the day; even though skill transferability between these opposing cultures is highly suspect.

The small populations and integrated social and economic life of these communities always provides for ways in which enterprises are important to Community Councils; even if they are not directly controlled by Councils. For example, in ensuring that enterprises do not cause local dissension or charge excessive prices (Ellanna et al., 1988: 23). One of the problems faced by some local Community Councils is the number of other incorporated organisations which have been set up within particular communities. This has been said, for example in the case of Nguiu (Bathurst Island), to result in the Community Council not being able to co-ordinate or control community development or management (HRSCAA, 1990: 18). On the other hand, it has been argued by Wolfe (1989: 70) that different factions control different resources within communities and that concentrating all a community's resources into one controlling body, and its dominant individuals, effectively disenfranchises other factions within communities. These conflicting aspects to control over community organisations will be taken up later, where it will be argued that if regulatory and development controls are weak on communities, enterprise organisations can get out of control.

Some of these problems may have diminished as major changes to the Aboriginal portfolio which occurred in 1990 — the formation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) — had not taken full effect at the time of this study. For example, the 'Training for Aboriginals' program, TAP as it is known, was only transferred from the Department of Employment Education and Training (DEET) to ATSIC in July 1992 following the Johnstone Report recommendations (1991). Although ATSIC have maintained a growing Aboriginalisation of their bureaucracy,

which they inherited from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) and the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC), there has been little change to existing imperatives of bureaucratic accountability and rationality (Rowse, 1992: 7). For example, the reduction in the number of ATSIC regional councils in December 1993, from 60 to 36, is no doubt economically rational. Nevertheless, it effectively disenfranchises specific Aboriginal groups, such as the Tiwi, who fought to have their own Land Council and until now have had their own Regional Council.

Such decisions by ATSIC appear contrary to notions of self-determination and to traditional understandings about who can represent who. Recently, traditional Pitjantjatjara lawmen and land owners from central Australia again stated that other Aboriginal organisations and individuals cannot speak for traditional owners with regards to what happens to their land (NT Sunday Territorian, August 8, 1993). Apart from questions to do with representation, the role of the Regional Councils at present is generally limited to planning the expenditure of commission funds. This role needs expanding if the integrated economic and social life of communities is to be addressed effectively by ATSIC. However, as Altman (1991: 14) remarks, this is unlikely to happen.

Apart from the bureaucratic constraints of ATSIC, the current Federal Government's Aboriginal Employment and Development Policy (AEDP) is ambiguous as to how these remote communities are to develop. For although AEDP policy concedes that the heterogeneity of the Aboriginal population has very much more to do with the differential settlement of Australia, than old distinctions made on racial grounds, little is said about what this implies (Altman, 1991: 16). Whilst AEDP policy admits that Aboriginal people who live in remote communities would not inevitably be integrated into the mainstream urban based labour market, there is little appreciation of the integrated economic and cultural life in these remote communities and the need for development programs to reflect just that. This policy is still orientated to national Aboriginal labour market figures and a goal of realising Aboriginal statistical equity in

Australia's labour market by the year 2000 (Australian Government, 1987a: 3). This orientation does not differentiate between urban Aboriginal people and community Aboriginal people still orientated to a traditional way of life.

Altman (1991) has expressed doubts as to whether statistical equity can be achieved on Aboriginal communities due to the limited opportunities for enterprise development and employment. However, the Federal Government has said it will achieve these results by broadening the economic base of communities. Firstly, by assisting in the development of enterprises and secondly, by providing employment under the Community Development Employment Project (CDEP); now by far the largest program administered by ATSIC under the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio. The CDEP scheme substitutes individual unemployment benefits for wages in the form of a grant to Community Councils for the purpose of carrying out community projects. That is to say, the CDEP scheme operates in many instances to support enterprises by effectively subsidising wages. The grant also includes up to 25% of these wages for on-cost and support overheads for administration, infrastructure and capital equipment. including in some cases materials and equipment. The problem with this, as Altman (1991: 13) explains, is that "the effective wage subsidy to an enterprise on CDEP is on-going and provides no incentive to reduce dependence over time, as is common in other enterprise support programs." The CDEP scheme had an expenditure of \$252 million in 1993/1994, with over 20,000 Aboriginal participants, and is still being expanded.

Although ATSIC now stress the need for communities to develop long term plans, there is little in place in the way of developmental strategies to enable communities with major organisational problems to do just that. Communities which are most in need of effective self-management of their organisations are also those least able to provide long term plans. As Sullivan (in HRSCAA, 1990: 5) points out, "[t]heir needs are greatest because their residents are the least acculturated to European systems and predominantly neither literate, numerate, nor proficient in spoken English." Given what has already been said regarding the factional and political nature of the Aboriginal

domain, uncertainty regarding the existing control that individuals and factions have over enterprise operations may also produce unwillingness within the community to legitimise existing control over these organisations.

The question posed by Rowse (1992), about whether community government can be the means by which Aboriginal factionalism and social organisations can be sympathetically incorporated into the structures of government of the Northern Territory, is also pertinent to enterprise organisations. Underlying socio-political community structures, such as clan or tribal identification, language and skin groups, are used for governance under the electoral scheme of the Northern Territory Community Government Councils. However, because many Aboriginal social organisations are not bounded, there are problems in utilising these organisations for representative purposes; apart from the fact that some Aboriginal social organisations may not be appropriate for controlling resources (see, for example, Wolfe, 1989:96). Due to these problems, the capacity of communities to make their own decisions may also be different from their capacity to make such decisions work. The political ability of communities to control both the internal and external sources of power, even if they have a sound basis for political organisation in their social organisations, is frustrated by the control exercised over them by the many diverse and external sources of power.

1.3.2 Factors Stemming from Aboriginal Attributes

The integrated economic and social life of traditionally orientated Aboriginal people and their customary behaviour and attributes in respect to enterprise operations are formidable obstacles to enterprise development. Aspects to do with social and kinship networks, attitudes to enterprise and material success, reciprocity behaviour, human/land responsibilities and the hierarchy of authority based on gender, age and ceremonial knowledge form, as Young (1988: 186) points out, a further major category of problems to enterprise development. Given the nature and strength of relationships

within kinship networks, which are of primary importance in these gift societies, it is hardly surprising that:

[i]nvariably people involved in economic enterprises find themselves caught in a web of sharing, which affects not only their own earnings, but also use of materials and equipment belonging to the business and perhaps also the disbursement of the profits. Such practices may well be difficult to reconcile with enterprise operations, and are generally assumed to be a major reason for commercial failure (Young, 1988: 186).

Much of the bad management, which is ascribed to these Aboriginal attributes by government funding agencies, is argued to have been brought about by the lack of appreciation by these same government agencies of the impossibility of separating enterprises from the community, both in social and economic terms (DAA, 1988: 255). For example, it is not hard to see why it is debatable whether Aboriginal pastoral enterprises can best be described as community enterprises or communities. As Young (1987: 66) points out:

East Kimberley Aboriginal cattle stations exhibit classic signs of confusion and conflict about their roles as communities or business enterprises. These arise from imprecise understanding by funding agencies about these roles, and their mutual interaction; and by the Aboriginal groups about what is expected, and indeed by law, required by them.

Given what has already been said of the nature and importance of Aboriginal culture in these communities, it is not hard to see how a failure to organise enterprise activities around kinship networks might well mean that the enterprise collapses (Ellanna et al., 1988: 54). Yet government agencies and funding bodies for enterprise development, such as DAA, ADC and now ATSIC, have increasingly been more interested in the financial aspects of community enterprises. However, kinship may well control who will be allowed to work and who should control profits (Ellanna et al.,1988: 54).

Indeed, decisions about Aboriginal employment in enterprises in general rests with the Aboriginal enterprise staff and their relations within the community. The reasons why

one person may apply for a position rather than another is generally unclear. Factors that are no doubt taken into account in the Aboriginal selection process include not only skills and experience for the job, but “also their relationships within community clan structures and other factors of social significance” (Young, 1984: 72).

Moreover, there is little first hand ethnographic or oral information available from traditionally orientated Aboriginal people about the conflict they experience in dealing with western organisations and western ways of doing things. This, as Rowse (1992) and Keen (1989) have suggested, needs addressing. Information that is available from secondary and non-Aboriginal sources, for example Young (1988) and Phillipot (1990), indicate that many problems arise because of the contrast between the Aboriginal and western world views. Conflict occurs when Aboriginal people working within community enterprises simultaneously seek to retain their social and kinship relationships and associated particularistic practises, while attempting to manage enterprise operations.

One outcome of this conflict is the psychological stress which accompanies much of the contact between European and Aboriginal cultures. Situations in which “stress levels can act as a barrier to making positive adjustments required in a dominated situation ... and where false assumptions will inevitably lead to communication blockages thereby causing frustration, anxiety, and conflict” (Phillipot, 1990: 21). In addition, aspects of political conflict which are always ongoing in communities can add to this stress and frustration

Stress has also been reported in western styled management structures where key decision making is supposed to be carried out by the manager. Aboriginal people, however, make decisions more by consensus (Williams, 1985: 261). This has been recognised by the Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) for example, which is trying to find ways to run stores without the stress on individual managers (Wells, 1993: 153).

As noted previously, the importance of obligatory and sharing relationships for traditionally orientated Aboriginal people provides major cultural conflict to sound management of western styled organisations. This is particularly the case for Aboriginal people working within economic community enterprises. Enterprises have to rely, to a large degree, on transactional relationships and quantification in dealing with western economic systems and the market place, but:

[t]hese things are directly contrary to Aboriginal ideas, not merely about kin-based rights and obligations and the functioning of society, but also to ideas about how the universe functions. They challenge an individual's conceived social and cosmic identity and relationships and how he puts these into practice through the process of interaction (Bain, 1992: 220).

Although the economic aspects of hunting and gathering are now only of primary importance in outstation situations, much of the social basis of interactional and personal relationships is still alive and well in Aboriginal communities. The underlying moral values to do with sharing within relationships are still central to many Aboriginal community people, while western values based on individualism and the accumulation of material wealth are peripheral. The major problem for traditionally orientated Aboriginal people is how to incorporate transactional relationships, which are essential to all western organisations, into a culture and knowledge system that is almost entirely interactional.

Moreover, transactional relationships to do with quantification were not needed, or wanted, in a prior lifestyle of hunting and gathering. This is because transactional relationships work against Aboriginal moral principles to do with interactional cause and the nature of personal relationships. Transactional relationships only deal with part of the total persona. For example, employee-employer relationships are distinctly different from full interpersonal relationships. Such relationships are immoral, if not illegal, in traditionally orientated Aboriginal society. Take, for example, a Tiwi story

that is told about the dire repercussions that occur if you do not share food with your relatives (Ward, 1990: 71).

Little is known as to what degree education and experience have assisted Aboriginal people in understanding the transactional nature of mainstream society. However, many Aboriginal people, especially elders, find it hard to understand the basis of western economic life. For example, many of the older people at Ramingining (Arnhem Land) were unaware of where the store obtained its food; some people believing that the food came from a government warehouse in Brisbane and that the food did not cost the government anything to make (Trudgen, 1991: 6-7). Part of the reason that western culture is hard for Aboriginal people to understand is that it embodies both interactional and transactional relationships commonly separated, to a greater or lesser degree, into one's working and private life. As Bain (1992) suggests, both these processes can co-exist. For example, in family businesses where family interaction may modify how the business operates. However, as Bain (1992: 145) also notes, although some of the private needs of the family can be accommodated, the impartiality of business must remain dominant if the business is to survive

Conflict between the transactional needs of business and the interactional world view of Aboriginal people underlie many of the communication problems faced by Aboriginal people in trying to get to grips with economic enterprises. As Bain (1992: 147) remarks, it is not so much that Aborigines or whites use different degrees of abstraction, but that problems arise when they come together to consider events in which they both take part. Phillipot (1990: 22) points out that the potential for problems in communication and psychological stress in these situations is enormous since there is a high probability that each culture's agenda will be different. This causes a sense of 'talking past people' that has resulted in suggestions that many Aboriginal people understand enterprise operations only in a ritualistic sense (Bain, 1992).

Although Aboriginal understandings of enterprise operations might be ritualistic, the nature of relationships between Aboriginal people working together in community enterprises certainly is not. As noted previously, decisions about who will work in stores, for example, will have much to do with relationships within community clan structures and other factors of social significance. The failure of the Arnhem Land Progress Association's (ALPA) trainee manager's scheme was said to be caused by the cultural inappropriateness of the Aboriginal trainees. That is, they did not have the age and ceremonial knowledge to become traditional mala leaders, or managers, "[f]or they were boys essentially and the rest of the community saw them as boys and they couldn't deal with them as managers" (McMillan in Wells, 1993: 162).

There is no doubt that selection of Aboriginal trainee managers on the basis of western educational and enterprise skill levels only is inappropriate in many communities and may well cause conflict within the Aboriginal domain. The ambiguous nature of western organisations in Aboriginal communities provides a basis for role conflict within Aboriginal society (Rowse, 1992). This is particularly the case when Aboriginal people are expected, by non-Aboriginal people, to assume responsibilities and control over other Aboriginal people and resources which are not theirs to control in the first place. It needs to be remembered that every Aboriginal employed within community enterprises is related to everyone else. Everybody is someone's aunty, uncle, cousin, sister, brother, son, interrelated through kinship, skin groups and totems. Even in situations where different tribal and linguistic groups co-exist in communities, varying levels of relationships are kept in order to maintain a level of social harmony.

Conventional role conflict within community organisations takes place when Aboriginal people are expected to take on western and universalistic ways of working and managing enterprises, whereas the rest of the community expects them to care more about their obligatory relationships within the community. The outcomes of obligatory relationships, such as pilferage, have already been seen to have a major effect on enterprise development and are a causal factor in the lack of success of self-

determination in some communities (Young, 1984: 121; DAA, 1988: 255; Cook, 1992: 11). Aspects of these relationships and status, based on age and sex, are also important. For example, there are particular problems to do with obligations and pressures exerted over the many young women employed in stores. Even though many are skilled, the lack of power and status that young women hold in the community probably explains the reluctance of experienced women to take on the task of manager (Young, 1984: 121).

Other conflicts arise because of the inseparable relationships and responsibilities between particular families and particular areas of land. Responsibilities that give specific individuals the right to control what goes on within land areas that can extend from small community enterprises to large scale cattle properties (Ellanna et al., 1988: 60). Dominant Aboriginal leaders within enterprise organisations certainly ensure that their relations are favoured in acquiring jobs, since factionalism and nepotism are not considered negative characteristics in Aboriginal communities. For example, Young (1984: 72) points out that Nguiu store employed a majority of young, single, Aborigines, many of whom were relatives of the Aboriginal manager. In this situation, enterprise management structures such as councils and enterprise organisations are likely to be dominated by specific Aboriginal groups. However, if the conflict between groups has deteriorated to a complete collapse of Aboriginal authority then non-Aboriginal operators are likely to be in charge (Peterson, in Ellanna et al., 1988: 61).

1.3.3 Factors Stemming from Non-Aboriginal Control

Although Aboriginal ownership of community enterprises is now the norm, it would be wrong to assume that Aboriginal control over these enterprises has increased as a result (Young, 1984: 73). Although changes in ownership from European to Aboriginal groups occurred in the late 70's and early 80's the change in ownership has yet to be accompanied by any marked shift in management control from European to Aboriginal

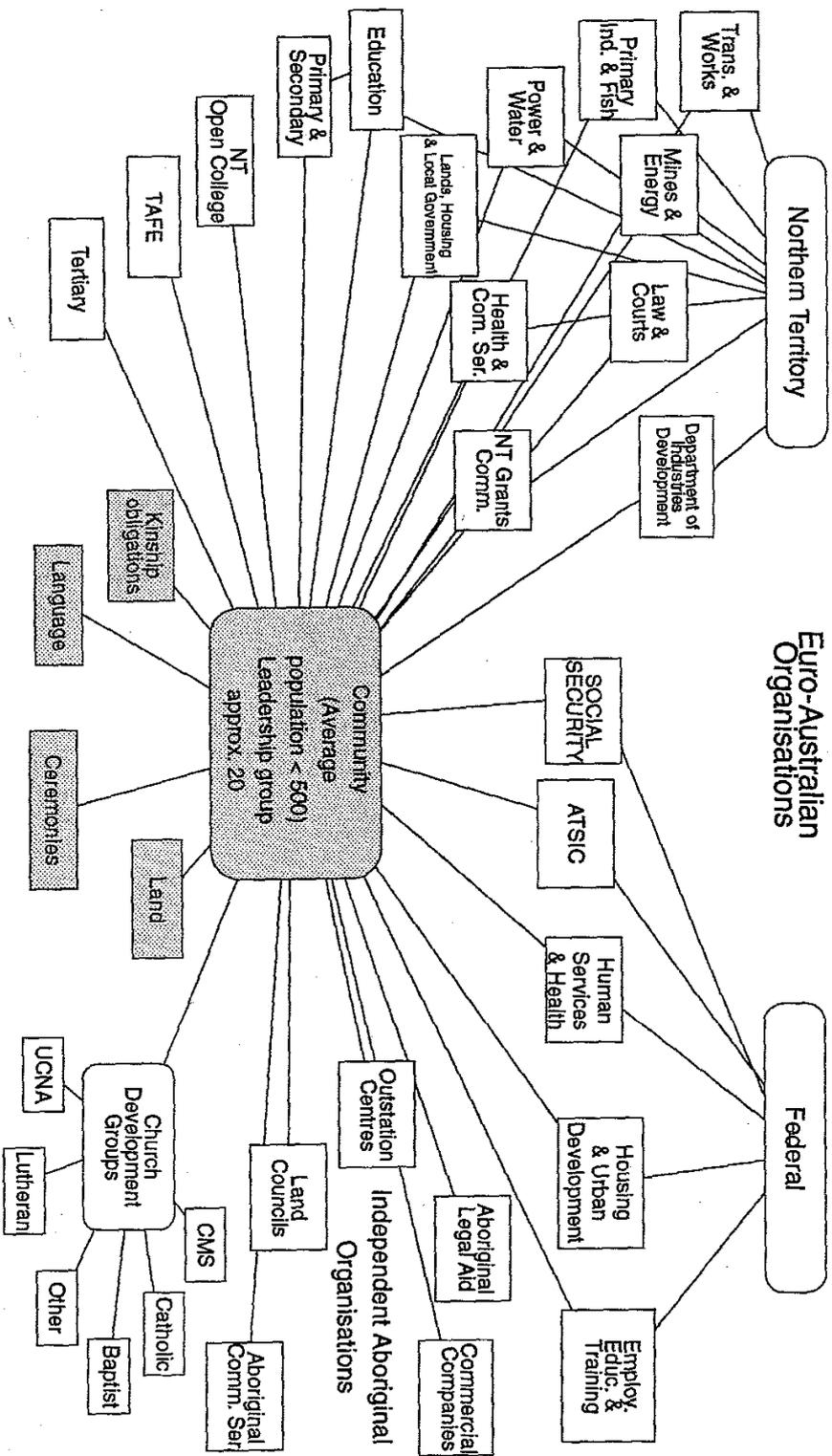
hands. Similarly, although self-management and self-determination have now been government policy for almost 20 years, the considerable amount of non-Aboriginal control exercised over Aboriginal organisations from Aboriginal agencies and the wider society has changed little.

Fig 1 (page following) illustrates over 32 external organisations which enmesh Aboriginal communities where the average population is around 500 people and where decision making is generally carried out by only a dozen elders. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) highlighted the problem of non-Aboriginal control over Aboriginal people and the disadvantages this caused. In the overview to the response of this bench mark report, accepted by all State and Territory Governments, was the understanding that this non-Aboriginal domination over Aboriginal people had to change (RCADC, 1992).

Apart from external control, it is rare to find an Aboriginal community enterprise that doesn't employ non-Aboriginal staff; most of whom it can be assumed are acting in managerial capacities (Ellanna et al., 1988: 63). As Gerritson (1982: 27) points out, whilst the direct control exercised by non-Aboriginal managers, advisers or co-ordinators of community enterprises presents a specific set of problems to enterprise development, their job survival is at least intrinsic to the community. However, this is not generally the case for indirect control exercised by government funding agencies, such as ATSIC, through their field officers or for external professional advisers such as accountants whose career

FIG 1

ORGANISATIONS AFFECTING ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES



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interests are extrinsic to communities. Field officers are in a particularly unenviable position as they have to:

look in two directions — back to his department for promotion and security, and to the community for what they want to do. For the first he will tend to conform; for the second he must take risks. If he has in previous administrative experience acquired a habit of domination, the relationship will be disastrous, although his record on the files may be excellent (Rowley, in Rowse, 1992: 18).

The marginal economic position of most enterprise operations, apart from monopoly situations such as stores, calls for on-going dependence on government controlled agencies for operational and investment monies. Much of this operational support has come in the form of training subsidies for Aboriginal staff which, however, means an increased administrative load on enterprise management. Not only do management staff need to know their way around available programs, but they also have to cope with bureaucratic funding organisations. These organisations are far more concerned with yearly acquittals and their own internal agenda, rather than any long term approach to particular enterprise development. Demands on management staff are exacerbated by the lack of co-ordination that has existed between funding organisations. For example, DEET and ATSIC, as well as the different political agendas that characterise State and Federal politics. Added to this is the lack of co-ordination and support of management staff within communities. If this is not enough, Aboriginal enterprises are required to use outside accounting firms, generally based in major urban centres, many of whom have little or no understanding of the situations under which these enterprises function and little concern over their development (Ellanna et al., 1988: 65).

Moreover, many of the external organisations which currently influence enterprise operations may have a vested interest in protecting the status-quo. One only has to appreciate the large sums of money involved in accountancy and auditing services,

usually between 7-12% of total costs, to understand the scale of this service (Young, 1984: 88). One may wonder why there are not more centrally based, or community based, organisations set up to provide accountancy services; particularly in communities where there is more than one enterprise. However, as Young (1984: 88) explains, not only are there difficulties in trying to convince governments of their worth, but other accountancy firms can be derogatory about their services. It is also hard to see to what extent these external Whitefella organisations and professionals can help. They are not in touch with the day to day operations of Aboriginal enterprises and may well have a very limited grasp of the specific cultural and situational factors involved in their operation. Apart from providing historical advice and accounting records, seen in terms of profitability and loss, there is little concern over the continuing dilemma of Aboriginal people to be publicly accountable both within the community and to these external funding organisations (Altman in HRSCAA, 1990: 110).

There has, however, been an increase in the monitoring and accounting requirements of community enterprises in recent years, following government reports of incorporation breaches and financial difficulties. Financial problems are not new or uncommon. ADC admitted in 1984 that 75% of its enterprise loan repayments were in arrears. The on-going failure of enterprise programs is evidenced by the recent ATSIIC (1991) *Evaluation of Enterprise Program Report*. Of the 124 ATSIIC funded enterprises randomly surveyed, 87% were not operating in a commercially competitive manner after three years. Only 25% of enterprises surveyed and funded in 1986/87 made a profit in 1988/89. The majority of enterprises still operating are dependant upon further government support. In terms of financial difficulties, the normal response has been to set conditions on financial assistance which might include: “staff replacement, the appointment of an administrator, the introduction of rigorous reporting and funds release requirements, institute training programs, or any combination of these” (HRSCAA, Hansard; 1988: 15-16). The recent increase in monitoring and accountancy provisions for Aboriginal enterprises, now funded by ATSIIC, may have the affect of forcing better book-keeping from non-Aboriginal managers. However, it may also

cause an increase in the numbers of non-Aboriginals in communities which will not assist with Aboriginal self-management or self-determination.

The history of these enterprises and their ups and downs is not discussed in the 1991 ATSIIC report, but questions as to whether these enterprises were economic in the first place or undercapitalised when acquired — such as Young (1988, 188), for example, discusses in relation to cattle properties — are obviously fundamental to possibilities for profitability and/or the need for on-going support. Sound management is one of the keys to any successful enterprise development whether the objectives of enterprises are social or profit orientated. Whether we are talking about a supported art related enterprise or the generally monopolistic and economic store which is found in many communities. Poor management, after all, is the major cause of failure in small enterprises in Australia per se; as in other countries (Williams, 1986). The management of Aboriginal enterprises provides a similar picture of management failings, except that government assistance has been provided to prop up some enterprises which have operated on government loans. Other enterprises, such as monopolistic stores, have traded their way out of problems by charging excessive prices for goods.

Aboriginal resource agencies have assisted enterprise development in recent years by providing management and accounting resources and non-Aboriginal staff for communities and outstations. Government recommendations, aimed at reducing problems to do with recruitment of non-Aboriginal staff, have suggested that Aboriginal resource agencies may well be the most appropriate organisations to assist communities in their selection of staff (HRSCAA, 1990: 126). Aboriginal resource agencies have been said to act in an intermediary or bridging role between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal socio-cultural systems and are capable of achieving economies of scale (HRSCAA, 1990: 131-136). There are, however, problems as to how these agencies are perceived within Aboriginal communities. For these representative organisations are a government creation which meet the manifestations of autonomy while still presenting the means for administrative control (Sullivan in HRSCAA, 1990: 136). For example,

although the ownership and control of ALPA is vested in its Aboriginal directors, drawn from client communities, the perception in communities is clearly different. “ALPA is nothing to do with community. We got council there for the community ... Nobody ever heard who ALPA really is. Is it really Balanda [European] or Yolngu [Aboriginal]” (Wells, 1993: 132).

ALPA, which provides management services to a number of community stores was used as a good example by the Miller Report (1985: 394-95) of an Aboriginal owned resource agency. The ability of ALPA's non-Aboriginal staff to provide appropriate support to its members' stores and supermarkets, through sound, central control of its non-Aboriginal managers, was said to have turned round the prior losses these stores had been experiencing through poor management. However, in terms of Aboriginalising the management of ALPA's stores, they have had little success to date. This is even after having provided high quality on-the-job skill training for some ten years. The recently accredited (1991) TAFE Open College Certificate and Advanced Certificate in Store Management owe much to ALPA's work. ALPA's recent human resource manager believes that the failure of management training highlights the fact that skills/vocational training was not sufficient because Aboriginal trainee managers selected to do the job (by ALPA staff) were not culturally appropriate. Consequently communities would not recognise these trainees as having any authority within the store. As Harper points out (in Wells,1993: 161-162):

[w]hen someone participates in a ceremony and learns new skills and stories ... they come out of that ceremony [and] the community recognises them as adults. [W]hat store training has done and all the other training for that matter ... its put people in the ceremony, given them the training but when they've come out the society hasn't given them the power to do the job .. With the management programs we thought well, OK, this person knows what to do ... you've been through this ceremony now we'll hand you the keys or we'll give you authority [but] what happened is the person's social and cultural obligations far outweighed [any other obligations].

Although there are currently no Aboriginal store managers in ALPA, it has been able to implement effective management and monitoring systems and recruit non-Aboriginal store managers with the requisite level of skills and knowledge to manage these stores. The degree of control that resource agencies, such as ALPA, have over the recruitment and operations of their non-Aboriginal management staff serves to limit their impact and autonomy in enterprise operations. This is not the case, however, for non-Aboriginal staff directly employed by Aboriginal owned community enterprises. The behaviour and efficiency of the generally non-Aboriginal managers, advisers and coordinators that work directly for Aboriginal owned community enterprises is extremely important. These people have considerable economic and decision making power over enterprises (Ellanna, 1988: 52). Yet there is a high turnover and uneven quality about their services. In 1988 DAA reported that “[s]ome had an interest in continuing paternalism, and either misunderstood or opposed Department policy. Some exploited and exacerbated community factionalism, though not always deliberately. Some were just crooks” (in Rowse, 1992: 3).

The coming and going of non-Aboriginal management staff has much to do with the ups and downs of enterprise finances. This is particularly the case when some Aboriginal communities are said to be quite happy for non-Aboriginal staff to conveniently look after Whitefella business while Aboriginal people devote themselves to traditional matters (HRSCAA, 1990: 117). Apart from other factors, the isolated nature of most communities in Northern Australia does tend to attract some people who would not be successful elsewhere. There are many stories of store managers ‘ripping off’ the takings (Young, 1984: 69). Instances have also occurred where non-Aboriginal staff have departed from a community after defrauding it, only to turn up in another community. Yet many of these cases do not lead to prosecutions (HRSCAA, 1990: 122).

However, manager inefficiency is probably more important than manager dishonesty in causing financial crises. Although there are some efficient managers with adequate

technical skills, who accept a subordinate and developmental role, there are others who have questionable skills and attitudes (Ellanna et al., 1988: 63). There are very limited controls exercised over the recruitment and employment of many of these non-Aboriginal managers and staff from the Aboriginal executives and owners of these enterprises. Not only are they recruited in an ad-hoc fashion, but they are generally not accountable for their actions and are hard to get rid of if found to be incompetent. If, on the other hand, they are good there is no career structure available to keep them in the community (HRSCAA, 1990: 113).

Aspects to do with the expatriate nature of living in these remote Aboriginal communities also affects recruitment possibilities and retention rates. The average length of employment in communities being about 18 months to two years. This high turnover of non-Aboriginal staff is related to the high cost of living, isolation, poor communications, a lack of facilities, harsh climate, cultural and language difficulties, general health standards in communities, poor working conditions and generally poor salaries (HRSCAA, 1990: 119).

Recruitment and operational control over non-Aboriginal staff is a major problem, especially given the subjective assessment by Aboriginal people of non-Aboriginal staff. The lack of adequate and impartial advice and support available from external organisations, which are supposed to assist in recruitment, is a major contributing factor to this on-going problem. Most external support, by its very nature, is reactive rather than proactive. It is important to recognise the dilemma faced by external organisations such as ATSIC in not wishing to interfere in issues to do with self-determination, such as employment of non-Aboriginal people in communities. However, it also needs to be recognised that it will be these non-Aboriginal staff who are expected to assist the most in the process of self-management and self-determination. Yet the range of attitudes and competencies non-Aboriginal people bring to communities, and the turnover of staff, does not assist in stable, long term co-operative development.

Many of the problems surrounding recruitment of non-Aboriginal staff have been said by Young (Ellanna et al., 1988: 63), to rest on the lack of understanding by Aboriginal people of what skills and attributes are required for management tasks. This lack of understanding is argued to have much to do with the importance of subjective and personal relationships to traditionally orientated Aboriginal people, making it very difficult to base decisions on objective advice. Managers or co-ordinators are more likely to be judged on how good their relationships are with Aboriginal people, rather than on financial performance (HRSCAA, 1990: 123). Cases have been reported of people being employed simply because one or two Aboriginal people happened to like the person concerned, even though they did not have the skills or experience for the job (Ellanna et al., 1988: 63). Even in situations of gross mismanagement many of these managers or advisers still have community support (HRSCAA, 1990: 123). Little is known of the effectiveness of non-Aboriginal staff in mediating between kinship obligations of Aboriginal staff and the needs of sound management. As Bain (1992: 155) has remarked:

they asked me, a person outside the kinship system, to take over as storekeeper and to say the transactional 'No'. I acted as a kind of backstop for Aboriginal workers, so that I was the one who, finally, made sure that payment was made.

To what degree Aboriginal people expect non-Aboriginal staff to intercede in this capacity is uncertain, but it is believed to be extensive.

These problems are further exacerbated by the job requirements of many non-Aboriginal staff to train Aboriginal staff for management positions. This is increasingly seen as a primary responsibility of non-Aboriginal managers and advisers, along with the progressive assumption of power and responsibility by Aboriginal people (HRSCAA, 1990: 117). However, this appears more of a wish than anything else given the general lack of training skills of many managers, time constraints to carry out training and the appropriateness/ effectiveness of training in the first place.

Although government departments have understood the importance of non-Aboriginal managers and advisers in communities, and have known that their shortcomings are a significant cause of many enterprise failures, little has been done to improve their quality (HRSCAA, 1990: 122-127). The problem of intervention in the recruitment process by government agencies such as ASTIC, who may be funding either the enterprise or the staff position, is the conflict this poses to self-determination. Yet the roles and behaviour of these non-Aboriginal managers and their relationships to Aboriginal people in communities are obviously very important. So too are other non-Aboriginals in communities who are expected to co-ordinate their efforts in terms of training and development, for example, adult educators and teachers. Community based training and development programs now constitute a major thrust by the Federal Government in promoting community development (HRSCAA, 1989: 1990).

Yet there is little information as to how co-ordination is to be achieved between the two major groups of non-Aboriginals who live in Aboriginal communities. The career interests of what Gerritson (1982) calls 'service whites' are external to the community. They are comprised of teachers, nursing sisters, police and contractors working on particular projects. In general this group do not interfere in community politics and have little social involvement with Aboriginal people:

[a]t Aurukun the school, set up to in some way transfer white skills to Aborigines, is staffed by people who almost never are seen in an Aboriginal household. Yet, Aborigines, individually, visit white households at Aurukun quite often and attempt to engage whites in relationships of many kinds and incorporate them, if successful, into specific families by quasi-adoption. Mutual colonisation is normally in process, but in unequal terms and in different spheres of action (Sutton in Rowse, 1992: 103).

