PHD

Problem-construction in teams.

Sims, D. B. P.

Award date: 1978

Awarding institution: University of Bath

Link to publication

Alternative formats
If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact: openaccess@bath.ac.uk

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

• Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
• You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
• You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal?

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
PROBLEM—CONSTRUCTION IN TEAMS

submitted by D.B.P. Sims

for the degree of Ph.D.

of the University of Bath

1978.

COPYRIGHT

"Attention is drawn to the fact that copyright of this thesis rests with its author. This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognize that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author."

"This thesis may be made available for consultation within the University Library and may be photocopied or lent to other libraries for the purpose of consultation."
SUMMARY.

In this thesis we propose that, in order to understand better the way in which work is done in teams, we need to understand how some particular view of some particular situation comes to be regarded as a "problem" for a team. We argue that this process of "problem-construction" is at least as significant as the process of "problem-solving". We review literature in the several fields that are related to this topic. The evolution of the research project is described; that description, together with a description of the context in which the main study took place, form antecedents for the development of the methodology. Data are presented from a study of the Health Care Planning Teams in Bath Health District during the planning cycle 1976/1977. The data are drawn both from accounts given by team members of their own, and others', actions and intentions, and also from our observations of meetings of the teams. Categories are developed from our analysis of the data, "grounded" in the expressed beliefs, and usually in the words, of team members, about problem-construction in these teams. Some analysis is also given of the rules that seem to govern problem-construction in the teams and the sanctions used to enforce those rules. The categories and other analytic statements are drawn together as a connected commentary on the processes of problem-construction in the teams. The research was conducted on holistic principles, but it is argued that the conceptual development and the emerging categories provide an incipient framework for understanding problem-construction in other teams. Directions for further development of the research are proposed.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

My grateful thanks are due to: -

Professor Iain Mangham, who created the space, time and climate in which I developed most of the thinking behind this thesis, and who read, commented, advised and encouraged while I was writing it.

Mr. John Mason, who applied his keen eye for nonsense to the first draft, and who made a great many helpful suggestions and comments.

Dr. John Meadows, District Community Physician in the Bath Health District, who gave me access to the Health Care Planning Teams.

Mr. Andrew Pearce, Assistant District Administrator in the Bath Health District, who checked my accounts in terms both of my understanding of what I saw and of confidentiality.

Other members of the Health Care Planning Teams in Bath, who gave me their time.

Many other colleagues, past and present, who helped me to refine and sharpen up on my ideas; particularly Mr. Galvin Whitaker, Dr. Colin Eden, Mr. Adrian McLean and Dr. Tony Murphy.

Jane Dakin, my sister, who typed the final version.

Alison, my wife, who encouraged me, helped me, listened to me, pushed me when I got stuck, goaded me, and took over my chores, all very gently.
CONTENTS


Ch. 1. The Research Problem.


Ch. 2. Models of Problem-Solving.

Ch. 3. Definition and Formulation of Problems.

Ch. 4. Problem-Finding.

Ch. 5. Problem-Solving in Teams.

Ch. 6. Problem-Finding in Teams.


Ch. 7. Preliminary Studies.

Ch. 8. The Context of the Main Study: Health Care Planning Teams.

Ch. 9. Methodology.


Ch. 10. General Beliefs about Problem-Construction.

Ch. 11. Beliefs about Problem-Construction in Particular Teams.


Ch. 13. Rules Operating in Problem-Construction.


Part 5: Conclusion.

Ch. 15. Drawing Together the Categories.

Ch. 16. Directions for Further Work.

Appendix.

Diagram and Brief Résumé of Problem-Construction Terms.

Bibliography.
PART 1

INTRODUCTION
Chapter 1: The Research Problem.

"One of my problems, Helen, is that whenever I have a problem to face, I always have another problem concurrent with it, which seems to take precedence. So bear with me if I seem abstracted. I cannot give my full attention to anything, because too many things need my full attention. My life has chosen to arrange itself on ramshackle lines, like a badly-wrapped parcel about to burst open; I can secure one corner of it only by disturbing the others, which then must be secured in turn."

(Keith Waterhouse; Billy Liar on the Moon)

Introduction.

How do teams come by the problems they work on? What are the sources of these problems, who are the person or persons who find them for the team, and what is the process by which the problem becomes defined and formulated to a state where it may be accepted as a legitimate problem for a team by the members of that team?

To put the question differently, how is it that some particular situation comes to be described as "a problem", and the description is agreed and accepted by the members of a team, where another situation does not. It will be argued that much of the research and theoretical work on problem-solving has implicitly assumed the existence of "problems" as things independent of personal definition, or at least with such a measure of agreement about their definition that they can be treated as if they had such independent existence. It is a theme of this research that the defining of problems is in fact problematic, and that the
following options are notionally open to any problem-definer (whether or not these options are perceived by him as choice being a separate question):

1/. Is there or is there not a problem to be faced?
If there is,
2/. what shall be regarded as the 'central' discrepancy between the existing situation and the preferred situation?, and
3/. what is it that keeps this discrepancy from being resolved, and thus makes it problematic?

These options are enumerated so that the concepts used in them may be given some context, and thus some meaning, in the thesis; they are not intended to suggest that there are three such questions which are asked sequentially and answered definitely in the process of defining a problem.

By way of an example, let us consider the researcher defining this research problem. Firstly, is there any problem about how teams come by the problems they work on? To the majority of writers on problem-solving, particularly writers from the field of organizational behaviour, there does not seem to be. But to this researcher, for reasons which will be made more explicit later, there is. The papers that other researchers have read and the organizational events with which they have collided may be similar to the papers I have read and the events with which I have collided; to the 'impartial observer' their situation and mine could appear to be the same, but I define the situation as a problem where most writers do not. Secondly, what is the central discrepancy between the existing situation and the preferred situation towards which this research is intended to
lead? The existing situation is one in which the attention of people who wish to improve the effectiveness of teams in organizations is directed primarily to the processes of problem-disposal or decision-making within those teams; the preferred situation is one in which the processes of problem-finding are given as much attention as those of problem-disposal. A different discrepancy which could be formulated would be to say that at present the understanding of how teams come by their problems is slight, and the preferred situation is that this understanding should become greater. Another formulation of a discrepancy would be to say that the existing situation is that I have ideas about how teams come by the problems they work on, and the importance of this topic, and that I have been exploring and proposing these ideas and their significance for some time. The preferred situation in this case is that my ideas should become more rigorous, be given empirical testing and be grounded in the reality of teams, so that I can propound their implications for action with greater confidence, precision and relevance. So we see that, for a situation which is defined to be problematic, more than one central discrepancy is available for the definition of the problem. These definitions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but my behaviour to solve the problem will be affected by which of the central discrepancies I take for my definition. Thirdly, having chosen any one of the discrepancies, why is it difficult for me to resolve that discrepancy? The solution, resolution and dissolution (Ackoff and Emery, 1972) of difficulties is something that all persons do continuously without feeling the need to dignify those difficulties with the label 'problem'. For a problem to be defined, the discrepancy must be regarded as one that cannot be readily disposed

For a brief description of the way problem-terms relate, see Appendix.
of. Thus if I had been able to answer the questions at the beginning of this chapter simply, succinctly and credibly, there would have been no need for this piece of research.

At this point, a single example of problem-finding must inevitably become misleading. The remainder of this chapter, therefore, will turn to the consideration of, firstly, the nature of the research problem that I have chosen to define, its scope and characteristics, and secondly, the significance of the research problem, its meaning and relevance in organizational life.

The Nature of the Problem.
To describe the research problem fully would require us to describe two situations, one of which is the existing situation as we see it, and the other is a situation which we conceive of as preferable; this is a consequence of our view of problems, which we shall explain in Chapter 3. In this section we shall relate our preferred situation to the context of persons working in and with organizations, and the need which we see for those persons to pay more attention to the processes of problem-construction in teams. Part 2 of the thesis will seek to show that such an understanding is not available from the existing literature, and therefore that the existing situation is discrepant from the preferred situation.

It is apparent that individuals in a team may differ widely on the following four matters, which are described in the next few pages (see also the Appendix for these terms):

1/. Problem-existence.
2/. Problem-definition.
3/. Problem-formulation.
4/. Context of the problem-situation.
1.5 Problem-existence. They may differ in whether they consider there to be a problem in the current situation at a particular time. Theoretically, the view will be taken that situations are defined by the individual for himself, and that in that sense the different individuals in a team are never in the same situation. However, it is a commonplace observation, and the source of many jokes, that persons in the same team will not necessarily all believe, at the same time, that a problem exists. Thus the person who persistently appears to be very anxious and to devote a great deal of energy in the face of such decision-problems as what to eat for lunch is a figure of fun. Similarly, anecdotes may be heard about persons who are 'simple-minded' enough to experience no problem and to be aware of no difficulty when others around them are experiencing the situation as highly complex and problematic. In this case the derision may often be tinged with a little envy. One of the functions of team and committee meetings in organizations, it may be argued, is to deal with precisely the point being made here. If all persons behaved alike in defining or not defining a problem in any particular time and place, - in other words if the only possibilities were that everybody or nobody thought there was a problem - there would be less need for teams, boards etc., where amongst other things, persons may seek to bring one another to an awareness of a problem.

* This is hinted at by Galbraith (1974), when he says, "For complexity enters with planning and is endemic thereto ....... There must be men whose knowledge allows them to foresee need ..." (pp. 77-78).
2/. Problem-definition. Individuals in a team may differ on how they understand or diagnose a problem, even when there is consensus that a problem exists. Again, in extreme cases there are figures of fun who define almost all problems in terms of the Russians or the unions or both. In a less extreme way, we may expect differences between individuals in how they understand or diagnose a problem to be particularly marked in teams where different disciplines and different functions are brought together. There are, for example, expectations about the type of point that is likely to be made by an accountant or an engineer in addressing an issue. In one of the team meetings which provided data for this research, it was suggested that it would be helpful to recruit an educationist as an additional member for that team. The reason for this was stated to be that he would have a different perspective from other members of that team, and would be able to alert them to problems and aspects of problems of which they might not otherwise have been aware. In this thesis, this characteristic will be understood in terms of Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955), and it will be argued that persons become adept in the use of the constructs of their profession in defining problems, and that additionally, persons will feel themselves responsible for defining the problems within what they regard as their area of responsibility in their organization. These theoretical points will be considered more fully in Part 2.