Apart from these 'service whites', there are those who are employed by community organisations whose career interests are intrinsic to the community. This group includes storekeepers, housing managers, mechanics and book-keepers. Gerritson (1982: 28)

refers to these whites as 'wayfarers'. Many of this group get involved in community politics, for there are certain political necessities for the survival of 'wayfarers' in communities. For example, storekeepers occasionally allow dominant individuals to take goods without paying (Gerritson, 1982: 29). There has been little research carried out since the early 1980's about the interaction that occurs between these non-Aboriginal 'wayfarers' and the Aboriginal community (Gerritson, 1982; Trigger, 1991). For example, whether or not 'wayfarers' as employees of Aboriginal enterprises are more susceptible to being incorporated into specific Aboriginal families or clans, particularly if they are single, and what additional pressures and expectations may result from such attachments.

Factionalism amongst the non-Aboriginal staff can add to internal politicking and inhibit possibilities for development. Trigger's (1991) commentary on the factionalism that characterised the Whitefella staff in the Aboriginal community of Doomadgee, North Queensland in the early 1980's, illustrates this problem. Although Trigger's example is somewhat dated, it is suggested that factionalism still characterises much of the interaction amongst white staff on communities and affects possibilities for effective co-ordination of community development.

Community planning has been suggested as an answer to the problems and possibilities for community development and the co-ordination of community resources (HRSCAA, 1989, 1990). Yet, how are these plans and the planning process going to help in addressing the problems to development evidenced in this discussion? Previous attempts to plan for development, as Wolfe (1993c: 4) has remarked, have not been co-ordinated or integrated within, or between external agencies. Much of the planning that has been done has been characterised as 'wish lists' of what goods and services people want rather than addressing the deeper problems of control and accountability evidenced here. The Community and Regional Planning program that was approved by ATSIC in 1991 was in response to this need for more and better local planning. It was also a response to ATSIC's own statutory requirements to formulate regional plans;

community planning being seen as forming the essential ingredients to regional plans (Wolfe, 1993c: viii).

Wolfe (1993c: 12), defines community based planning as describing a process in which a community participates fully in planning and carrying out its own development. However, such planning is carried out under unequal relationships; a concern not addressed in the recent government report *Our Future Our Selves* (1990). For as Wolfe (1993c: 14) points out, the primary or normative decisions about putting this planning process into action, and the control over what it expected to achieve, remains the preserve of political and public service elites.

This is a particular problem where Aboriginal people insist that their ideals, values and interests are not the same as non-Aboriginal society, who being more powerful dismiss these basic cultural difficulties (Wolfe, 1993c: 17).

What is informative in the planning guidelines is that planning is considered to be a continual process of goal setting and strategy/program development for goal achievement which covers all aspects of community life (Wolfe, 1993c: 18). An on-going process of planning that would seem to integrate planning for development, with development itself. However, ATSIC's six pilot projects for this community planning program undertaken in 1991/2 were agency driven, structured into four discrete stages and carried out within a six month period. Needless to say this top down, agency driven, fast track planning approach to community based development did not do well (Wolfe, 1993b: 3). Part of the problem was due to the lack of adequate resources within ASTIC to support this planning program and the human capacity of agency staff and community leaders to carry out the planning process. Some other problems that were encountered were: the lack of time to adequately involve community decision making, the need for prior planning awareness in some cases and the factional and undemocratic nature of community politics (Wolfe, 1993c: 11).

However, integrating both planning and skill development in a long term and participatory bottom up approach to development, is already being utilised in community education. For example, the long term action research approach at Yirrkala Community School, North East Arnhem Land (Raymattja Marika-Munungiritj et.al,1990). This approach to education development now underlies Aboriginal Teacher Education for communities that Deakin University and Batchelor College NT initiated in 1987.

1.4 SUMMARY

As discussed, most Aboriginal communities are artificial constructs that were set up by non-Aboriginal people to acculturate Aboriginal people into mainstream Australian life. The history of economic and enterprise development in these Aboriginal communities has been driven by a non-Aboriginal ideology that traditionally orientated Aboriginal people do not share. It was an ethnocentric ideology which believed that Aboriginal culture would die out and be replaced by a white Australian way of life. This has not happened. Aboriginal people living in remote Aboriginal communities are still attached to a traditional way of life that is based on a very different world view from that of mainstream Australia.

Factors to do with the history of enterprise development in communities are important in providing a framework to contemporary operations. Considering that many Aboriginal communities and community enterprises were established for assimilationist rather than economic reasons in the first place, it is hardly surprising that communities and many enterprises are still dependant on government subsidies. What is surprising is that although government policies and programs since the mid 1970's have been espousing Aboriginal self-management and self-determination, there has been little attention given by government agencies to effectively engaging Aboriginal people in the

problems of organisational and management development they experience. One of the reasons this has occurred is due to the inability of governments to differentiate between the heterogeneity of the Australian Aboriginal population on anything other than racial lines. Rather, it is argued that the degree to which traditionally orientated Aboriginal people are enmeshed in interpersonal kinship relationships provides grounds for a continuum of Aboriginality that has important implications for management and organisational development.

Basic issues to do with the impossibility of separating enterprises from social and cultural factors in Aboriginal communities are hardly addressed in the development and evaluation of enterprise programs. Yet cultural aspects to do with the strength and nature of obligatory relationships and the web of sharing within kinship networks, are known to determine enterprise success or failure. Indeed, much of the cultural conflict that Aboriginal people face in working within community enterprises arises out of their interactional world view that is diametrically opposed to the essential needs of transactional relationships in western economic systems. For example, conflict occurs when Aboriginal people are expected to manage resources which are not theirs to control in the first place. Similarly, people find it extremely hard to manage other Aboriginal people at work, since everybody is related to everybody else and these interpersonal relationships are far more important than working life. What this means is that human relation problems cannot be dealt with by individual organisations, as they are bound up with the political and cultural nature of the community.

Other major factors affecting enterprise success or failure have to do with the high, yet ineffective, degree of non-Aboriginal control exercised over Aboriginal communities and their enterprise organisations. This has changed little in recent years and is a major deterrent to self-determination (RCADC, 1992). Much of the indirect control is carried out by bureaucratic government agencies with little long term commitment to specific enterprise operations. The structures of organisations and styles of management that have been provided by these government agencies are a reflection of traditional

Australian management practices. What is offered to Aboriginal people is western training in functional aspects of management without concern as to how applicable such training is to traditionally orientated Aboriginal people. Moreover, little appears to be happening in terms of the recruitment and operational control of non-Aboriginal enterprise managers and advisers who generally control these Aboriginal community enterprises. Indeed, it is not uncommon for these employees, either through inefficiency or dishonesty, to cause major financial problems for enterprise operations. Problems that can be made worse by negative attitudes towards Aboriginal development.

Contemporary government development strategies seem to be somewhat at a loss as to where to go. Although the current Federal Government policy (AEDP) stresses the importance of cultural factors in development, these factors are generally not addressed in practise. Similarly, the Community and Regional Planning program of ATSIC seems more a response to ATSIC budgetary and statutory requirements than a platform where development problems evidenced here can be resolved. The insistence on assimilationist management training and more training as an appropriate basis and method for Aboriginal management development is known not to work, for it fails to acknowledge a cultural basis to management. Although community organisations such as enterprises are known to be culturally ambiguous, much of the organisational and management development directed towards achieving Aboriginal control does not address these cultural factors (Rowse, 1992).

1.5 THE STUDY

The opportunity to study the significance of cultural and management factors affecting community enterprises occurred with management development work undertaken for

three Tiwi enterprises at Nguiu, Bathurst Island in 1990/91. The focus of this study revolved around these enterprises and the needs of the Tiwi people of Nguiu for appropriate and effective management control.

The purpose of the empirical part of the study was two-fold: to critically evaluate the current systems of control and accountability of three Nguiu enterprises and provide implications for self-management and organisational development. However, if research questions concerning management and organisational development are to be valid then it is essential that they be formulated within a theoretical framework. In this study the theoretical framework includes aspects of contemporary Human Resource Management (HRM) thought, as well as what is said about traditionally orientated Aboriginal culture. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account what has been said of factors to do with the historical and contemporary development of these enterprises, for as indicated earlier, ethnocentric and assimilationist management practises have influenced much of their development.

Given these considerations, Chapter two provides a brief historical overview of the development of modern analytical approaches to HRM and points out that there is no one best way to manage organisations. The picture presented in many third World and indigenous societies illustrates the extensive problems caused by collective and particularistic practices within organisations. These provide for considerable role conflict. The commitment needed to change this state of affairs, however, comes hard up against problems surrounding cultural and value change. This is particularly the case for indigenous people who need to keep their culture intact, for they have little else left. Development strategies which can engage cultural factors are seen to be participatory, long term and bottom up. A very different scene from the ethnocentric management development which has been foisted on to Aboriginal people.

Chapter three starts by providing a background to the situation that indigenous people find themselves in before moving on to discuss contemporary, but still traditionally orientated, Aboriginal culture. Although encapsulated within the nation state of

Australia the Aboriginal domain is far more important to these Aboriginal people as it provides identity, vernacular language and a very different way of life. Managing resources is tied into kinship and sharing relationships. For these are gift societies, where power lies in the allocation and distribution of resources; not simply in ownership. Given the importance of individualism within kinship relationships and the fact that kinship systems are not bounded, concepts such as social field and social networks that leaders can manipulate provide a way of seeing how indigenous management operates. Nevertheless, their underlying values and world view are in total opposition to the requirements of formal organisations; in particular, economic enterprises. Having provided this management and cultural backdrop the methodology and case histories are documented in Chapter 4. In the light of evidence presented within the literature review and on the basis of field observations, a number of research questions were formulated with reference to the three major groups of factors affecting enterprise development. These factors, those to do with the history and contemporary operations of enterprises, cultural factors and non-Aboriginal control, form a framework for the research objectives. Research objectives were required to provide a historical and contemporary picture of enterprise operations at Nguiu, with particular regard for qualitative aspects to do with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal control.

As such, a case study approach to each enterprise was used. This enabled the integration of qualitative and quantitative data from both primary and secondary sources to provide a picture of management development. A brief overview of the development of Nguiu is given before moving on to the three enterprise case studies. Each case study is structured around the three major sets of factors which have been seen to affect enterprise operations, beginning with a discussion of the historical and contemporary operations of the enterprise. Factors to do with Tiwi attributes and those to do with non-Aboriginal control, which have specifically affected the management of these enterprises, is then taken up.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions of this study in three parts. Firstly, aspects to do with research and development of HRM. For example; what is said about typologies of cultures and their effects on organisations is compared with what is known of indigenous management and world views. Secondly, the development of enterprises at Nguu with comments about other traditionally orientated Aboriginal communities and the development agencies which are supposed to assist them. Finally, a number of remarks are made for the purpose of developing enterprises at Nguu.

CHAPTER TWO

CULTURE, ORGANISATIONS, AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by outlining the rapid rise in recent years of contemporary Human Resource Management (HRM), from a personnel function within traditional Anglo-western hierarchical organisational structures, to a central and strategic role in contemporary management and organisational development. The changing role of HRM is important to understand as it relates not only to changing perspective's about the nature of work and individual development, but also to recognition of the importance of informal relationships to organisational effectiveness. These subjective aspects of organisational effectiveness, organisational culture as it came to be known, were partly popularised by Peters and Waterman in the early '1980s'. However, they had already gained academic respectability by the earlier work of organisational

theorists such as Gouldner (1965) and Silverman (1970). This background and introduction emphasises the central place HRM has in organisational development, particularly in culturally different settings.

Interest in these subjective features of organisational culture was strengthened by the domination of Japanese organisations in the seventies and the effectiveness of the Japanese way of doing things. The 'one best way' approach of traditional HRM, which is shown as being prescriptive of organisational problems, was under attack. For organisational problems, by their very nature, contain considerable non-prescriptive content. The lack of flexibility and adaptiveness of traditional management practices in dealing with the wider environment provide a narrow vision of the nature of problems that affect organisations. In contemporary HRM, the adoption of contingency theory - there is no one best way to manage an organization - and a more eclectic and analytic approach to organisational problems, has enabled a more strategic and informed approach to problems affecting organisational development.

Problems that multinational companies have had to deal with in other cultural settings, and the major development problems experienced in Third World countries, have provided a major area of interest for international management researchers and practitioners. The principal findings of Hofstede (1980), on differences in work related values in different country settings, provide evidence of the dimensions of cultural values which affect work practices. The cultural assumptions that underlie these dimensions also provide different pictures of how people structure and give meaning to the world.

The different ways in which people view the world provides the central theme of this chapter. In particular, the way collective societies with tight social relationships between family and kinship systems impact on modern organisations. The major problems faced by organisations in collectivist societies is seen to relate to the role conflict that exists in these developing states. That is, conflict between the needs for

effective organisations and the more powerful needs of family and kin. Examples and dimensions of this role conflict in West Africa, that Price (1975) describes, is discussed. Moreover, an expanded model of role theory, used by Blunt *et al.* (1989), compares Price's findings in Africa with those of Brunei in South-East Asia. These examples provide considerable evidence of the lack of role separation between work and social life in these collective societies. If possibilities of adaptation are to occur, as Blunt (1990a) points out, there is a prime requirement for people to be committed to increasing the effectiveness of their organisations, in particular, for political and organisational leaders to provide appropriate role models.

Beliefs as to the convergent nature of organisations are undermined by the pervasiveness of certain types of cultural beliefs and the realities experienced in divergent environments. The need to orient management development to the realities of these complex and often turbulent environments, in order to develop suitable management development programs is evident. To do so obviously requires an understanding of the nature and dimensions of indigenous social and political structures and processes. Trying to fix these culturally determined behaviours by western management techniques is questioned for appropriateness, as is skill transfer and much that goes on in the name of management training. Participatory intervention strategies are suggested as providing possibilities for development in what Hofstede (1980) calls high power distance societies, as described by Price (1975) and Blunt *et al.* (1989). How these might work in low power distance but tribal societies, the central concern of this dissertation, is taken up in Chapter 5

Although contingency theory points out there is no best way to manage organisations, there is still a prime need for organisations to be effective. Blunt (1990a) proposes a core of structured organisational imperatives and work related values and attitudes which are essential for effective organisations. This is taken up and explored as a tool for assessing problems to do with organisational effectiveness and the demands of the sociopolitical environment. Organisational imperatives to do with control,

accountability, and role relationships, are shown to be particularly significant in this regard.

Finally, it is argued that indigenous and prior exchange based societies now encapsulated within dominant societies contains additional problems for management development. Apart from the opposing nature of exchange societies to that of the dominant state, there is a legacy of problems which have stemmed from a history of political and administrative control. The use of the term the Fourth World, to describe such encapsulated societies, is suggested as a useful operational term to understand the additional problems posed for management development in these situations (Dyck, 1985).

2.2 RISE OF HRM - CULTURAL CONTINGENCIES

Personnel administration tasks pre-date the rise of contemporary HRM. The role of personnel departments in traditional organisations was seen as providing assistance to the major tasks of line management. Employees were considered primarily as cost factors to production or administration. These costs were required to be minimised in the search for profitability and efficiency. The rational properties of bureaucracy and an instrumental view of work, as portrayed by Weber (in Andreski, 1983), provide a theoretical basis for this rationalist view and the hierarchical structures of traditional organisations.

The ability of traditional organisations to function in this manner is underpinned by the clear separation of work and social life arising out of industrialisation in western cultures. Ideals of democracy and individualism, based on a philosophy of scientific rationalism and materialism, have become major cultural features of western societies. These features, which emphasise western economic domination, universalism and transactional relationships, provided a suitable cultural backdrop for the rise of traditional western organisational structures.

However, the importance of social relationships for the efficiency of traditional organisations was not recognised however, due in part to beliefs about the instrumental nature of work and the apparent acceptance of hierarchical authority. The most important functions of everyday life as Weber (in Andreski, 1983) remarks “have come to be in the hands of technically, commercially and above all legally trained government officials.” The legal and rational nature of bureaucracies, as distinct from patronage and other ascribed social characteristics, provided legitimacy and acceptance of hierarchical

authority. Separation of corporate from personal property, and the basis of free labour, constituted key factors to the instrumental basis of work.

The Hawthorn (Mayo, 1949) studies, however, provided an understanding of the importance of social relationships to organisational efficiency. The need for harmonious relationships, and thereby increased productivity, gave rise to human relations as an important function of personnel departments and of “keep people happy strategies” (Pieper, eds. 1990: 2). Miles (in Pieper 1990) distinguished between these early traditional and human relation models of management - which incorporated a pacifying role for human relations - to a model incorporating an expanded perspective of the potential of the work force.

This expanded role of the work-force was taken up by organisational humanists such as Maslow (1954) and McGregor (1960) in the mid 1950's and early 1960's. They provided an understanding of the potential and ability of people to grow and develop at work. Maslow, for example, pointed out that work could provide for more of the higher social and personal needs of individuals, while Mc Gregor suggested that these higher order needs dominated his Theory Y type managers. Good group relations and participation in decision making in responsible and challenging jobs, was said to motivate such managers. From this perspective the benefits to the organisation in assisting individual development, were deemed to outweigh the costs involved. As Pieper (1990: 2) points out:

seen this way, the major task of human resource management, is helping the company's employees to actualise and develop their potential. This was to be done in accordance with the needs of the organisation, and the interests of the individuals in question, rather than restricting personnel management to purely administrative tasks.

This presented a major break in the role of HRM from its prior personnel and administrative function.

HRM in the '1960s' and '1970s' treated human labour as the major asset of an organisation, rather than viewing labour primarily as a cost factor as in traditional management philosophy (Pieper, 1990: 2-4). Even in an age of high technology it was shown that companies should invest in the development of their employees. There was little critical assessment however, of the work of organisational theorists on the importance of social relations within organisations and the impact such have on management effectiveness.

Gouldner's *Wildcat Strike* (1965) is perhaps an exception. This study presented a picture of social relationships within a particular organisation which were heavily influenced by workers and managers being frequently friends or neighbours outside the work-place. As Silverman (1970:155) points out, "the distinction between expectations appropriate to contractual relationships at work and those relevant to primary group interaction was very unclear." While Silverman (1970) was concerned with the reasons behind the behaviour of the individual and social groups within organisations, functionalist and systems theorists, such as Gouldner (1965), were concerned with the outcomes of behaviour and how they affect the organisation. These latter approaches to organisations dominated management thinking of the sixties and seventies. That is, the organisation was seen as the unit of study rather than its constituent parts. Organisations were considered as small societies (Parsons, 1964). What mattered in terms of the integration of individuals and groups into the organisation was that the value system of society should be reflected in the goals of the organisation.

Although these HRM approaches treated employees as a major asset, they were still seen as individuals within systems and processes. Importance was placed on organisational functions and goals, which tended to reify organizations as integrated systems and processes with a life of their own. The overriding concern with functions and organisational goals gave little attention to individuals and groups within organizations, who had different strategies and interests (Silverman, 1970:66).

The sixties and seventies was also a period of major organisational change for Anglo-western organisations, brought about by the beginnings of high technology and computerisation. The accent was on the rational/technical functions of organisations, and how the organisation interacted with the external political and social environment. Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) point out “that in the end it was an effort dominated by a methodology and by a computer rather than a point of view.” Rational and objective approaches to management were reinforced by the belief that organisational effectiveness could be achieved by prescribing what should constitute HRM roles and objectives in the organisation. However, this is a major, and widely recognised problem of the conventional functionalist approach of HRM. That is, it does not differentiate between specialised HRM functions and general management tasks (see, for example, Legge, 1978, 1986; Pieper, 1990; Blunt, 1992). For example, in Robbins (1987: 571) the process management approach:

[t]he human resource management process encompasses human resource planning, recruitment or decruitment, selection, orientation, training, performance appraisal, disciplinary action, career development, and labour management relations.

These are, however, activities common to all managers in organisations, as Blunt (1986: 5) has pointed out, and especially so in small business organisations where the whole human resource management process is performed by a handful of key employees or owners. Management texts dealing with the process approach, for example Robbins (1988), do acknowledge that whether or not an organisation has a personnel department, every manager is involved with human resource decisions. However, the nature and context of that involvement within the organisational environment, is not addressed by the mere process by which it is carried out. Little attention is paid by traditional HRM approaches to the internal and external environment within which management and organisations operate. Yet this operational context is primarily responsible for success or failure, as numerous writers have pointed out (see, for example, Hofstede, 1980; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Blunt, *et al*; 1989, 1990; Richards, 1991).

Organisational Culture, as a more appropriate description of some aspects of the internal environment of organisations, was popularised by Peters and Waterman in their 1982 book *In Search of Excellence*. Although Peters and Waterman left aside other aspects of HRM - what Child (1984) calls the strategic choices that managers can make, for example in regard to technology - they convincingly argued that the economic success of companies in America was, in large measure, a result of attitudes and values espoused in HRM practise. In these successful companies Peters and Waterman (1982) found that HRM had a broader and more encompassing role in company strategy than that of traditional HRM. The importance that Americas' most successful organisations attached to organisational culture did not, in itself, guarantee success. Their cultural prophecy, however, as Blunt (1991: 55) points out, was that organisational culture mattered a great deal, "[t]hat is, the importance of organisational culture as a necessary if not sufficient condition for effectiveness — lived on" (Blunt, 1991: 55)

Ouchi and Wilkins (1985;463) show that organisational culture has a dual interest in what is explicit and objective in organisational life, as well as what is implicit and subjective; '[t]his has consistently been a central issue in the sociology of organizations and has become central to the study of organisational culture'. Qualifying and quantifying the constituents of organisational culture, and the implications to organisational effectiveness, was a major task of HRM practitioners and academics in the eighties. The intellectual foundations of organisational culture amalgamates several points of view from various disciplines. A citation analysis by Ouchi and Wilkins (1985;458) shows that anthropology and sociology, as well as management scholars, form the most frequently cited works on organisational culture.

A range of perspectives and disciplines underlies research in this area. A technique utilised in much of this research is that of participant observation, derived from ethnographic studies such as those of Malinowski (1922) carried out on the Trobiand Islands. These ethnographic studies provide a functionalist and objective picture of

social integration. Other anthropologists, such as Geertz (1973), concentrate on the subjective importance of understanding culture from the ethnomethodological or natives' point of view. The traditional interest of anthropology in small scale tribal societies, what Hofstede (1980) calls low power distance cultures, has provided a rich understanding of how beliefs, values and social structures serve to maintain cultural cohesion.

Both objective and subjective approaches to understanding culture are utilised by Shein (1985) in describing different levels of organisational culture. The first level of culture is visible and includes artefacts and layout of the work-place, dress and manners of employees, enthusiasm and interpersonal behaviour. The middle level of organisational culture is one of values and of greater awareness of why things are done a certain way. At this level, understanding can be gained by talking to people about what they do and why they do it. The deepest level of organisational culture reflects underlying social beliefs and assumptions people have about society and their place in it. This level of cultural reasoning can only be found after careful probing and analysis of these assumptions and beliefs.

By the mid 1970's the importance of underlying cultural factors to effective organisations was brought into sharp focus by the economic domination of Japan. Cultural differences, arising from the cultural norms and values of Japanese society, provided the key to understanding the effectiveness of Japanese organisations. As Blunt (1986) pointed out, Hofstede's (1980) cross-cultural study of work related values provided a means of measuring and comparing the relative nature of organisational environments. Hofstede provided direct measures of culture by asking questions about peoples' values and beliefs. His research utilised national borders as cultural boundaries and suggested, using statistical methods, that work related values could be applied to four major dimensions of culture. These dimensions, for example, individualism on the one hand versus collectivism on the other, represent fundamental differences in human

societies, although Triandis (1990, 1991) suggests that individualism and collectivism co-exist and are simply emphasised more or less in each culture.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions, although providing a good operational term for describing and comparing cultures. However, as Blunt (1990:309) points out Hofstede's sample did not include the significant and very different cultural minority groups which live within country borders. Examples of such minority cultures would include the indigenous Aboriginal people of Australia and Canada.

Cultural differences obviously provide a range of possibilities for the development of organisational culture (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). Given the success of Japan and the rise of the other four Dragons - Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea and Hong Kong - the appropriateness of American-style HRM was called into question. The short term and bottom line performance philosophy of American HRM, for example, contrasts with dominant Japanese loyalty values and long-run concerns (Fombrun in Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990: 19). The 'one best way' of traditional HRM, as Blunt (1986) pointedly remarks, is a form of ethnocentrism which has been thoroughly exposed by Hofstede. Major differences in the circumstances and contingencies faced by different countries do not allow for any one best way to practise HRM. As Pieper (1990: 4) remarks:

[w]hether a plant is built in India or the Federal Republic of Germany makes a considerable difference to its efficiency, even if exactly the same technologies are being used because the work - force in the two countries is different in regard to, for example, its standard of education and its culture.

Concurrent with the interest in cross-cultural aspects of HRM, particularly with respect to multinational companies, research groups in the early 1980's developed expanded models of where, and how, HRM fitted within organisations. Pieper (1990:3) remarks that, "[m]ost of these authors argue that such an integration of the personnel function into strategic management forms the major difference between traditional personnel

management and the concept of HRM.” This more inclusive definition of HRM incorporates the following elements:

- *traditional personnel administration (staffing, rewarding, work design)*
- *personnel development*
- *a specific management philosophy that values labour as the major asset of an organisation and that regards human beings as being able and willing to grow and develop*
- *the integration of the personnel function into strategic management*

(Pieper,1990:3)

There are controversial issues surrounding the importance and relationship of strategic human relation management to traditional HRM. A major issue relates to whether one sees HRM from a strategic management viewpoint or from that of the human relations tradition. The strategic stand-point is that of general management, responding to HRM situations and contingencies affecting the organisation. From this perspective HRM is treated as a range of things affecting the employment and contribution of people, against criteria of coherence and appropriateness (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990: 21). The history of this approach can be traced back to Legge (1978). As Blunt (1986: 46) points out:

[h]er general strategy was to adopt a contingency, rather than prescriptive, approach to personnel practise. Legge rightly argued that the major vehicles of conventional wisdom in the field — personnel and HRM text books — "tended to be too prescriptive in general terms rather than analytical about actual situations."

The single most determining factor for success is, therefore, people. Unlike technology or money, people are generally confined to national borders where cultural differences will vary the concepts and needs of HRM. Organisational structures, methods of coordination and control techniques of HRM etc, should be adapted to the particular circumstances or contingencies that they face. Urbanised, multi-cultural societies such

as Australia contain a variety of cultural situations and rapidly changing organisational environments. Until recently, HRM in Australia had been oriented to a traditional one best way approach. This had been firmly orientated to a white Anglo-Australia work ethic and a clear separation between working and social life, in marked contrast to traditionally orientated Aboriginal culture. As Blunt (1986: 7) remarks, HRM practitioners in the mid eighties were still:

preoccupied with operational or day-to-day issues rather than long range goal setting, broad policy formulation, or designing a well adapted fit between the organisation and its internal and external environments.

The rise of HRM from its former low power and prescriptive position to that of a strategic and analytical approach has only occurred during recent years. Modern contingency approaches of HRM are concerned with the situations that organisations find themselves in. Culture provides an important contingency to management practise, both in terms of organisational culture and the impact on the organisational environment by the external cultural environment. The need for HRM to adapt itself to external cultural forces requires a strategic role for HRM. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the literature on organisational problems of the Third World.

2.3 CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ORGANISATIONAL PROBLEMS OF THE THIRD WORLD

Blunt and Jones (1991: 3), in a recent editorial to *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, remind us that most of the world's population live in very poor developing states. The ineffective management of organisations in these developing states is perhaps the most crucial factor affecting their development. This lack of effectiveness is known to be related to the mismatch that occurs between imported and

indigenous systems and indigenous needs. Indigenous systems and the extensive, close relationships people have with each other pose a major stumbling block to development and to effective HRM practise (Price, 1975; Blunt, 1978; Blunt *et al.*, 1989; Pieper, 1990).

In high power collectivist societies people are born into social structures with tight relationships. In-groups, extended families and kinship networks take precedence over the individual (Hofstede, 1980). Emphasis is placed on one's social obligations and social responsibilities as part of a corporate group. As such, social relationships between kin take precedence over organisational needs. This is certainly not the situation in urban western societies where ties amongst individuals are very loose and where people look after their own self interest and maybe those of the immediate family.

Studies carried out by HRM practitioners in developing countries, for example, Brunei, East Africa and South - East Asia, provide evidence of how socially determined characteristics and political structures impact on the performance and effectiveness of organisations. In the case of Kenya and Tanzania, Blunt (1978) points out that many organisational problems are related to race, ethnicity and age; characteristics important to African society. Although racial problems in Africanising the previous colonial administration were said to be receding by the mid seventies, the political and commercial power of ethnic groups such as the Kikuya were demanding that ascriptive traits compete with managerial competence in the selection of senior and middle level personnel. What was a racial problem had, by then, become an ethnic problem (Blunt, 1978: 436).

Apart from the political and organisational favouritism towards specific ethnic groups, conflicts and tensions to do with age are also common in most of Africa. Authority is traditionally associated with age and elders are given a great deal more respect from the general population than is the case in western societies (Kiggundu, 1991: 33). Needless

to say, problems occur in management situations where younger and more educated supervisors have difficulty in obtaining the respect and co-operation of older members. Similarly, the same supervisor may face resistance and resentment from older members who feel their positions threatened (Blunt 1978: 438).

The importance of elders in the traditional social institutions of the Kikuyu relates to relationships based on family ties to land and marriage, and groups cutting across these specific ties, based on status and age within a given territory. Traditional governing structures of the Kikuyu were characterised by the orderly government of popularly accepted councils and participation of mature, but especially older adults. Indeed, the generation-set system or 'rika' "regulates access to power throughout the institutions of Kikuyu society" (Blunt, 1978:445).

Where African workers do not regard work as a central life interest they elect to satisfy the particularistic role expectations of kin and friends rather than the universalistic role expectations of the organisations they work for (Blunt, 1986:105). The notions of particularism and universalism and the implications for organisational effectiveness were originally derived from Parsons' (1950) set of conceptual dichotomies, or pattern variables:

they refer to different means of interpersonal control and interaction. In particularistic exchanges, interaction is governed by the personal relationships of the participants. In the organizational context, this might mean that 'personal' factors such as kinship and ethnicity would have a major bearing on a wide variety of organizational decisions and behaviour. Universalistic behaviour, on the other hand, takes no account of personal relationships and concentrates instead on other aspects of the individual such as his formal qualifications or expertise or his ability to perform effectively in a particular job (Blunt, et al 1989: 436).

Particularism is not confined to East Africa. Studies have been carried out by Price (1975) in West Africa, Blunt (1988, 1990), Hofstede 1980, Hofstede and Bond, 1988) and Richards (1991) in South-East Asia, and Blunt *et al.* (1989) in a comparative organisational study of Brunei and West Africa. Particularistic practices were found to be endemic in all these developing states and a major problem to management.

Richards (1991: 11), in his paper on large private and public sector organisations of Brunei, for example, points out that there is:

clear evidence of policies and practices that vary according to personal relationships between particular individuals and which are based on a sense of loyalty and a sense of duty; promotion based on seniority rather than performance or effectiveness; personnel departments which are concerned with record keeping, technical training and with the continuous resolving of personal interpretations of policy.

Similarly, the West African public sector described by Price (1975) gives precedence to particularistic and status obligations characterised by a great deal of formalism. This is seen in ritualistic behaviour, with little concern for performance or goal attainment.

Price (1975) points out that employees who exhibit particularistic behaviour gain social approval for their actions because personal and kinship relationships take precedence over organisational goals and performance. Blunt *et al* (1989) shows that clients of organisations in both West Africa and Brunei expect behaviour involving government officials to conform to the particularistic mode.

Social sympathy for such behaviour also implies that family, or other non-organisational social members with close ties to an official, will expect the official to fully exploit the resource potential of his position. Such exploitation is seen as corruption from a western standpoint particularly where bribery is involved. However, corporate societies, however, do not compartmentalise the roles of individuals into discrete zones of social intercourse. Therefore, distinguishing between public and private 'goods' is difficult (Blunt *et al.* 1989: 422). Corruption in these organisations

does not have the same connotations of social disapproval as it does in western societies. It is suggested that corruption needs re-defining in organisational terms, rather than social terms which are inappropriate to different social contexts (Blunt *et al.*, 1989: 422).

It has been argued that economic scarcity is the primary cause of these particularistic practises. The assumption being that given enough resources people will become more individualistic, hence untying themselves from social obligations. The research, carried out by Blunt *et al.* (1989) in Brunei, which has one of the largest per capita GDPs in the world, shows that resource scarcity is not a necessary condition for widespread particularism in newly-emerging states. Evidence is provided that particularism is a powerful and pervasive force in Brunei, where rules and regulations are routinely manipulated or understood according to whether appropriate personal relationships exist.

Even in the lower levels of government organisations in Brunei particularistic exchanges treat time itself as the scarce commodity - that is to say, the bureaucratic wheels will be made to turn faster or slower according to particularistic criteria (Blunt *et al.*, 1989: 429).

Particularistic and corrupt practises which are endemic in many developing countries are therefore, not simply a reflection of poverty. Rather they reflect strong cultural beliefs and values about the nature of inequality in society and one's place in the world. Inequality in society is said to incorporate, in varying degrees, a vertical or hierarchical dimension of superiority or inferiority that relates to what Hofstede (1980) calls the degree of inequality, or power distance, between people. Hofstede (1980) describes power distance as the way in which societies deal with inequalities in power and wealth and the way that inequality is institutionalised. For example, in low power distance western societies inequality is treated as basically undesirable.

There is little information available from management writers on the way management operates in low power distance but collective tribal cultures that Hofstede (1980) discusses, or of the fundamental principles on which they are based. Triandis (1989, 1990), however, cites evidence (Adamopoulos and Bontempo, 1986) that the basic dimensions of social behaviour have emerged during the course of historical development. According to Triandis (1990: 71) this social development has seen societies develop from the proto-individualism of hunter gatherer tribal societies, to collective societies, and then to the neo-individualism of modern industrial societies. Many similarities are reported by Triandis (1990) between hunter gatherers and modern societies. Although these hunter gatherer societies are known to be collective societies, Triandis (1990: 47) notes that hunting, gathering, fishing, or foraging societies are individualistic. How tribal societies can be both collective and individualistic is taken up later, where it is argued that it is the nature of relationships that people have with each other and the environment which provides the clue to this dichotomy.

In high power distance and collective societies, such as Brunei and much of South - East Asia, the hierarchy of inequality has been said by Hofstede (1987) to have become the fundamental principle on which all relations are based. The consequences of this inequality for Brunei organisations includes:

low levels of trust; positive evaluation of close supervision by both supervisors and those supervised; employees afraid to disagree with their superiors; considerable centralisation of decision making with tall organisation structures and a high proportion of supervisory to non-supervisory staff (Richards, 1991: 12).

How people deal with the unknown, whether they are made nervous by situations that they consider to be unstructured, unclear, or unpredictable, is the third dimension of Hofstede's (1980) work related values which he calls Uncertainty Avoidance. Strong Uncertainty Avoidance societies are characterised by a more emotional resistance to change, less risk taking and a preference for clear organisational structures that must be

respected at all costs. There is also a preference for clearly laid out rules and regulations that should not be broken and other related work behaviours of high power countries such as Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia (Blunt 1988).

The final work related value dimension from Hofstede's (1980) research, is the division of roles between sexes in society with polar opposites of masculinity and femininity. This dimension provides an understanding of the degree of overlap between male and female social roles in society and, in particular, the masculinity of the role pattern attributed to men. Japan, for example, is considered to be highly masculine with men dominating in dealings with money and material goods, while the women are expected to be caring and serving in support of the men. Although most countries in South-East Asia are suggested by Hofstede (1980) to take a more medium masculinity road, the roles of sexes in different societies will have implications within their organisations (Richards, 1991: 14).

For effective organisational development to take place in collectivist societies, there will need to be some changes to underlying beliefs and values regarding the extent of particularistic relationships at work. As Richards (1991: 15) points out, effectiveness in these situations is clearly a culturally determined matter. Cultural change and management development is certainly not going to be a quick or easy task. The role conflict inherent between traditional corporate systems and modern organisations is central to understanding the possibilities for cultural change.

2.4 ROLE CONFLICT AND ROLE THEORY

Many writers of organisational dysfunction argue that explanations of administrative weakness in newly emerging states are to be found in the conflict generated by the penetration of modern forms of organisations by traditional corporate systems (see, for

example, Price, 1975; Blunt *et al.*, 1989; Richards, 1991). Describing and analysing the role conflict that is experienced by individuals in these situations, and the outcomes in terms of organisational behaviour, is clearly of central importance.

This conflict has been well demonstrated to be centred on the lack of role separation between working and social life. Kinship, family and in-group relationships are known to be of primary importance to the individual and take precedence over working life. Expectations and obligations within these relationships are said to be the major cause of particularistic and corrupt practices in organisations (Blunt *et al.*, 1989: 415). Price (1975: 22) remarks that, “we could say that while the formal organisation demands universalistic behaviour from its members, the actors in the social system whom the members care about are at the same time demanding particularistic behaviour.”

Effective organisations also require behavioural requirements for the achievement of organisational effectiveness. These are dependable role performance and some measure of innovation and spontaneous action to assist the accomplishment of organisational goals (Price, 1975:22). Blunt *et al.*(1989) add that, “[i]f dependable role performance and commitment to the organisation are undermined by the existence of role conflict, then role conflict is a condition which is clearly important to describe and analyse.”

The power of role theory lies in providing a rational choice by which to understand behaviour, as the outcome of a range of social forces acting on the individual. Blunt *et al.* (1989: 412) convincingly argue that an expanded version of role theory, which can incorporate individual scope and initiative, is better suited to explaining the multi-faceted nature of role behaviour in newly-emerging states. For individuals in organisations are not simply passive actors locked into roles and status, but rather active participants. Seen this way, this expanded version of role theory allows for more qualitative analysis than is the case in conventional role theory. Role behaviour can be analysed from the individual or client’s perspective; an important consideration in development situations.

It has been contended that the individual's scope for role negotiation or enactment is much greater in societies such as Brunei, where the boundaries between social and formal organisational roles are not clearly drawn or observed. Blunt *et al.* (1989) argue that, in these situations, a concentration on role conflict, role negotiation and role enactment provides a more balanced view of reality than that offered by conventional functionalist role theory. In the conventional approach one's role within the organisation is considered less problematic. There is more emphasis on trying to adopt a prescriptive approach to organisational roles, than trying to understand the external pressures and conflicts that can dominate management.

Such factors assume even more importance in newly emerging states characterised by corporate social organisations, particularism, resource scarcity and generally lower levels of organisational commitment (Blunt *et al.* 1989:415). The comparative study carried out in Brunei was designed to test the validity of Price's (1975) social role analysis of the behaviour of government officers in Ghana. Apart from additional qualitative procedures, similar methodological and experimental procedures to Price (1975) were used in this comparative study; the main instrument being a clientele questionnaire. Price's (1975) argument was that if society is organised on the basis of corporate group behaviour, then the norms and standards of behaviour required by formal organisational roles will be violated in favour of these particularistic obligations. The nature and dimensions of these particularistic obligations are, therefore, of central importance to role conflict.

A primary dimension of importance is the size of families. This is due to the weight of obligation placed on family members and the extent of family membership. It is this dimension, Price (1975: 95) argues, that poses problems for effective role performance from the organisational point of view. The magnitude of expectations concerning obligations that clients of Brunei organisations had, of getting better treatment from their relatives, was similar to Price's study in Ghana. In both studies approximately two

thirds of respondents regarded these particularistic and familial role expectations as legitimate (Blunt *et al.*, 1989: 420). Getting better treatment ranked in line with the closeness of kinship ties. In both studies the closest kinship ties tested were one's father's brother and the most distant kinship tie tested was the husband of father's brother's wife's sister. Significantly, even in the case of this most distant relationship, nearly a third of respondents expected better treatment. This general social acceptance and social legitimacy of particularistic relationships within organisations speaks for the extent of this problem.

The reduced expectations of better treatment from distant relatives in Brunei, as distinct from Ghana, is argued to relate to Brunei's small and ethnically more homogeneous population. That is, everyone can find some relationship to someone else if they wish. That they can, or may, take advantage of these distant relatives will depend on the advantage to the client (Blunt *et al.*, 1989: 419). The circle within which particularistic expectations are likely to predominate is therefore related to both the kinship distance and the respondent's belief in the existence of familial obligations. This is also influenced to some degree by residency. In urban situations in Ghana, conjugal ties are of increasing importance due in part to separation from rural kinship and obligatory networks (Price, 1975). Allowing for individual choice with regards to distant relationships and personal friendships provides a complex picture of obligatory relationships (Blunt *et al.*, 1989:420).

The kinship ties that were utilised in Price's (1975:98) survey also incorporated dimensions of consanguinity (biological ties) and generation (age ties). The survey found little correlation, however, between these types of kinship ties. Due to the type of expectations considered in this questionnaire there also appeared to be no relationship between obligations to matrimonial or patrimonial descent groups, or tribal background. Differences in the way that lineage membership is determined seems to bear little relation to expectations in this context. However, membership is known to be important in this context. However, membership is known to be important in other contexts such

as in determining inheritance (Price,1975:100). Little appears to be known as to what degree contemporary indigenous systems of accountability and control can constrain obligatory pressures.

Although modern influences and organisations are seen to affect traditional corporate systems, many of them are still very much alive and well. Their continued existence in the face of development and modern organisational needs speaks for their strength. The major problem of corporate systems, from an organisational viewpoint, lies in the inability of individuals to separate working life from corporate life. In the corporate societies described, social solidarity and customary behaviour take precedence over the individual. This provides for considerable conflict and deviant behaviour in organisations. The effects of these particularistic practises are a lack of commitment to the organisation, leading to systematic corruption and ineffectiveness. These major impediments to organisational effectiveness suggest that existing strategies of management training and development may need to be reorientated (Blunt *et al.*, 1989: 434).

2.5 CULTURAL CHANGE AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

A principal feature of HRM in developing states has been the concentration on improving the effectiveness of organisations. Many of the primary problems to improving organisations are known to relate to indigenous values and beliefs, and the systems, structures, and procedures arising from them. Moreover, the strength of indigenous cultures poses questions concerning the transferability of management concepts, techniques and practises developed in the west. The failures of external intervention in improving performance are attributed, almost invariably, to the inappropriateness of imported HRM to the indigenous setting (Blunt and Jones, eds. 1991).

Evidence suggests that while there are common structural requirements for improving organisational effectiveness in any context, the pre-requisite for improvement is the basic value of commitment to the organisation (Blunt, 1990: 308). This is well understood in development agencies. For example, commitment by public administration and political leaders is a major requirement of developing states seeking support from the United Nations Management Development Program (Palmlund, 1991: 49). In some developing states, however, the national policy is one of limiting cultural change, yet at the same time commitment to promoting policies that advocate rapid educational and technological change. In these situations, as Blunt (1988: 239) has remarked, it is unlikely that one can have it both ways.

The problem in translating development commitment into practise in developing states could, therefore, be argued to require management to take on values such as mutual trust and confidence, openness to constructive criticism and change, and clear articulation of accountability and role relationships (Blunt, 1990; 309). Clear evidence abounds that this is not an easy matter. Particularistic practises and group solidarity have been shown to work against these essential organisational values (see, for example, Price, 1975; Blunt *et al.*, 1989; Richards, 1991; Price, 1975).

Other contingencies affecting management development in these situations are political commitment to this process, adequate management resources and the impact of political and social forces on organisations (Kiggundu, 1991: 33). In Africa, for example, the context for development is one where society dominates organisations. Kiggundu (1991: 33) points out that “one cannot be of much help within organisations in Africa therefore, without at least a working knowledge of the dominant environmental forces affecting organisations.” Understanding the dimensions of these forces, and their effects on the management of organisations, is an obvious requirement that needs to be undertaken prior to management development and organisational change.

In the case of South-East Asia there is some agreement about underlying and dominant environmental forces which impede organisational change. Blunt (1988), for example, compared his own findings on Brunei and Malaysia with Bate's (1984) work on cultural orientations and Hofstede's (1983) cultural dimensions of South – East Asia. The results showed a strong correlation of cultural characteristics and associated organisational outcomes. For example, the high power distance characteristics of South-East Asia, as reported by Hofstede (1983), Blunt (1988) and Richards (1991), are comparable to Bate's (1984) cultural orientations of 'subordination and antipathy' behaviour associated with unemotionality. Associated behavioural outcomes affecting management development are, following Blunt (1988: 238), "[l]ow commitment to and involvement in change [and] [d]isowning of problems and an abdication of responsibility for the search for solutions." What this means in organisational terms, is that people do not get emotionally involved.

Problems therefore tend to be internalised and to smoulder for a long time. If problems are brought out into the open they tend to deal with them at arms length. Wherever possible, face-to-face confrontation is avoided. People tended to be over-cautious and inflexible. Collaborative problem solving and decision making rarely occur, and people's concerns focus more about keeping the status quo rather than attempting to change it (Blunt, 1988: 238).

Hofstede (1987: 17) argues that cultural assumptions underlying these high power distance societies are distinctly different from individualistic western models. These high power distance values that characterise South-East Asia Brunei and Malaysia, act in opposition to modern organisations where the accent is on co-operation, openness and mutual trust (Bates, 1984; Blunt, 1988). Hofstede's (1987: 16-17) South East Asian assumptions, for example, suggest that:

— *Work is a necessity but not a goal in itself.*

— *People should find their rightful place, in peace and harmony with their environment.*

— *Absolute objectives exist only with God. In the world, persons in authority positions represent God, so their objectives should be followed.*

— *People behave as members of a family and/or group. Those who do not are rejected by society,*

The possibilities for changing these cultural values are not encouraging, given the underlying assumptions and corporate nature of these developing states. However, the need for effective organisations demands some elements of cultural change (Blunt, 1988, 1989, 1990; Richards, 1991).

Richards (1991: 18) suggests that there are three broad alternative policies for countries like Brunei:

(1) *Change the cultural base of values and attitudes.*

(2) *Change the nature of the organisation.*

(3) *Modify the values and attitudes and modify the nature of the organisation.*

This third policy is suggested by Richards (1991) as the most probable course for development in situations such as Brunei. Blunt *et al.*(1989; 435) argue that in order to get a clear separation of roles and changed attitudes and values, “the social value of individual identity will have to grow to a point that allows the social actor to stand apart from the group with which he identifies.” This becomes very hard in situations where people in authority are seen to represent God, and where if they do not behave as members of a family or group they will be rejected by society (Blunt *et al.*, 1989: 435).

Given the nature of these high power distance societies, intervention strategies need to be adapted to suit this environment; where direct confrontation of these problems is avoided at all costs. The only alternative solution for value and attitude change is if political leadership can provide an appropriate role model and commitment to such

intervention (Blunt *et al.*, 1989: 435). Whatever the case, cultural change will not occur easily or quickly. Interventionist strategies therefore need to take account of the nature of the society that they are dealing with. Richards (1991: 19) suggests that possible solutions and mechanisms for cultural change should be tested out and re-conceptualised in terms of the best aspects of indigenous knowledge. What constitutes the best, or most appropriate, indigenous knowledge and management techniques in Brunei, will obviously be different in other cultural situations.

2.6 INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT

Traditional indigenous systems of control and accountability of social, political and economic resources have provided a wide field of anthropological investigation over many years. Although much of what constituted traditional systems of management have been discarded or discounted as irrelevant, contemporary uses of indigenous knowledge systems, in agriculture for example (Marsden, 1991: 33), are providing a more sustainable platform for development than much of the technology the green revolution promised. Unlike western systems, these indigenous knowledge systems, particularly in hunter gatherer societies, do not separate man from the natural environment. As Howes (in Wolfe *et al.* 1991: 11) puts it:

[i]ndigenous knowledge systems are the concrete expression of ‘world views’ which do not regard human society as something apart from ‘environment’, but emphasise the unity and symbiosis of man and nature

Categories of knowledge that relate to these indigenous knowledge systems are argued by Wolfe *et al.* (1991: 11) to be “holistic rather than reductionist; subjective rather than objective; and experiential rather than positivist.” Western categories of knowledge, on the other hand, are based on assumptions to do with reductionism, objectiveness and

positivism. These assumptions, as Wolfe *et al.* (1991) argue, underlie traditional western management practice and are characterised by ethnocentrism. The creation of the modern state over indigenous societies has attacked the validity of non-western indigenous knowledge systems, as the modern state has vested much of the control that indigenous political and social systems had, over both material and human resources, in western styled organisations.

What is not well documented is an understanding of how indigenous organisations operate to provide control over resources and the management processes involved. This has been suggested to have important implications for organisational development. Kiggundu (1991) talks about the lack of indigenous change management strategies in Africa, for example, and the loss of checks and balances which now allow personal excesses.

If HRM strategies are to utilise indigenous knowledge systems and adapt to these divergent social contexts, the applicability of management skill transfer is called into question. For failures of traditional development intervention strategies in the past were characterised by assumptions that technology transfer alone would produce results (Marsden, 1991: 22). Although there is no one best approach to development intervention, there is a need to ensure that development strategies are compatible with adult learning. Intervention strategies by here major donor organisations have been assessed by Sahara (1991) as to their compatibility with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory. A basic principle of this theory is that adult learning based on one-way transmission of hypothetical models is not as effective as mutual learning based on real problems (Sahara, 1991: 70). The current hands off style of the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), with its role model of expatriates as development catalysts, is suggested as the most adaptable to experiential learning (Sahara, 1991; 72). This hands off approach encourages indigenous managers to take decisions on their own and to learn from experience. Expatriates stay with their indigenous counterparts in a

consulting, rather than a teaching role, and attempt to make sense of the real worlds of these managers.

Underlying SIDA's approach to development is participatory action research; the central tenet of which is experiential learning. The importance of participation in this bottom up approach lies in the very reasonable assumption that people will be more responsive if they are central to the design and implementation of programs that affect them and if they have made some investment or commitment to them (Marsden, 1991: 22). The long term need to modify underlying cultural values and beliefs, that Richards (1991) refers to in Brunei, has a similar orientation to that of experiential action learning. Experiential action learning also requires a long term approach and is concerned with the discovery and resolution of deep seated problems by participants. Action learning has been proven to be a successful intervention strategy in management development in the Third World. The doyen and founder of action learning, Revans (1991), provides examples of the philosophy of participation and involvement which characterises this action learning approach.

There is little conflict from management writers on the Third World that dealing with real problems and situations in a developmental context provides a far better learning environment than culturally inappropriate management training. At its worst, traditional training practices with a one best way approach are highly ethnocentric. Much traditional management training has emphasised procedural training for lower level positions and routine functions. Management training which either ignores, or goes against, the context of indigenous organisations and management, as has been previously noted, is a major problem in Africa and other developing states (Blunt *et al.*, 1989: 435; Kiggundu, 1991: 31).

The social environment, which dominates organisations in developing states, is not amenable to the individual autonomy and impersonal relationships required of effective western styled organisations. The essential need for development, therefore, is to

modify these social values and beliefs to accommodate the needs of the organisation. Modifying underlying cultural beliefs and values is known to be a long and tricky process; one that requires full participation and acceptance by the affected social group. In situations where organisational and social boundaries cannot be made to coincide, modification of values and beliefs will need to be reinforced by political commitment to change. Long term and participatory involvement in this developmental process is essential for cultural and belief modification to take place. Adult learning theory and action research provide a proven contemporary response to these needs.

2.7 ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTROL IMPERATIVES

As already discussed, contingency theory which dominates management thinking proposes that there is no one best way to manage an organisation. The variety of contexts within which organisations operate, particularly in the corporate cultures discussed, provide a compelling picture of divergence. The need for organisations to adapt to these situations is clear. Adaptation however can go too far. Developing countries with highly divergent cultures are characterised by endemic particularistic practices and systematic organisational corruption (Price, 1975; Blunt *et al.*, 1989; Richards, 1991). These pose major problems for organisations in such developing states, which not only seek to keep their culture intact - and implicitly keep such practices alive - but at the same time seek effective organisations. In these circumstances, as Richards (1991) rightly remarks, “you can’t have your cake and eat it too.” The need for control of these endemic and particularistic practices within organisations is, therefore, a prime requirement for organisations. Control over such practices, however, lies with the corporate group and the social and political environment.

Commitment to increasing the effectiveness of organisations, in such conditions, is obviously going to have to contend with these factors. Contemporary pressures of

economic rationalism and global competition are producing more reflective and sustainable requirements for development resources from donor aid organisations (Sahara, 1991). With this necessarily comes an increased requirement for client commitment to effectiveness and what this entails. As Blunt *et al.*, (1989) point out:

[o]rganisational effectiveness can be defined as the degree to which an organisation attains goals agreed to by interested members in a manner acceptable to them and commensurate with the overall mission of the organisation and its long term survival.

In order to attain these goals it is suggested that attention be given to two major dimensions of organisations and their interrelationships.

1. The first dimension required is a structured division of labour involving a clear definition of roles and methods of coordination and control. This dimension relates to the essential functional needs of organisations and has been termed by Blunt (1990: 302) as 'Structural Imperatives of Organisations'. Blunt (1990: 302) suggests that these imperatives, taken in order, are necessary for improving organisational performance anywhere. They are:

Mission, goals, strategies and main functions. Functional alignment. Co-ordination and control. Accountability and role relationships. Planning and communication. Performance and reward. Effective leadership.

2. Individual and group behaviour, including motivation, conflict and commitment, constitute the second dimension of effectiveness which relates to the essential need for values conducive to organisational effectiveness. This dimension, or 'Value Imperatives for Organisational Effectiveness,' is argued to contain the essential prerequisite of development. The essential value imperative is that of commitment to getting the job done which, as Blunt (1990a: 308) notes, is particularly important for those leading and controlling the organisation. Without this value driven commitment at the top, the organisation will simply go from one crisis to the next. Apart from this

essential motivational value, which should ideally be distributed throughout the organisation, considerable value needs to be placed on “mutual trust and confidence; openness to constructive criticism and change; fair and just treatment for everyone” (Blunt, 1990: 309).

Since these structural and value imperatives describe the essential needs of effective organisations, they should equally serve to describe what is wrong with organisations. The nature of these structured organisational and value imperatives lend themselves to this task because they are characteristics of all organisations, yet allow for the central contingency notion of adaptation to divergent situations. The structured and ordered steps that need to be taken in order to improve effectiveness provide a logical framework from which to assess structural weakness. The basic need and commitment by top management to values aimed at getting the job done provides a starting point for evaluation of commitment to this process and, therefore, effectiveness. This starting point can include divergent effects arising from the political and social environment within which the organisation is set.

In addition, this model is particularly useful as it allows for evaluation of effectiveness both through objective and functional methodologies; as well as more ethnomethodological approaches such as role theory (Price, 1975). Its usefulness in this regard, as a framework from which to develop participatory intervention strategies such as action research, requires further exploring. The ability to assess objective aspects of accountability, as well as the subjective role relationships associated with accountability, provides a powerful tool for assessing problems in organisations.

Imperatives to do with aspects of control and accountability and role relationships are suggested as particularly important in divergent and corporate environments (Price, 1975; Blunt *et al.*, 1989; Richards, 1991). Without clear role separation between competing value systems, role conflict provides a situation where, in high power distance societies, management accountability takes on a different meaning.

Unswerving obedience to authority in these high power distance societies is translated into tall hierarchal organisations where the interpretation of accountability has much more to do with preserving authority than of getting the job done (Blunt, 1990a: 303).

Role relationships in societies which have corporate social systems cause major problems as to who is accountable to whom and for what. Accountability and control become meaningless in situations where accountability is seen as having more to do with kinship or family groups (Price, 1975). In this situation, which may be evidenced in low as well as high power distance societies, understanding the dimensions and strengths of corporate social systems becomes important and clearly needs further examination. Price (1975) has provided evidence to suggest that the extent of these familial relationships and obligatory pressures bear little relationship to marriage and kinship ties. Traditionally, however, control and accountability of people and resources was exercised through social and tribal structures. Understanding how traditional control and accountability works in indigenous management practices is obviously important, not only in terms of defining the limits to accountable and controllable corporate boundaries, but also to understanding the possibilities for role segregation.

The essential need for improving organisational effectiveness in highly divergent cultures has been seen to be mitigated by the pervasive effects of corporate social systems and a lack of political commitment. Possibilities for utilising convergent organisational imperatives as a way of evaluating and coming to grips with these problems has been suggested. Relating structural and value imperatives to role conflict provides a picture of organisational strength and the reality of management commitment. These organisational imperatives suggest a strategic framework for participatory development; a way to explore the interrelationships of values and the crucial dimensions of role conflict. The important, but little researched, aspects of indigenous management may hold possibilities for organisational development. This is suggested to be particularly the case where collective control and organisational boundaries can be made to coincide.

The need for adequate levels of control and accountability, and problems associated with achieving such in some Third World States, have been seen to be centred on the corporate nature of society. In much of South East Asia this corporate nature is characterised by what Hofstede (1980) has termed high power distance societies. There is little information available, however, as to the development problems posed by collective and low power distance and marginalised indigenous societies. Moreover, it is known that the political and social control exercised over them by nation states provide additional problems to the possibilities for organisational development.

2.8 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE FOURTH WORLD

The collective nature of societies, found in many Third World countries, is also found in other and more marginalised societies. The nature of these marginalised and tribal societies, and the problems and possibilities they cause for effective management, bear striking similarities to many Third World nation states. Such similarities are, however, offset by the fact that these small scale collective yet individualistic societies exhibit what appears to be generally low power distance (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1990). That is, the degree of inequality experienced within band and tribal societies is not a major feature. More importantly, these societies are encapsulated within much more powerful nation states. Understanding the historical and political outcomes of this control by the encapsulating nation state has been suggested to provide another dimension to development (Dyck, 1985).

Indigenous people within Australia, Canada and Northern Scandinavia represent some of the last tribal groups of hunter-gatherers and herder's whose economic mode of production has changed little since the dawn of human society. Many of these indigenous people now live in urban situations and many more lack tribal affiliations to land and kin. A considerable number, and the concern of this manuscript however, are still strongly tied to their traditional culture and tribal lands which, in the case of Australia, have belonged to Aboriginal people uninterrupted for at least 40,000 years. Unlike South - East Asian states, the political and social structures of these prior hunter-gatherer societies are characterised by small tribal groups and bands. Due to the nature of hunting and gathering, populations are very low; rarely exceeding a few hundred people with little stratification within communities. Status is more a matter of sex, age, and personal qualities, tied in with traditional knowledge and skills (Bodley, 1988:10).

The significance of these tribal cultures is not only that they are totally different from the mainstream nation states which encompass them, but in a real sense they are the only sustainable cultural system that humanity has ever known. The adaptive strategies of hunter gatherers sustained and satisfied people without depleting the environment for nearly all of human history. As Sahlins (1974) points out, they represent the original affluent society since their needs are low and could be supplied within a sustainable environment. The relationships of these indigenous people to nature, their cognition style and sense of time is also totally different to industrialised western societies (Christie, 1985).

The historical, social and political factors that constitute the environment within which organisations exist, has been suggested by Kiggundu (1991) as an important pre-requisite to understanding organisational development. In the case of encapsulated and small scale societies, the history of political domination and administrative control exercised over them by nation states provides a consistent dimension against which indigenous people have struggled for self-management and independence.

In situations where indigenous people are politically weak, economically marginal and culturally stigmatised members of nation states, they comprise what in recent years has come to be known as the Fourth World (Dyck, 1985:1). The Fourth World is suggested to be a useful operational term to denote the political and administrative environment within these culturally different people live. The similar nature of the problems that confront indigenous people has resulted in the formation of the World Council of Indigenous People. Similarities in social relationships and problems to do with development have resulted in considerable academic exchange. Writers such as Wolfe (1989b; 1991) and Young (1984; 1988) have written about both Aboriginal and Inuit experiences in relation to development.

Understanding the cultural, political and social factors that go into shaping the environment within which management and organisations operate, is suggested to be more important for marginalised people than it is for Third World countries. The nature of problems caused by close knit social relationships to organisational effectiveness are said to be similar for other high and low power societies. (Hofstede, 1980; Ellanna *et al.*, 1988). The major difference to organisational development which characterises Fourth World indigenous people is the political, financial and administrative impact that the dominant culture has over them.

2.9 SUMMARY

The ability of HRM to effectively come to grips with problems emanating from contingencies and situations which face modern organisations is of recent origin. It has been seen to be due in part to the exposure to different ways of managing organisations. Some of which are effective, Japan for example, and some which are not, such as Brunei. Modern analytical approaches of HRM are based on approaches informed by the dominant position of contingency theory; which points out that there is no one best way to manage organisations. A major problem, however, to effective organisations in

the Third World has much to do with the collective and particularistic nature of these societies.

Collective relationships within these developing states, as well as indigenous tribal cultures, are shown to provide the greatest challenge to HRM. The strength and pervasiveness of particularistic relationships and underlying values, gives rise to considerable role conflict and organisational behaviour that leads to extensive organisational corruption. The essential need to change this state of affairs, to provide a clear separation between work and social life, runs hard up against the problems surrounding cultural change and the value adoption required for this to happen. The pre-requisite to pursuing effectiveness, as Blunt (1990a) points out, is commitment. Getting this commitment is seen to be problematic in situations where people need to keep their culture intact and yet increase the effectiveness of their organisations.

Skill transfer and management training which have been carried out regardless of major cultural differences have been shown to be both inappropriate and unsuccessful.

Intervention strategies, if they are to succeed, require a more participative and long term developmental approach in order to provide the right conditions for change. This approach should incorporate experiential and action learning, since they are known to be the most effective learning styles for adults. Adopting appropriate intervention strategies also requires adaptation to the local environment. Such adaptation may be able to incorporate indigenous knowledge and management techniques. These have been suggested as providing possibilities to unlocking the role conflict experienced in these organisations.

Accountability and control imperatives are essential requirements to effective indigenous management. The use of organisational imperatives to provide a basis for the evaluation of organisational development, and the demands of the social environment is suggested. A requirement for all development, however, is an understanding of the major political, social and economic forces affecting the

organisation. In the case of indigenous tribal people encapsulated within nation states, the political and historical control that has been, and still is, exercised over them adds another dimension to opposing cultural differences. The following chapter provides a picture of this situation with regards to Australian Aboriginals.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM A GENERAL TO A SPECIFIC PICTURE OF ABORGINIAL CULTURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Given what has been said regarding the situation of indigenous cultures, this chapter focuses on the culture of contemporary Australian Aboriginal people still orientated to their traditional way of life. These indigenous Aboriginal people of Australia, and similarly of Canada, now only occupy the northern and outback regions. They live in small communities or bands and are still dependent in varying degrees on their traditional hunter gather life-styles. Understanding the nature of this traditional way of life is shown to be central to the contemporary problems indigenous people face in terms of development towards self-determination within the nation state of Australia. While examples were drawn in Chapter two of the problem for organisational development in what Hofstede (1980) has called high power distance and collective cultures such as Brunei, low power distance and small scale collective cultures such as those of Aboriginal people in Australia will be shown to exhibit a different set of problems for organisational development.

The contemporary situation of indigenous people encapsulated within the democratic welfare states of Canada and Australia is considerably better than the plight of other

indigenous people within other developing states. For example, Indians of the Amazon in Brazil. However, the powerful political structures which confront all indigenous people, as Kleivan (1989: 31) reminds us, very often affects their conditions and circumstances in negative ways.

Land rights and control resource development are major issues for indigenous people who are often accused of utilising their land in an uneconomical way. The kind of rationality and sustainable development reflected in their mode of living is not respected by societies who regard the philosophy of economic growth as the only acceptable development option. The comparative experiences of Canadian and Australian indigenous people in seeking more control over their traditional lands and way of life is currently producing considerable sympathetic academic research. Indigenous and western knowledge and management systems (Wolfe *et al.*, 1991), comparative issues in development (Young, 1991a) and the politics of these northern regions in both Canada and Australia (Jull, 1991) provide a comparative basis for the contemporary scene of indigenous development.

This chapter firstly considers the Aboriginal situation, both in terms of the historical and social forces imposed on Aboriginal people by the dominant Australian society, as well as cultural similarities of small scale hunter gatherer societies. Having provided an historical background, the general situation of traditionally orientated Aboriginal culture is discussed with particular emphasis on contemporary Aboriginal communities in north and outback Australia. The relatively recent and drastic changes which have occurred to Aboriginal people – in moving from a homogeneous and mobile band existence on traditional land to residency on implanted and, in many cases, heterogeneous tribal communities – is shown to be a major cause of internal political and social problems (Gerritson, 1982). These problems encompass resource control and allocation within community organisations. Understanding the contemporary nature of Aboriginal culture in these implanted communities, with particular reference to control and accountability of resources within Aboriginal culture, is therefore a major theme of this chapter,

The contrasting world view of Aboriginal people, the importance of kinship systems, the nature of time and relationships between man and the environment are drawn on to provide some idea of the very different way in which Aboriginal people view the world. The nature of kinship relationships shows that economic and cultural factors cannot be

separated within traditionally orientated Aboriginal communities (Altman, 1987; Young, 1988). The difficulties and stress faced by many Aboriginal people in trying to operate in two very opposing cultures, or domains, has resulted in organisational failures (Ellanna *et al.*, 1988:60; Rowse, 1992).