3/. Problem-formulation. A third way in which individuals in a team may be expected to differ is in the elements of the situation which they see as being relevant to the problem. Even where persons in a team agree that a problem exists and understand that problem in terms of the same discrepancy, they may differ in how they see the
other elements of the situation to be related to that element in which they perceive a discrepancy. For example, two persons might agree that there is a problem, and that the problem is a shortage of nursing staff relative to the number needed to supply a particular level of service. They might, however, have different beliefs about the causes of this shortage, and if so, they could end up with quite different problem-formulations. Such differences in the causal beliefs of individuals may lead one person to see as irrelevant what another sees as crucial. Theoretically, beliefs as to cause will be taken as part of the person's definition of the situation (as distinct from definition of the problem).

4/. Context of the problem-situation. We may expect persons to differ on what aspects of a situation they see as being admissible to manipulate in response to the problem. Persons have differing ethical views, differing value systems and differing belief systems. Hence they may differ as to whether any particular element of the problem-situation may be manipulated to dispose of the problem with good effect, and without giving rise to anything unacceptable in the way of ethical implications or side effects.

With evidence such as we have set out above for the individual differences which may be expected over problem existence, definition and formulation, it seems to the researcher that some theory of order is called for — some explanation for the fact that persons are able to come together in teams, and are more or less able to agree in those teams as to the problems for which they need to find solutions. At the same time we may wish to know how the processes which are employed to resolve interpersonal differences in problem-defining teams will affect the constructed problems that are passed on for solution. The central discrepancy that has
been chosen for this research has to do with the team processes of resolution, rather than with the individual processes whose difference creates the need for that resolution, although it is not possible to address these two topics completely independently. The research problem, defined in this way, will lead us to ask questions about issues such as the following:

1. What a person sees as a problem
2. How a person views a problem
3. What sort of problems a team should construct
4. How a team should go about formulating problems
5. Roles in team problem-finding
6. Good use of a team
7. Peculiarities of problem-construction in teams
8. Team problem-construction in its organizational context.

The Significance of the Problem.

Large numbers of people are involved in coming in as outsiders to teams, and making interventions which are in some way based on behavioural science knowledge and which are intended to bring about greater effectiveness in those teams. It has been argued (McLean, Mangham and Sims, 1976) that many of these practitioners feel the need for better models of the processes in which they are intervening, and are frustrated because the lack of such models prevents them from integrating their experience in such a way as to increase their learning. The research reported here is intended to provide such practitioners with ways of understanding a number of team processes as well as providing team members with categories and tentative models which will enable them to act more effectively within those teams. Team development exercises have been going on for many years, and yet the organization development literature does not show accounts of explicit attempts to intervene in
problem-construction, as opposed to problem-disposal, in teams. This thesis will argue that the effectiveness of work on team problem-solving has been hampered by the lack of attention paid to problem-construction in teams. To illustrate this point, let us consider three statements about working in teams, in order to see how this research would bear on them.

Firstly, people often say that team meetings are a waste of time, because so much time is spent discussing 'insignificant' issues. If we consider such statements in the light of a framework which regards problems as being constructed, then we may take it that such statements reflect a rejection, on the part of the person making the statement, of the problem which is at that time being presented to, or worked on by, the team. The use of a problem-construction framework, however, makes a considerable difference to the actions which may be considered by, or commended by, the team member or his consultant for resolving that problem. It may lead away from solutions to the problem of coping with boring meetings, such as stopping going to that type of meeting, making the meeting shorter, or taking along some other work to do during the meeting. It may lead towards considerations of how to influence that team to spend its time on issues which the person concerned sees as significant, how to exclude some issues which other members bring, but which the person believes should not be worked on by that team, and how to gain acceptance for his own issues and his own redefinition of issues, or it may lead to strategies of looking for possible points of coalition where his own defined problems may be accepted in return for accepting another's defined problems. In general, the research problem should be significant to all who are not completely satisfied with
the problems or issues on which time gets spent in some team which they wish to influence, whether as member or from outside. This may sound a little bold and all-inclusive, but it must be remembered that there is a distinction between wishing to influence the issues which are considered by a team, and wishing to direct the outcome of a team's consideration of issues.

Secondly, some people come out of team or committee meetings feeling that an inadequate description has been worked out for a problem because someone, often themselves, has not brought out their own special perspective on that problem. Whereas the previous point had to do with the existence and definition of a problem, this has to do with problem-formulation. For some reason, an element which someone in the team sees as being relevant to a problem is not introduced in the team's formulation of that problem. From the research findings in Part 4, some possible alternative explanations for this could be found, and this is not the place to anticipate, simplify and distort those findings. However, we may see that an analysis of this situation in problem-construction terms creates some possibilities for acting or intervening in the situation, whereas without such an analysis there are not many reactions available other than anger.

Thirdly, it may sometimes be that an elegant solution is found for a problem on which the team has worked, and the solution is implemented, but that subsequently the solution is found not to have helped or satisfied anybody. This rather familiar scenario for the aftermath of consulting projects or the reports of working parties within organizations sometimes leads to a post mortem on the solution that was found or the way it was implemented. The approach being developed in the present research would lead the
search for an explanation for the lack of satisfaction derived from the solution of a problem away from those areas and towards the process of problem-construction that took place before the selection and implementation of the solution. The process of problem-finding in teams, it may be argued, is complicated to the extent that, by the time a consultant or a working party has been given the problem to work on, it may have been through so many transformations that it is no longer recognizable as a problem owned by any person, and the solution of this further-developed 'team' problem may not help with the solution of any of the problems felt and owned by persons in the team.

Alongside these quasi-anecdotal instances of the significance of the research problem, it is suggested that much of team life could best be looked at in terms of the problem-construction going on in it. For example, more might be understood of the nature of power in teams by considering the power to define problems for the team to work on. Communication in teams has often been studied or intervened in by the use of problem-solving games or exercises. It is possible that one of the reasons for the limited learning to be derived from such studies, and the limited success of such interventions is that the games and exercises which are used typically have the problem-construction built in to them, thus obscuring exactly those processes whose importance is being proposed here.

Evidence for the significance of the research problem comes from many team members with whom the researcher has discussed his work during the course of the project. Not many claimed to be thinking in problem-construction terms for their own work in teams, but some did, and this, coupled with the immediate relevance to
their own situation seen by those who had not previously thought in these terms, was taken by the researcher as some sort of evidence that the research problem was significant in practice, and not merely theoretically intriguing. The three kinds of statements which were considered earlier in this section describe types of situation which were described many times by 'naive' team members during the course of the research.

Although practitioner/team member theorising is regarded in this research as very important, the work also has significance for researcher/academic theorising. In these terms, the outcome of this research is an understanding of the process by which some teams negotiate definitions and formulations of problems amongst themselves, including the rule framework within which they do this. This should be a contribution in the following areas of study: -

1/. Problem-solving. To date, this has dealt often with normative models of the process of individual problem-solving, and very broad descriptions of normative models for group problem-solving, together with some prescriptions for implementing these normative models. Thus for example a parallel but quite different research problem has been treated in the operational research literature, where problem-formulation in teams is discussed. Thus Ackoff (1962) and Ackoff and Sasieni (1968) have considerable sections under such headings, but their topic is quite different from ours; they are seeking to offer prescriptions where we are only attempting description, their teams consist of operational researchers, - specialists in problem-solving, - while ours are naturally arising teams working in health care, and their teams are working (initially) with problems that are found for them by a client, while ours find
their own.

Where research has been descriptive, it has often been experimental rather than field research. Also, as will be seen in Chapter 2, research on problem-solving has not often addressed questions of how the problems solved came to be defined and formulated in the way they were. There do exist studies to which none of these remarks apply (e.g. Allison 1971) but the present study goes further in studying more problem-constructions and in attempting to discover more categories in use.

2/. Team work and processes. This research will provide a basis for development of knowledge and skills in one particular, but it will be suggested, crucial, aspect of teamwork. It is anticipated that the findings from this research will be productive of further research on team processes, and it is hoped that it will produce a re-evaluation of which features in team process are most urgently in need of further understanding.

3/. Definition of the situation. The definition and negotiation of the problem-situation among members of a team which is described here may be seen as a part of research going on about the ways in which persons define their situation. The present research should contribute to that research, being a body of evidence and theorising where each of the three terms 'problem-existence', 'problem-definition' and 'problem-formulation' corresponds with a meaning of the term 'definition of the situation'. Perhaps most significant in this field will be the link between problem-formulation, definition of the situation, and beliefs about causality.
PART 2

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
Chapter 2: Models of Problem-Solving.

This research is concerned with a particular aspect of problem-solving by persons in organizations. Our estimate is that the range of convenience (Kelly, 1955) is not very great, and that theories which have been formulated to explain the problem-solving behaviour of animals do not have explanatory power for the problem-solving behaviour of persons. While they might have heuristic value, they might equally be thoroughly misleading when used as a device for learning about phenomena for which they were never intended. For the purposes of this research, it has been taken that the dangers of being misled by such theories, of reconstruing observed reality to be consistent with those theories, are greater than the likely heuristic benefits arising from transposition. Models and theories developed for 'animal problem-solving' (the very term being incomprehensible outside a behaviourist framework, because the meanings of situations to animals are not known to us) will not therefore be considered here.

The same arguments apply more weakly to experimental studies of problem-solving. The focus of convenience (Kelly, 1955) or core of such work is different, because this research is about persons in organizations, not about persons in experimental situations. Nevertheless, the gap here is narrower, and it may be argued that the social context of an experiment and the social context of an organization, whilst different, are not so different that learning gained in the one may not be used heuristically in the other. The greater problem with trying to make use of models and theories from experimental research on problem-solving may be the implicit model of man which guides much experimental research. Fuller discussion
of this issue will come in Chapter 9, but it should be noted here that, for research based on an anthropomorphic model of man (Harré and Secord, 1972) experimental studies of human problem-solving may be based on a mechanistic, non-human model no more relevant than studies of animal problem-solving.