Given the need for specificity, the final part of this chapter focuses on the Tiwi people. Their culture and way of life constitutes the primary example of traditional orientated Aboriginal culture. Aspects to do with kinship, land ownership, customary practises and ceremonies are drawn on to provide a contemporary picture of Tiwi life. However, the perspective which is presented is that of non-Tiwi lacking a working knowledge of the Tiwi language. Therefore, this explanation relies to a great extent on what is written of the Tiwi people and what has been explained or experienced during several extended visits to the Tiwi Islands over a period of four years from 1989 to 1993.

3.2 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN GENERAL: THE COMPARABLE ABORIGINAL SITUATION

In its 1989 year book The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) reported that the Forth World comprises some 200 million indigenous people. These tribal or Aboriginal people are now generally minority population located within nation states. As such, they share common problems to do with their contrasting and often opposing ways of life to that of the nation states which control them.

Bodley (1991: 5) suggests that it is the small scale nature of indigenous cultures and their adherence to certain cultural traits – such as community-level resource management, high levels of local self-sufficiency and relative social equality – that makes indigenous people so distinctive. Adherence to such cultural traits and domestic modes of production is most characteristic in the small scale indigenous hunter gatherer societies of both Canada and Australia. Although changes to the circumstances of indigenous people within these welfare states have reduced their dependence on hunting and gathering as the sole means of subsistence, it still provides important resources and is integral to their traditionally orientated lifestyle (Williams and Hunn 1982; Altman 1987).

Until the beginning of the industrial revolution, barely 200 years ago, indigenous people still effectively controlled much of their inhabited worlds. Although slowly giving up ground to expanding states, the advent of colonial conquest by industrial nations and subjugation by emergent nation states destroyed millions of Aboriginal people worldwide. The American frontier, the bush veldt of South Africa, tropical forests of the Amazon Basin and the outback of Australia all saw killings, imprisonment, torture and exploitation of their original inhabitants (Hitchcock, 1985).

Beliefs that indigenous people would die out or be assimilated into nation states gave grounds for anthropologist, politicians and missionaries to reduce their suffering by way of protection and civilising programs. As Bodley (1991: 2) remarks, this “effectively denied any possibility that indigenous people might maintain their independence.” Recent years have seen these people asserting their rights politically through national and international organizations. As the concept of human rights has expanded to include the cultural, political and territorial rights of these people, there has been increasing pressure brought to bear upon nation states to treat them more equitably and humanely (Jull, 1991).

Australian Aboriginal people have continuously occupied the Australian continent for at least 40,000 years (Roberts, Jones and Smith, 1990). This represents the longest continuous period of occupation known by human society. Apart from occasional contact with Portuguese and Dutch vessels (from the seventeenth century) and the seasonal Makassan trepang fishing off the northern coastline (which began in the eighteenth century), there was little which disturbed the tribes and bands of Aboriginal people and their hunting and gathering lifestyle.

Colonisation by the British which commenced in 1788 in New South Wales and the declaration of Terra Nullis over the Australian continent abrogated the rights of Aboriginal people to their traditional lands. The destruction of much of what was Aboriginal society followed the direction and history of colonisation of the continent. Although images of the noble savage of Rousseau crop up in the early journals and chronicles, the predominant sentiment of the early settlers towards Aboriginal people was one of racial and human inferiority (Christie, 1979). The history of persecution and violence directed against Aboriginal people for most of the last two hundred years, and within living memory of many Aboriginal people, has been well documented. Rowley

(1970) for example, provides a general history of the destruction of Aboriginal society, while Downing (1988) provides a specific history of violence and persecution within the Northern Territory. Moreover, unlike the experience of Canada, where indigenous trapping and hunting skills provided valuable furs and income from traditional lands unsuited to other pastoral or agriculture uses, Australian Aboriginals had limited economic resources to trade apart from considerable land which was appropriated for pastoral and agricultural use by the colonists (Jull, 1992: 10).

Colonisation of the Australian continent and dispossession of Aboriginal people did not occur overnight and was geographically uneven (Rowley, 1970). Explorers, and the pastoralists who followed, took up the fertile south-east of the continent first before heading towards the centre and the north. In the case of northern Australia, permanent settlement by Europeans is barely a hundred years old. Remoteness and the inhospitable climate and terrain saved most of Northern Australia from excesses of violence that characterised much of the early colonisation of the south-east of the continent and Tasmania. However massacres still occurred (Downing, 1988: 6). Aboriginal responses to this colonising process ranged from resistance through to passivity and helplessness in the face of increasing numbers of colonists and their weapons.

The assumption that Aboriginal people would die out unless they were protected was the dominant policy framework adopted by the Federal Government throughout Australia from Federation in 1901. This [policy brought in paternalistic and coercive measures directed towards controlling and containing Aboriginal people (Rowley, 1980). Until the early nineteen fifties, Aboriginal 'protectors' were appointed and empowered to remove Aboriginal people from urban areas to Aboriginal reserves where they could compel people to remain. In those draconian days control by government even extended to control over Aboriginal social life. For example:

(m)arriages needed the approval of the protector, in some cases Aboriginal property was placed in official hands and children were forcibly removed from their parents. Protective legislation defined who were Aboriginal persons and effectively transformed their status into a class of Australians without the rights accorded to the rest of the community (Miller, 1980: 1).

From the 1950's to the mid 1960's the Native Welfare Council, comprised of the Federal and State Governments, re-orientated policy towards assimilation of Aboriginal

people into mainstream Australian society. The idea being that Aboriginal people would eventually be expected to take on the same customs and be influenced by the same beliefs and loyalties as white Australians. The establishment of missions and government controlled communities, which took place during both the protectionist and assimilationist periods, forced many Aboriginal people away from their tribal lands to central settlements. Non-Aboriginal staff of either mission or government controlled settlements/communities when differing clan and language groups, who traditionally would not have resided together and may even have been enemies, were forced to interact and even intermarry.

Moves away from the assimilation policy and towards one of self-determination and self-management followed the referendum of 1967. This gave Aboriginal people the same legal rights as other Australians and provided a basis for the Federal Government's involvement in Aboriginal Affairs. The policy of self-determination for Aboriginal people was formally given recognition by the Whitlam Government in 1972 (HRSCAA, 1990:3). The political situation within Aboriginal communities, which were expected to take on self-determination, was and in many cases still is problematic. Problems to do with tribal or clan groups co-habituating on communities are well documented in the literature and are still a major concern in many communities (see, for example, Ellanna *et al.*, 1988; Wolfe, 1989). As Coombs (1980: 2) points out:

(m)ission settlements and government settlements, being of limited size, were inevitably situated on the territory of merely one or two clans among many; accordingly, mission and settlements communities characteristically contained many tribesmen that traditionally did not belong to them.

Although these problems caused some movement away from settlements and the establishment of outstations on traditional home-lands, the Labor government's (1973) support of decentralisation allowed, as Coombs (1980: 2) remarks, "the exodus to begin in earnest." Outstations, which generally consist of extended family groups, are normally dependant for services on larger communities which range in population from a few hundred to a couple of thousand people, Residency in communities or outstations is generally fluid, with people visiting relatives or spending time on their homelands for extended periods. Importantly such communities need to be seen as artificial constructs which bear no relationship to traditional Aboriginal living patterns and the small groups which characterised a hunter gatherer way of life. Much of the conflict which still exists

in many Aboriginal groups within the community have had with each other and to non-Aboriginal managers and therefore, access to resources. As the Miller report (1985: 2) points out:

This has left a legacy of communities with a range of interests and traditional groups whose needs have to be reconciled within the governing structures imposed from outside and with which the communities are expected to run their own affairs.

Gerritson (1982) interpreted the resulting competition between traditional Aboriginal groups for European goods and services, to a need by the leaders of these groups to acquire western knowledge in order to effectively compete. This competitive situation that Gerritson (1982) has described of the Katherine region is also suggested to be true of Tiwi communities and is taken up in detail later. The implanted nature of communities and the problems of community life experienced by Aboriginal people suggest there is a primary need to understand the general nature and basis of contemporary Aboriginal culture. This is particularly the case in terms of moves towards self-determination and self-management. For indigenous resource management and cognitive aspects to do with the way of life of these hunter gatherer societies is still very much alive and well in the remote communities of northern Australia.

3.3 TRADITIONALLY ORIENTED ABORIGINAL CULTURE; THE GENERAL SITUATION

Before European settlement there were at least 500 tribal groups of culturally and linguistically distinct Aboriginal people living in Australia (Berndt, 1981: 28). Given an estimated total population of 300,000 these tribal groups may have averaged only a few hundred people. However, archaeological evidence shows an adaptive history of Aboriginal culture and hunting and gathering lifestyles that has, in many areas, seen more sedentary and concentrated populations than was reported at the time of European settlement (Schrire, 1984; Lurandos, 1985). Although many of these tribes no longer exist in the southern states of Australia, there are many Aboriginal people living in remote communities in the central and northern areas of Australia who are still strongly attached to a tribal way of life and pre-contact practices, or what is generally known as traditionally orientated culture (Altman, 1987; Young, 1988).

This attachment, as Harris (1980) observed in his study of the coastal community of Milingimbi in north-western Arnhem Land, means that although the Balanda (European) domain of the cash economy and modern technology operates between 8 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday, after hours and on weekends the Yolngu (aboriginal) domain operates. A domain where “the vernacular is always spoken, all the time, and the Aboriginal world view and social priorities reign” (Harris, 1980: 132). Harris’ portrayal of these two domains is not merely descriptive of the use of language, it is also politically prescriptive of the apportioning of powers of management within such communities (Rowse, 1992: 19).

However, access to the Yolngu domain is not easy for Europeans. Few non-Aboriginals speak vernacular languages with sufficient fluency to know what is going on and there is little ethnographic material available, particularly from Aboriginal people, which explains how resource management is carried out within this Aboriginal domain. Nevertheless, a vast amount of literature is available from non-Aboriginal researchers on aspects of traditional Aboriginal culture along with a growing body of information about specific aspects of contemporary culture and resource management within communities.

Taking these factors into account, generalising about the traditional nature of this Aboriginal domain has a number of pitfalls; not the least being its diversity and adaptive nature. There are, however, some common aspects to do with resource management within the small groups that make up Aboriginal tribes which are important. In particular, the strength and nature of sharing relationships within kinship systems which are of central importance to traditionally orientated Aboriginal people.

Dependency on hunting and gathering as the primary economic means of subsistence has been largely replaced in these communities by government transfer payments; such as Social Security benefits or, on some communities, the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). However, the general lack of marketable resources provides limited employment in Local Government and the one or two small community enterprises which characterise these communities. Whilst bush foods and natural resources are still very important this is generally only the case in the smaller outstations characterised by residency of small (20-50) land owning groups.

3.3.1 Resource Control and Kinship

Tribal boundaries can be said to constitute the general limits to culturally distinct kinship networks, social organizations and marriage and form the basis for tribal law and shared mythology. However, the same cannot be said of traditional resources management. Although tribal maps, for example those of Tindale (1974), provide a basis for recognising tribal lands and boundaries, rights to specific area of land within tribal boundaries belong to much smaller land holding groups. Concepts to do with the rights and obligations of land ownership and the nature of bounded territories are distinctly different from western concepts of land ownership.

In the case of the Western Desert, Gould (1982:71) describes a situation where “the non-seasonal and unpredictable nature of rainfall and surface water resources, create a situations in which people must ‘chase rain’ in order to live.” Given that edible plants and game are also related to the availability of water, Aboriginal nomadism in the Western Desert is extreme and opportunistic. The fluidity of residence required in this situation and the fluctuations in the size and movement of local groups precluded any kind of local organisation based upon groups of fixed size or composition operating within bounded territories. The answer to resource scarcity in the Western Desert has been the establishment and maintenance of long distance kin sharing networks that enable people to move freely to better favoured areas in drought (Gould, 1982: 72). The constant giving away of food and goods to in-laws and other related kin maintain the sharing networks and serve as a kind of social capital against which one can draw on in times of need.

Broadly speaking Western Desert people emphasise kinship and personal sharing relationships across vast tracts of country, rather than focusing on membership in exclusive land owning patrilineal descent groups. These latter groups are more representative of coastal people with a smaller range of seasonal mobility and less marginal environments (Sutton and Rigsby, 1982: 158). Kinship relationships are in all cases constitutes the basic datum point of social identity in traditional Aboriginal society. As Williams (1987: 22) explains:

(i) In an exclusively Yolngu context no face-to-face interaction is conceivable in the absence of kin identification ... Not even transient and insignificant personal contacts are possible if individuals are unable to identify a link through which they can identify a specific kin relation.

There are five types of kinship marriage systems based around the availability of cross-cousin marriages, although Aboriginals can be considered to be essentially homogeneous as far as social organizations go (Berndt, 1981: 76). In the case of the Kariera system, for example, cross-cousin marriage is allowed while in the Aranda system cross-cousin marriage is not allowed, but marriage between certain kinds of second cousins is (Berndt, 1981:76).

Within kinship systems there are two basic kinds of social units to which everybody belongs. Local descent or land holding groups and land using groups characterised by bands or hordes which act as a food collecting or co-resident unit (Berndt, 1981: 43). Land holding groups are commonly small, 25 to 50 individuals, and are bound to the same locality by ties of common patrilineal descent, kinship and religion (Sutton and Rigsby, 1982). Land holding localities are defined not so much by territorial boundaries but by the actual spiritual and ritual sites which bind people to their own 'country' (Berndt, 1981: 43). This binding means that there are inseparable relations between particular families and particular areas of land; responsibilities which give certain individuals the right to control all operations within these areas (Young, 1988: 187).

Coombs *et al.*, (1989) has pointed out that locally related land owning groups share traditional knowledge and ceremonies to do with particular areas of land. Both are land owners and land users. An owner of one area of land is guardian, for another's land and vice-versa. Power and control are shared but also divided. The role of 'guardian' that land using groups had to land owning groups has been diminished in recent years as relationships of ownership have become a key feature within the Northern Territory Land Rights Act. Section 3 of this act defines traditional Aboriginal land owners as: *A local descent group of aboriginals who (a) have common spiritual affiliations to a site on the land, being affiliations that place that group under a primary responsibility for that site and for the land; and (b) are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to a forage as of right over that land.*

In a traditional hunter gatherer lifestyle people live in economic households units which generally incorporate local and related land owning members. Household size depends on a variety of factors such as resource availability and ceremonial activity, but include the husband, wife (or wives), children and relatives dropping by for a visit. Small groups of households make up what are termed territorial clans, or bands (also known as hordes), having close land and kinship relationships to each other and operating together in hunting and ceremonial matters. Band members generally consists of between 25-50 individuals, similar in numbers to contemporary outstation populations and to the reported membership of land holding groups (Sutton and Rigsby, 1982: 159). Traditionally, these hunter gatherer households and clan groups moved within their territorial borders in accordance with seasonally available food resources. This is still the case in many outstation situations today; as Altman (1987: 20) describes in reference to the Momega and Gunwinggu bands of north-central Arnhem Land. However, there is no economic need for band or territorial clan groupings in larger community contexts which depend on the cash economy, since language, kinship and country relationships are just as important for community residents. Individuals identify themselves very much with their own 'country,' close kin, and territorial clan affiliations rather than their tribe (Hart *et al.*, 1988: 15).

Apart from these basic economic and residential social units there are other aspects of social organization which are important. Elkin (1954) demarcates between territorial clans and social clans. Social clan membership, which is nearly always exogamous (people marry outside of clan membership), is acquired through matrilineal descent. Membership emphasises a special relationship between people based on their association with a particular totem or mythological complex; they regard this totem as their flesh. Totemic clan affiliations relate to important myths of the 'dreaming' and the bonds that tie the various life forms that inhabited the dreaming time together (Berndt, 1981: 44).

Sexual division and/or classification of the whole tribe into alternate generations, or more commonly into two distinct divisions or moieties which are also exogamous, are other basic social structures. These groupings and other aspects of kinship, such as sections and subsections, provide a basis for both rules to ease social relationships between people and expected kinship behaviour and marriage rules between one set of

kin and another (Berndt, 1981). Kinship provides a formal structure whereby people are sorted out according to specific categories indicated by the terminology used by particular tribes. An underlying principle here is equivalence of siblings of the same sex. For example, if one man addresses another by a certain kin term he will use the same term for his full brothers. These terms are equivalent in a formal structural manner. Differences between one's real brother and classificatory brothers are recognised. Attitudes towards kinship relationships vary in accordance to the closeness of the relationship. As Berndt (1988: 85) points out, "(t)here is no question of confusing a person's own father with a nominal one, or an 'own' brother with a classificatory brother such as father's brother's son or mother's sister's son."

Although some aspects of kinship behaviour, such as marriage rules, have been relaxed in recent years, respect for elders and a proper line of conduct between related kin is still expected (Hamilton, 1981; 76). This may entail complete avoidance or restraint and circumspection when dealing with particular kin. Or conversely, a bantering or joking relationship might be appropriate. A common avoidance relationship is that with ones mother-in-law. Whilst this might appear to hold some logic, the avoidance relationship is one of respect ensuring a separation of personal relationships from economic support in situation where privacy is hard to arrange (Berndt, 1988: 81).

Not mentioning a recently deceased persons name until due ceremonies have been carried out is also common. The death of an important person within the community generally brings all business to stop. Ceremonies and dancing to mark the rites of passage of both the living, through circumcision and initiation ceremonies, and the dead, through mortuary rites, are frequent occurrences and the preparation and execution of the ceremonies occupies considerable time for many people. These aspects of kinship behaviour, obligations and responsibilities are important:

Throughout a persons life stipulating what he (or she) should or should not do in respect of the people he calls relatives of one kind or another – which means everyone in his social perspective – in matters of everyday routine, and in crisis, major or minor, such as when they or born, or initiated, or marry or die (Elkin, in Berndt, 1988: 77).

The degree of adherence within traditionally orientated communities to these traditional ways of doing things varies. For example, there has often been disagreement between

older and younger members of the community. Wolfe (1989a) gives an example from the 1970's where the Welfare Branch noted conflict between young and old: *Aborigines in the forty plus age group have become increasingly concerned about the diminished importance of their traditional life in the eyes of the younger generation. Attempts to revive, or reinforce, traditional customs and obligations have become more marked* (Wolfe, 1989a: 27).

Traditional kinship obligations are also important when it come to residency patterns. In the case of temporary dwellings or camps, the need for co-residency with close kin is reflected in both spatial arrangements of who lives together and who lives apart (Ross, 1987: 57). Social obligations often cause overcrowding of limited house space in many communities (1993, ABS Census). Changing relationships due to age, marriage and death within close kinship systems also affects who resides with whom and where. Residency patterns are generally limited within communities that have been planned by Europeans, with little regard for the kinds of spatial requirements of tribal or clan affiliations. The result in many communities is tension and friction between different clans and tribal groups which have to live together on land belonging to one specific clan. In many communities this results in self-imposed segregation of the population into discrete groups (Ross, 1987: 57).

Visiting relatives, taking part in ceremonies and caring for 'country ,' are still very important for community residents even though most are expatriates living away from their own 'country'. The availability of high paying jobs or high quality housing does not override the values of mobility. There is frequent movement of people between communities and 'country' which incorporate processes such as circulation, chain movement, multi-local residence and social motivation. As such they are closer to mobility patterns of the Third world than those accepted within white Australia (Young, 1990).

Part of the on-going centrifugal effect to outstations and homelands from communities is a need to return to one's own 'country', as well as to lessen the social and cultural problems of community life. Wolfe (1989a) cites many examples of the problems and tensions that a multiplicity of clans living side by side create; particularly as these clans usually retain their separate identities and traditional leaders. This is even more pronounced when a western system of Local Government is imposed over the clans. As

Coombs *et al.*, (1989: 113) remarks, “(I)n effect there may be two systems of authority: that of the councils authorised by the governments; and that of the senior people who exercise authority by tradition.”

3, 3, 2 Land Relationships

The need to return to tribal lands for re-establishment of spiritual; and ritual needs is very strong. Aboriginals have a special relationship with the land. They have been intimately connected to it and everything in it as their way of life demanded. It has had a religious significance in that it was conceived of as the place of origin for and identifiable number of people (Biernoff, 1975: 16).

When Aboriginal people say this land is my mother, they mean it literally, not metaphorically. In effect the land owns them as much as or more than they own the land (Harris, 1990: 24).

The natural and social world have been integrated in a way which humanised the land through the concept of the Dreaming (Berndt, 1981: 137). The mythical creatures of the Dreamtime are associated with mystic tracks and creation sites which relate to each other. These criss-cross the land connecting though totems and male/female secret sites to the Dreamtime and its creating figures. As Rev. Djiniyini Gondarra (in Downing, 1988: 140) points out, “(l)ike a human mother the land gives us protection, enjoyment, and provides for our needs-economic, social and religious. We have a human relationship to the land: Mother-daughter-son.” The charter of land possession rests in the Dreaming expressed through myth and ritual. In this context land cannot be alienated or transferred from specific groups of Aboriginal people since both people and land depend on, and sustain each other (Berndt, 1988: 140).

Control and access to land still constitutes the most important resource for traditionally orientated Aboriginal people, both in terms of economic and spiritual ties. It also underscores the importance of land rights and land ownership as a core area in contemporary Aboriginal politics. For, in Aboriginal practise, rights to land can be transposed to rights to monetary resources (Altman in HRSCAA, 1990:110). In respect of problems experienced by the Kunwinjku Association in dealing with Uranium payments, O’Faircheallaigh (1988) has pointed out that ties to specific areas of land

provide for a sense of community which has little to do with living on land belonging to other people. Uranium royalty payments to the Kunwinjku Association were primarily those to do with membership based on residence, rather than land ownership:

Membership as a whole shared no strong feelings of community, which encourages individuals and family groups to maximise their personal gains from Association revenues, on the assumption that if they failed to do so some unrelated individuals or groups most certainly would (O'Faircheallaigh 1988: 173).

3.3.2 Sharing

One could say that to own land in Aboriginal terms is to have the obligation to share. Williams (1982: 148) points out that boundaries do not exist for the purposes of excluding non-owners. Rather, boundaries are used to express varying categories of rights for both land users and land owners. Owning is linked to sharing. As Williams and Hunn (1982: 12) point out, "to own without sharing resources is to lose the full value of one's property, since that value, over and above the satisfaction of one's own immediate needs, is realised only by investing it socially." For in 'Gift Societies' the power of the gift is in the giving (Mauss, 1967; Sahlins, 1974). It is this allocative power of control over resources which is important, rather than ownership per se (Coombs *et al.*, 1989: 37). When one is locked in these dependency and sharing relationships one owns very little. Household goods such as TV's, clothes and cars, for the few people who 'own' them, are frequently borrowed by kin who have a claim to them.

The basis for sharing in the cash economy of outstations has been described as involving gift giving, gambling and communal drinking between co-residents and kin (Altman, 1982: 155-156). How similar this scene may be in larger communities dominated by the cash economy is not known. However, giving away cash to relatives is very common as is gambling and, where allowed, communal drinking of alcohol and kava. Altman (1982: 204) shows how gambling in outstations is utilised for circulating cash within kinship alliances and relationships of convenience. Unless big winners required money for a specific purchase, they either redistributed their winnings or rejoined the game and invariably lost.

Transfers of cash occur in outstations when the supply truck or boat arrives, with cashing of social security cheques and shopping for a fortnight completed within a couple of hours. Pension day in communities follows somewhat the same pattern with distribution and cashing cheques immediately followed by major shopping. Sharing in hunter gatherer societies has been postulated as being a risk reducing strategy, as Gould (1982) suggests of the limited resources of the Western Desert. Given, however, that populations varied in proportion to resource availability, it would appear more likely that, “perhaps the risk is not of scant resources but rather of an excess of near neighbours. If so, it is the aggrandising behaviour that is risk-minimising” (Williams and Hunn 1982; 11).

3.3.4 Power and Status

Although Aboriginal society has been characterise as egalitarian, leadership of family and clan groups has been said to be characterised by a strong authoritarian hierarchy based on traditional knowledge, age and sex (HRSCAA, 1990). Hamilton (1981: 81) reminds us that although there is some asymmetry between the sexes, women have a significant position of their own due to their role in production and reproduction. After all, given the freedom of movement in social life the dominant, authoritarian individual could be left with nobody to dominate. This could well produce a relatively uniform picture of respected elders wielding political power in a low-key almost causal manner, a career path open to all man of normal intelligence and knowledge (Kolig, 1989: 45).

Although elements of aggrandisation f resources by individuals – considered as traditional knowledge and control over the land and women - obviously occurred they were mitigated by the process of age in acquiring knowledge and the small scale of social organizations. Within land holding groups executive power is generally held by one or two initiated older men. These individuals have gained the rights to perform the major totemic rituals at sacred sites and have the power to allocate access and control over resources. However, control over land is not a simple matter of inheritance and bounded territories (Keen, 1989). Many Aboriginal people, including adult women, have a degree of choice as to their traditional attachment due to other kinship relationships and may be able to invoke or create a range of ‘facts’ to establish new attachments to land (Sutton and Rigby, 1989: 167).

Land, however, is not the only basis of power. Kolig (1989, 48) suggests that there are now two types of power base, one economic and the other religious. Religious or ceremonial power is the major legitimation for authority, including authority over land, and is based on the entire body of sacred knowledge which is called 'the Law' (Gerritson, 1982; 22). 'The Law' has been handed down from the Dreamtime when spirit figures created the land. It encompasses stories, myths, songs, dances, painting and their interpretation:

Intrinsic to the system was the equation of sacred knowledge with power, and the requirement that secrecy surround all important (powerful) knowledge and activities. Acquiring an understanding of the Law required sacred power (Bierhorf, 1975).

It is not clear whether secrecy in traditional knowledge systems has any counterpart in economic power, which both Gerritson (1982) and (Kolig (1989) argue is a post-contact phenomena based on the need to control Whitefella business and bureaucratic processes. Power in both cases, whether economical or religiously based, is related to control over and dispossession of material and spiritual wealth. An important manifestation of power has been access to women, both in terms of their labour and reproductive potential (Kolig, 1989: 47). What relationships and contingencies that old forms of power have to the new is not clear. As Rowse (1992: 27) suggests, there is a need for some ethnographic and historical studies in this area. Unlike many Third World countries, status and power in Aboriginal communities is no apparent or easily visible but must be searched for in the workings of ordinary social and religious life. There is a lack of obvious trappings and features commonly associated with power; including direct authoritarian and heavy handed decision making. Social interaction also lacks the obvious features commonly associated with the presence of power, such as bowing and scraping and humbling oneself (Kolig, 1989: 46-47).

Although a few important leaders within communities might well possess a vehicle and some desirable consumer goods, there is little in the way of status symbols or behavioural characteristics which set many leaders apart from the population. In traditional politics, leadership was very much tied into clan and band faction. In the contemporary situation on communities Local Government Councils and Incorporated Associations attempt to represent these discrete factions under western representatives methods. However, even where methods of representing clan and other kinship groups

are used they tend to fall foul of the factional nature of community life. As Wolfe (1989) points out:

(a)lthough the elective and representational method was chosen for consulting councils, the competition for power within them was quite unlike a micro-level version of the contest between party groupings on the wider state and national stages of politics. Instead the groupings in local level Aboriginal community politics appear to be more like the patron client and faction groupings to be found in other administered indigenous societies which are trying to adapt their traditional culture to a dominant power (Wolfe, 1989: 32)

These factions commonly give rise to distribution conflicts where:

(u)nequal access to services within a community is often a function of that community's politic, reflecting particular advantages that individuals, families or clans have obtained vis a vis the other occupants of their settlement (Gerritson, 1982: 16).

In many cases the factions which gain an advantage over resources within communities are the traditional land owning group. For example, at Wujalwujal (in North Queensland) they have monopolised most of the housing and employment benefits of the settlement (Gerritson, 1990: 40). From an Aboriginal perspective, however, such an advantage might well reflect the inseparable relationship that exists between particular families ad particular areas of land. For, “people do not have the right to speak for or control resources of which they are not traditional owners” (Ellanna *et al.*,, 1988: 61). Given the expatriate nature of most Aboriginal clans and families in communities this causes distributional conflict over scarcity. Where such conflict becomes excessive it can destabilise the community and “exit is usually the result, as the Peppimenarti separation from the Daly River settlement and numerous other examples illustrate” (Gerritson, 1990: 45).

The problem of unequal distribution of resources and of emerging inequalities within Aboriginal communities is attracting debate (Altman ed., 1989). Part of that debate centres on the difficulty of identifying clearly bounded social groups and, as Keen (1989) suggests, a limiting view of the nature of authority. For “it is not possible to define a most inclusive group in northeast Arnhem Land because Yolngu social boundaries, like Pintubi are diffuse” (keen, 1989: 19). Keen (1989) argues that bounded political units such as bands and clans and the structures of leadership, such as age and

sex, serve to legitimise power and authority in terms of direct authoritative action. Pintubi territorial organizations, residence and land ownership groups are the outcome of processes of individual choice and negotiation influenced by demography and environmental pressures. Neither bands as units, nor rules of recruitment to groups are basic to Pintubi organization (Myers, 1986: 173). Balancing their sense of land relatedness against their desire for individual autonomy gives their aggregations a temporary quality that as Rowse (1992: 29) remarks, has been observed by Myers (1986) since 1973. Even in the case of the more bounded areas that characterise northern coastal people, where traditional land owing groups have considerable local political power, the individual takes precedence over membership of social groups (Goodale, 1971: 335; Phillipot, 1990: 64).

Keen (1989) suggests that social network and social field concepts within an action concept of control may be more applicable to understanding the field of influence of Aboriginal leaders in this picture of social structure then:

(a)ssumptions that the structure of the social network within which leaders had influence was universally a clearly bounded group such as a local group, horde, clan, tribe or language group ... along with kinship, age organization and gender (Keen, 1989: 24). In these temporary or changing networks, relationships are defined egocentrically. This way of thinking, as Rowse (1992: 29) notes, “preserves the primacy of individual autonomy over obligations to a corporate ‘community’.”

Aboriginal corporate associations without bonded membership are, as Sutton (in Rowse, 1992: 56) suggests, reifications reflecting certain stages of negotiation. Their temporal and ephemeral groupings and pro tem relationships that Sansom (in Rowse, 1992: 57) discusses, rounds off a picture of Aboriginal social organizations that is very different from how Hofstede (1980) describes collectivist societies. For what has been said about traditional Aboriginal culture does not suggest that social structures with tight relationships takes precedence over the individual. What appears to be more important is the nature of relationships the individual has with others. The nature of Aboriginal leadership, for example, is about access to power not access to material and financial benefits for their own sake. Control over, rather than ownership of resources is what is desired. As Gerritson 1982: 22) points out:

(p)ower in Aboriginal communities (and its benefits, status and prestige- not necessarily money per se) is in control over the lives of one's fellows. Controlling access to

vehicles, housing (one could add jobs, training and skills) and so on is as real and important to Aborigines as is controlling access to ceremonies on traditional land.

Control over European goods and services, however requires numeracy and literacy skills which many older traditional leaders do not have. Younger and more literate relatives are often used as a mouthpiece for such elders. Gerritson (1982: 22) points out that leaders today need both traditional and Whitefella power. More importantly, in terms of the management of community based organizations, is the on-going political process whereby individuals within family and clan groups aggrandise not only rights to land but also rights and dominance over the control of resources in communities.

Gerritson's (1982) typology of actors who work within communities is very useful in providing a description of the principal actors and the forces that manipulate local politics. Power derived from within the community, Gerritson (1982) suggests, belongs in general to three groups of Aboriginal men. The first two groups represent half to two thirds of the adult male population who do the manipulating. Gerritson (1982: 21) labels these the dominant and prominent men. The followers, which constitute the balance of the population, form the retinues of dominant and prominent men. Dominant men are the most powerful individuals within the community and community politics revolve around them. They obtain their power through the possession of one or more of the following three elements: inherited ceremonial knowledge; control or ownership of land; and/or Whitefella power. However, as noted above, to possess Whitefella power requires:

Literacy or at least adequate English and it encompasses the skills required to understand bureaucrats and bureaucratic processes; to represent the community in dealings with bureaucrats; to control the distribution of benefits of government services; to be a boss of whitefella business (Gerritson, 1982: 22).

Dominant men express their power through control over council vehicles, access to employment, store credit and the demanding of gifts and presents. As an example; *(a)t Bamili successive storekeepers have had disputes with Council Presidents because 'booking up' at the store is regarded as one of the rights of the President's position. In the period 1978-1980 thousands of dollars were booked u at the Lajamanu store in similar fashion – dominant men even insisting (successfully) that the store advance*

them loans so that they could meet hire purchase repayments for their cars (Gerritson, 1982: 23)

Dominant men can refuse requests from relatives for access to their vehicle or sharing of their accommodation. Checks on dominant men usually only occur when factionalism based on clan or tribal affiliation occurs. This raises the question that Gerritson (1990) asks, of how far can, or should governments go in controlling the excesses of dominant men's power? Although Gerritson (1982) suggests that some aspects of power are gained through meritocratic means, he suggests that dominant men are recruited from a particular subset of Aboriginal society and thus are largely hereditary (Gerritson, 1982: 22). Whether this subset is bounded by kinship or land ties or structured in terms of age in regard to power derived from traditional and ritual knowledge is not clear. Similarly, the nature of corporate structures which imply internal governance, even of patrilineal land holding units, is also questionable (Keen, 1989: 25). Prominent men are either members of the extended family of the dominant men or heads of the families of minor importance. Although they generally have better housing and employment prospects than 'followers', they cannot refuse requests from related kin as can dominant men.

3.3.5 Cognitive Factors and Values

The aforementioned structural facets of Aboriginal community life and the small scale of Aboriginal society need to be seen within traditional hunter gather life cycle and way of life that is lived very much in the 'here and now'.

To the Aborigine, life is a cycle, though whether it is continuous or not, he does not always dare to say. Found by his parent in a spiritual experience, he is incarnated through his mother and so enters profane life. But a few years later, through the gate of initiation he partially re-enters the sacred dreamtime or sky-world which he has left for a season. After passing farther and farther into it, so far as the necessities of profane life will allow, he dies, and through another gate, the transition rite of burial, he returns completely to his sacred spirit state in the sky, the spirit-home or totemic centre, perhaps to repeat the cycle later, perhaps to remain, perhaps to cease to be (Elkin, in Philpot, 1990: 17).

This cyclic nature of time also relates to genealogies. Aboriginal people do not measure kinship relationships back more than a few generations and therefore connect the Dreamtime – in western notions of time tens of thousands of years old – to the living and recently dead (Harris, 1990: 26). There is little regard for the future for while ceremonies and marriages are planned, time does not have that linear space stretching into the future that westerners like to fill up (Harris, 1990: 27). There is no concept for punctuality. Stereotypes by non-Aboriginal people of Aboriginal people always being late, have little regard for the fact that they are sometimes very early for specific ‘White’ events (Eades, 1984: 28). This different orientation to time comes from a prior lifestyle of hunting and gathering where there was no separation of working and social life and no need of a work ethic. In the contemporary scene on remote Aboriginal communities:

Aborigines do not draw a clear distinction between living and working... Just as in ritual, participation rather than productivity, is crucial... It is no accident that the Aboriginal English word for ceremony is business (Harris, 1990: 35).

Underlying values of Aboriginal society may be taken to be in opposition to those of the western world. For example, distribution of goods rather than their accumulation, and personal responsibility rather than personal rights (Biernrnhoff, 1975: 24). In essence the core difference between Aboriginal and White is a contrasting world-view and ontology. The essential element of this is the interactional/transactional dichotomy (Bain, 1979, 1992; Christie, 1985; Harris, 1990). Christies (1985: 10-11) sums up the interactional nature by which Aboriginal people view the world in six points:

1. *the units by which an Aborigine knows the world are large and available to perception.*
2. *social activity involves interaction between elements that are seen to be related. Interaction is not bound by historic time or quantification.*
3. *The Aboriginal dreaming is not subject to scientific study*
4. *Qualities and relationships in business and ceremony are what are important while quantities and analysis are not only irrelevant to the Aboriginal World, but contrary to it.*
5. *The principle of interactional cause*

6. *The strength of an interactional view is that it describes the interrelatedness of spiritual and human beings.*

Due to this very different way of viewing the world, characteristics to do with indigenous knowledge systems are, therefore, holistic, subjective and experiential. Distinctly opposed to reductionist, objective and positive western characteristics (Wolfe *et al.*, 1991).

The principles which underlie indigenous knowledge relate to sustainable management of the natural environment. An environment in which man is related to, and in balance with nature (Wolfe *et al.*, 1991: 12-16). Living very much in the 'here and now' of interactional kinship networks provides, for example, a temporary quality to decision making and consensus that is always open to re-definition. Aboriginal people expect to review their decision making; that individuals will 'change their thinking' or 'change their world' (Williams, 1985: 244). This is because:

(t)he Aboriginal model of individual and group decision making, unlike Western models, focuses on change; rests on the assumption that I characterise as an expectation of change. On the premise that it is a continuous process, the logic of decision making operates on the contingency of review (Williams, 1985: 244).

There is a latent need to re-determine if a consensus still exists amongst those who have a legitimate interest in a decision. There are protocols about who, by proposing an outcome, initiates discussion. Moreover, there are shared contingent understandings about who has rights to contribute and preconceptions about the form of the decision itself; that of consensus. Therefore, Aboriginal people base their procedures of decision making on the assumption that they can and will reach a consensus. Consensus does not imply unanimity however, but "refers to the existence of general agreement in the absence of any overt disagreement. One may in fact view consensus as an agreement not to differ" (Williams, 1985: 243). Such agreement, particularly if the decision is acknowledged by Aboriginal people to be important as in the case of proposals for the Ranger uranium mine, takes time:

It is a long hard road to final answer. Sometimes a person or group will say 'yes' then talk a little more and then say 'no'. The more talk might talk may take place after a few months and still no final answer. Then all people who really belong to that country will go over it all again until everyone is sure of his answer and then the answer is given.

That may be years after the first talks if the question is a hard one (Roberts, in Williams, (1985:245).

Clearly, consensus an agreement in decision making, as one aspect of indigenous management, incorporates processes and structures which are very different from those of western management systems. Not only are cognitive aspects to do with interpersonal relationships of primary importance, but there is a need to involve and reach agreement with all the appropriate people who might be affected by a decision. This is not easy given the factional nature of community politics. These general features pose major problems when it comes to the need for commitment and consistency in management community based organisations. Particularly, as will be shown later, for those directly tied in to the market economy.

So far this discussion has provided a general picture of traditionally orientated Aboriginal culture as it relates to resources management. Contemporary, traditionally orientated Aboriginal culture is diversified not only by different environmental and cultural factors but also by the differing imprint of the dominant society. For many Aboriginal tribes this has resulted in displacement from traditional lands and, in many cases, has led to different language groups living together. The problem in trying to unravel these factors, in coming to grips with how traditional resource control operates in these particular contexts are formidable.

3.4 THE TIWI AND OTHER ABORIGINAL GROUPS, SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

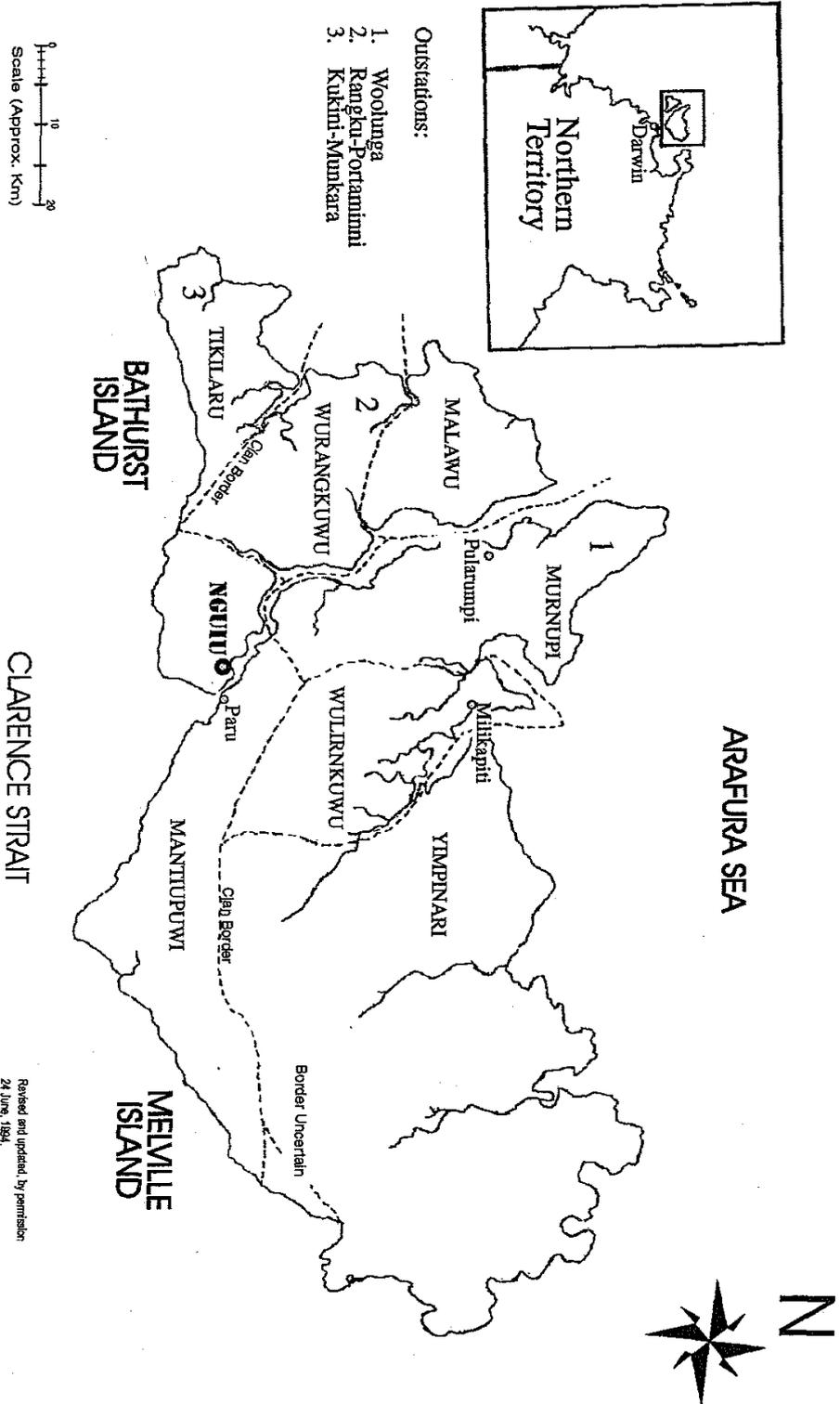
Melville and Bathurst Islands have been home to the Tiwi people for thousands of years (Hart *et al.*, 1988: 3). These Islands, which cover nearly 8000 square kilometres, are situated 11 degrees south of the equator and are approximately 50 kilometres north of Darwin; separated from the mainland by the Clarence Strait (see Fig 2 page following). Compared too much of Australia these tropical monsoonal islands and adjacent waters

have abundant natural resources which are well distributed. Unlike many mainland communities, the history of the Tiwi's contact with white Australia has not produced the devastating effects of displacement from traditional lands. Geographic isolation and the Catholic mission have served to stave off the worst effects of European incursion; which in the case of the Tiwi people is barely a hundred years old.

The 1991 census set the Tiwi population of the Islands at 1800, nearly twice the generally accepted estimate of 1000 for pre-European settlement (Goodale, 1982: 199). Nearly all Tiwi now live in the three principle communities with the following approximate populations: Nguiu (Bathurst Island) 1100, Pularumpi 400 and Milikapiti 300 (both on Melville Island). Due to the isolation of the Tiwi people these communities are still culturally homogeneous, a distinctly different situation to that of many Northern Territory coastal communities such as Millingimbi, or Port Keats for example.

FIG 2

BATHURST AND MELVILLE ISLANDS



The Tiwi attachment to traditional lands is similar to that of other traditional Aboriginal groups; all Tiwi being both land holders and land users. This similarity extends to the patterns of ownership involving the right to be asked and obligations to share (Goodale, 1982: 201). Their uninterrupted occupation of their own lands is, however, significantly different to the experience of many other Aboriginal groups. Contact with the seasonal Macassan trepang fishery from the eighteenth century, and Japanese Pearling craft from the early twentieth century are unusual. Then too, the Tiwi lack elaborate male rituals and kinship categories such as moieties, semi-moieties, sections and subsections which characterise many mainland tribes. Until recently, the fact that both males and females were initiated into the adult world in the same ritual, the Kulama ceremony, and at the same time is an unusual aspect of Tiwi culture (Goodale, 1971:338). Similarly, the Tiwi lack what can be called 'negative' magic or sorcery. Common mainland practices of bone pointing or 'singing' a man to death are completely unknown on the islands (Hart *et al.*, 1988: 95).

Kinship systems of the Tiwi, although uniquely developed, belong to the Karia system which ideally allows cross-cousin marriage. Much social activity is directed around membership in matrilineal social clans. These social clans differ from the more familiar patrilineal membership of territorial clans which characterise most mainland tribes. Matrilineal clans, however, have only gained importance since the Tiwi settled in communities around the '1930s'. Before this time people identified themselves by band membership and affiliation through patrilineal land owning groups that mattered (Hart and Pilling, 1960:11). In this regard:

Tiwi interpersonal relations were primarily kin relations between members of all bands, territorial loyalties were shifting ones, temporary and necessarily quite subordinate to kin loyalties. Hence warfare, in the sense of pitched battles between groups aligned through territorial loyalties, did not occur and could not occur among the Tiwi (Hart *et al.*, 1988: 91).

Similar to other Aboriginal groups on the mainland, the Tiwi invest a considerable amount of time in social and political activities. Leadership and control over traditional resources such as land and ceremonies, as well as contemporary political and community organisations feature in the career paths of aspiring men and women.

3.4.1 Resource Control and Kinship

Prior to the settled life in communities, the largest significant social units amongst the Tiwi were the bands. These bands consisted of between 100 and 300 individuals and were “the land-owning, workaday, territorially organised group that controlled the hunting, the food supply, and the warfare” (Hart *et al.*, 1988: 15). People thought about themselves as band members of particular ‘countries.’ There was no conception of united bands and no tribal assemblies even in warfare. However, these bands were the temporary concentration in one district of semi-autonomous households in which fluidity of band affiliation was a constant feature of Tiwi life. The position and dominance of the father or husband held these households together. As such, when he died the household broke up with individuals joining other households, sometimes in other bands. Households were primarily autonomous food producing and food consuming units and the crux of Tiwi territorial organisation (Hart *et al.*, 1988: 35-36).

The traditional political process of expansion and amalgamation of band lands has been well documented (Hart *et al.*, 1988: 132). For example, nine bands controlled the principle land holding and bounded areas (or countries as they are colloquially known) on Melville and Bathurst islands prior to European arrival. Twelve band areas are shown on the 1962 Forestry map, reducing to seven bounded areas in 1983 which now constitute the Tiwi Land Council. Moves to a settled life in communities, it has been suggested, has inflicted greater changes on the composition and function of the land holding groups than on any other Island institution (Goodale, 1971: 13). For example,

as matters regarding ownership have been minimised by the settled life, the boundaries that identified specific localities within these countries have become less known and less used in recent years (Goodale, 1971:16). Sacred places have little significance and most Tiwi are now buried in the communities where they have been living rather than on their own land (Pye, 1977: 13). The presence of the grave marker of one's father or grandfather has long ceased to be a marker of land ownership. Land ownership, up until the Land Rights (NT) Act and political moves towards Aboriginal self-determination, had come to mean only permission to burn the grass (Goodale, 1971: 176).

In 1977 the Tiwi formed their own Land Council which deals with all matters relating to land and the external affairs of communities. In deciding who was to be recorded as owners of band areas or 'countries' the senior men and women had to debate a situation that 70 years of Mission influence and some 50 years of community living had left them. To quote from Hart *et al.*,(1988: 133):

[t]he traditional marriage arrangement where every Tiwi woman was promised in marriage to a Tiwi husband before her birth, ensured that any child born to her had a Tiwi father through which certain rights in land were passed. But many years of Mission and European influence on promised marriage has resulted in increasing numbers of children who are born to Tiwi mothers, but whose father has no rights in any Aboriginal land to pass them on.

This has had important implications to traditional rights over land, for:

in the discussion amongst the leaders of the Murnupi, Cyril Rioli, the chairman of the TLC at that time, asked, "It comes down to this - do I have any rights in this land of my mother?" The Murnupuwu agreed that he did. Mr Rioli had been raised at the Garden Point Mission school and settlement, married, and raised his own family there, but his father had not been an Aboriginal though he could claim land rights (Hart et al., 1988: 133)

Inheritance of rights to land are now able to be gained through one's mother as well as one's father. What this may mean to the internal control over who might exercise rights over a particular 'country' previously held by the dominant 'big man' or 'boss' is not clear (Goodale, 1971: 176). As Goodale (1971) points out, traditionally the eldest male owner of a 'country if competent, is acknowledged as the final authority. The re-emergence in the '1980s' of patrilineal 'aminiyati' land based family groups composed of the descendants of important and powerful father's fathers have been said to provide a basis for political control, assisted by the influence of the Mission and the Land Rights Act (Hart *et al.*, 1988; 143-144)

For example, the family surnames of Munkara, Kelantumama, Munkamoni and Alimankinni belong, and have control over, the country of Jikilarruwu in the South-west of Bathurst Island (Ward, 1990: 2). The emerging power and prestige to be gained as the representative and powerful land owner of a 'country' on the Tiwi Land Council is considerable.

Although countries had definitive borders that were well known, the people that owned the country were a flexible and constantly shifting collection of individuals (Hart, 1960: 12). Individuals, especially women, changed their band residence frequently during the course of their lives. Being born into a band did not require permanent residence within that band, either for males or females (Hart, 1988: 15). Moreover, as Goodale (1982: 200) points out, in spite of this recognised flexibility:

Tiwi resource management is grounded in a fundamental cultural acknowledgment of the bounded integrity of the corporate group identified with the country, and in the economic independence of the members of the exploiting residential group within a country. It is important to note that country endogamy was a significant cultural value and social mode in traditional times.

Country affiliation is still a strong element in personal identity. For, although most Tiwi's are expatriates and have been for a long time they prefer to reside in communities close to their own 'countries' (Goodale, 1971: 16). In the case of Nguiu (Bathurst Island), this means the 'countries' of Tikilaru, Wuranguwu, Malawa, and Mantiyupwi; for Pularumpi (Melville Island) the country of Murnupi, and for Milikapiti (Melville Island) the 'countries' of Wuliranguwu and Yimpinari (Hart, 1988: 136). Three major family groups, the Munkara, Tipaloura and Kantilla have made moves to establish outstations on their own lands in recent years. Whilst these outstation developments have not been particularly successful, in terms of residential status, the process of outstation development continues.

Apart from association to land and resident group affiliations, all Tiwi's are born into a matrilineal descent group called one's 'pukwi'; or in pidgin ones 'skin' group. Goodale (1972: 20-21) lists 24 different 'skin groups' or 'sibs' which acknowledge a common descent to the extent that marriage is prohibited between members of the same group. Individuals within each 'sib' have a special relationship to each other based on a specific totem identified from the environment, for example the 'sibs' of 'flying fox', 'woolybark flower' and 'red ochre'. These 'sibs' are grouped together in four 'arumipi' or 'phratries,' which are also exogamous. For example, people in the four clans which make up the 'arumipi' called Miyartiwi can marry into two of the other 'arumipi', Wantarringiwi and Marntimapila, but not into the 'arumipi' of Takaringuwi. This prohibition is still taken seriously. For although people choose their partner they do not make a random choice, but always adhere to the traditional lines of acceptable marriage (Ward, 1990: 17). When they violate kinship or clan rules of exogamy considerable debate and discussion takes place (Hart, 1988: 143).

Until the 1930's these matrilineal social groups were not as important to everyday living as the bands which were patrilineal based and tied into land owning and land using groups. The move to community living in the '1930s' negated the usefulness of the old

band organisation and so the underlying social clan organisation dominated.

Consequently:

[b]y the 1950s, young Tiwi often denied that they had any band membership. But it was not unknown for teen-age Tiwi males to lie awake at night counting up the members of their matrilineal clan. According to informants, in the 1940s and 1950s the major fights that occurred at Bathurst Island Mission were interclan [inter-matriclan/sib] skirmishes (Hart et al., 1988: 121).

These social groups have become increasingly important in the political development of the Tiwi people. At Nguuu they form the basis of group representation on the Nguuu Community Council which has sixteen representatives, four from each of the four 'arumipi'. How 'skin group' representation works in political decision making to do with resource allocation is not clear. Turner (in Wolfe 1989: 64) describe these 'skin groups' as "subdivisions of heritable jurisdictions on a generation basis." This is at odds with both Goodale's (1982: 200) understanding of Tiwi resource management based within land using and land owning groups and Peterson (in Wolfe, 1989: 64) who maintains that, "[skin] groups have no social coherence. It is highly unlikely that any person from a given subsection could effectively represent another person with that subsection affiliation on any matter."

3.4.2 Cognitive Factors and Values

It is important to note that for the Tiwi people it is their individuality that comes first, even though like other Australian tribes one is enmeshed in kinship networks. As Goodale (1971: 335) explains:

Tiwi are conceived as unique beings first, and only secondarily as members of social units. The first ritual act focused on them is the giving of a unique name, one of many they will acquire throughout life. With the possible exception of the yam ceremony, all Tiwi ritual is ego-orientated, a rite of passage. If the Kulama - yam ceremony is traditionally or primarily an initiation ceremony, then we find no exceptions. There are no rituals belonging to one kind or type of social unit, or to a specific unit to the exclusion of any other.

If, as Goodale (1971: 337) suggests “personal achievement appears to be the dominant value for which Tiwi males and females strive during their existence in the world of the living”, then individuals must have considerable room to manoeuvre within kinship relationships. Kinship relationships, however, permeate all aspects of Tiwi life and as Ward (1990: 13) points out:

The importance of the kinship system for the Tiwi may be more clearly understood when one realises that in Tiwi it is an insult to call a person's Tiwi name ... They are always referred to by the kin term and if a person is no relation they will be called friend.

Kin terms can be extended to cover all the Tiwi tribe. A basic aspect of kin terminology, which in some measure guides behaviour, is a distinction of kin:

on the basis of genealogical and geographic distance, the two criteria that the Tiwi conceive as one when they use the phrases ‘close kin’ and ‘long way kin’. Genealogical distance refers to the relative positions of ego and alter ego in the matrilineal and patrilineal descent group system, while geographic distance refers to the relative positions of ego and alter ego in both the land holding group and the residential group system.

(Goodale, 1971: 109)

Kinship terms are further complicated not only by the fact that individuals can be related in more than one way, but because different terms are used to express gender (Ward, 1990: 14). This means that a child will be called by a different name by the

child's father and mother. This linguistic distinction between gender terms characterises the entire Tiwi universe including areas of land and flora and fauna (Goodale, 1982: 202). For example, “a person whose father is from the Wulinjuwila clan, will consider the small island of Wulinjuwu, which is the totemic dreaming place of their father's clan, as an aunt, and the father will call the island sister”(Ward, 1990: 19).

This gender division also flows through to the division of labour and types of activity deemed appropriate for each gender. In traditional resource management, the men exploited resources from the air and sea, such as birds and fish, while women exploited resources from the ground, such as cyad nuts and yams. Goodale (1982: 205) points out that the Kulama yam is the unifying symbol in the linkages of gender based resources. The ritual preparation of this poisonous yam into an edible state performs a central role in the Kulama initiation ceremony. It is not clear what, if any, aspects of gender division have implications in the cash economy, apart from avoidance relationships between particular kin. Although the values of Tiwi culture stress “that all males be given the opportunity and be encouraged to try for expression as individual and outstanding personalities in the land of the living. It is not much different for women. It is just that there are less opportunities” (Goodale, 1971: 338).

Although individual achievement is the dominant value, co-operation and sharing are essential values as well. As Ward (1990: 71) explains:

[t]he Tiwi have an inbuilt law about sharing, especially food, or in fact any of their possessions, with their relations. For this reason it is almost impossible for them to store away things even for a short length of time as relations will make requests of them and they can't refuse, as they would be afraid that some sickness would occur or even a death can happen. An example of this is the story of a young boy taken by a crocodile. The reason given was that his uncle had refused to share flour with his mother.

The importance of sharing to the Tiwi, and to traditional Aboriginal people in general, means that it is not the person requesting that has to decide whether their request is reasonable, but rather the person asked has to decide whether the request is reasonable to grant. In the 1990 *Handbook for Non-Tiwi Teachers*, Ward (1990: 71) points out that it is important to know the polite way to refuse requests, which is not simply to say no, but to make up an excuse. In this respect manners are important, the asking of too many or probing questions is considered rude and silence is likely to result. It is up to the person being asked to decide whether or not to answer (Ward, 1990: 75).

Similarly, respectful relationships between people are very different to those of westerners. For example, young women do not speak to their brothers and half-brothers on their mothers side when they are adults, even though there are close bonds between them. As Ward (1990: 74) notes “[s]he will not say their names nor will she hand them anything. If she visits their home she will speak to their children or to their wives, giving them any message or request.” This is considered good manners as well as avoiding the possibility of incest. Non speaking relationships extend to husband's mother-in-law and daughter's father-in-law and these potential relationships. Due to this, and other avoidance relationships, people are careful to keep away from embarrassing situations and frequently go out of their way to do so.

Underlying these relationships is a concept of the Tiwi world view in which there exists three worlds: “the world of the unborn, the world of the living, and the world of the dead, and the belief that one can pass through each of these worlds but once appears to be held by all Tiwi, regardless of sex” (Goodale, 1971: 332) Although the concept of three worlds may be specific to the Tiwi, “the emphasis is on interpersonal relationships rather than on relationships between human and nonhuman forms in the environment” (Goodale, 1971: 332), which is common to the Aboriginal world view (Bain, 1979, 1992a; Christie, 1985; Harris, 1990). These interpersonal relationships take place within a sense of time that is worked out on a large scale. The Tiwi do differentiate between times of the day but these times reflect the natural environment. For example;

<i>arawunga</i>	early morning before dawn	
<i>tokwampari</i>	early morning when birds sing	
<i>yartijumurra</i>	darkness before daylight	
<i>wujakari</i>	first light before sunrise	
<i>murantikala</i>	dawn/daybreak	(Ward, 1990: 76)

What is important is that relationships do not depend on ‘keeping to time’. People may well be an hour early or late for an appointment or trip without any real concern (Ward, 1990: 77). This is a problem not only for Tiwi who have to deal with non-Tiwi people or organisations, but is a general problem for traditionally orientated Aboriginal people as discussed earlier.

3.4.2. Customary Practises and Ceremonies

Traditional beliefs and practises that relate to the supernatural focus around three areas:

1. *an elaborate system of day-to-day taboos,*
2. *an elaborate set of beliefs and rituals pertaining to death*
3. *the complicated initiation ceremony*

(Hart, 1989: 95).

In essence these are still in place in contemporary Tiwi life although some features have disappeared or changed.

The elaborate system of taboos was previously related to ‘Pukimani’, a generic word and state of being for anything sacred, forbidden or untouchable. ‘Pukimani’ behaviour was an accepted passive state that ‘just happened’ to a person when a relative died or his wife gave birth. Individuals in a state of ‘Pukimani’ observed the avoidances and abstentions automatically. Although much of the elaborateness of ‘Pukimani’ customs

have gone, aspects to do with not mentioning a deceased person's name until mortuary rites are completed, avoidance of his or her 'country' and adjoining sea and 'smoking' the deceased individual's residence are still carried out.

Mortuary rites associated with death, particularly those of important people, were also elaborate affairs generally carried out in the dry season. Although the influence of the Catholic Church has reduced much of the ceremony surrounding these rituals, the basic structure and obligatory roles of kin and spouse remain. The acceptance by the church in recent years of Tiwi customary practises has led to burial services being preceded by a mass "followed by traditional expressions of ritual grief, and continue to be where kinship, and matrilineal clan (own and father's) and land affiliations are expressed in songs and dances" (Hart, 1989: 141). Carved 'Pukimani' poles once again stand beside the graves of Tiwi people even though most Tiwi's are buried away from their own 'country'.

Unlike ceremonies to do with rituals of death which include states of 'Pukimani' and may last for extensive periods and occur throughout the year, the 'Kuluma' initiation ceremony is only about a week long and takes place in January or February when the Kuluma yams are ripe. Although initially concerned with male initiation this is no longer so important. The ceremony now revolves mainly around singing, in which kinship relationship and name changing for daughters are significant (Ward, 1990: 35).

3.4.4. Power Prestige and Influence

Much has been written by Hart, Pilling and Goodale (1988) of the traditional prestige and influence system and the central importance that control over women played in pre-settlement times. To be a dominant or 'big man' in Tiwi society meant that a Tiwi had to devote all his adult life to accumulating assets in the form of women. Possibly unique in the world, the Tiwi subscribed to the idea that all women must be married

from birth and that all females must have a husband all the time; widows being required to re-marry at the grave-site of their late husband. The right of prenatal betrothal by the husband of the pregnant woman, not necessarily the father, meant that daughters were an asset to their fathers who invested them politically in trying to win friends and increase prestige and influence over others (Hart, 1988: 17-24). Many women are still said to be promised to husbands at birth, but whether many of these contracts are concluded is not known.

The most concrete symbol of Tiwi success was the possession of surplus food. Hi enabled leisure time which could be devoted to social and political life. The way to acquire such success was in the control over enough women to provide this surplus. Hart and Pilling (1960: 5) compare this influence and career pattern for power and prestige to a non-stop bridge game, wherein the scores were never totalled up nor a new game started on a clean slate. How much of this game is still ongoing, given that monogamy is generally practised and the cash economy is firmly in place, is not known, but well have been translated into manipulation of kinship resources in contemporary Tiwi. Women do play an important role in matters relating to domestic life and the maintenance of peace and harmony and are not afraid to voice their opinion at Council meetings. Women are also employed in most community organisations. Bima Wear, a small clothing enterprise at Ngiuu employing only women. Some of these women are very prominent in the communities, though what role they play in managing community resources is unclear.

Dominant men, prominent men and women certainly appear centre stage in the communities' social and political scene; much as Gerritsen (1982) has suggested of the Katherine area. Some dominant Tiwi men are also able to keep a vehicle for their own use as well as to hold on to some of the luxuries of life such as a T.V. and video recorder. Although many of the dominant men who represent particular 'countries' are now members of the Tiwi Land Council, there has been little correlation between the three Community Council President's positions and leadership in the local land owning

families (Hart, *et al.*, 1988: 135). This may indicate that community leadership is not dependant on local land owning ties, due to recent residency patterns and burials within communities (Goodale, 1982: 200). Even if this was the case, the factional nature of Tiwi society indicates that particular kinship groups or families, through long association or powerful leadership, may well, in the Tiwi domain, seek to control community organisations.

3.5 SUMMARY

Although the Tiwi provide a specific example of traditionally orientated Aboriginal culture, much of what characterises traditional Aboriginal Australia and indigenous cultures in general is applicable to the Tiwi. These low power distance and collective societies have been shown to have a different set of problems associated with organisational development than high power distance states such as Brunei. Apart from their small scale and sharing nature, these tribal societies are encapsulated and confronted by the powerful political structures of nation states, in this case Australia.

The comparative history of white Australia in dealing with its indigenous inhabitants has seen a history of abuse and encroachment of traditional lands. Today only some of the 500 distinctly different tribes which inhabited Australia prior to colonisation are still in control of their traditional lands and orientated to a traditional hunter gatherer way of life. As noted previously, most of these tribal people now live in small communities located in the northern and central areas of Australia. Tribal boundaries were, and are, quite fuzzy over much of Australia. Tribes and tribal boundaries relate more to linguistic and kinship networks between small, semi-nomadic groups that owned and used particular bits of country, rather than a picture of tribes to do with tribal assemblies or tribal chiefs that characterise much of Africa's pre-colonial past.

Most traditionally orientated Aboriginal people now reside in what are, perhaps unfortunately, referred to as 'communities'. These implanted constructs describe the residence of politically factional groups that historically were semi-nomadic and rarely, if ever, came together. Resource management, political and social life were always integrated to one's close family and kinship group within a local land owning and land using group. The result of many different groups coming together in communities is conflict over resource allocation that is partly responsible for a continuing centrifugal movement to outstations. Although cash rather than subsistence now dominates the economies of these communities, the cash economy operates in an Aboriginal domain. This domain is much more important for Aboriginal people as it provides one's identity, vernacular language and a way of life very different to that of mainstream Australia. In the Aboriginal domain, resource management is tied very much into kinship and sharing relationships. For these are Gift Societies, where the basis of power lies in control over the allocation and distribution of resources, and not in ownership per-se. One only gains the full value of ownership by investing it socially.