In this chapter we shall consider first one of the more comprehensive models of problem-solving. After that, other models will be compared and contrasted with it, and we shall categorize some of the normative and positive models which have been made available in the literature.

D'Zurilla and Goldfried (1971) prepared their model of problem-solving, after a selective review of the literature, for the purpose of considering problem-solving in a very broad sense of the word, as that which individuals continuously do in resolving situational problems in life. They follow Socrates' observation that competent individuals are "those who manage well the circumstances which they encounter daily, and who possess a judgement which is accurate in meeting occasions as they arise and rarely miss the expedient course of action". They are interested in problem-solving research which has relevance for problem-solving in "real life" situations, and they are concerned to show how difficulties and incompetencies in resolving situational problems may lead to clinically diagnosable undesirable states. As they are also interested in identifying "possible training or therapeutic procedures" there are good grounds for arguing that the

\* Several narrower uses of the term 'problem-solving' will be found later in this Chapter.
purpose for which they developed their model of problem-solving is related to, and at least compatible with, the purpose of the research reported here, and their model is therefore likely to be of use to us.

They begin by defining the terms "problem", "problem-solving" and "solution". The term "problem" they use to refer to "a specific situation or set of related situations to which a person must respond in order to function effectively in his environment". They say that "a situation is considered problematic if no effective response alternative is immediately available to the individual confronted with the situation". By this they do not mean to imply that all stimulus elements of a problem must be construed as originating from outside the individual, but follow Dollard and Miller (1950) in believing that "feedback" from his own responses is an important part of any person's response environment.

D'Zurilla and Goldfried define problem-solving as "a behavioural process, whether overt or cognitive in nature, which (a) makes available a variety of potentially effective response alternatives for dealing with the problematic situation and (b) increases the probability of selecting the most effective response from among these various alternatives". Their definition of a solution in a problematic situation is "a response or pattern of responses which alters the situation so that it is no longer problematic to the individual and at the same time maximises other positive consequences and minimises other negative ones".

D'Zurilla and Goldfried go on to report on their review of research and theory in problem-solving. They claim that although there have been many differences shown in the way individuals go about solving problems, "there has been a remarkable degree of
agreement among various theorists and investigators working in different areas as to the general kinds of operations involved in effective problem-solving”. They find five general stages which seem to represent a consensus viewpoint; (a) general orientation, (b) problem definition and formulation, (c) generation of alternatives, (d) decision making, and (e) verification. They stress that use of such a stage-sequential approach is not meant to imply that this is how problem-solving is, or should be, carried out. They believe that, rather than proceeding by stages, the stages usually overlap and interact with each other. So their five stages are an heuristic for organizing problem-solving procedures or operations for study or learning purposes, and not a description of a discoverable sequence.

(a) General Orientation.

D’Zurilla and Goldfried suggest that a personal orientation likely to encourage independent problem-solving behaviour would include being inclined to (1) accept that problem-situations are a normal part of life, and can usually be dealt with, (2) recognize problem-situations when they occur, and (3) inhibit tendencies to cope with problem-situations by impulse or inactivity, which they seem to regard as alien to effective coping. They describe research reviews indicating that an individual’s general expectation of being able to control his environment can greatly increase the likelihood that he will actually attempt to cope with situational problems when they occur. Similarly, in the therapy research literature, the client’s initial expectation for positive behaviour change can greatly facilitate the actual improvement.

On the second aspect of general orientation which they
2.5

described, they quoted the description of discovering a problem's existence by Miller, Galanter and Pribram (1960):

"In ordinary affairs we usually muddle ahead, doing what is habitual and customary, being slightly puzzled when it sometimes fails to give the intended outcome, but not stopping to worry much about the failures because there are too many other things still to do. Then circumstances conspire against us and we find ourselves caught failing where we must succeed - where we cannot withdraw from the field, or lower our self-imposed standards, or ask for help, or throw a tantrum. Then we may begin to suspect that we face a problem." (p.171)

D'Zurilla and Goldfried point out that the affective response described by Miller et al. may be coped with in at least two ways; it may be dealt with by cognitive distortion, or it may be used as a cue to focus attention on the problematic situation producing it.

(b) Problem Definition and Formulation.

D'Zurilla and Goldfried suggest that, in order to avoid an unwanted source of variance in problem-solving performance, the experimental work on problem-solving is typically done with problems presented in a highly structured, well defined form. Outside the laboratory, however, most problems are "messy", vague, ambiguous, with inadequate data and without obvious goals for problem-solving. They claim therefore that when an individual has recognized a problematic situation, and has inhibited his tendency to respond on impulse, he must "(a) define all aspects of the situation in "operational" terms and (b) formulate or classify elements of the situation appropriately so as to separate relevant from irrelevant information, identify his primary goals, and specify the major sub-problems, issues, or conflicts" (their emphasis). It should be noted here that the use of the word
"define" by D'Zurilla and Goldfried is in a different sense from that in which the word will be used in other parts of this thesis. They are arguing here for a concrete approach to the defining of problems, and are able to show some evidence that this is the approach used by successful problem-solvers. They also quote evidence from Crutchfield (1969) that the "skills" of formulating problems involve identifying the boundary conditions of the problem, putting the facts into some orderly form, discriminating relevant from irrelevant facts, recognizing gaps in the available information, and specifying what other data are needed to fill these gaps. They follow Gagné (1966) in believing that the individual in a problem-solving situation responds not primarily to the physical stimuli, but to the meanings which he attributes to the stimuli, which thereby mediate his response to them. D'Zurilla and Goldfried see such attribution of meaning as one form of classification undertaken by the individual. By classifying something, the individual is able to relate it to other members of a category with which he has had experience in the past. Thus classification may help the individual to discriminate between different problem-situations, and so improve the quality of his formulation.

(c) Generation of Alternatives.

The objective during this stage is to generate possible solutions for the problem, and to do it in such a way as to make it likely that a satisfactorily effective response will be among those generated. They review a considerable body of research, mostly about brainstorming, underlying which, they say, are two basic principles of idea production, 'deferment of judgement' and 'quantity breeds quality'. They state that brainstorming has
four basic rules: (a) Criticism is ruled out. (b) "Freewheeling" is welcomed. (c) Quantity is wanted. (d) Combination and improvement are sought. They conclude that the research they review "indicates that the brainstorming package is effective in facilitating good quality response alternatives in problem-solving", but that no conclusions can be drawn, from the research evidence available, on the contribution of the individual rules to the efficacy of the whole.

(d) Decision Making.

Now, say D'Zurilla and Goldfried "the problem solver has, in a sense, exchanged old problems for new ones". If he has generated alternatives successfully he may have created a decision problem for himself. Again their approach follows that of Miller et al. (1960), whom they quote:

"An ordinary person almost never approaches a problem systematically and exhaustively unless he has been specifically educated to do so. It is much more natural for him to visualize what is and what ought to be and to focus on the gap between them than to visualize some huge set of alternative possibilities through which he must search." (p.174).

This stage of decision-making involves the complexities that decisions can only be evaluated within the values of the individual making that decision and that the consequences of taking any particular action will be estimated within the belief system of that individual. The decision-making takes place at two levels; at one level to select a strategy to resolve the major issues or conflicts, and at the other, to select the specific means of implementing the strategy selected.
(e) Verification.

D'Zurilla and Goldfried say that without a stage of verification, "an individual may persist in the performance of an inadequate course of action instead of attempting to find out where the trouble is and correcting it". For effective problem-solving the person must seek to obtain accurate information about the consequences of his actions. He must determine whether "the alternative finally selected effectively resolves the major conflicts or issues which comprise the problematic situation."

Again D'Zurilla and Goldfried incline to follow Miller et al. (1960), who proposed a "Test-Operate-Test-Exit" (TOTE) unit. This represents a decision-maker testing his operations, and only 'exiting' from them if the outcome of that test is satisfactory. The TOTE unit is thus a form of feedback loop. The criteria for exiting in "real life" problem-solving, they acknowledge, may not be as precise as one would like. In practice, this stage may be judged by satisficing rather than optimising criteria, and may in fact often be left out altogether.

Other Models of Problem-Solving.

We turn now to examine some of the other models of problem-solving in the literature, - mostly ones not incorporated in D'Zurilla and Goldfried's review and distillation of other models, together with some which we consider merit more attention than they have received above.

Vinacke (1974), in his textbook on cognitive psychology, defines problem-solving as "realistic, goal-oriented behaviour in complex tasks having definite and correct outcomes, in which the following phases can be distinguished: confrontation by a problem,
working toward a solution, and reaching a solution (or failing)". He sees contributions to the understanding of problem-solving coming from four areas of research (apart from experimentation on animals). Firstly, he notes the contributions to a more inclusive view of the human processes of problem-solving coming from experiments in the gestalt tradition. This tradition is concerned principally with the characteristics of adults in complex tasks, but as Vinacke says, the experiments amounted to little more than illustrations of points of departure for analytic interpretation. He follows Duncker (1945) in distinguishing between analysis of the situation and analysis of the goal. In Duncker's view the subject must ascertain conflicting elements of the situation, as solution always requires some variation of crucial relationships. The person also analyses the goal, by which he means, considering what would constitute a solution. Duncker distinguishes between solutions reached by analytic means, which are rational and desirable, and those reached by resonance (meaning, more or less, that they 'feel right'), which are 'banal' and less rational. Vinacke also cites in this section work on the concepts of functional fixedness, centering and recentering, method of instruction, and direction. More will be said of these concepts in the next chapter. Secondly, he considers research on insightful principles. This is a body of detailed and strictly experimental research concerning explicit facilitating or interfering conditions for producing insightful responses to puzzle-type problems. As Vinacke says in summarizing this work, "The general principles of centering and recentering appear to be accepted, although our understanding of problem solving would be
advanced by intensive study of the processes by which these central features of problem solving actually operate. In this respect, introspective reports could be valuable." (p.258). Thirdly, under modes of attack, Vinacke summarizes research showing that the strategies which are employed for solving problems can not be understood only in terms of either characteristic personal strategies which tend to be employed universally, or types of strategy inherently appropriate to a particular problem, but that the mode of attack which eventually leads to successful problem-solving results from the interaction of these two factors.