Until settlement into communities, resource management and social life were tied into land holding and residential groups to which everyone belonged. Each land holding group 'owned' specific sub-countries which gave them rights to a specific area of 'country' and associated resources. Adjacent land using groups acted as guardians to land owners. The basis of land ownership was patrilineal descent. However, this was by no means a closed system, rights to land were, and can be, manipulated politically within kinship systems. In the case of the Tiwi people, extended settlement in communities has now created a situation where land rights can be gained through matrilineal as well as patrilineal relationships (Goodale, *et. al* 1988: 133). Whilst who might exercise rights over the internal control of particular 'countries' and their resources is not clear, resource management for the Tiwi is grounded in rights to and rights over 'country' (Goodale, 1982:200).

Who exercises rights over the control of community based resources is also not clear. Traditionally, the owners of the land on which a community is situated would own its resources. While in many other communities the unequal distribution of resources has favoured the local land owning group, this does not appear to be the case for Tiwi communities. Ownership over the land on which the community stands may well have been diffused by burials, since burial posts previously signified land ownership.

Since they settled into communities in the 1930's, matrilineal kinship relationships have been of more importance socially to the Tiwi than their previous patrilineal descended landowning groups. However, matrilineal kinship relationships do not appear to have been utilised as a basis for control over resources. Although there may be moves afoot to resurrect some aspects of patrilineal descent in connection with control over land, kinship relationships outside of one's close kin and family appears more as a structured web of potential and actual relationships that leaders can and do manipulate in their quest for power. Given the lack of any real bounded areas to either kinship systems or resource management, Keen's (1989) suggestion that concepts of social field and social networks are a more appropriate means by which to understand the field of influence of leaders within kinship relationships appears sound. This is reinforced by the primacy of individual autonomy over social obligations to the corporate community (Rowse, 1992: 29). The Tiwi, for example, subscribe to the pre-eminence of the individual and personal achievement as the dominant value.

The essential nature of the Aboriginal world view is that it is based on kinship relationships between both people and the environment that are lived very much in the 'here and now'. This means, for example, that consensus and decision making are carried out in a contingency of review; as an ongoing process. Moreover, Aboriginal knowledge systems are known to be holistic, subjective and experiential, and relate to sustainable management in the interrelated social and economic life of hunting and gathering. There is little distinction between living and working and little regard for the future. Work itself has more to do with ritual participation than productivity. Qualities

and relationships are of more importance in work than quantities and analysis. The essential difference between Aboriginal and western culture, as Bain (1979) suggests, is this dichotomy between interactional and transactional relationships.

This dichotomy is nowhere more evidenced than at the interface between the Aboriginal domain and that of the wider Australian state. In the ever encroaching situation that Aboriginal people find themselves in with the Australian state, they are not only hanging on to their identity, but are increasingly affirming their distinctive nature and maintaining their links with the past. However, their underlying values and world view are in total opposition to the requirements of effective formal organisations. In particular those organisations tied into the market economy such as small enterprises; for example stores or small supermarkets which are a feature of Aboriginal communities.

In the situation of scarce resources and factional politics, which characterise these communities, dominant leaders seek allocative power and control over these organisations for their followers and kin. The role conflict this situation causes, given the control exercised over most of these community organisations by generally non-Aboriginal managers and external organisations, is very much the concern of the next chapter. For the essential need for Aboriginal people to retain their own culture comes hard up against the need for effective and accountable formal organisations.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL CASE STUDIES

4.1 METHODOLOGY

So far this discussion has dealt in a general way with the nature of enterprise development, and the problems and possibilities posed for control and accountability of Aboriginal community enterprises. What was needed was a research and methodology that illustrate these aspects within the specific context of Tiwi enterprises at Nguiu, Bathurst Island. In this regard research objectives have been set within a framework of factors which Young (1988: 186) suggests are important to enterprise success or failure. These objectives need to be considered before dealing with methodological problems, for, as Blunt (1981:62) and Dainty and Smith (1991:5) argue, one should look for methods to investigate a problem, not for a problem to fit acceptable research methods.

4.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study has two interrelated objects: to critically evaluate the current systems of control and accountability within enterprise organisations at Nguiu, and the implications for development towards self-management by Tiwi people. Taking into account the preceding discussion, this evaluation attempts to answer the following questions:

Factors Stemming from Historical and Contemporary Operations

[1] What were the reasons and objectives surrounding the establishing of enterprises at

Nguiu?

- [2] How has the evaluation of enterprises and their funding reflected these objectives?
- [3] How relevant and effective are the existing formal organisational structures in terms of reflecting existing Tiwi management control at Nguiu?
- [4] What is the history of management development and training?
- [5] What is the level of Tiwi understanding regarding the manager of enterprises?

Factors Stemming from Tiwi Attributes

- [6] To what extent can these community enterprises be said to be controlled by specific individuals, families or factions?
- [7] How extensive is role conflict for Tiwi people trying to manage enterprises?
- [8] What problems do respectful Tiwi relationships and manners pose to Tiwi management?

Factors Stemming from Non-Aboriginal Control

- [9] How accountable are non-Tiwi managers and advisers to the Tiwi owners of enterprises?
- [10] What is known of the attitudes of non-Tiwi managers and advisers to Tiwi self-management and determination?
- [11] What is known of the efficiency of non-Tiwi managers and advisers?
- [12] To what extent does the imposition of external monitoring and accounting requirements assist/inhibit the management of enterprises?

[13] What degree of co-operation exists between non-Aboriginal people at Nguiu in the development of Tiwi people towards self-management and self-determination?

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Since this study was concerned with evaluating the current systems of accountability and control surrounding enterprise organisations of Nguiu, it contains both description and analysis. In the absence of any previous studies on these aspects of management in traditionally orientated Aboriginal communities, this study was exploratory in nature. That is to say, it was expected that the research findings would indicate specific areas requiring deeper consideration than is either possible or necessary within the limitations of this projects.

Given the research objectives, the research design was required to provide both an historical and a contemporary picture of enterprise operations at Nguiu, concentrating on the control and accountability of Tiwi and non-Tiwi people over these enterprises. Before discussing research methods, assumptions to do with this research and the epistemological implications arising from these assumptions, need to be acknowledged. For, as Morgan (1983:21) points out, the logic of a research strategy is embedded in the links between all of these factors.

4.3.1 Underlying Assumptions

This dissertation has been oriented towards Aboriginal people living in remote Aboriginal- communities of Northern Australia, who are still tied into kinship and interpersonal relationship from a recent hunter-gatherer past. What has been said to be traditionally orientated Aboriginal culture. In this regards this discussion already contains explicit assumptions about indigenous beliefs, values, cultural and knowledge systems, which have been said to provide for very different modes of thinking and communicating (Wolfe *et al.*,, 1991:3). A very different ontology, or way of being, and reinforced by the use that educators, such as Harris (1980) and Christie (1985), have made of Aboriginal and white ‘domains’ in two way schooling methodologies.

Although McConvell (1991) has criticised the views of these three writers as being neo-wharfian – implying the discredited philosophy that language controls our understanding of reality and world view – Bain’s refutation (1992b) and her central argument is that it is the totality of culture and not just language that is important. Bain’s argument is complimented by the inclusion and holistic nature of indigenous knowledge systems described by Wolfe *et al* (1991) and reinforced by the use that educators, such as Harris (1980) and Christie (1985), have made of Aboriginal and White ‘domains’ in two way schooling methodologies.

In accepting these views of aboriginal culture, one needs to be mindful of Popper’s distinction between verification and falsification. What Popper (in Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1991:39) has called the problem of induction. That is, one should look for evidence to disconfirm one’s hypothesis or existing view, because it is easier to disprove hypotheses than prove them. Given the lack of refutable evidence, this researcher accepts the above propositions with regards to the nature of Aboriginal culture. As Burrell and Morgan (1979) have shown, acceptance of these assumptions – in this case about the Aboriginal cultural and social world – have important implications concerning how researching is likely to be orientated. In this case reflecting the researchers own world view that there are no detached observers when it comes to studying other cultures (Hopkins, 1982:33). Additionally, as Heron (1981: 33) argues, the idea that any science is value free is a delusion.

4.3.2 Orientation Towards a Phenomenological Viewpoint

Such assumptions orientate this research towards a phenomenological and subjective inquiry from the inside, rather than an empirical and objective inquiry from the outside. For accepting that one’s world view and reality is socially and culturally constructed rather than objectively determined, provides a viewpoint from which one is orientated towards meanings and trying to understand what is happening, rather than focusing on facts and then trying to deduce meanings from them. There are serious limitations to this orientation, however, given that this researcher is a white ‘outsider’ (Callan 1986) who does not speak Tiwi.

In the first place there is a major problem in researching minority groups due to different perceptions and “ignorance of the mind of the other” (Callan, 1986: 32). This is particularly important in the case of traditionally orientated Aboriginal people, where, as already discussed, their world view is very different from that of the dominant majority of white Australians. As such, there may be problems of acceptance of the researcher. This may have much to do with perceptions within the community about the researchers relationships to people. Moreover, differing perceptions and ethnocentric bias can add increased misunderstands to research situations. Given this situation the researcher may well have different perceptions about the importance of objects and events in the Aboriginal domain vis-à-vis mainstream Australia. Discussing the researcher’s perceptions with aboriginal people, with an open view to corroborating or negating perceptions, assisted in overcoming these difficulties.

There are also difficulties that occur with regards to courtesy norms (Callan, 1986:32). For example, where questions are not deemed important by respondents they may agree with the researcher’s questions in order to please the researcher. On the other hand, questioning about management operations in this research may well induce reticence to freely explain situations and experiences which are considered by Tiwi stakeholders to be sensitive, or not considered to be the business of others. Disclosure of sensitive information can prove to be very damaging to individuals if made public. The politics of management research therefore requires a fine line to be drawn as to what one would like to do and what one may be allowed to do (Easterby Smith *et al.*, 1991:59) . This is particularly difficult in applied management research which is dealing in current management situations and practical outcomes, yet at the same time trying to provide discretion for individuals and groups. Levels of education and other cultural factors such as gender norms, add to these problems.

This dissertation, however, is more concerned to understand the qualitative aspects of what is going on in Aboriginal enterprise management and why, rather than quantifying the results of that management. Research that is orientated to a naturalist paradigm, where the role and relationship of the researcher cannot be detached from the ‘setting’ if one is to understand what is going on (Craig-Smith and Dainty, 1991:11). However, trying to understand what is going on inside these enterprises is particularly hard given

major cross-cultural differences that result in two 'insides' to community enterprises, one to do with Tiwi understanding and one to do with non-Tiwi understandings. One way out of this dilemma, suggested by Schwatz and Ogilvy (in Reason and Rowan, (eds) 1981:241) is by moving away from notions of objectivity and subjectivity by utilising a personal and more distanced view of reality. A view that will still, in the case of this researcher, reflect non-Tiwi understandings of reality. In providing a personal perspective of reality, one needs to be mindful of what Reason (in Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1991:32) argues is the need for a critical subjectivity. This involves recognising one's own views and experiences in interpreting what is going on, but not allowing oneself to be overwhelmed by them.

Although this research is orientated to a subjective viewpoint, there is no suggestion that empirical data and large samples do not have their place in cultural studies, as Hofstede (1980) has shown. This dissertation, however, is concerned with small enterprises, set within unique small scale but factional community contexts, which have already been seen to be of major importance. Large samples and substantial data analysis are, therefore, irrelevant both methodologically and substantially, as Davila (in Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1991:61) has also pointed out in the context of Latin America. Empirical data, particularly in the form of secondary sources from community organisations, is important however in helping to fix or confirm subjective understanding of events and movements in enterprise development and operations (Craig-Smith and Dainty, 1991:133-134).

Of the extensive bibliography that is available on the Tiwi, three publications are particularly relevant to a discussion of Nguiu enterprises. Altman's (1988: 151-281) overview of tourism on Melville and Bathurst Islands provides an economic analysis of the art enterprises of Tiwi Design and Bima Wear within the larger Aboriginal Art and Tourism Industries. West's (1988) thesis *Art for Money's Sake*, provides historical and anthropological insights into Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Art in general and deals with aspects of Tiwi culture and Tiwi behaviour at work. Stanley's (1983) monograph on the economy of Nguiu, although now somewhat dated, provides useful information about the enterprise of Nguiu, and their economic structure and development. The Ullinginni Association's store is referred to by Young (1984, 1988a) and Stanley (1983). Apart from these publications there are two consultancy reports (Scruby, 1989; 1992) to do

with manufacturing and marketing in Aboriginal screen printing enterprises, which refer to Bima War and Tiwi Design, and a consultancy report (Cook, 1991) which deals with the management development of all three enterprise organisations.

Community contexts and enterprise operations have been seen to require an eclectic approach to information gathering and questioning. Local historical, anthropological and political aspects, as well as economic and financial data need to be gathered together into some sort of order since we are interested in the totality of enterprise operations. This poses problems to do with cross-discipline methodological development and contextual validity (Blunt, 1981:55z); and as Reason and Rowan (1981:240) remark, how any particular piece of information fits in with the whole picture.

4.3.3 Nature of Research

Since this research design is required to have some practical outcomes, to assist in the development of Tiwi enterprises at Nguiu, the research design fall into the general category of applied research. However, this study is also exploratory in two general ways. Firstly, by taking a theoretical position regarding Aboriginal cultural and contemporary enterprise development. Secondly, by reflecting on what has been said to be the general categories of problems for enterprise development to a specific setting, in this case Tiwi enterprises at Nguiu, Bathurst Island. Taking such factors into account, the nature of this research takes the form of a naturalistic inquiry, describing, explaining, and analysing what is, and have been, going on in terms of control and accountability of enterprises operations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

4.3. The Context

Conducting research in Aboriginal community settings such as Nguiu, provides a good example of just how important the context is in constraining what is possible and what

is desirable (Easterby-Smith, 1991: 59). For politics, ethics, and management philosophy envelope the research perspective (Dainty and Smith eds, 1991:207). Here we are dealing with a development situation of very unequal partners, one where white Australians have dominated research into Aboriginal affairs. Minority group grievances against researchers from the dominant society has, at the best, been characterised as unequal, and at worst exploitative (Callen, 1986:33). The problem here, as Howitt (1990):3) remarks, is that:

On the one hand, questions of professional standards and academic accountability (including academic freedom) cannot be brushed aside as unimportant. Yet, on the other hand, the rights of Aboriginal groups to decide for themselves what constitutes appropriate research and control information about themselves and their communities are fundamental to self determination.

This requires a paradigm shift towards doing research with Aboriginal people, rather than doing research on them. Given that the Tiwi Land Council do not have specific guidelines with regards to screening research and researchers into Tiwi affairs, there is an ethical need to take up Shaw's (1990: 6) concept that a negotiated agreement between researcher and the community council has to happen. In the case of this research, the Tiwi managers of the three organisations researched were briefed on the research, and it was negotiated that access to enterprise records and information would be made through them. Apart from enterprise staff, it was agreed to keep the Nguui Community Council, through the Council President and the Tiwi Land Council manager, generally informed as to progress. A clear undertaking was also given to the Tiwi executives of enterprises to refrain from implicating individuals who may be involved in current enterprise operations.

4.3.5 Scope and Limitations of Research

The enterprises involved in this research are confined to the Ullingini Association, which runs the store, garage, and take-away restaurant, Bima Wear (a woman's business, which designs and manufactures and retails women's clothing) and Tiwi designs, which also designs and manufactures clothing and which now incorporates the pottery and artefact sales. Each of these enterprises would be classified as a small business in mainstream Australia. Excluded from this research I the Nguiu Club whose executive did not want to be involved and the Housing Association which was not included as it is an infrastructure rather than an enterprise institution (Stanley, 1983:7).

Although this study is exploratory in nature, the scope is quite broad since it is concerned with factors surrounding the control and accountability of enterprise management over time. What is needed is a methodology that can incorporate enterprises as the unit of study, eclectic sources of information and data, with a longitudinal focus. In term of enterprise operations this needs to include both qualitative and quantitative data collection. There are problems in mixing these different forms of data together as Easterby-Smith *et al.* (1991:31-32) for example, outlines. However, since this is an exploratory study, it only needs to adhere to the 'first level of rigour' in requiring that the methods employed strictly adhere to the fundamental requirements of the research (Bennet, 1991:87). This is particularly the case here given the need to deal with issues and a data mix which more rigorous and pure approaches may not be able to handle.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODS

There is no doubt that a change in focus from applied research, utilised in this case study approach, to a more co-operative and participative methodology would be better. Better, that is, in the reasonable belief that the Tiwi's, who will be most affected by implementing changes, should be involved in the research process itself (Easterby-Smith, 1991: 34). Initially this research was started as a co-operative inquiry between a

Tiwi friend, Stanley Tipaloura, and myself. Tragically, Stanley died in early 1991 only a few months after commencing this project. Time and funding limitations have precluded my spending extended periods at Nguiu, and therefore have inhibited the opportunity for long term action research.

However, my involvement with these enterprises through intermittent consulting and training trips to Nguiu in the period 1989 to 1993 does have implications in terms of this research. Firstly, because the nature of interaction for much of this period was in the form of co-operative research with Tiwi and non-Tiwi enterprise management, although the degree of interaction was limited by language difficulties. Secondly, because of the process and outcomes of the research consultancy into Tiwi management development (Cook, 1991). While much of this earlier work can be criticised in hindsight the aforementioned report contains relevant research data and information to do with this dissertation.

4.4.1 Case Study Approach

Given the research context and the applied research objectives, it was determined that a case study approach to each of the three organisations would be the most useful method. Case studies also provide a platform, where qualitative and quantitative data, of a primary and secondary nature can be integrated to provide a picture of management and organisational development (Bryman, 1989:175). Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a good overview to naturalistic case study methods. However, the need for case studies to be representative is not considered an issue here, primarily because of the applied nature of this research in assisting specific Tiwi enterprises (Craig-Smith and Dainty, 1991:94).

Whilst these Tiwi enterprises may well reflect what have been seen to be general factors affecting the development of Aboriginal community enterprises, they can only be said to provide examples of these general factors in a unique community context. In this regard it is important to be careful that theory and hypotheses are grounded in the case (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:369). It is also important that bias or a modelling effect (Phillips, 1973:61) is not introduced; particularly from what has already been seen to be theoretically or generally important. There is therefore, a need for a degree of rigour involved in these case studies to do with validation, reliability and objectivity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:290-294).

Although case studies are limited by events occurring before the time of study, observations and understandings gained by this researcher's intermittent engagement with these enterprises during three years at Nguiu, assist in the credibility of the findings (Craig-Smith and Dainty, 1991:94). Similarly, the use of secondary and archival information within enterprises, to do with administration and financial operations assists in the triangulation of findings and interpretations as does verification of 'what has gone on' by enterprise staff (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:283).

4.5 DATA COLLECTION / DATA SOURCES

There are two major sources of data to do with enterprise operations:

- . Primary information on enterprise operations from people who have worked in, or who have had dealings with, these enterprises.
- . Secondary data regarding the operations and development of these enterprises, much of which is held by enterprises.

Primary information on enterprises and their histories was gained by semi – structured interviews and unstructured discussions with key stakeholders, both Tiwi and non-Tiwi, who have, or who are, currently associated with the enterprises. This information was

then integrated with secondary records from enterprises and reports about enterprises to provide a reasonable picture of the history and contemporary operations of enterprises. Information contained in documentary and archival form, as Bryman (1998:197) points out, is generally free of the biases that can occur in interviews and questionnaires. Documentary, or secondary information, to do with budgets, internal correspondence and the financial picture of organisations has been important to many qualitative studies (see, for example, Mintzberg and McHugh, 1985; Sutton, 1987). However, it is useful to bear in mind the checklist that Gottschalk, Kluckholm and Angell (in Bryman, 1989:198) propose for the accuracy of such material.

In terms of secondary and archival data, the yearly financial reports that are provided for public scrutiny by the accounting firms of these incorporated Associations give little precise information as to the recurring problems of enterprises, or of employee competence. More detailed data on the ups and downs of financial performance can be gleaned from minuted meetings and monthly or quarterly accounting and management reports. For a variety of reasons these historical records may be intermittent, or unavailable, and care needs to be taken in interpreting information. One can, of course, ask people questions about prior and current events to back up known data.

Information gained this way should highlight many of the factors to do with both the historical and contemporary operations of enterprises, as well as some information as to the effects of Tiwi attributes and non-Tiwi control over these enterprises. Published reports, personal records and diary entries for the period 1989–1993 – when this researcher made frequent visits to Nguiu for periods up to two months in regards to training and development consultancies – were utilised to provide comment on secondary data and provide some understanding of the attitudes of non-Aboriginal staff and possibilities for development.

4.5.1 Operational steps / Data Analysis

Following Lincoln and Guba (1985:366) the first operational step in case studies is to provide for the verification of facts, documents, accounts of events, and assertions. This means indexing and referencing data that has been collected so that it can be referenced in the text. The index of data is attached as Appendix 'A.' The second step involves developing a storyline that will be used in all three case studies. In the case studies described here, the storyline revolves around the history of enterprise management with indexed material cross referenced to the provisional outline. Draft case studies of each enterprise were finally submitted to the enterprise executive for approval and comment.

4.6 ENTERPRISES AT NGUIU

Having provided a research design and methodological basis for researching the operations of community based enterprises, this section provides case histories of three community enterprise organisations at Nguiu, Bathurst Island. Figure 3 (page following) shows a map of Nguiu including the location of enterprises and other features. The enterprises discussed consist of:

- . The Ullinginni Association, which has by far the largest sales, and operates the only store, take-away restaurant and garage.
- . Tiwi Designs, which screen-prints fabrics, incorporates a pottery and buys and sells Tiwi wood carvings. Most products being exported to the mainland or overseas.
- . Bima Wear, which screen-prints fabrics and manufactures women's clothes for a predominantly Tiwi market, and is operated and managed by women.

Following an outline of the history of Nguiu and its enterprises, individual case histories and contemporary operations of the Nguiu Ullinginni Associations Store, Tiwi Designs, and Bima Wear are given, citing secondary records, reports, and primary data from individuals, as well as this researcher's own experiences between 1989-1993.

4.6.1 Annotated History of Nguiu

The Aboriginal population of Nguiu stood at 1004, in 1982, with the number of non-Aboriginals, mostly working in a managerial capacity in infrastructure organisations, at 84 (Stanley, 1983:3). In the 1986 census the Aboriginal and Torres Strait population was 1008 with the non-Aboriginal population increasing to 103 (Altman, 1988: 254). There appears to have been a problem with the 1991 census because the Aboriginal population of Nguiu was said to have dropped drastically to 864, while the non-Aboriginal population increased to 182. There has been a story circulating on the Island, however, that 200 completed census forms were inadvertently not returned to the census office.

From the establishment of the Catholic Mission in 1911 through to 1974, Nguiu was known as Bathurst Island Mission. The importance of the Mission to the economic and social development of Nguiu, and its continued influence, should not be underestimated. It was not until the early '1970s' that the full integration of Nguiu into the cash economy occurred, with the discontinuation of the ration system by the Mission and acceptance of government funding. Individual Tiwi's, under government benefit schemes of the '1970s', were then able to receive direct government payments, rather than being paid through the Mission. Tiwi community groups and enterprises were also forced to incorporate as Associations and Organisations in order to qualify for funding. At the same time, the new government training allowance scheme (TAS) encouraged the Mission to diversify its training program, while acceptance of government funding meant that the finances of Nguiu were no longer managed by the Mission. These factors, as West (1988: 21) points out, gave a strong impetus for the Mission to assist in developing Aboriginal enterprises.

It was within this context that the Ullinginni Association was developed by Brother Gallagher to serve as an umbrella organisation for the economic and social needs of Nguiu. The Ullinginni association was incorporated in 1971. Tiwi designs was started by a catholic lay teacher, Madelaine Clear, in 1969 and ran as a partnership between two Tiwi artists until it was incorporated in 1981. Tiwi Clothing Company was initially part of Tiwi Designs, later to become separately incorporated as Bima Wear. This is a women's business, managed initially by Sister Eucharua from 1979 to 1986.

Sister Anne Gardiner, who has been with the Mission at Bathurst Island for some 40 years, pointed out that when these enterprises were established, little thought was given to involving the Tiwi in management and/or organisational development. Similarly, little consideration was given to how Tiwi management and kinship networks affect control of these enterprises (I/AG 3/12/93). Nevertheless other cultural aspects, such as the need to provide separate employment opportunities for women, were the reason that the Mission developed Bima Wear. Even today, as Sister Anne explained, the Tiwi's do not want to integrate the Boy's and Girl's schools into one school and have mixed classes, even though it would be more efficient. This reflects avoidance relationships between brothers and sisters as discussed in Chapter 3 (I/AG 3/12/93).

As previously mentioned, prior to the '1980s' the Mission exercised control over fiscal policy and the recruitment of non-Tiwi managerial staff to Nguiu Associations and enterprises. When Mission control was replaced by the development of what is now the Nguiu Community Council, the umbrella role of economic development that the Ullinginni Association had been given by the Catholic Mission was not transferred to the Council.

The factional nature of community politics and the prior development of enterprise Associations now means that the Community Council has little control over development (HRSCAA, 1990: 18). Most regulatory or policing bodies that provide for the accountability of enterprises in mainstream society are generally irrelevant or inoperative in Nguiu. Factors such as the Tiwi way of life, different values and a dislike

for outsiders questioning and prosecuting individuals, even non-Tiwi's, has caused a vacuum of regulatory control in which fraud, embezzlement and theft has flourished.

Although by the end of the '1980s' the Catholic Mission had ceased its last monitoring role over Bima Wear, the Mission is still a major force in the social and economic life of Nguuu. Control over the operations of the hospital was only transferred to the Nguuu Community Council in 1993, and the Girls school (previously called St. Teresa's, now Murrupurtiyanuwu) is still primarily run by the Mission sisters, even though Tiwi control over the school is increasing. While the principal of the Boys school (Xavier's, now called Xavier Community Education Centre) is a lay person, there are some Catholic Mission Brothers employed. A general Roman Catholic ethic permeates both these schools, which is hardly surprising since they are still administered through Catholic Education. The Xavier Community Education Centre which was designed to access external courses, also controls adult education (1993).

4.7 NGUIU ULLINGINNI ASSOCIATION

4.7.1 Factors Stemming from Historical and Contemporary operations

Brother Gallagher of the Roman Catholic Mission organised the formation of the Nguiu Ullinginni (Ullinginni meaning 'fun' in Tiwi) Association in 1970. Bernard Tipiloura, applied for, and was granted, incorporation of this Association under The Northern Territory of Australia Association Ordinance in 1971. The two major objectives of the Association's constitution (amended 1974 version), set in place largely by Brother Gallagher, being firstly "to promote, or assist in promoting the social cultural and economic development of Aboriginal people resident at Nguiu, Bathurst Island." The other major objective "was to establish and conduct or assist or encourage the establishment of business enterprises of all kinds suitable for establishment and conduct at Bathurst Island" (U/ER 1974).

In 1974 the Association activities included an active social club, film club, a tourist operation and a ferry service, mainly for Tiwi people and supplies across the Aspley Strait to Melville Island. In addition, the Association handled artefact sales and ran the store, as well as the bank agency and post office. Although the social and film club were popular with the Tiwi's, they were run and controlled by European Mission staff. With the removal of Mission control and interest, the social and cultural side of activities disappeared. Other enterprises set up by the Ullinginni Association in the late 1970's and early 1980's, such as the bakery, garden, poultry farm (for eggs), and fishing enterprise failed, like most enterprises set up in the assimilationist period, due to a lack of profitability, underlain by a lack of on-going Tiwi interest in them (U/E/ER 26/3/83). A fate common to most enterprises set up in the assimilation period and possibly due to the menial tasks allocated to Tiwi's in Mission based enterprises. Today the Ullinginni Association is only concerned with the store, garage and restaurant, although funds are

still requested by community groups to support community needs, such as providing meals for the mothers' club (I/RC 1/12/93).

Between 1991 and 1993 the number of employees of the Association varied between 20 and 30. The store employed between 12 and 15, some on shift work. The take-away restaurant between seven and 12, mostly on shift work, and the garage between three and five. In that period, the number of non-Tiwi employed in a managerial capacity varied between three and six. Wages for Tiwi employees of the Association are not high, ranging from \$200 to \$400 gross per week with executive members being granted an additional sitting fee for executive meetings, currently \$40 per meeting. Non-Tiwi staff salaries, in contrast, can include bonuses such as, removal expenses, return flights to Darwin, a car, etc, and range from \$500 to \$900 gross per week. Operational control over the three enterprises is normally given to the store manager, who becomes in effect the general manager. Accounting, ordering of stock and wages for all three enterprises are processed through the store.

Eligibility for membership of the Ullinginni Association, as shown in the constitution, is open to Aboriginal people over the age of 18 and normally resident at Nguuu. Although Clause 5 of the constitution provides for subscription fees to be charged to members, these were never levied and no membership list of Association members has ever been kept. What has happened is that automatic membership is assumed to be in place for all Aboriginal people over the age of 18 residing at Nguuu. The executive of the Association, which comprises a President, Two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, Treasurer and three ordinary members, are eligible for re-election at the yearly AGM. This requires a minimum quorum of 100 members, or as happens, a crowd of concerned and involved Tiwi residents. Elections of the Ullinginni association, unlike Tiwi Designs and Bima Wear, provide much local politicking as a result of the importance of this Association in the control of community resources, although most of this is carried out behind the scenes. For the Ullinginni association is very important as it controls most essential community resources.

According to the constitution, the minutes of all meetings are supposed to be kept in book form. However, minutes are kept loose in files and there are periods of a year or more with no records and no trace of minutes prior to September 1987. What the limited minutes do show up, and what is reinforced by more extensive audit and accountancy reports about the Associations operations, reveals the roller-coaster ride of profitability and near bankruptcy that the Ullinginni Association has experienced. Trading Results for 1988, for example, show gross sales of the Store to be a little over \$1.7 million but with a negative Gross Profit of \$20,000.00 (U/E/ER 1988). In 1989, however, with gross sales just over \$2.0 million, gross profit was \$497,000.00. Gross profit has varied by up to \$0.5 million a year, and in constant dollar figures has done so frequently (U/E//ER 1983-92). There are fluctuations in gross profits between quarters in 1991 of 17% without apparent financial reasons.

On occasions the Association may have been technically bankrupt, for example, in 1991, yet on other occasions, the Association's high profitability has provided considerable funding to community groups (U/E/ER 21/1/92). Yet all three Ullinginni Association enterprises are monopoly businesses and there is no reason why they cannot be continuously profitable. The accountancy and audit records generally imply, and this is affirmed by Tiwi and non-Tiwi staff, that these ups and downs are the result of two major factors:

- . Those to do with Tiwi attributes.
- . Those to do with the non-Tiwi managers and advisers who generally control Association operations.

(Cook, 1991).

Although the Tiwi executive of the Ullinginni Association are supposed to control the enterprise activities of the Association, there is no requirement that the executive have any understanding of enterprise operations. Reports, surveys and interviews show that executive members have a very low level of basic enterprise understanding; a point

reinforced by the Tiwi themselves (U/ER March 1991; Cook, 1991; TI/BP 10/6/93; TI/RG 1/12/93). This means that the executive cannot understand the monthly management reports, or the basic trading cycle.

It could be argued that lack of appropriate training may be the problem in this situation and certainly much of the training that has been carried out is questionable (Young, 1988: 188; Cook, 1991). There are fundamental problems, however, to do with the transferability of management training to the very different Tiwi domain which is not addressed by 'training' Tiwi in western ways of management.

4.7.2 Factors to do with Tiwi attributes

The very different world view of the Tiwi, as discussed in Chapter 4, leads to problems in understanding enterprise operations, similar to those that Bain (1979, 1992a) and Trudgen (1992) have described with regard to other Aboriginal situations. In these Tiwi enterprises there is little separation between working and social life. Obligations and personal relationships to one's relatives and kin do not disappear when at work. The Tiwi way of life as Ward (1990) describes has not been greatly affected by the veneer of schooling and training in western ways that most Tiwi have had. Obligations to relatives have consistently resulted in goods being misappropriated; particularly in periods when there was little effective management control, and continues to be a major drain on the resources of the Ullinginni Association (Young, 1984: 61; Cook, 1991: 11; TI/ RG 1/12/93). This is a common situation in remote Aboriginal communities (Young, 1988a: 186).

The history of Tiwi control within the Ullinginni Association executive is a shifting one that is not completely known. Although individual executive members are sometimes re-elected to the same positions, and may stay within the executive group for several years, there have been considerable changes to the executive over time (TI/RG 1/12/93).

What appears to be important in exercising control over the Association operations are those employees and executive members who currently work for the Association and their changing network of family relationships and alliances. The Tungutalum family and relations, for example, have been well represented on the executive in recent years (TI/RC 1/12/93). Although individual Tiwi's can reach a position of power within the organisation there are always other factions competing for control over the Association, which hold such individuals in check.

Decision making within the Ullinginni executive is rather more about who will support who in dealing with the non-Tiwi management, since it is the non-Tiwi staff who make most of the operational decisions. Selection of non-Tiwi management staff, after pre-screening of technical suitability by ATSIC, is made by Tiwi executive members. What is known to be important in the Tiwi process of selection is the subjective assessment of the possible relationships that might develop between the manager and executive members (TI/HT 2/12/93). An applicant who is perceived as a strong manager, for example, may not be considered flexible enough in his/her dealings with the executive, or of being able to be incorporated and recruited into particular factions, as Sutton (cited in Rowse, 1992: 103) has discussed. Yet as one key Tiwi explained, it takes at least a month to get to know a person (TI/HT 2/12/93).

Policy decisions of the Ullinginni executive are made in meetings where the non-Tiwi manager provides considerable input to decision making. For example, in a recent (1993) meeting, the Tiwi executive suggested re-introducing a book-up system of credit against wages for employees. The non-Tiwi manager advised against re-introducing credit due to prior problems the Association had experienced in controlling book-ups, but this decision, as the manager said, was up to the Tiwi executive (TI/RC 1/12/93). The executive agreed not to re-instate credit. The manager conceded that it was likely that the Tiwi executive would explain to their relatives that the decision on book-ups was that of the non-Tiwi manager and that they should go and see him if they did not like the decision. "Well they probably did. I say it came from them which it does, you

know they make policies; it's up to me to carry policy out. That's the basic idea" (TI/RC 1/12/93).

Role conflict between the needs of sound management and the pressure on Tiwi employees to supply relatives with goods, when they are hungry, is very strong, particularly for young women, as is generally the case in Aboriginal communities (Ellanna, 1988: 60; Cook 1991: 11; TI/RC 1/12/93). As the recent (1993) manager remarked:

I wouldn't like to be put under the same pressure. They've got to say no, and most times they do they handle it. But you don't see everything that goes on of course. We've found a lot of pressure in the restaurant, we've lost a lot of stuff [goods]. I think that in one month we estimated that probably \$19,000.00 went out, recently. In one month, stuff [goods] that went out without being paid for. It was going out wholesale at one stage I was told by people. So we got the girls and they admitted it eventually (TI/RC 1/12/93).

To what degree other factors, such as the need for personal prestige or power are associated with misappropriation of goods is not known, but it needs to be remembered that Tiwi society is still very much a gift society. Given the importance of sharing to the Tiwi, it is hardly surprising that, the extent of censure against Tiwi who do not share can become violent, and is very hard to resist, as Tiwi in the Ullinginni Association acknowledge (D 10/11/91; RG/TI 11/6/93).

Respect for Tiwi relationships, which do not allow, for example, brothers and sisters to talk to each other, also poses problems for management. As a senior Tiwi employee explained: "One cannot speak to certain people, I have to go round and talk to somebody else" (HT/TI 2/12/32). This attribute needs to be taken into account in recruitment: "I got caught out a few times in taking people on, they don't tell you, you've got to find out. So now I ask them, can you get along with these people?" (TI/RC 1/12/93). Recruitment of Tiwi staff is generally carried out informally by the

non-Tiwi manager who simply “puts the word out” (TI/RC 1/12/93). How informal recruiting occurs in the Tiwi domain, and why particular Tiwi's present themselves, is not known, however, it is known that Tiwi recruitment practices do not simply select the best graduates with western skills that are available from Nguiu's schools (TI/RC 1/12/93). These Tiwi attributes, together with their way of life are central to enterprise operations and possibilities for self-management, yet have not been addressed by the Ullinginni Association in any of its training programs.

4.7.3 Non-Aboriginal Control

In recent years ATSIC has exerted a degree of indirect control over the Ullinginni Association, due to a long term loan agreement that was taken out to build the existing store in 1982. Accountancy and audit requirements of this loan provide ATSIC and the Ullinginni management with monthly and three monthly trading accounts. The idea being that problems to do with profitability should be able to be taken up quickly by the management of the Association, or by ATSIC, before they become serious. There are delays, however, in processing and forwarding accounts between Nguiu and the Darwin accountants, which can take a few weeks. Apart from these time delays, interpreting the wide monthly divergences between budgeted and actual figures and poor reliability in stock control and record keeping that have characterised the Ullinginni Association trading history, is very difficult (U/ER 1982-92). By the time the losses really stand out, it is too late. The management and accountancy reports which are provided are not understood by the Tiwi executive, who gloss over continuing management problems such as inadequate stock control, and offer little practical advice on operational control (U/ER 1982-92).

Given the speed at which the Ullinginni Association can flounder, reactive management advice and indirect control from Darwin is ineffective, expensive and has not assisted

Tiwi development (Cook, 1991; TI/RG 1/12/93). This lack of effective external control over enterprise operations, combined with the lack of enterprise understanding of Tiwi staff, provides non-Tiwi management staff with much more independence and control over enterprise operations than similar salaried managers, for example, in Darwin. This is a situation one non-Tiwi manager likened to running one's own business, but in a very volatile and different cultural environment (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

This environment has given rise to many of the general problems of recruitment and employment of non-Aboriginal staff discussed in Chapter 1. Equally, the lack of control over the recruitment and operations of non-Tiwi staff within the Ullinginni Association has resulted in the employment of ineffectual managers and the occasional crook. A general problem in Aboriginal communities and another major cause of financial distress in the trading history of the Ullinginni Association, as noted by Young (1988a: 188). This has been compounded by poor record keeping and the reluctance of the Tiwi's to pursue people through the courts. As such, possibilities for self-interest in managing Aboriginal stores are well known, particularly amongst applicants for managerial positions (TI/RG 1/12/93).

The story of Nadzeb Pty Ltd, a trading company set up by a manager and partner in 1990 to provide goods for the Ullinginni Association, is a case in point. The non-Tiwi manager argued that one main creditor and pre-priced goods would simplify the book-work and provide cheaper prices for goods. It was further suggested, and accepted by the executive, that the manager would not need to be paid wages but rather should receive commission fees paid to Nadzeb, her husband's company (U/ER 5/4/90). In the six months that it took, in trading with Nadzeb before major problems became apparent, and action taken, there was half a million dollars shortfall in the budgeted accounts (U/E.ER July, 1990). Whether the Ullinginni Association actually received all the goods invoiced by Nadzeb, particularly since stock levels in the store became remarkable low, is not known. Why the resultant hue and cry did not proceed to prosecution is not clear, but the outcomes for the Ullinginni Association were severe.

The ability of the Association to continue trading was questioned in the auditor's report of the 21/1/91, providing much speculation and politicking at Nguiu about the future of the Association. Prices of essential foods were increased to almost double those of Darwin for the next year and a half, while the Association again traded its way out of trouble (TI/RG 1/12/93). Needless to say, these high prices caused considerable hostility since most community residents are on government benefit payments.

Other managers have been either lacking in the technical skills and experience required for this position, or do not relish the tedious work involved. Take for instance inadequate stock control which has been continuously reported by the Ullinginni Associations accountants (U/E.ER 1982-92). Of more importance, however, is the attitude of non-Tiwi management staff towards their employment. During field work, from 1991 to 1993, it was apparent that where non-Tiwi management staff lacked the skills or knowledge to implement, for example stock reporting systems, and made little attempt to upgrade their own skills, even though assistance was available in the community (D 2/8/91).

A previous manager employed in 1987, for example, not only convinced the executive to employ consultancy services for the garage, hardware, retail store, training and development, but a fortnight later employed accountancy and legal services because he could not be expected to have such skills (U/ER 4th and 15/9/87). Recruitment of this manager seems to have been influenced by a pre-selection process that did not address the suitability of this candidate's references adequately, allowing this ex-public servant the sole interview for the job. When this was criticised by Bernard Tupaloura at an executive meeting a few weeks later, the executive explained that they "would see the guy from Darwin first and if they liked the look of him and he liked the look of them, then they probably wouldn't go any further." The executive were concerned about saving money on interstate airfares (U/ER 25/9/87).

What role the ADC, as the funding organisation to the Ullinginni Association, played in this recruitment process is not known. But this same manager attempted to embark on a program of expansion of the Associations enterprise activities that was almost visionary. Projects included a pearling venture, airline and private medical clinic. If this was not enough, this manager created much ill-feeling by involving himself deeply in local politics.

More recently (1991), the strong personal views on Tiwi-development by a non-Tiwi bookkeeper, who was also the secretary for the Association, heavily influenced executive meetings. For example, b creating a negative influence on ideas about co-operative development such as community based accounting (U/ER 15/8/91). Once the Ullinginni Association pays off its loan to ATSIC, there will be no external control over pre-selection of non-Tiwi staff and recruitment may prove to be increasingly subjective. Clearly, the need for the Ullinginni executive to accept objective advice, with regards to the recruitment and operation of its non-Tiwi staff is of major importance.

Equally important is the need to address monopoly issues concerning profitability and pricing, particularly given the essential nature of the Association's goods and low community incomes. Although the most recent manager has said that the Association can make any profit it likes since it has a monopoly, sticking to budgeted profits will require better control over stock than is the case now and may result in the need to employ more non-Tiwi staff (TI/RC 1/12/93). This brings up the problem of obligatory pressures on Tiwi employees to supply their relatives with goods, and that of inequality in who receives them. For, when large quantities of goods are misappropriated, store prices go up but these higher prices will most affect members of the community who do not have good relations with employees who are pilfering, or not charging for goods.

As discussed, the development of the Ullinginni Association in the early 1970's took place under the control of the Catholic Mission. Incorporation objectives, structure and membership requirements of the Association reflect what the Catholic Mission

perceived to be important for Tiwi development. Likewise, the range of community and enterprise developments undertaken during the '1970s' and early 1980s' reflected Catholic Mission ideas about assimilation. Most of these early enterprises and community projects failed because they were driven by the Catholic Mission, with little Tiwi input. Now the Association only operates three monopoly enterprises. But even so, the trading results of the Association have continuously fluctuated between high profits and technical bankruptcy.

What is agreed by Tiwi and non-Tiwi staff is that these fluctuations in the operations of the Associations enterprises are the result of two major factors; those to do with Tiwi attributes and those to do with control exercised by non-Tiwi managers. Apart from brief periods the operations of the Association have always been controlled by non-Tiwi managers. This is due to the low level of enterprise understanding by the Tiwi executive underlain by fundamental problems in transferring western management training to the very different Tiwi domain. For in the Tiwi world view there is no separation between working and social life, and one's relationships and obligations to one's relatives and friends are far more important than working life. These obligations have consistently resulted in goods being misappropriated, and in periods of little effective management have led to a severe drain on the Association's resources. Yet these cultural factors have not been taken into account in the development of the Ullinginni Association.

The contemporary picture of management is one where the Tiwi executive do not understand the management reports and trading operations of their own Association. What limited control and decision making ability the executive do have has more to do with who will support who in dealing with the non-Tiwi management. Yet this is where many of the management problems of the Association have stemmed from. The subjective recruitment of non-Tiwi staff and their lack of accountability to the Association or the community has often led to the employment of ineffective or unscrupulous managers and the occasional crook. External agencies are of little help in

dealing with this problem, due in part to reactive and poor management advice to the Association, or not wanting to involve themselves in issues to do with self-determination. Moreover, the effects of poor management of the Ullinginni Association are felt throughout the community.

4.8 TIWI DESIGNS

4.8.1 Factors Stemming from Historical and Contemporary operations

Madeleine Clear, a lay teacher of the St. Xavier Boy's school, founded Tiwi Designs in 1969. Believing in the artistic potential and interest of three post school boys, she set up Tiwi Designs as a formal business partnership, utilising premises under the Presbytery.

Both Madelaine Clear and the next craft adviser, Dianna Conray, saw their role as craft advisers rather than as administrative or technical support. The dual functions of Tiwi Designs as a training workshop as well as a craft enterprise was said by West (1988: 43) to have caused some initial conflict: "Clear, in fact, believed that given the high cost of production, Tiwi Designs did not have an economic future, but that its principal function was in developing the talents of its artists." Both art training in western skills of screen printing, and enterprise development characterised Tiwi Designs until the beginning of the '1980s'. A period in which Tiwi Designs expanded production and employment, and in 1976 obtained its present premises from the Mission.

The Tiwi Pottery was developed separately in 1973. Its function was also to train Tiwi in western technical skills to do with pottery production (its premises being built in 1974). The pottery has continued in production with the exception of two short periods in 1981/82 and 1989/90 when it was closed due to lack of funds. Since 1981, the pottery has been managed by Tiwi Designs in an effort to make the pottery enterprise more efficient. Indigenous Tiwi carvings had been purchased and resold by the Mission before Tiwi Designs was established. However, it was not until 1977 that Tiwi Pima Art was officially recognised for funding purposes and incorporated as the Tiwi Ngaripulawamigi Aboriginal organisation. Erratic production and sales coupled with management problems in 1990 resulted in Tiwi Pima Art being absorbed into Tiwi

Designs in 1991(D 28/5/90; West, 1988: 41). Production and management of all three art enterprise areas, Tiwi Designs, Tiwi Pima Art, and Tiwi Pottery, are now (1993) incorporated within Tiwi Designs. This is still a small business, having a current (1993) work force of about twelve employees.

As West (1988: 40) remarks, it is evident from the order in which the craft enterprises were established that western skills were seen as being more important than indigenous skills. The development ideology behind Mission and government support was without any substantive support for the Tiwi perspective or indigenous skills until Tiwi Pima Art was officially recognised in 1977. As will be seen, the Tiwi perspective and way of life is still not being taken into account in the current economic and self-management development policies of funding agencies.

Moves towards economic rationality occurred in 1982 when the three craft advisers for Tiwi Designs, Tiwi Pima Art and Tiwi Pottery were reduced to one overall manager with business skills located at Tiwi Designs; a decision made by the ADC then the principle funding body. The single manager could not cope with both enterprise and art production areas and by 1986 craft advisers were re-employed to handle the training and production of art and crafts from the different areas (West, 1988: 45). It was also in 1981 that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs advised Tiwi Designs to change from the existing partnership to an Association governed by a committee, in order to access government funds. A change that was said by West (1989: 44), to have caused concern to its original patrons, who felt they were losing some of their prestige as the originators of Tiwi Designs.

Tiwi Designs was incorporated under the Commonwealth Aboriginal Councils and Association Act in 1981. The objectives of Tiwi Designs Corporation are:

- . *to promote, preserve and enrich the Tiwi culture;*
- . *to promote employment for the Tiwi community in the crafts, printing, textiles and*

related industries.

Both training and enterprise development are implicit in these formal objectives, but recent government AEDP policy to do with the funding of enterprise subsidies has put increasing stress on Tiwi Designs becoming profitable (West, 1988: 43). However, these formal objectives and the external pressure for profitability are said by the recent manager to be “just Whitefella objectives which the Tiwi are not interested in” (TI/PJ 4/11/93; I/CB 1/12/93). Wages for non-Tiwi and Tiwi staff are comparable to those in the Ullinginni

Association, except that many Tiwi Design employees are on a piece rate system, introduced in 1974 to allow the artists to work at their own pace, such as artists and carvers who sell work on commission, earn larger amounts intermittently.

The governing committee of the Association comprises a President, Vice President, and five other committee members. Similar to the Ullinginni association, membership of Tiwi Designs is open only to Aboriginal people over the age of 18 and normally resident at Nguuu. Although a record of members is supposed to be kept, this has only been done three times between 1969 - 1982 (I/CB 30/4/94). For, as the recent manager pointed out, the requirement for a membership list is simply to satisfy the Act (TI/PJ 4/11/93). There are no records of Tiwi Designs meetings prior to this manager arriving in 1990: “[t]here wasn't a list of members, there wasn't a minute book, there was nothing, absolutely nothing. There was nothing there for years. There is no record of members there except in these (1990-1993) general meetings, which is seven members only” (TI/PJ 4/11/93). Cathy Barnes, currently (1993) the Tiwi Designs manager, who has worked for Tiwi Designs for seven years, points out that, “there were no records of meetings from 1983-1988 because there were no meetings” (I/CB 1/12/93). There may have been no need for annual general meetings, unlike the Ullinginni Association, for Tiwi Designs has had a stable Tiwi executive and work force.

There has been no change in the directors since I've been there [1990-1993]. We have a meeting [AGM] and I record that the directors resign their positions and are appointed unopposed. For there is nothing political for them to talk about. They've got their own group of people there. The rest of the community doesn't want to get involved. No one want's to get involved. Tiwi Designs is Danny Munkara, Angelo Munkara, Edwin Fernando, Osmond Kantilla, Timothy Wommankinni, that's it. And nobody else as far as I can see has any right, that's the way that they look at it. It's exclusively their club (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

This stability may well be due to the lack of community involvement or politicking about Tiwi Designs, because this enterprise contains little of the essential goods needed for living.

Apart from labour force distortions caused by training schemes, such as in 1989, the growth and popularity of Tiwi Designs products has caused its Labor force to increase from 2 in 1969 to 12 in 1993, not including artists and carvers on commission. Sales have also increased from \$20,000 in 1976 to nearly \$300,000 in 1991 yet in 1993 Tiwi Designs was still not profitable (West, 1988: 91; Auditor's, 1991 Report).

The reasons for Tiwi Designs lack of profitability, as West (1988,4) has said, have more to do with largely unacknowledged cultural factors than market constraints; even allowing for the increasing demand for Aboriginal art products in the 1980's. This is because the Tiwi's want to maintain their relaxed pace of work. Then too, increased production requires more staff, which in turn requires wage subsidies, a relationship which West illustrates (1988: 54). Consequently, as West (1988:80) argues, "constraints on profitability are located in the methods of operation and aspirations of the workers, and not, as Stanley (1993) argues, in economic directives."

4.8.2 Factors Stemming from Tiwi Attributes

These unacknowledged cultural factors have much to do with the difficulties faced by Tiwi employees in understanding and dealing with enterprise operations, similar to those experienced by the Ullinginni Association, and for the same reasons that Bain (1979, 1992) and Trudgen (1992) discuss.

The outcomes for operational control of Tiwi Designs are the same for the Ullinginni Association: “It's the Whitefella at the time that makes the decisions. He looks at the directions of Tiwi Designs in a formal way if necessary, like a grant application. They [Tiwi's] agree to it and he [Whitefella] does it, so it's just a Whitefella stamp of approval.” Non-Tiwi managers have seen themselves as being accountable to ATSIC rather than the Aboriginal owners of Tiwi Designs (TI/PJ 4/11/93; I/CB 1/12/93).

Attempts to motivate the workers towards self-management have not been successful (West, 1988: 46). There are basic problems with numeracy and literacy and a lack of interest in self-management; with the Tiwi staff being happy to leave administrative matters to the manager. Even where Tiwi Designs staff have undertaken bookkeeping courses and can undertake administrative tasks they do not want to get involved (West, 1988: 86). “The general lack of interest in the management side can be related to social factors and to the general dislike of hierarchal power structures outside of the ritual context” (West, 1988: 46).

The trainee manager has the best understanding amongst the Tiwi staff of how the enterprise operates, but as the recent and current manager points out:

It's still very minimal. He understands the physical system of bookkeeping, it's no problem. Like the other day when we were [working with the new] bookkeeper, he sat down and went through the whole computer system. So he was there teaching the

bookkeeper, so that really made him feel good, because he knows the bookkeeping system. But it's the concepts of business operations, finances, and things like that, that he has difficulty with. He's got a very limited understanding of actual business (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

Tiwi attributes to do with an interactional way of life have not been taken into account in management training provided to the Tiwi's, which has stressed only western skills to do with transactions. Yet, as a recent manager remarked:

Aboriginal people really don't see the need for transactions the way we do. They see more relationships. You know, last night when I was leaving, Tim broke down in tears, that's the type of relationship they have. But it's the business side and transactions they can't see, it reverts back to this relationship all the time. I think this is one of the main problems, that they need to see the concept of being able to operate within a transaction area (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

Obligations to relatives have not been a major problem to the trading of Tiwi Designs, principally because Tiwi Designs products do not constitute essential goods that the Tiwi need and most transactions are not cash. Equally, there is tighter control over the small amounts of finished products and petty cash on hand, although on occasion cash and goods go missing. However, the potential of obligatory relationships is always present: "I'd say to the degree where it would jeopardise the financial viability of the business" (TI/PJ 4/11/93). This is just the sort of situation where, "European administrators not only take on the task the people are not yet equipped to do, but also resolve the difficulties that the Tiwi have with being directive in interpersonal relations" (West, 1988: 46). This has been seen to be a general problem in traditionally orientated Aboriginal communities where non-Aboriginal store managers are required to say the transactional 'No' (Bain, 1992a).

It is certainly the case that interpersonal relationships take precedence over transactional relationships in Tiwi Designs, as in other enterprise operations in Nguiu:

If there is some traditional relationship [that takes precedence] people find it very difficult to operate. That goes right through the community, from Bima Wear to the girls at the checkout of the Ullinginni Association, to the girls serving in the restaurant. If it's a relationship they find it very difficult to do anything about it (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

Yet every Tiwi has a relationship to every other Tiwi in these community enterprises, as can be seen in the matrix of relationships that exists between staff at Tiwi Designs (see Fig 4 page following). It is not that everybody is related to everybody else that is important, but rather how good and stable the network of interpersonal relationships is that counts (Keen, 1989). Relationships between the Tiwi staff employed in 1980 were not affected

by the legal change from a private partnership to a community Association. As West (1988, 44) points out, Tiwi Designs functioned as before as a co-operative effort by eight Tiwi workers:

largely because three are consanguinal kin and because the senior partners who are now assuming more ceremonial responsibility within the community are still considered by the younger workers as overseers of the operation working in conjunction with the European craft adviser (West, 1988: 44).

FIG 4

MATRIX RELATIONSHIPS - TIWI DESIGNS EMPLOYEES: 1991

The original chart was put together by the Tiwi trainee manager in twenty minutes (names have been omitted).
 Read from top line. e.g. An(M) is the kinship son of Ed(M). In the case of An(F) who is Go's Aunt she would call him son in Tiwi.

Sex	Ti	Go	Tg	Da	An	Ed	Os	Bj	Al	An	Jo	He
Grp.	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	F	F
S	Cousin	Cousin	Uncle	Brother	Brother	Father	Brother	Cousin	Cousin	Niece	Sister	Grand Daughter
M	Cousin	Uncle	Uncle	Grand Son	Cousin	Nephew	Cousin	Brother	Brother	Aunt	Cousin	Sister
P	Nephew	Nephew	Uncle	Uncle	Son	Brother	Father	Uncle	Nephew	Cousin	Daughter	Niece
Da	Brother	Grand Father	Nephew	Cousin	Cousin	Father	Brother	Cousin	Cousin	Niece	Sister	Cousin
An	Brother	Cousin	Father	Cousin	Father	Father	Grand Son	Cousin	Cousin	Niece	Sister	Cousin
Ed	Son	Uncle	Brother	Son	Son	Uncle	Son	Uncle	Uncle	Cousin	Daughter	Niece
Os	Brother	Cousin	Son	Brother	Grand Father	Father	Cousin	Cousin	Cousin	Niece	Sister	Cousin
Bj	Cousin	Brother	Nephew	Cousin	Cousin	Nephew	Cousin	Brother	Brother	Aunt	Cousin	Sister
Al	Cousin	Brother	Uncle	Cousin	Cousin	Nephew	Cousin	Brother		Daughter	Cousin	Sister
An	Uncle	Son	Cousin	Uncle	Uncle	Cousin	Uncle	Son	Father		Aunt	Daughter
Jo	Brother	Cousin	Uncle	Brother	Brother	Father	Brother	Cousin	Cousin	Niece		Cousin
He	Grand Father	Brother	Uncle	Cousin	Cousin	Uncle	Cousin	Brother	Brother	Aunt	Cousin	

Kinship relation where mother/father/sister/brother/son/daughter are not full blood related.

S Sun
 P Pandanas
 M Müller
 R Red Ochre

In recent years the network of relationships between the founding partners and the current Tiwi Designs staff has changed somewhat, and the founding partners may not have the same legitimacy as overseers as they once had. In terms of family relationships, the Munkara family currently (1993) has the most influence. Danny Munkara, the current (1993) president, having worked at Tiwi Designs for 15 years. However, the Kerinauiua family is also becoming important (I/CB 1/12/93). The network of kinship relationships that bind all Tiwi together, and the employees in Tiwi Designs, is not dependent simply on one's blood relationships, as discussed in Chapter three.

The lack of friction and the good relationships that exist between Tiwi Designs staff, even where they are not consanguinal kin, is evidenced in low staff turnover — many employees having worked in Tiwi Designs for over ten years — and the relaxed and friendly relationships that characterise interaction at work and in after hours activities. It is quite common to see nearly the whole work-force fishing together after work. Good relationships are also respectful relationships, and, similar to the Ullinginni Association, people find it hard to get around these:

There's a relationship between Josett and Tim. Josett can't simply talk to Tim. So if Tim was running the business I don't know what he would do. He would have to go and tell one of his workers to instruct Josett what to do. Even a simple thing like "come in here, there is a canvas I want you to paint", can't be carried out (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

Full time workers on the piece rate system show salary fluctuations which indicate a work-for-need basis (West, 1988: 85). Motivation to continue working has much to do with the status of working at Tiwi Designs, particularly for artists, and the good stable personal relationships that exist. The purchase, of a four wheel drive vehicle, and large

dinghy, through the Tiwi Designs social club, enables regular group hunting and fishing trips, and a further inducement to stay.

Relaxed attitudes of Tiwi employees towards western work practises, however, has drawn criticism from the Scruby reports (1989, 1992): “[p]ractically every person in the screen printing area and even those who worked in the paint storage and mixing area were smoking ... We spoke of this three years ago (Scruby, 1992: 4). The suggestion that the continuation of these "Bad Habits of the Tiwi" are somehow the fault of the non-Tiwi management indicates a limited appreciation of Tiwi work practises and the role of non-Tiwi management (I/CB 1/12/93). Similarly, recommendations from these reports regarding upgrading of the technology and quality of Tiwi Designs products have assumed this is what the Tiwi’s want.

4.8.3 Non-Aboriginal Control

Due to the need for on-going financial support, there has always been a greater degree of indirect control exerted over Tiwi Designs by funding organisations, than has been the case with the Ullinginni Association. Changes to government policy regarding the funding of enterprises in the late 1970's has seen a shift from art and craft training and the employment of art advisers, to economic enterprises and employment of enterprise managers. Much of this change in emphasis has been as a result of government policies seeking to make community enterprises more efficient and economic and, at the same time, self-managing. However, as West (1988, 87) has remarked, “no-body has ever asked the Tiwi what they want, or taken into account the Tiwi perspective.”

While it is true that Tiwi Designs has benefited from the expansion of the Aboriginal arts industry in the 1980's, and its products have become well known in the market place, it has still not become economic. Although cultural factors underlie many of

these problems, funding agencies such as ASTIC have ignored these, increasingly stressing fiscal accountability in the development of Tiwi Designs. Concerns about the acquittal of funds, and the need for elaborate accountancy systems, now take precedence over self-management and enterprise development. As the recent manager wryly explained: “[y]ou have to remember that Cathy Barnes [art adviser] looks after one third of the income [Production] and the bookkeeper looks after the other two thirds [Grants]. who's the more important person?” (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

Records that are required for ATSIC are far more detailed than would be required in any mainstream small enterprise: “[i]t's a lot more, I'd say equivalent to a level of a small corporation” (TI/PJ 4/11/93). The grant application for ATSIC, for example, was reported by the recent manager to have increased from a 10 page submission to 36 pages for the 1993-94 financial year. This manager reported in May 1993 that he had just completed the 25 pages of accounting information that Ernst and Young required, and was about to start on the 50 pages or so needed by the auditors Coopers and Lybrand. Yet:

[t]he size of a business like Tiwi Designs turning over \$270,000 a year, you could virtually run it on a deposit book and a cheque book. Just simply give the little box to the accountant at the end of the year to sort out the invoices. But here you need a fully functional computerised accounting system with somebody with a fairly good knowledge of grant administration to run it (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

They now employ a non-Tiwi bookkeeper to do just that, a common situation now in art and craft community enterprises (I/CB 1/12/93).

Although the acquittal procedure for grants now asks for performance indicators, such as "how many Artists are working now," they do not refer to the performance, or development of the enterprise itself, such as reduced overheads, increased gross margins, working capital ratios, etc (TI/PJ 4/11/93; I/CB 1/12/93). Current funding arrangements (1993) do not look at Tiwi Designs criteria for working capital or budget

requirements. There is a lack of concern as to how the enterprise will operate, or evaluation of actual against budgeted performance. Budgets for grants operate as they would in the public service, the key is to acquit funds, rather than increase performance. There is no interest in the overall development of the enterprise: “[t]here's more hassles if you underspend your budget due to thrift rather than in going 5% over budget” (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

Although art advisers and art managers of Tiwi Designs are constrained by these detailed reporting systems, they still have the same degree of operational freedom as other non-Tiwi people running enterprises at Nguiu. However, the scale and nature of this enterprise does not provide the same opportunities for malpractice, or the magnitude of financial problems caused by ineffective managers, as the Ullinginni Association. For the same reasons it is harder to judge the efficiency of some of these art advisers and managers. However, one recent manager described the efficiency of non-Aboriginal managers and advisers as ranging “from very good to absolutely shit-house. I'm not going to mention names but you know I've had people come in and they don't even know what a gross profit is, yet they are running a enterprise, and are being paid a reasonable salary”(TI/PJ 4/11/93). Some are known to have limited enterprise skills, while others have their own attitudes to development strategies (D 25/5/90). For example, a manager employed for a limited period in 1989 is well known for increasing staffing of Tiwi Designs to a total of 45, by employing an additional 30 Tiwi's funded through DEET training programs. Most of these new workers were subsequently sacked by the next manager who only managed to stay three months before leaving under strained relationships with the Tiwi (I/CB 1/12/93).

Although some non-Tiwi managers may have had a relaxed attitude to managing this enterprise, others take on a much more involved role, as one manager remarked:

I've had my own business for several years and I know what sleepless nights and ulcers are. I thought, when I went to work for somebody else, that type of worry you wouldn't

have. But that's not the case, you virtually have the same worries as if it were your business, but it's somebody's else's business. But the somebody else has not a care, not a worry at all, so you shoulder that full responsibility, as if it was your own (TI/PJ 4/11/93). This sentiment is shared by the new manager (I/CB 1/12/93).

As can be seen by the above discussion, many of the problems evidenced by the Ullinginni Association are less prevalent in this enterprise due to the lack of valued goods and large amounts of cash. However, the stress on fiscal accountability by external funding agencies does not take into account cultural attributes which have been seen to be of prime importance to possibilities for development. Nor does the emphasis on the acquittal of funds by these agencies say much about Tiwi Designs' performance. Although there is a need to upgrade the skills of non-Tiwi managers, this is unlikely to be achieved until there is some effective Tiwi control over them. There is obviously a need for the Tiwi's perspective on the development and management of Tiwi Designs to be heard, including some clear direction about the role and performance criteria for non-Tiwi managers. However, this is a developmental rather than a training problem, one that will take more than a couple of years to achieve (TI/PJ 4/11/93).

4.9 Bima Wear

4.9.1 Factors Stemming from Historical & Contemporary operations

Sister Eucharia started Bima Wear, from what was the Tiwi Clothing Company, in 1970. It was established as an unlimited sole trader utilising eight women employed under the TAS training scheme. Stanley (1984: 23) suggests that the reason behind Bima Wear's establishment has to do with the segregation of the sexes in Tiwi Society, however there was concern by the Mission Sisters that the women would have no opportunities in the developing art area if Tiwi Designs became solely a men's business. Since Bima Wear was founded all its employees and non-Tiwi managers and production managers have been women. Bima Wear was set up to manufacture and retail its clothes predominantly for the Tiwi women of Nguiu. However, by 1982 Stanley (1984: 24) reported that Bima Wear exports to the mainland constituted 70% of all sales.

Bima Wear was granted a major loan of over \$300,000.00 from ADC in 1978 to build their current premises that were opened in 1979. Although primarily a clothes manufacturer, Bima Wear screen-prints much of the fabric that it uses to make garments and ancillary items such as table-cloths. Exports of such items to Darwin retailers continued throughout the 1980's. The establishment in 1991 of a retail shop in one of the most expensive shopping malls of Darwin was, however, a disaster. Apart from Bima Wear losing its wholesale customers in Darwin, the shop cost considerable money. This was because the market for Bima Wear's products in Darwin and the costs of establishing a shop were not properly assessed before starting.