Fourthly, on contributions to the understanding of problem-solving from information-processing research, Vinacke says, "A conception of the human problem solver as responding solely to the information display, as extrinsically defined, and as operating mechanically on this basis, is artificial. Memory, past experience, and cognitive structure (to say nothing of emotional and motivational characteristics) must be taken into account." (p.275). The information-processing model of man is too mechanistic even for Vinacke.

We have already said something indirectly of the model of problem-solving employed by Miller, Galanter and Pribram (1960). These writers state that, in general, normal people do not tackle even simple problems with a 'systematic' plan, that is, with a plan which sets out to search for a solution without making prior judgements about where that solution might be found. The ideal for such a systematic plan is that it covers all possible points of search without repetition and without the sequence of the searching being important. They show that even for a problem as
simple as an anagram, people do not use a systematic plan, but rather, an heuristic plan of search, guided by combinations of letters or word endings which they do or do not expect to encounter in the language of the anagram. They show mathematically that even simple problems would in practice be virtually insoluble without the use of heuristic plans. "A heuristic is a way of exercising discernment - but it always runs the risk that the solution will be discarded inadvertently along with the millions of apparently useless combinations. Thus we arrive at a typically human dilemma - slow and sure, or fast and risky?" (p.168).

Miller et al. are careful to point out that the model of search in problem-solving should not be taken to imply that the solution will necessarily be easily recognizable. "We search about, exploring a hunch, gambling that we might get a good idea if we spent some time on this or that, fiddling with a few examples, trying to imagine what is missing or what we could get rid of, but never being certain precisely what we are searching for." (p.172). However, this particular feature of problem-solving they see as having to do with 'image' of the situation rather than with 'plan', and they therefore regard it as outside the scope of their book.

Lindsay and Norman (1972) offer an information-processing model of problem-solving. They classify problems as either well defined or ill defined, a well defined problem being one that has a clearly stated goal. They deliberately concentrate their study on well defined problems, whilst stating, without demonstrating, that the results of the investigations should apply to all problem-solving behaviour. They say, "The first step in the investigation of any phenomenon is to observe the behaviour associated with
it." (p.502). A model which is explicitly restricted to the solving of well defined problems and which is intended to explain data to do with exhibited behaviour during problem-solving, and not data to do with personal experience or meanings during problem-solving, is not likely to be of value for the present research, typical though it is of the information-processing school, within which much research on problem-solving has been done.

March and Simon (1958) also offer an information-processing model of problem-solving, and theirs is of more interest to us as we shall be able to employ some of its implications and corollaries later. They distinguish two types of problem-solving, "reproductive" which "consists primarily in searching the memory in a relatively systematic fashion for solutions that are present there in nearly finished form" (p.177), and "productive" which involves the "construction of new solutions out of more or less "raw" material" (p.177). They say that the type of problem-solving used depends on both the characteristics of the problem and on the past experience of the problem-solver. They describe five general characteristics of problem-solving processes. Firstly, they say that these processes, however complex their totality, may be seen as aggregations of simple processes. This statement is intended heuristically, not as a statement of fact. Secondly, a large component of problem-solving consists of search processes which may be physical, perceptual or cognitive. Thirdly, a large component consists of screening processes, by which the items that are dredged up by search processes are evaluated. Fourthly, these two elementary components of the process are characterised by considerable "randomness". Despite such arbitrariness, however,
they see two elements of organization giving the process structure. The first is some procedural programme, which can be recognized, they assert, in most problem-solving, although there is no inexorable sequence of problem-solving steps. Also, there are substantive programmes, by which the problem-solving process is structured to reflect the structure of the problem to be solved. Thus a problem of broad scope may be factored into different aspects which may be dealt with separately, sequentially or simultaneously. Fifthly, both types of programmes have generally a hierarchical structure, that is, both procedurally and substantively, one may focus at several different levels of detail, and the programmes seem to apply at each of these levels, subject to similar programmes at a higher level.

Rubinstein (1975) recognizes only two approaches to research in human problem-solving, the 'behavioural' and the 'information processing'. 'Behavioural' turns out to mean for Rubinstein the behaviourist view as propounded by Skinner (1966); as an engineer, Rubinstein was perhaps more likely to settle for the information-processing approach in any case. He makes a distinction not found elsewhere between two basic categories of problem-solving. The first of these consists of the statement of an initial state and a desired goal, but the manner of proceeding from one to the other is not known. The second category is where the initial state is known and the transformation processes for problem-solving are known, but the desired goal is unknown; in this category, a solution will not be immediately recognizable as such, and some form of verification procedure will always be needed.

Gagné (1966) has already been mentioned in connexion with
D'Zurilla and Goldfried. He follows Mackworth (1965) who says;
"Problem solving is a choice between existing programs or sets of
mental rules - whereas problem finding is the detection of the
need for a new program based on a choice between existing and
expected future programs" (p.57).

Gagné does not decide whether this distinction is valid, but he
concludes that a fundamental criterion of problem-solving is "that
a kind of performance which could not be exhibited before the
"problem" was solved can be exhibited after the "problem" is
solved." (p.130). This implies a change in human capability and
he says that the most important characteristic of the newly
acquired capability is its inherent generalizability. Gagné
distinguishes the kind of problem-solving model he is building from
mathematical models (e.g. Luce, Bush and Galanter, 1963) and
computer models (e.g. Simon and Newell, 1964). He describes his
own as a mechanical, or perhaps an electromechanical, model.
This gives his model certain kinds of characteristics, which he
notes as:

1/. Sequential action: successful completion of any stage depends
on the existence of a capability in the preceding stage.

2/. Threshold phenomena, where a state may have to reach a given
point of "strength" before the next stage of the process can
proceed.

3/. Non-graded responses, where a causal reaction may either take
place or not with no finer distinctions in between.

4/. Multiple connexions, by which "an event can contribute to
one or a number of subsequent events, or conversely, any number
of events can be required to produce just one subsequent event."(p.147)
Gagné's model is interesting for the fact that he is conscious of the type of model that he has built, and as the list of features above shows, conscious of the consequences that this type of model has for his theorizing. We shall not explore his model of internal and external events in problem-solving further here because he raises a question closely related to the research problem driving the present work, but makes it clear that he does not believe he has anything to say on it. After raising the point from Mackworth mentioned above he says, "It seems reasonable to suppose that there is a perfectly valid distinction here, although it is much more difficult to decide how important the distinction is; that is, how far apart these two kinds of human activity really are." (p.129).

Ackoff and Emery (1972) define a problem as "a purposeful state that a purposeful individual is dissatisfied with, and in which he is doubtful about which of the available courses of action will change that state to a satisfactory one." (p.108). They see three different ways of disposing of a problem. Firstly, the person may 'dissolve' a problem, that is, he may remove it by changing his intentions. One person may also dissolve another's problem by changing the other's intentions, for example by distracting him so that different intentions become salient. Secondly, the person may 'resolve' a problem. He may remove a problem by the exercise of arbitrary choice. This may be done, for example, where there seems to be no basis for making a rational choice on the data available. This, however, only disposes of the problem if the course of action selected removes the state of dissatisfaction. Thirdly, in 'solving' a problem, the person
selects as the result of enquiry the course of action that he believes is the most likely to produce a state of satisfaction in him; if it does in fact produce such a state of satisfaction he has 'solved' the problem. Solving a problem, they say, involves answering two questions, (1) What alternatives are available? (2) Which one is best, or good enough? They see problem-solving as principally concerned with formulating and evaluating courses of action. The main contribution of their model must be the recognition that there are other ways of disposing of problems than by 'solving' them.

Davis (1973) attempts to bring together the literature on human creative problem-solving from the fields of experimental psychology and training (by training he means attempts in industry and education to improve problem-solving). Davis develops a taxonomy of problems and problem-solving, which he uses to relate these disparate fields, and to discover both concealed commonalities and concealed differences. His questions are:

"1. Is the problem really a problem?
2. Does the task elicit observable trial-and-error behaviour or implicit problem solving and thinking?
3. Does the task require one "correct" solution or many original ones?
4. Is the problem (and its solution) a fairly well-defined, one-shot affair, or is it a creative contribution of substantial magnitude, requiring the creative solving of multiple subproblems?" (p.21).

The first of these questions he amplifies with a definition of a problem as "a stimulus situation for which an organism does not have a ready response" (p.12) - a definition which, as he says,
is very similar to that of Skinner (1966) who says "A question for which there is at the moment no answer is a problem" (p.225). The second of his questions, although he does not comment on this, is very similar to the distinction made by Miller et al. (1960) between systematic plans and heuristic plans in problem-solving.

With his third question, he points out that the distinction between tasks requiring one correct solution and those requiring many original ones, while frequently made in the research literature, may be misleading when applied to a "real world" situation. In the "real world" it is likely that the best results will be achieved by first divergently thinking of a number of possibilities, and then convergently selecting, formulating and implementing the solution which is seen as best. The fourth distinction, he says, is between such "single" problems as landing a man on the moon (and getting him back) or composing a symphony, which might also be seen as massive complexes of more or less separable sub-problems, "while any laboratory or other short-term problem would lie at the other extreme." (p.23). He seems to be suggesting here that there are qualities inherent in some problems such that they can only be solved after factoring (March and Simon, 1958, p.151) them. Such problems are ordinarily distinct from unitary problems.

Jackson (1975) sees a problem as having two distinctive features, an objective and an obstacle. He suggests stages of problem-solving which are:

1. Formulating the problem, which involves its detection, identification, and definition.

2. Interpreting the problem.

3. Constructing courses of action.
4. Decision-making.


He says that the distinction between these stages is important, and that it is best to proceed one stage at a time. The whole sequence is a chain in which there should be no weak link, although he acknowledges that the complexity of problems sometimes makes it necessary to revise earlier assumptions and to repeat some stages. Jackson has resolved the dilemma (which underlies much of the problem-solving literature) of whether to describe or be normative by being thoroughly and openly didactic; his book has, appropriately, been reprinted in the 'Teach yourself' series. Whilst his model of problem-solving seems to follow closely that of many (unidentified) precursors, his notion of 'interpreting' the problem is one we shall take up later.

Kepner and Tregoe (1965) are also highly prescriptive and didactic in their intentions. They claim that;

"Problem solving is a process that follows a logical sequence. The process begins with identifying the problem, continues with analysis to find the cause, and concludes with decision making. Each stage involves basic concepts. One of these is that a problem is a deviation or an imbalance between what should be and what actually is happening. And another concept is that this imbalance is caused by a change of one kind or another." (p.18).

Whilst much of their work seems to come out in the form of the seven-point plans so abhorrent to academics and researchers, they have some distinctive concepts, particularly around the definition and formulation of problems, to which we shall return in the next chapter.
2.19

Some Comments on the Models.

In general the models cited in this chapter have been presented with the more descriptive ones earlier and the more normative ones later. It is the intention in this thesis to investigate and understand phenomena and experiences of problem-construction in teams, and to draw out any consequences which this understanding may have for those involved in organizations only as a subsequent and independent step; in this sense the research paradigm employed is not one of action research. For this reason, the normative models are of relatively less significance for this research than the positive ones. However, "understanding the event or situation being studied" is itself not a neutral process, but is guided by the purpose for which the model builder wants to gain understanding. Thus D'Zurilla and Goldfried's expressed purpose (see p.2.2) for their model is consonant with the purpose of this thesis, whilst Ackoff and Emery present their model as if it were a pure distillate of understanding, making it more difficult to gauge the relevance (see p.2.15).

Whilst there are plenty more models of problem-solving about, the survey above is offered as a fair representation of the types of models in existence which might be applicable to persons in organizations. We would follow McLean, Mangham and Sims (1976) in saying that a model is "an abstraction from and a simplification of reality and thus cannot include all the variables and factors operating in any given circumstance. It should, however, include all those variables which the model builder considers important, and, in this sense, models serve as an aid to understanding the event or situation being studied." (app.1). As we turn in the
next chapter to problem-definition and -formulation, we shall use the models outlined above, and particularly that of D'Zurilla and Goldfried, to assist in focussing on the topic of this research.

No assertions are being made about the truth content of any particular model; the judgements are about the usefulness for gaining the types of understanding being sought here. Also, whilst one model may seem appropriate for most features of the work, dichotomies and classifications from other models will be drawn in at will.
Chapter 3: Definition and Formulation of Problems.

It may be noted in the models of problem-solving in the last chapter that models more concerned with the initial stages of the process tend to be directed more towards improving the practice of problem-solving than towards increasing the understanding of how such practice is conducted at present. We consider, however, that attempts to improve practice will be of limited efficacy and reliability in an area where little understanding has been achieved, as we shall suggest is the case here. The range of descriptive terms for the early stages of problem-solving demonstrates the absence in this field of any clear and widely accepted conceptualization. Indeed the discrepancies and variation in the usage of the terms is rather understated in a list such as that above by the fact that some terms, e.g. 'problem-definition' may have quite different meanings for different writers.

For the purpose of this thesis, a distinction will be made between problem-definition and problem-formulation on the one hand, and problem-finding on the other. This distinction, despite having been taken as far as the chapter headings, is not intended to be taken as a hard, well defined, mutually exclusive dichotomy. Instead, these two terms are taken to connote closely (and uncertainly) related concepts, and it is intended that they should gather different connotations in their use in this thesis. The following section will describe some of the terms used; it is intended to be descriptive rather than definitive of these terms.

Description of terms.

Several descriptions and definitions of the term problem,
from the literature, were mentioned in Chapter 2, and there seems to be something closer to consensus on this than on most of the other terms used. Most of the definitions contain notions of an existing state, some preferable (though not necessarily clearly defined) state, and some difficulty, doubt or uncertainty about moving from one to the other. So, when an individual sees himself as having a problem, this problem is a property of (a) the model he has of himself and his situation, and (b) the image he has of what would constitute a preferable situation. Persons may agree to define some shared issue as a 'team problem', but this is a quite different concept. A person's problem can only be understood in terms of that person's models of reality and his preferences (or values), and similarly, a problem can not be understood without being explicit about whose problem it is. The statement "The problem is that A is not working hard enough" can only be understood by discovering or inferring whose problem it is that A is not working hard enough. Thus if B wishes that A would work harder and does not know how to make him do so, we may say that B experiences a problem that A is not working hard enough, while A may be getting nothing but pleasure from his idleness. On the other hand if A considers that he could work harder and wishes to do so, but somehow can not find a way to end up doing so, we may say that A has a problem that A is not working hard enough. The distinction may appear trivial and obvious, and indeed it must have appeared so to most of the writers in this field, since it is scarcely mentioned, but it will be taken in this research to be a crucial distinction, because determining who is the owner of the problem which is being solved can have a radical effect on the strategies available for solution. For example, the problems, "B

*We return to this issue on p.5.1
wants A to work harder" and "A wants to work harder" may well suggest quite different ranges of possible solutions. In this thesis all problems will be taken to be personal problems in the sense that they are phenomena in the experience of a person, and can not be understood independently of that experience. This, we would claim, is one of the common language uses of the word 'problem'. Another common language usage of the word is in the sense of the 'problems' at the end of a chapter in a mathematical textbook. In our usage of the word these are not of themselves problems, but become problems when some person wishes to solve them. It should also be noted that the concept of problem being used here does not imply either a deficiency or a negative state to be overcome, but only that there is some state which a person sees as being not as they would have it be, and that there is no obvious route to removing this discrepancy between what is and what would be preferred. The term 'problem' as used in this research thus embraces such concepts as 'need', 'development need' and 'changes you wish to make'.

For the term problem-situation we would follow Eden and Sims (1977a) in saying that this is "one about which a person feels there is some difference between the situation as it exists (and/or as he expects it to exist in the future) and his preferred situation". This concept is different from that of 'problem' described above, in that the person does not necessarily know what his problem is. He may feel doubt, unease, disquiet or dissatisfaction with his situation, and yet not be able to state a problem that he owns. Linked with this concept is that of definition of the situation (as for example McHugh, 1968; Mangham, 1975), whereby the nature
of the situation which a person is in is not fully described by the events and objects which surround him, but must be understood through the definitions by which the person makes meaning for himself out of the plethora of entities and activities in his environment. For example, different persons attending the same team meeting may define the situation as an opportunity to float ideas, a way of keeping ancillary services informed about what is going on, an opportunity to demonstrate to a colleague and all others present what a fool that colleague is, a way of passing unofficial messages between unions and management, and an afternoon away from the telephone and from decisions for which you can be held responsible. Also entailed in the notion of definition of the situation is that this definition is not determined for a person, but is a matter which may involve, as well as his range of personal interests, beliefs and experiences, some degree of choice. Another implication of this concept is the solution it offers to problems of reality: the person will behave according to his definition of the situation, and thus "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas, 1928 p.572). When we use the term 'problem-situation' it is not meant to imply that there exists a situation, and that inherent in that situation is a problem. Instead, it is argued here that a problem-situation only exists because it is defined as such by a person, and that a different person, or the same person on a different occasion, might be confronted by what appears to an observer to be precisely the same situation, and yet on one occasion the situation is problematic, in the person's definition, and on the other it is not. In any case, as has been said, the term 'problem-situation'
may be used about something more nebulous and unstructured than the term 'problem'. This less structured situation has been described by Kepner and Tregoe (1965, p.63) as "mess", and a notion of a problem-situation which can not yet be described as a problem is also implicit where persons are exhorted to discover, and then solve their "real" problems, or the "right" problem (Ackoff, 1974 p.8). A problem-situation, as we have described it here, turns out to be a situation which is problematic to the person who is in it. It is a problem because there is a discrepancy between an existing situation, which is one of "mess", unease, no defined problem, and a preferred situation, where there is a defined, and therefore finite, problem; also there is some degree of difficulty and doubt about the means of proceeding from the former to the latter.

The term problem-existence may be seen as a subsidiary of the term 'problem-definition'. 'Problem-existence is not a term which will be used very much in this thesis, because the idea of a problem 'existing' suggests that there is a thing present in a situation called 'A problem' which a person either does or does not recognize to exist. This is clearly incompatible with our notion that it is unhelpful to regard problems as entities in the external world, and much more helpful to regard them as individual, idiosyncratic and personal definitions of his situation by a person. Nevertheless, there are occasions when the term 'problem-existence' is useful to label that process by which a person acknowledges to himself that he has what he sees as a problem or a problem-situation to deal with. In this sense, problem-existence means recognizing the existence of a problem-
situation, and implies the possibility of problem-definition, as defined below, but neither contains nor is contained by either of these. Where this term is used in this thesis, it should be taken as an abbreviated way of saying "recognition by a person that he is defining a situation to be a problem and/or a problem-situation", and not as an abbreviation of "recognition by a person of a problem that exists in his environment".

The term problem-definition will be used in this thesis to refer to the process by which a person comes to regard himself as having a problem and as knowing what is the central feature of that problem. The term 'problem-definition' is thus being used in a quite different way in this thesis from the use of the same phrase by D'Zurilla and Goldfried who mean by it that an individual must "define all aspects of the situation in "operational" terms" (1971, p.113, their emphasis). Our usage of the term connotes (a) the definition of a situation as being one which contains one or more problems for the person, and (b) the location within this defined situation of something which is used by the person with the problem as a descriptor of the essential nature of the problem as he sees it. Thus if A says that he has a problem to do with not working hard enough, or B says that he has a problem to do with A not working hard enough, then these are definitions of problems. If, in preparing this thesis, the writer says that he has a problem with presenting material about a very primitive field of enquiry in an academically respectable way, this too is a definition of a problem.