Whilst the Catholic Mission relinquished direct control in 1986 they remained in an advisory role till 1989 (B/ER 23/5/88). Unlike Tiwi Designs, there were regular recorded meetings in the early years 1979 -1984, and, although the frequency of

meetings has decreased since 1984, records have been maintained in two ledgers. Although Sister Eucharia ceased managing Bima Wear during 1986, she was responsible for organising the incorporation of Bima Wear as an Association under Territory legislation in the same year, becoming its first public officer. The major objectives of Bima Wear are to:

- . *promote the welfare and development of the women and girls of Bathurst Island*
- . *train and educate the women and girls of Bathurst Island in all types of sewing skills, the distribution and sale of clothing, maintenance of bank and business accounts, and keeping of basic records.*
- . *arrange for the provision of educational business and craft training....*
- . *foster and preserve traditional and other cultural activities...*

Eligibility for membership of Bima Wear is not specified in the constitution and no membership list is kept. The general understanding is that all women and girls residing at Nguiu can be members of the Association if they want to be (I/CK 6/11/93). Stanley (1984: 23) suggests that it is only the workers within Bima Wear who actually become members of Bima Wear Incorporated and its executive, and in 1993 this was certainly the case. Similar to Tiwi Designs, there is considerable stability in the staffing of Bima Wear. The current (1993) Tiwi trainee manager and some employees have been employed since Bima Wear first started, with the current (1993) trainee manager having been on the executive for most of that period (I/CK 6/11/93). Although the Kantella family have always been an important force in Bima Wear, there are other family groups such as the Portaminni who need to be taken into account. Similar to Tiwi Designs, the network of kinship relationships that bind staff together in Bima Wear is not simply dependent on family relationships. Wages for non-Tiwi management and Tiwi employees are similar to the Ullinginni Association, but most of the fourteen current (1993) Tiwi employees of Bima Wear are on piecework.

It is known from surveys, that Bima Wear's trainee manager - and from 1991 to 1993 the president of Bima Wear's executive - had the best understanding of enterprise operations of all the trainee managers (Cook, 1991). Indeed, she is still (1993) the only trainee manager whose Western education is up to the TAFE certificate level.

However, she understands that her abilities to integrate the concepts of business is still low, for she has said she wants “to learn more about the business side of it, accounting, marketing, business, how to run a business” (TI/CK 9/6/1993). Given this lack of enterprise understanding, control over Bima Wear is very much in the hands of the non-Tiwi manager, similar to the Ullinginni Association and Tiwi Designs.

As discussed the relatively recent period in which Bima Wear has separated from Mission control (the last Mission appointed financial adviser terminated in 1989) and problems in collecting data from a predominantly women's business, the performance of Bima Wear and its management is largely unknown. There are indications, however, that problems to do with non-Aboriginal control and Tiwi attributes are as important for Bima Wear as they are to Tiwi Designs.

4.9.2 Factors Stemming from Tiwi Attributes

Role conflict between Tiwi ways and business ways are a major problem for the management of Bima Wear. When interviewed in 1990 the senior Tiwi manager explained that she could only manage Bima Wear for two or three weeks before pressure “mainly from family and some outsiders too, they put a lot of pressure on[for goods or cash]” became too great for her to resist (TI/CK 9/6/93). Due to the large retail store that is incorporated within Bima Wear's premises, and its central location, there are a lot more people, generally women, coming in to the shop than is the case at Tiwi Designs. As the Tiwi trainee manager remarked, “[w]e get a lot of pressure from women's business” (TI/CK 9/6/93). Significantly, when this same Tiwi manager came to Darwin to manage Bima Wear's ill-fated shop in 1991, mainly on her own, the

pressure from relatives and friends at Nguiu to take goods or money disappeared. The Tiwi trainee manager explaining how much easier it was to manage a business away from Nguiu (I/CK/ 10/11/1991)

4.9.3 Non-Aboriginal Control

There have only been three non-Tiwi managers, including the current manager, since Sister Eucharia left in 1986. Since the first non-Tiwi manager — who was employed in 1986 and left in 1990 — was selected by the Mission, there have only been two white managers employed directly by the Bima Wear Association, with some help from ATSIC, since 1990. Along with these non-Tiwi Managers, Bima Wear normally employs a non-Tiwi sewing/production manager, similar to the art adviser's position in Tiwi Designs.

There are already indications that the lack of control over the operations of non-Tiwi managers has had a detrimental effect on enterprise operations. The previously mentioned opening of a retail shop stocking Bima Wear products, in one of the most expensive shopping malls of Darwin in late 1991, is a case in point. There are no recorded reasons as to why a retail shop was thought necessary, or why a grant was sought. Minutes of the 21st August 1991, however, show that a grant of \$20,000.00 had been given by ABTA to open a shop, which duly opened on the 27th September 1991. No thought had apparently been given to Bima Wear's existing wholesale customers in Darwin, for there was considerable outcry when they were forced to compete with Bima Wear's retail shop.

It is not known what the budget projections were for the Darwin shop, but problems were reported in the meeting of 18th May 1992 with the manager explaining financial difficulties caused by a cancellation of wholesale orders and the costs of operating the shop in Darwin. Problems were again reported in late 1992 with ATSIC refusing

further funding while the shop in Darwin remained open (B/ER 20/12/1992). The retail store was closed by mid 1993, but by then the damage had been done. For the year ending 1991 the Scruby (1992) report shows that on sales of \$ 400,000.00 Bima Wear incurred a net loss of \$127,000.00 before subsidies, apart from its loss of wholesale outlets (Scruby, 1992: 13).

The impression acquired during this period of fieldwork, was that the manager was upset by the expansion of Tiwi Designs into a retail shop at the airport and therefore had decided to open a shop in Darwin, but without much budgeting or business planning. Bima Wear could have co-operated with Tiwi Designs in marketing appropriate goods through the Darwin Airport shop (Ampigi). The reasons why this did not occur have much to do with the excessive degree of control managers have, as well as attitudes toward co-operative development.

Although Bima Wear has only become fully independent from the Catholic Mission since 1991, its operations reflect similar problems to those experienced by Tiwi Designs and the Ullinginni Association. However, this is a women's business and collecting data on performance and management provided problems. Nevertheless, there may be a higher degree of role conflict for Bima Wear staff vis-a-vis Tiwi Designs because Bima Wear manufactures and retails clothes designed for the Nguiu market. Apart from larger cash sales than Tiwi Designs, women's clothes are in demand and considerable pressure can be exerted by important relatives to provide credit or goods. Recent financial losses experienced due to opening a retail shop in Darwin, serve to highlight managerial problems that originate through the excessive degree of control and poor attitudes to development.

Having discussed the operations of these three Tiwi enterprises at Nguiu, it is time to reflect on some of the major themes of this dissertation before dealing with the specific research objectives. For these have implications for the management and organisational

development of other Aboriginal communities and provide evidence of fundamental cultural differences between First and Fourth World indigenous cultures.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR HRM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This dissertation has been concerned with the general problems of control and accountability affecting Aboriginal community enterprises before focusing on those affecting three specific Tiwi Enterprises. However, there are broader implications for HRM regarding Aboriginal development apart from parallels experienced in some Third World Countries. For, as Kiggundu (1991:33) points out with reference to Africa, “one cannot be of much help within organizations without at least a working knowledge of the dominant environmental forces affecting organizations.” Here we are dealing with encapsulated tribal societies with a history of domination and control by the nation state of Australia. Moreover, this political, financial and administrative impact provides an operational dimension to development that Dyck (1985) calls the Fourth World. Indeed, the dominant forces affecting Aboriginal community enterprise organisations have had as much to do with this history of non-Aboriginal control as they do with the impact of Aboriginal culture.

There was little rationality in developing Aboriginal communities in the first place. Rather, they were created in order to control and then assimilate Aboriginal people. Now, the rhetoric of the nation state is to promote Aboriginal self- management and self-determination. However, the degree of non-Aboriginal control over community organizations and the number of external organizations push a developmental ideology that traditionally orientated Aboriginal people do not share. An ideology that is based on ethnocentric ideas about management and organisational development and misplaced beliefs about the speed of Aboriginal cultural change. Indeed, non-Aboriginal control over these communities is acknowledged by the government to be a major deterrent to self-management and self-determination. The very reason why organisational and management development needs to be orientated from an Aboriginal community perspective. It has been argued that in Third World states whose cultures are not conducive to effective organizations, you cannot have both your culture and effective organizations (Richards, 1991). In the Fourth World organisational development needs to be handled more sympathetically. For cultural identity is all that Aboriginal and other indigenous people have left in nation states such as Australia.

However, what Aboriginal culture means for organisational and management development is tied very much into the heterogeneous Aboriginal population resulting from the differential settlement of Australia. For, in developing HRM strategies and policies, it matters a great deal whether an Aboriginal organization is located in a traditionally orientated Aboriginal community or in urban Australia. Moreover, development in these communities is specific due to tribal differences as well as the context in which development has occurred. In the communities discussed here, Aboriginal people are still very much attached to an integrated social and economic way of life reflecting their recent hunter gatherer past. Many Aboriginal people are still orientated to traditional values and behaviour and speak Aboriginal languages. This fundamentally different domain co-exists with western styled management and organizational structures creating culturally ambiguous Aboriginal organizations.

This had major implications for Aboriginal management and organizational development. Of central importance are obligations arising from social and kinship relationships which provide for considerable role conflict at work and often result in the misappropriation of goods and services. This is a major problem for community enterprises organizations and a major reason for enterprise failure (Young, 1988:186). Given this conflict it has been argued that these organisations need to be managed sympathetically rather than trying to make them Aboriginal organizations using European ideas of good management. (Rowse 1992:35). Yet how is this to be achieved? The profile of HRM in government reports on Aboriginal development is the narrow one of personnel administration tasks within traditional Australian management practice. Recommendations in government reports concentrate on functional skill training as the answer to management development. This is argued to be an ethnocentric approach as it presumes that self-management training is culture free and relevant to the Aboriginal management of community organizations. However, as the literature shows, management training that does not take cultural factors into account fails due to false assumptions regarding the transferability of management training between different cultures. Moreover, the opposition between Aboriginal and Australian culture provides another dimension to these assumptions, one that is related to fundamental culture differences about how many people see the world (Bain, 1992a). Indeed, we still have the situation in many Aboriginal communities where there is a need to demystify Aboriginal people as to the nature of western economic systems.

Contemporary development strategies, informed by contingency theory, and more encompassing approach to what is important in managing organizations, can take these major environmental forces into account. Such an approach provides a strategic and analytic way to carry out organisational and management development and a more inclusive role for HRM. This is certainly needed, but there is no acknowledgement in Australian government reports on community development of this possibility. Recommendations for functional management training do little to address the importance and pervasiveness of the Aboriginal domain and the need to effectively engage this domain in development. Indeed, the lack of Aboriginal managers of community organizations has much to do with the conflict experienced by Aboriginal people in trying to operate in two opposing domains.

Moreover, the integration of economic and social life in communities means that many HRM problems cannot be dealt with within individual organizations. This basic issue is hardly addressed in the development and evaluation of enterprise programs. Yet cultural aspect, to do with the strength and nature of obligatory relationships and the web of sharing with kinship networks, underlie many problems of enterprise development. What this means is that management and organisational development is very much tied into community development. This is even though communities are implanted constructs which do not provide boundaries to kinship or social networks, and may comprise of hostile factions. This is not only because communities provide the local base for services, resources and community organisations. It is also to do with an experiential way of life.

There has been written by HRM writers about the problems of Aboriginal development which have been discussed here. Moreover, there is little appreciation of the unique place that Aboriginal and similar indigenous tribal cultures have in the diversity of cultural types that Hofstede (1980), for example describes. Indigenous people within Australia and Canada present some of the last tribal groups of human society: in the case of Aboriginal occupation, an uninterrupted history of at least 40,000 years. Their significance is that these tribal and adaptive hunter gatherer cultures represent mankind's first and only proven sustainable cultural system. If as Adamopoulos and Bontempo (1986) suggest, the basis dimensions of human behaviour have emerged during the course of human history then what were the original dimensions which affected the management of resources?

For hunter gatherers are collective societies as well as individualistic ones (Triandis, 1989; Goodlae, 1982). Within these societies the symbiosis of man and nature is reinforced by holistic, subjective and experiential indigenous knowledge system. (Wolfe *et al.*, 1991). In a lifestyle lived very much in the here and now it is hardly surprising that cognitive aspects of interactional relationships dominate the management of resources. Moreover, interactional and personal relationship allow both individualism and collectivism to co-exist. Aboriginal corporate associations without bounded membership are, after all, reification of who's who at present, for decision making operates in a contingency of review. Indeed, it had been argued that concepts such as social networks or social field provide an appropriate way to describe how management operates in these fluid situations.

Unlike the accent on the dimensions of relationships as they affect high power distance cultures such as Indonesia (Hofstede, 1980), here, we have been interested in the nature of relationships (Bain, 1992a). In particular, between transactional relationships essential in western economic and working life and interactional relationships which characterise social life. Even today in traditionally orientated Aboriginal communities the core difference between Aboriginal and White is a contrasting world view of ontology. The essential element of this life is the interactional/transactional dichotomy. (Bain, 1979, 1992a; Christie, 1985; Harris, 1990). Understanding the importance of interactional relationships for Aboriginal people and their very different world view has important implications for HRM intervention and development strategies. In the first place it implies that development needs to fit in, and be part of, on-going social and political life. This is not an easy task to facilitate given the integrated life in communities, where people speak local Aboriginal languages. Apart from these difficulties there is a need to be accepted by the community, a process that can take considerable time.

Implementing development strategies is further complicated by the need to co-ordinate the disparate and factionalised non-Aboriginals who work in Aboriginal communities. This is particularly the case when non-Aboriginals are employed by external organizations whose mainstreaming policies are antipathetic to community development. Moreover, the attitudes of individuals to Aboriginal development can greatly affect the possibilities of any co-operative and co-ordinated community

development strategy. There are other HRM major problems to with the recruitment, operational control and conditions of service of non-Aboriginal in communities which need addressing. Government reports do not deal with these issues, or acknowledge that problems of co-ordination and control are likely to be exacerbated if there is no strong Aboriginal leadership present. However, if there is to be any co-ordination of non-Aboriginal resources in communities they will need to firmly under the control of the Aboriginal community.

For development strategies to work they will need political commitment. Not only from external organizations, such as ATSIC, but more importantly from strong Aboriginal community leaders who can bring together community factions. Developmental strategies aimed at Aboriginal self-management and self-determination will, however require some modification of Aboriginal values and attitudes. How this might be carried out needs to be tested out and re-conceptualised in the best of local Aboriginal knowledge. For, what might work for one community may not work for another. Whatever the case, modifying underlying cultural beliefs is known to be a long and tricky process; one that requires full participation and acceptance from the community. In this situation interventionist strategies need to be sustainable over the long run. The use of organisational imperatives to do with control and accountability and role relationships within HRM is suggested to be particularly useful in designing and evaluating strategies for management and organisational development.

Some of the key aspects of bottom up development strategies used in the Third World suggests possibilities for the turbulent nature of political and social life which characterise Aboriginal communities. The use of participatory and long term action research approaches to development is one possibility. This approach starts from the reasonable assumption that people will be more responsive to development if they are central to the design and implementation of programs that affect them. This is of particular importance given the need for Aboriginal self-determination. Moreover, for development strategies to be effective they need to be based on real problems. In this regard experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1981) underpins much of the successful action research approaches to development in Third World countries that, for example, Sahara (1991) comments on. A basic principle is that adult learning based on one way transmission of hypothetical model is not as effective as mutual learning based on real problems. This is particularly relevant for traditionally orientated Aboriginal people

whose preferred use of first degree abstractions retains a direct link with reality (Bain 1992a:198). Experiential action learning which requires a long term approach, is particularly useful with regard to the problems affecting community organisations since it is concerned with the discovery and resolution of deep seated problems. In fact, long term action research has already had some success in the educational development of the Aboriginal community of Yirrkala in Arnhem Land (Marika-Munungirity, R. *et al.*, 1990).

Although ATSIC has, since 1991, been involving community planning this has been seen to be a top down approach which has concentrated its efforts on services and infrastructure requirements. There is little interest in resolving the deep seated HRM problems evidenced here. The objectives of ATSIC's planning process are related more to statutory requirements regarding budgets and planning by ATSIC regional councils rather than long term participatory development. Given what is known of the dynamics of community life and the nature of Aboriginal decision making, it is no wonder that this fast track approach to planning did not do well (Wolfe, 1993b:3). Moreover, this planning approach to development does not address the very communities which are most in need of assistance.

Participation in development also implies participation in research. Yet most research carried out in Aboriginal communities has been done by Whitefellas with little benefit to Aboriginal people. Moreover, the history of community development has provided a scene where the dominant culture has failed to involve Aboriginal people in sustainable development. There are major tasks for HRM research in coming grips with the problems evidenced here. However, rights of Aboriginal people to decide for themselves what is appropriate research and to control information about themselves and their communities, is fundamental to self-determination (Howitt, 1990:3). What is ironic about HRM in Australia today is that we preach about cultural problems and the importance of a strategic role for HRM in the Third World we do not practise when dealing with our own indigenous people. Having provided this general summary it is now time to turn to the specific objectives of the empirical research, referred to in Chapter 4.

5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF NGUIU ENTERPRISES

5.2.1 Factors stemming from Historical and contemporary Operations

These constitute the first group of research questions. As is the case with other Aboriginal communities, historical factors have had a major bearing on enterprise development at Nguiu. The reasons and objectives for setting up the three enterprise organisations have a lot to do with the Catholic Mission at Nguiu and its control over Tiwi development. The Catholic Mission set up these organisations with an assimilation philosophy towards Tiwi development. One belief was that if one trained Tiwi people to manage these organisations Tiwi culture would adapt to western ways. As has been demonstrated this has not happened. The reason that the Catholic Mission facilitated the incorporation of these organisations was to access government funds for training and development purposes. There was little concern given by the Catholic Mission to how these organisations would assist Tiwi development, or how membership of these organisations reflected Tiwi control. Moreover, the economic and social objectives are those which the Mission thought appropriate when these organisations were incorporated.

The evaluation of these enterprises and their funding does not relate to these original objectives. Firstly, because these objectives are not relevant to what these organisations do, and secondly, because they do not relate to the objectives of funding organisations. For example, the Ullinginni Association has not become the controlling organisation for Nguiu's development because Nguiu has had a Community Government Council for some years. Likewise, the training and cultural objectives of Tiwi Designs and Bima Wear play second fiddle to the push for profitability by funding organisations. Organisations such as ATSIC and DEET, which fund and evaluate training and development, are concerned with objectives to do with yearly budgets and cash flows.

Training is evaluated on attendance and completion, not how it assists Tiwi development.

Similarly, the existing formal organisational structures are in no way relevant to the existing Tiwi management control. They only reflect that part of the organisation which is concerned with western management practice. Tiwi control over these organisations operates separately and is generally concerned with the informal aspects of the organisations, those which lie in the Tiwi domain. The history of management development and training has been characterised by a lack of Tiwi involvement in the development of their own enterprises. What has been offered has been western skill training in functional aspects of management and/or on the job training. Although the Tiwi Island Management Development Strategy of 1991 did propose a community based approach to management development, this was not implemented. Moreover, most current mainstream educational offerings and access courses on offer are still implicitly assimilationist, expecting Tiwi people to be able to separate work from social life. The lack of Tiwi management within enterprises is a testament to the ineffectiveness of this approach to Tiwi development.

The history of enterprise development has seen the Catholic Mission relinquish monitoring of, as well as operational control over, enterprise associations, but without passing it to the Nguiu Community Government Council. Therefore, the contemporary situation (1993) is that enterprise associations operate in isolation from each other, without any monitoring or development control from the community. Yet in Nguiu, where regulatory controls are very weak, enterprises such as the store can quickly get out of control, with disastrous consequences to the price of essential goods. Although ATSIC and Darwin-based accountancy services provide management advice to these enterprises, it comes in a form that the Tiwi do not understand, is generally too late and, being remote from the community, does not assist the Tiwi with management or organisational development.

Indeed, it is well known that the level of understanding by Tiwi regarding the management of enterprises is low. This is a major problem. Executive members who are expected to control their enterprises do not understand their basic accounts and financial position. Moreover, even the best educated of the trainee managers have problems in applying the basics of enterprise management to community enterprises and one can understand why. In managing these local enterprises what is important is one's relationships and standing in the community and not one's degree of business skills. Even where trainee managers take external courses and acquire business skills, it is unlikely that they will be able to manage these enterprises until some accommodation is made for obligatory relationships at work. Yet the history and contemporary (1993) operations of these enterprises have not allowed for the incorporation of Tiwi attributes in development, even though they are of primary importance to Tiwi people.

5.2.2 Factors Stemming from Tiwi Attributes

Although these enterprises were set up as community organisations - in that membership of these community organisations is open to all Tiwi residents of Nguuu, and of Bima Wear, to all women - they are not controlled by the community. Control, in the Tiwi domain, is carried out by important and sometimes powerful individuals and their kin-groups, who include current employees and executives of enterprises. However, the Tiwi who exercise control may not necessarily be employed in management or executive positions. Moreover, these factions are not simply blood related family groups as they incorporate other kinship relationships. Tiwi control is, therefore, dependant on the stability of these groups and involvement by other powerful community members. This is because networks of relationships extend throughout the community. In the case of Tiwi Designs and Bima Wear (1993) the stability of employees and their good relationships with each other provide for a stable network of

control. This is not the case for the Ullinginni Association, which, due to its important resources, can become unstable as it attracts competing factions.

However, Tiwi control over these enterprises is very much tied up with obligatory relationships and the importance of the Tiwi way of life. For example, in 1990 I asked the three trainee enterprise managers from these three enterprises to pick either a group of skills or a group of attributes that would most help them to run their enterprises at Nguiu. The group of skills were those that came from the best education in business management that could be obtained through a university. The group of attributes were those associated with being a Tiwi elder. It should come as no surprise that all the Tiwi trainee managers picked the attributes of Tiwi elders. When one is living in kinship relationships with every other Tiwi, in what is still a kin-based society, maintaining relationships is the name of the game. Personal achievement – What has been the dominant value in Tiwi society - for power and prestige, is gained by utilising resources to manipulate kinship relationships (Goodale, 1971: 337). Although kinship relationships have been seen to provide a basis of genealogical and geographic distance they only guide behaviour.

The non-stop game for control over traditional resources that Hart (1960: 5) described, now includes the quest for control over enterprise resources, a similar situation to that which Keen (1989: 24) and Gerritsen (1982: 22) have noted in relation to other remote communities. For example, although powerful individuals within the Tungatalum ‘family’ currently have a degree of control over the Ullininginni Association, the Munkara's over Tiwi Designs and the Kantella's over Bima Wear, these controlling families act more like factions which have drawn-in have drawn-in other kinship related individuals to their network of control. In traditionally orientated communities such as Nguiu they do not simply represent one’s blood relations. Since there are no corporate boundaries within these Tiwi networks of personal relationships, cultural attributes, such as obligatory pressures in enterprise operations, cannot be dealt with internally within enterprises because they are community wide. It was assumed that the task of

dealing with cultural factors affecting enterprise development could be carried out by the representative and elected skin (arumpi) groups of the Nguiu Community Council, acting in conjunction with the Tiwi executives of enterprise associations (Cook, 1991: 8). Moreover, as already discussed in Chapter one, it is questionable whether 'skin' group representatives can actually speak for other people on resource allocation.

Indeed, the cultural attributes of Tiwi are related to a lack of interest in managing enterprises in the first place, and major role conflict when people attempt to do so. If one's relatives are hungry or require resources, the pressure which can be brought to bear on employees to take goods is very great. . In this regard non-Tiwi management acts as a buffer between these obligatory pressures and the need for sound enterprises. These obligatory pressures, however, rise and fall as they reflect the immediate needs within an interactional way of life. Moreover, Tiwi's do not see the importance of transactions, essential in business, because interactional relationships are what is important. For example, respectful relationships between brothers and sisters means that they do not talk to each other posing obvious management problems at work.

5.2.3 Factors Stemming from non-Tiwi Control

This brings us to the final set of factors affecting enterprise development, that of non-Tiwi control. For managers have very little accountability to the Tiwi's that employ them and effectively operate independently of the enterprises. This is because Tiwi executives do not understand enterprise operations and managers do not tie themselves into Tiwi relationships. Since these managers operate, to a large extent, independently, their accountability is subjective and personal. The problems this can cause to enterprises, or the community, if the non-Tiwi managers are ineffective or worse are well documented. Some managers come to Nguiu simply to line their own pockets, while others may have had trouble finding a job elsewhere. As the 1991 report points out:

[t]he lack of management knowledge and therefore lack of effective control over non-Tiwi enterprise employees, have meant that for enterprises, the common result had been exactly as Altman (1988: 315) remarks, “ mismanagement and inefficiency linked to high management turnover and occasionally embezzlement ” (Cook, 1991: 15).

Moreover, the level of business skills that managers bring to the job varies considerably as does their attitude to Tiwi development. Even managers who are happy to assist in developing Tiwi management may have strong assimilationist ideas on what development means. What is also remarkable is the lack of communication between these managers, even though they live in a remote community and face similar problems in managing and developing enterprises. For example, at a meeting of non-Tiwi enterprise managers in 1990 introductions had to be made, even though the most recently employed manager had been at Nguuu for some months. The subjective nature of recruitment practises has much to do with this on-going problem, but so to does the lack of community control.

Given the freedom of control that managers have, it might be expected that external monitoring and accounting requirements would assist the management of enterprises, at least to warn of financial difficulties. But this does not happen. This is partly because of the time it takes for financial and accounting information to reach Darwin, be processed and returned. It is also due to dissemination and interpretation of enterprise performance evaluation. For not only is it hard for these external agencies to interpret figures that often fluctuate widely, but they are not on the spot to see why they do. Equally, managers can miss-inform their Tiwi employers about what is going on until it is too late. Moreover, the costs of these individual services are high and not only in dollar terms. In the case of Tiwi Designs and Bima Wear, there is a major administrative cost in processing excessive paperwork that bears little relationship to the turnover of the enterprises.

The degree of co-operation between managers in the enterprises, as it is with most non-Tiwi at Nguiu, is up to the individual. This is influenced by whether one is employed by organisations such as the Catholic Mission, or schools which tend to co-operate together even though there are divisions within these organisations. However, the Catholic Mission and schools are still orientated to mainstream education and training programs, and exercise a degree of control over adult education and the Community Education Centre.

The recommendations for an integrated community-based development and training strategy in 1991 (Cook, 1991: 23), did not only attempt to address cultural problems, but also problems in controlling recruitment and operations of non-Tiwi management staff. The lack of control over non-Tiwi management at the enterprise level, their isolation from one another and differing attitudes to development certainly require attention by the community, particularly if management and organisational development is to occur. Concepts such as non-Tiwi managers working together as a resource group, accountable to the Enterprise Board, drew initial agreement by all the non-Tiwi staff of these enterprises. The cost effectiveness and usefulness for developmental purposes of a community-based accountant and management trainer were also discussed and initially agreed to (Cook, 1991: 8). The attitudes, however, of two non-Tiwi managers to this development proposal changed in 1991 and their independence and influence over their Tiwi enterprise executive curtailed further development.

In hindsight, some recommendations from this earlier report now seem naïve, but the core recommendations of this report - for a co-operative and community based approach to management and organisational development - is still deemed to be essential. More time, however, needs to be taken in considering questions relating to the nature and degree of monitoring control that any 'Enterprise Board', formed within the Nguiu Community Council, should have over the independence enjoyed by enterprise executives. Furthermore, since Nguiu has a homogeneous Tiwi population, bringing these factions together in a community based development has a good chance of

working. Such development also needs to bring together enterprise management as well as the Xavier Community Education Centre and Adult Education. This is not easy given the detachment of education and training providers from enterprise development and is exacerbated by differing attitudes of non-Tiwi at Nguiu to development. However, the essential and prior need for any sustainable development to occur is commitment to this end by Tiwi leaders.

5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although the three case studies of Tiwi enterprises at Nguiu illustrate what have been seen to be general problems of control and accountability in Aboriginal communities, they are not intended as a criticism of these enterprises or their staff. They have been used to demonstrate the major environmental forces which have affected these community enterprises and their management development. The history of their development has had much to do with non-Aboriginal control. This control, as well as the Tiwi way of life, are major forces which need incorporating if any sustainable development is to take place. This is hardly news to the Nguiu community, as these problems are well known to constitute the major problems to management and organisational development. For example, they were discussed at a community meeting in 1991 dealing with acceptance of the TIMDS strategy. The need to address these problems with an integrated community-based strategy was, and still is, argued to be essential for Tiwi management and organisational development.

Of particular concern is the lack of community control over the operations and development of enterprises. Unlike many Aboriginal communities, the enterprises at Nguiu were developed before the introduction of Community Government with the result that the community, through the Nguiu Community Government Council, has no control over them. Moreover, the relatively weak position of the Nguiu Community Government Council vis-à-vis the enterprises does not help matters. For how can the

Council co-ordinate and control development while the enterprises do not allow the Council some legitimacy in the area of community representation? Some control is certainly needed, for when enterprises such as the store get into financial difficulties the whole community suffers high prices for the basic necessities of life. This does not necessarily mean that the enterprises need to lose their autonomy, but rather that a monitoring and regulatory role needs to be taken over the operations of enterprises by the community. Indeed, the Tiwi Land Council, which controls the permit system for entry to the Tiwi islands, could provide legitimacy to the Nguiu Community Council to oversee the operations of managers and community organisations.

Given the speed at which enterprises can go broke, the monitoring of enterprise operations needs to be frequent, with some commonality of management accounting systems between enterprises. Moreover, basic information about enterprise operations needs to be accessible and understandable to the general population. A proposition to employ a community-based accountant who could do just this was agreed to in 1991. However, this recommendation, amongst others from this (Cook, 1991) report, did not eventuate. The initial commitment and co-operation amongst the non-Tiwi managers for this development fell apart, and thereafter there was no strong support from local leaders. Part of the reason for this lack of support was that non-Tiwi managers have a major influence over the executive that employs them, because the managers are the ones controlling their money and goods. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Tiwi support their managers even when they are doing a poor job or when they are negative towards development proposals.

What is important for effective organisational and management development is much better utilisation and co-ordination of the non-Tiwi on the community. There are major problems in getting any community development off the ground when operational control over many of these individuals is held by external agencies, which may not be receptive to a community based approach to development. This is further complicated by the differing attitudes and ideas of individuals within these organisations to

development. Particularly since a few individuals command considerable respect in the community. Nguiu organisations such as the Xavier Community Education Centre and Adult Education should be central to any community development. These organisations, however, offer education, training and access courses that have little to do with what needs to be addressed in Nguiu organisations. There is little evaluation of how effective such training is for the Tiwi management of Nguiu enterprises and little interest in engaging the Tiwi domain in this mainstream education process. Moreover, the low levels of enterprise understanding reported in these enterprises have more to do with fundamental problems of transferring western education and management training to the Tiwi domain than it does with how much training or education individuals have.

What is essential to effective developmental strategies, is the long term involvement of Tiwi people and their leaders. This is not easy to achieve since some Tiwi like things the way they are. Yet for Tiwi organisational and management development to occur, there is a primary need for consensus and commitment by Tiwi leaders. A problem here is that many Tiwi leaders generally have the least time available to provide commitment. Yet any worthwhile development strategy will need considerable time and commitment. This was a limitation to the 1991 TIMDS strategy. For problems to do with skin group representation did not surface until late in the development process when time and funds had run out.

Given these prior problems for development, there is certainly a need for a longer time frame and a more inclusive plan. One which includes educational facilities as well as the enterprises in participatory development. Long term action research which characterises educational development at Yirrkala in Arnhem Land is a possibility. How this might start, whether through educational, enterprise, or Community Council instigation, does not really matter. What does matter is that the Tiwi end up controlling the pace and direction of development, and that resolving the HRM problems to organisational and management development evidenced here form a major part of such development. For, as initially proposed by this thesis, a prerequisite for any increase in

effectiveness is the successful resolution of the conflicting social and formal requirements of control and accountability. Indeed, this thesis has argued that resolving this conflict is central to effective management development strategies.

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APPENDIX "A" INDEX OF DATA

Enterprises B = Bima Wear, U =Ullinginni Association, T = Tiwi Designs

Enterprise Records ER

These include minutes of meetings, letters between organisations, internal correspondence. Advice from external sources and reports, such as accountancy and audit reports is pre-fixed by **E** The date of the enterprise record follows the indexing. For example (**U/E/ER 26/3/83**) refers to a Ullinginni Association's external document dated 26/3/83.

Taped Interviews TI

First two letters after TI indicate initials of respondent, followed by the date. For example(**TI/RC 1/12/93**) Is a taped interview with Ray Crawshaw on the 1/12/93.

Interviews I

First two letters after I indicate initials of respondent, followed by the date.

Diary D

Diary notes, followed by date.