This last problem-definition, however, has more of the complexity of the everyday world about it, and this leads us to the other term which we need to describe for this chapter, problem-
formulation. This is the process by which a person understands his situation, and the relationship between the various elements of that situation and the problem that he has defined. It encompasses the various reasons why the obvious and simple ways of disposing of a problem (that is, the ways that are so obvious and simple that it would not be defined by the person as a problem if he could see such ways) are rejected by him as in some way not usable. Problem-formulation may be seen as the person building a model for himself of the situation and what it is that keeps the problem in place. So in the example given above of a problem defined as being about the difficulty of reconciling research in an undeveloped field with academic respectability, one can conceive of several suggestions which might be made by a naive observer of ways that he considers might solve, resolve or dissolve the problem. He might propose changing the topic of the research, changing the reference group from whom respectability was sought, ignoring respectability altogether, or many other ways in which a person other than the writer might dispose of the defined problem. Such disposition is possible because the formulation of the problem is not known to persons other than the person whose problem — and formulation — it is; this is not meant to imply that he has a complete and conscious formulation of the problem, but rather that he has some model of the situation which supports a more complicated understanding of that situation and which leads him to see the intendedly helpful suggestions as naive or at least over-simple. Such naivety can of course have value, as on the occasions when it leads a person to reconsider the formulation of his problem. On the whole, however, it leads to amusement on the part of one
person (the onlooker) at the expense of another (the problem-definer) who for some reason can not see the simple solutions to the problem he is defining. At the same time, it leads to exasperation on the part of the problem-definer at the lack of understanding as he sees it on the part of the onlooker of the problem-definer's situation (e.g. everyday conversations about politics and politicians).

The Model of the Situation.

In the descriptions above of the terms 'problem-definition' and 'problem-formulation' it was necessary to introduce the idea of a model of the situation in which a problem is being defined and formulated, with some element of the model being used as a descriptor in problem-definition and other elements relating in such a way with each other and with the descriptor element that the problem is not immediately disposable; these elements, together with the descriptor element and the interrelationships between all of them constitute the problem-formulation. So the way a person defines and formulates a problem for himself depends on his model of the problem-situation; this makes it necessary to say something about the derivation of models of situations.

As has been said above, the perspective taken here is that situations are defined by the individual for himself, and that actions are taken by the person within the situation as he has defined it, regardless of how an observer might view it. At this point we shall distinguish between the content and the structure of a defined situation, the content being those objects or activities which the person perceives as being part of his situation, and the structure being the relationships between them. We shall consider these two features separately.
The content of the model of the problem-situation will be in the terms of the classification, or construct (Kelly, 1955), system of the person. The person to whom all the world is a battlefield will use that battle imagery and those battle constructs in making sense of his world, and the content of his model of any particular situation is likely to be different from that of a person whose constructs are predominantly about modes of collaboration. Personal construct systems are idiosyncratic, and because they act as the instruments of perception, it follows that the content available to a person for building a model of a situation is similarly idiosyncratic. But given that there is a finite number of constructs and perceptions available for use in the model, how are these selected to give the much smaller number actually used? We have already introduced the notion of 'definition of the situation', and this provides an overarching concept to explain the selection of content. According to the over-all definition given to the situation by the person, parts of his construed reality will come to seem salient or otherwise. This definition of the situation entails two conceptually separate operations which concern us; that of defining the situation to be problematic, and that of finding a descriptor for the problem. It would be conceivable at this stage to attempt to create a formal model of the process of 'definition of the situation' for the purpose of this research. Alternatively, it would be feasible to generate hypotheses about the definition of the situation as it relates to our topic. Both of these approaches are resisted here, partly because they are inconsistent with our grounded methodology (see Chapter 9), and partly because such formal modelling or hypothesizing, on a subject so central to the main topic of this
research, would be premature before consideration of the data, and perhaps generally a little previous in as undeveloped a research field as this. We shall therefore defer further exploration and formalization of this concept.

In general, we may say of the 'content' of the model of the problem-situation that it will be influenced by the personal constructs of the person in the situation and also by his values. As Postman, Bruner and McGinnies (1948) say:

"What one sees, what one observes, is inevitably what one selects from a near-infinitude of potential percepts. Perceptual selection depends not only upon the "primary determinants of attention" but is also a servant of one's interests, needs and values" (p.142).

Eden and Sims (1977a) develop this point further to show that there are two distinct routes by which the value system of a person may affect the way in which he defines problem-situations. Firstly, as Postman et al. suggest, there is the influence of values on perception and perceptual selection which affects the understanding which the person has of his situation, but also the very concept of value, as it is used in everyday language, implies the notion of preference, and values thus affect the preferred situation also. So values have consequences both for what the person perceives in his current situation, and also what kind of situation he might find preferable, the two entities which we have described above as notionally (though not necessarily consciously) discrepant in defining a problem-situation.

The structure of the model of the problem-situation is an even more difficult subject on which to make statements which can be supported from the literature, rather than just being left as bald assertions. The structure of personal construct systems
(Bieri, 1955, Crockett, 1965, Landfield, 1971) must probably be relevant here. Measures of structure have been produced in the construct theory literature, but unfortunately these, as for example the measures of cognitive complexity of the three authors mentioned above, are usually defined operationally rather than conceptually; so although moderately replicable measures are available for use on scores from repertory grid and allied techniques, it is not usually possible to say of what these are a measure. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to know if there is a significant relationship between some types of problem-definition and -formulation and the conventional measures of structure of construct systems.

At present a more promising approach seems to be coming through Rokeach (1973), with his work on beliefs and values, through the work of those who have been attempting to make cognitive maps of the beliefs of politicians (Axelrod, 1976). In this work, diagrammatic representations are made of the beliefs of a person as they relate to an issue. While the work done in this field so far has principally been done at a distance, modelling the beliefs of those who are either unable or who are unlikely to take the trouble to comment on the models produced, current research studies (Eden, 1977, Eden, Jones and Sims, 1978) are attempting to use a similar method to help both researchers and those persons who are collaborating with them in an organization to understand the person's beliefs as they relate to particular situations. Such a modelling procedure attempts to discover both the content and the structure of the person's models of problem-situations.

Content and structure in this context are, as often, only
partially separable concepts. There follow two brief examples of personal styles of modelling situations which had been observed by the researcher before embarking on this project (the examples concern style rather than the modelling of a particular problem situation because of the large amount of detail which would need to be given for the latter to be used to make any clear point). The first example is of an elderly woman whose models of problem situations always contained either the Russians or the New English Bible; all problems were seen by her (according to her accounts of them) as being, at least in part, caused by one or other of these factors. While this style of modelling is principally remarkable for its content, it did also exhibit a very simple structure. Incidentally, as neither the Russians nor the New English Bible were within her powers to eliminate, she could rest in the comfortable assurance that all problems were insoluble.

The second example is concerned principally with structure. It is of an intelligent, and in most ways competent, man, whose understanding of the world and of himself within it led him to model very large and complicated problem situations. It was his style always to have at least one of these on the go, so if he was going on holiday, and problems were hard to come by, he would consider more and more possibilities on such questions as how to get there, who to swap cars with etc., until he had a problem of considerable magnitude to solve. When this practice of defining and formulating a problem of large size and complex structure where no one else could see anything problematic, as if he were trying to maintain an adequate supply of problem, was described to him, he was able to recognize that this was his practice. This
is similar to a process described by Cook (1976), who says;

"Perhaps we like to be seen to "own" important problems, in that perhaps these give us status; if so, we really want to conserve them at least until a suitable moment arrives when we can stage a successful solution (by ourselves); and we will not do that until we have another important problem ready to display after the first one is shown to be solved." (p.8).

Both these examples are of extreme styles of problem-construction. Several categories which relate to individual style in problem-construction emerged during the research, and will be described in Part 4.
Before proceeding, it will be necessary to describe the terms 'problem-construction' and 'problem-finding'. These two terms will be used in this thesis with a broader meaning than the terms 'problem-definition' and 'problem-formulation'. Problem-construction will be used as a term to describe the whole process, including both the definition and the formulation of a problem, by which the person comes to regard himself as having a particular problem. 'Problem-construction' is thus the sum of 'problem-definition' and 'problem-formulation'.

Problem-finding, a term which we derive from Mackworth (1965), will be used where we wish to refer to processes of problem-definition and problem-formulation, but where it is not our intention to specify which of problem-definition, problem-formulation, or some mixture of the whole or parts of the two, is involved. In this chapter we shall consider a number of points that can be made about ways in which persons proceed from the state of experiencing no problem to experiencing some problem. These points all have to do with 'problem-finding', and it is not important for the present purpose to know specifically how they relate to the processes of definition and formulation. In addition, this looser term will be used to describe any process which does not seem to fit happily with either of the more specific definitions, and yet seems to belong within the notion of 'problem-construction'. Our concept of 'problem-finding' is thus contained by our concept of 'problem-construction', and will be used when we wish to imply a less definite conceptual boundary than we have given to 'problem-construction'.
The description of the term 'problem-finding' that was given above was intended to hold open a considerable range of convenience, whilst at the same time giving a recognizable focus of convenience (Kelly, 1955). It follows that, in taking different aspects of this concept, whilst we may be able to identify different aspects, with a loosely defined notion such as problem-finding the way in which these aspects relate to one another will be uncertain. For this reason, the order in which the aspects of problem-finding are discussed in this chapter has no particular significance. We shall consider five aspects, discussing in each case first some relevant approaches in the literature, and then the view that will be taken in this thesis. The five aspects that have been chosen are:

- Finding the "real" or "right" problem;
- Problem-finding and expectations;
- Problem-finding and the size of problems;
- Control and choice in problem-finding;
- Understanding and problem-finding.

Finding the "Real" or "Right" Problem.

There is a notion in good currency in everyday thought that it is important in problem-solving to find out what the problem "really" is, or to discover the "real" problem. As Eden and Sims (1977b) have pointed out, such a notion implies the existence of "unreal" problems, although the grounds are not usually clear on which the one is awarded the status of reality and the other is not. A similar notion which we shall consider in this section is that of finding the "right" problem.

Slee Smith (1971) gives an example which typifies the "real" problem approach. His example has a drawback in that the
organizations concerned are spoken of as if they were persons. However, we may assume that when he speaks of the cognitions and actions of organizations this is a shorthand form denoting persons in those organizations.

"For example, a Middle East country might pose the problem, say to the World Bank, of how best to convert vast tracts of arid desert into productive arable land? Straightforward enough and calling for study by ecologists and other experts. But is this the real problem? Surely it lies with the country's urgent need to increase its food production: trying to make corn grow in the desert will certainly help to relieve a difficult situation, but it will not solve the problem. Once this is fully realised then the true problem can be tackled in its entirety" (p.102).

Slee Smith's stress on reality is very strong, and he warns that appearances may be deceptive. "The first essential in problem solving is an appreciation of the true position, not as it appears to be, but as it really is" (p.102). He further illustrates the mistakes persons may make about their problems as follows:

"A company plagued with labour troubles may think that the major problem facing its management is how to prevent its employees from downing tools and walking out of the factory, but they would be wrong. The major problem is not to find a formula for preventing labour disputes but to discover why they take place in the first instance." (p.102).

Unfortunately he never tells us what he means by "real", nor is it clear why the person becomes deluded by appearances into making a mistake about the nature of his problem.

Ackoff (1974) develops a rather different view. He says, "Successful problem solving involves finding the right solution to the right problem. We fail more often because we solve the
wrong problem than because we get the wrong solution to the right problem." (p.8). So far this sounds very similar to Slee Smith's view, except that in this case he is speaking of a mistake which prevents work with the right problem, rather than a delusion which prevents work with the real problem; this is a less restricted view because it suggests that there may be other and more complex criteria for the choice of a "right" problem than the single criterion of reality. Ackoff goes on to say, "The problems we select for solution and the way we formulate them depends more on our philosophy and world view than on our science and technology." Ackoff is in fact suggesting that there are other factors in the choice of which problem to find, and that these factors are dependent on our philosophy and world view. "These, in turn, depend on the concepts and ideas we use and how we use them to organize our perceptions of the world. Fundamental changes in these organizing concepts and ideas and the way they are used move societies from one age to another." Ackoff is thus describing a socially defined world view which may change over time. So Ackoff's "right" problems are very similar to Slee Smith's "real" problems, with the difference that Ackoff considers that the social definition of reality may change with time; however at any one time the "right" problem is the "real" problem. However, the significance of the "right" problem to Ackoff has to do with the efficacy of the solutions to which the problem leads. He is aware of the objections to regarding a problem as an externality, and indeed at another point he says:

"In the Machine Age problems were thought of as "out there", as purely objective states of affairs. But John Dewey, the great American philosopher, challenged this notion and argued that
4.5
decision makers have to extract problems from the situations in
which they find themselves. They do so, he said, by analyzing
the situation. Hence problems are products of thought acting
on environments; they are elements of problem situations that
are abstracted from these situations by analysis. What we
experience, therefore, are problematic situations, not problems
which, like atoms and cells, are conceptual constructs."(pp.20-21).
Kepner and Tregoe (1965) have a less unitary notion of the
right problem to work on. It should be noted in the following
quotation that the word "problem" appears usually in the plural.
"Picking the right problems to work on may seem like a simple
operation, which is probably why so many managers skip lightly
over a series of problems and tackle those that at first glance
appear to be the worst. However, the task is not that simple.
It involves several actions and the handling of much information.
To pick the right problem, a manager has to know what standards
of performance he is following and what is actually going on in
his department; he has to recognize when a problem exists and
identify clearly the problems he wants to correct; and then he
has to choose the most important problems to work on first.
Doing each of these things well can increase his competence in
problem analysis." (p.57).
Kepner and Tregoe have stressed the importance of problem-
finding here, and have assigned more choice to the person (albeit
in a prescriptive manner) by speaking of the person identifying
problems that he wants to correct, and choosing the most important
ones, rather than implying that there is a single "right" problem
discoverable. However, Kepner and Tregoe still hold to the notion
that there are "right" problems as opposed to "wrong" problems,
even if there is no single right problem with all other problems
being wrong. They speak of a manager identifying a problem by
surveying the situation. "With a good knowledge of the expected
performance standards in each area he can identify deviations from
such performance. But he will only consider those deviations where he believes something is wrong, and which he wants to correct. He will not waste time considering deviations which are permissible within the band of limits he has established for himself" (p.61). It should be noted that this group of "right" problems is discoverable by Kepner and Tregoe's "rational manager", who has knowledge of the expected and actual performance in several separable areas of the world about him, and the capacity to compare and evaluate these performances. This may be enviable, but such rationality sounds some way removed from the experiences and competences of most of us, whose way of thinking seems to fit better with a notion of 'limited rationality' (March and Simon, 1958).

Jackson (1975) also has a notion of a correct definition of the problem. In his case, however, the correctness of a problem-construction depends on the problem being defined in terms of the objectives of the person with the problem and in terms of the obstacle that prevents that person from reaching the objective. Only when the problem is transposed into these terms can it be "right" or "wrong", and then it appears that it is the transposition and the accuracy with which the person has articulated his own objectives and obstacles whose correctness or otherwise is important. Jackson gives the following example.

"Consider the type of situation where something goes noticeably wrong. We may be sitting down at home reading a book and all the lights go out. Instantly we are aware of the existence of the problem and we can identify what kind of problem it is: a failure in the flow of electric current. But the way we define the problem will have a considerable influence on our actions to solve it. One definition, 'too many electric appliances
switched on', for example, might cause us to go and inspect the fuses; another, 'meter empty', to find coins to insert in a meter; another, 'must finish this chapter', to light a candle; another, 'can't see any more', to change our activity from reading to conversation." (p.15).

In Jackson's approach, any of these definitions of the situation might become the basis for defining the right problem, but the choice could only properly be made if the person formulated a problem for himself in terms of objectives and obstacles.

In this thesis the notion of "real" problems will not be used, because of the difficulties which arise in terms of whose reality it is that is being considered. To paraphrase the quotation from Thomas and Thomas (1928, p.572) used in the preceding chapter, if a person defines a problem as real, then it is real in the sense that he will try to solve it. It is conceivable that a person may present to another person a definition of a problem which he does not believe to be a real problem, but that is an issue for Chapter 6. The view taken in this thesis will be that the notion of a real problem is a misleading one; indeed it is very difficult to find any cogent description of this notion despite its popularity. It therefore appears that talk of "real" or "right" problems is a shorthand way of acknowledging the fact that there is considerable choice in problem-finding, and that the choices made have important implications for the solutions found and the actions taken. Our view on the reality of problems will be quite similar to that of Jackson, with two reservations. Firstly, he does not state who defines the obstacles of which he speaks, but for our perspective it is important that they be obstacles as perceived by the person finding the problem. Secondly, we do not believe that there is always one principal
objective and one group of obstacles in a problem-situation, but rather that both may be multiplex. His stress on identifying the objective and the obstacles may very well be helpful to some persons. We would suggest, however, that to intervene in a person's problem-finding by persuading them to be clear about their objective and the obstacles to achieving that objective does not merely clarify the problem that they have, but changes it into a different problem. It seems very likely that the new problem will be more soluble than the old, but it does not necessarily follow that the solution of the new problem will be helpful to the person who experienced the old problem.

**Problem Finding and Expectations.**

Many writers on the topic of problem-finding introduce the notion of expectation in one form or another. This is not necessarily expectation in the forecasting sense, but rather a subjective measure of how things 'ought' to be. Thus in D'Zurilla and Goldfried's definition of problem as "a specific situation or set of related situations to which a person must respond in order to function effectively in his environment," the notion of functioning effectively implies some expectations about what would constitute effective or ineffective behaviour.

Ellis (1962) has noted the role of the expectations maintained by persons about the world around them, and has suggested that many of these expectations are irrational. The person may maintain a strong belief that certain events "should" or "should not" occur, and such beliefs may be maintained irrespective of the probability of those events occurring or not. Each time these expectations of what "should" be are offended, a problem will be
found. The possibility of this way of finding problems is significant to Ellis because it suggests that solutions may be sought in a radically different way if the problem is defined as being the expectations rather than the external events.

Colgrove (1970), in experimental research on the production of innovative solutions to problems, demonstrated that "The mere suggestion that a person has the reputation of being an original thinker creates a mental set that upgrades his problem-solving performance." (p.89). Although the transposition is a little speculative, we may suggest from this that the quality of achievement in problem-finding will also be influenced by the expectations that the person has of his own performance. More important, however, is a less speculative, but also less direct, link; the person is likely to be influenced in the problems that he finds by his beliefs about his likely ability in solving them. This does not necessarily mean that he will find only problems that he can solve. An example was given at the end of Chapter 3 of a person who appeared systematically to find problems such that he could not solve them too easily.

Ackoff (1974) distinguishes two different types of deviation from expectation which may lead to problem-finding. The first of these he labels "symptoms", and "a symptom is a deviation of a system's behaviour from what is considered to be normal behaviour." (p.231). Thus if normal behaviour is continuing, a person may expect his body temperature to be round about 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. If there is any significant deviation from this he may be in a position to find a problem, in this case possibly a cold. A symptom does not necessarily mean a potential problem as
deviations from the normal can take place in two directions, and if they are in a favoured direction they would still be described as symptoms, but will not necessarily (although they may possibly) constitute a problem; also, extreme symptoms may not mean a potential problem, as in our example, where a deviation of 20 degrees Fahrenheit will probably not be experienced by the person as a problem on the grounds that he is dead. The second type of indicator about deviations from expectations which Ackoff notes he describes as "omens". "Omens are presymptoms, predictors of future symptoms." He gives as an example the feeling that a person has when he thinks he may be catching a cold although the symptoms normally associated with a cold are not yet present. Unfortunately he does not explore this concept in any detail, and it is not clear whether this is something quite different from a symptom (which is a departure from the expected normality) or whether it is an intuitively perceived symptom, that is, one that is recognized and interpreted according to procedures of which the person is not fully conscious.

Kepner and Tregoe (1965) recognize expectation as a basic concept in problem-finding. They suggest a series of steps to formalize the connexion between expectation, deviation and finding the problem which is causing the deviation. These are as follows.

1. The problem analyzer has an expected standard of performance, a "should" against which to compare actual performance.
2. A problem is a deviation from a standard of performance.
3. A deviation from standard must be precisely identified, located and described.
4. There is always something distinguishing that which has been affected by the cause from that which has not.
5. The cause of a problem is always a change that has taken
place through some distinctive feature, mechanism, or condition to produce a new, unwanted effect.

6. The possible causes of a deviation are deduced from the relevant changes found in analyzing the problem.
7. The most likely cause of a deviation is one that exactly explains all the facts in the specification of the problem. (pp. 44-46).

Jackson (1975) relates expectations to problem-finding in a rather different way. He suggests that some problems may be much easier to avert than to solve, and he therefore counsels his readers "to make a study of the signs and symptoms of the sorts of problems that are of the greatest importance to us individually" (p.40). Jackson's advice is that, where there is a significant likelihood of difficulties arising, the person should be alert to the signs and indicators that would tell him that a deviation from his expected normality has occurred. Jackson has thus implicitly included a concept of the confidence which the person feels in the continuation of normality.

In this thesis it will be taken that the offending of expectations is one of the principal triggers for persons to find a problem in their situation. Expectations may be offended either by the perceived actuality falling short of the expected actuality, or by the person gaining an impression that there could possibly exist a situation which he would wish to attain in preference to the situation which he expects to attain without further intervention. Expectations may also be falsified when perceived actuality turns out to be preferred by the person to the actuality which he had expected and accepted. This would not usually be regarded as a problem.
Problem-Finding and the Size of Problems.

The notion that problems may be of different sizes, and in particular, large or small, is thoroughly embedded in the everyday language used of problems. In general, of course, this is spoken of as if problems were objects existing in some way independently of their owners: thus the largeness or smallness of a problem is spoken of as if it were an inherent property. Nevertheless, we can find some instances in the literature where the size of problem found comes out as an aspect of problem-finding worth considering.

Slee Smith (1971) gives a warning about inclinations to render a problem manageable by making it smaller. He says,

"Narrowing down the problem to what is misleadingly called the bare essentials does not mean that it becomes any simpler to solve, merely that it loses its true identity. There are, in fact, no short cuts to major problem solving and no substitute for the serious deep thinking that is so necessary in order to understand them." (p.101).

Slee Smith is suggesting here that problems have, in some sense, a natural size, and that any attempt to tackle a problem by finding a more manageable problem from within it is unlikely to be successful. The problem being addressed is then no longer the "real" problem. Our divergence from Slee Smith in what "reality" means in terms of problem-solving has been discussed above. In the perspective adopted in this thesis, whilst we would agree with him that finding only problems that are small enough to be handled relatively easily will affect the relevance of solutions produced to the situation of the problem-finder, we would argue that there are many such factors which come in to play, in most cases unconsciously, and that a problem never possesses a "true identity", as Slee Smith suggests, but rather has a chosen construction. A
legitimate part of the process of choosing a construction is finding a problem of a size which the person regards as being large enough to reflect the complexities of his situation, and small enough that it can be handled.

Kepner and Tregoe (1965) do not commend problem-solvers to find any particular size of problem, but they do advise that a problem be specified, and in so doing, that it be delimited. "It is not a blind hunt for "all the facts." It is a selected, careful search for certain kinds of facts that will draw a boundary line around the problem." (p.73). They also advocate the precise and operational description of problems, in order that an agglomeration of smaller problems does not get passed off as a large problem.

"A tangle of different problems is often given a "handle" by which it is locally recognized. For instance, at one auto company the loss of the convertible car market (sales had fallen from 78% to 12% of the market) was referred to as "the convertible problem." Actually, this was a tangle of many different deviations. Unless the tangle of problems is broken apart into separate deviations, it may continue to baffle analysis for years." (p.63).

Kepner and Tregoe warn that a large problem, - large in the sense of comprehensiveness rather than necessarily in the sense of difficulty, - may indicate that what is being referred to is not a problem so much as a mess of problems which cannot be addressed until they have been broken apart into separate problems. They say that if a cluster of problems is not broken up, the person is likely to believe that he can correct the whole tangle of problems at once. They say that this may lead to drastic action based on a false premise, because each of the deviations has a cause, and
genuine solutions to any one of the problems (other than by good luck) can be achieved only with knowledge of its particular cause.

Tarr (1973) considers the issue of the size of problems found with particular reference to researchers and research problems. He points out that, in research work, there is usually considerable uncertainty as to what is essential to the achievement of the main goal and what is not. In the face of these blurred boundaries, projects tend to spread. Each time a new aspect is found to be connected to the research problem there is an option of including it within the problem, and thus making the work technically better, or excluding it and thus keeping the work from becoming less likely to be completed.

Rose (1976) has noted a characteristic difference to be found between the type of problems found by social scientists and those found by politicians when both are confronted with the same material. "The focus of social scientists conducting research within disciplinary categories tends to be narrower than that of politicians concerned with the undisciplined ramifications of a problem, or with the interconnectedness of many problems." (p.101). Rose explains the failure of social scientists and politicians to collaborate well by the fact that the training and the reward systems which together define what a particular discipline is about are quite different within the two disciplines. If either a social scientist or a politician were to find a problem of the size and shape normally handled by the other, this would suggest to his peers that he was incompetent. Thus different persons will find different sizes of problem according to their occupational roles and their discipline backgrounds.

Maier (1970) addressed a similar issue to this in asking,
what makes a problem difficult? Having excluded lack of knowledge (such as where procedures for handling a problem are available but are unknown to the problem-solver) and limited capacity (where a person would not be able to comprehend a solution even if it had been found) he identifies eight types of difficulty that may be raised by problems. These are:

1. misleading incorrect solutions,
2. difficulty in selecting from given alternatives,
3. requirement of response having low priority in the behaviour repertoire,
4. requirement for generating an unusual response,
5. type of demands made upon the idea getting versus the idea evaluation process,
6. difficulty in locating surmountable obstacles,
7. motivation factors,
8. degree of stress. (p. 179).

He goes on to develop the conceptualization of these types of difficulty, giving experimental evidence for their occurrence, and to conclude that "It would seem improbable that high ability in solving some problems would make it possible to predict performance on others". (p. 188). Although Maier's work is phrased in terms of problem-solving it seems likely that persons, when finding problems, have some perception of the difficulty, or size, of any problem they may find, and that this perceived difficulty will be taken into account when defining and formulating the problem. Maier's eight dimensions of difficulty indicate how individual a perception the size of a particular problem is likely to be.

The "size" or "difficulty" of problems is a very slippery concept, and it seems that it cannot be handled in any consistent way except in terms of the size of the problem as perceived by the individual who has that problem. That some people tend to find
larger problems than others was suggested in the example at the end of Chapter 3, but such notions are based on a very loose behavioural measure by which one person appears to another to search until he has a problem requiring significant cognitive activity on his part. We may say that such a person finds big problems, not on the basis of an observer's understanding of the problems with which he works, but on the basis of an observer's understanding of the effort with which he works on his problems, supported by the person's recognition of this description of his activity.

Control and Choice in Problem-Finding.

Implicit in the last section was the notion that persons have some sort of option about the nature of the problems that they find. By this we do not mean that the person decides to have a problem of a particular type and size and then goes out and finds himself one, but rather that, from his situation, a person may construe many different problems or no problem at all, and that at least notionally he has a whole range of options. Problem-finding is not determined by the externalities of a situation, and if the choices involved are not always consciously perceived as such, the same might be said about many choice processes. If some persons see themselves as being in control of their problem-finding, whilst others see their problem-finding as being controlled by the problems that turn up, this is also true of other processes.

Rickards (1974) suggests two groups of techniques which may be used to generate more choice for the person about the problems he finds. The first group he labels "restructuring techniques", and they involve some sort of modelling activity by which a representation is made of the situation of the problem-solver. Rickards believes that such techniques are appropriate when the
situation is seen by the person in it as so complicated that, in order to make objectives and constraints clearer and easier to recognize and challenge, some sort of representation is necessary. Such techniques create the possibility of choice by reducing confusion. He labels the second group of techniques "redefinitional procedures". Here, in contrast to the convergent, though possibly liberating, activity of restructuring, procedures are employed to encourage divergence in the range of problem-definitions found for selection. Rickards maintains that, with problems whose boundaries are fuzzy, it is frequently the experience that redefinition takes place as the problem is worked on. He says, "This gives the lie to the old belief that one must have the correct definition before initiating any problem-solving actions" (p.48). Rickards has a series of questions; the answer "yes" to any of these indicates a need for improvement in problem-definition style: -

- Is my first description of a problem complex and unclear?
- Is it difficult for me to change my view of the key aspects of a problem?
- Difficulty in generating several optional redefinitions of problems?
- Are the redefinitions all of a kind?
- Are redefinitions mundane and generally close to conventional views on the problem? (p.49).

The exercises and techniques which Rickards offers following this list are, like his restructuring techniques, designed to teach a skill of problem-finding, in which a person becomes "better" at generating options about problem-definitions and at choosing between them.

Simon and Hayes (1976) summarize experimental work designed to test a computer model of the cognitive processes of understanding
They say;

"Both the way in which the subject names objects and the way in which he structures the internal problem representation are determined pretty directly by the language in which the problem instructions are written. Subjects initially adopt the naming conventions and representations that follow most directly from a parsing of the instructions." (p.189).

They also found some evidence that, as problem-solving efforts continued, inconvenient naming conventions may be abandoned, and that a difficult representation might be abandoned for one that makes problem-solving easier. Thus, if a person is given a definition and formulation of his problem, he is likely to adopt that definition and formulation, although he may subsequently change the definition, and possibly the formulation, if he is not successful with the problem.

Vinacke (1974) regards "functional fixedness" of available objects as especially important. By functional fixedness he means the inability to conceive of using objects in ways other than those in which they are habitually used. While this concept belongs in work on problem-solving rather than on problem-finding, we would argue that processes in problem-solving such as this one have their effect by enabling the person to reformulate the problem. Functional fixedness may also be a notion of limited scope, having its origins as an experimental term to do with the functions of objects left around for experimental subjects to perform some strange activity with, when they achieve 'insight'. Nevertheless, the idea that the choice of problems found is restricted by the person's limited perception or imagination about the uses to which he may put objects and events around him may be taken from this.

Kepner and Tregoe (1965) recognize a negative feature of
the possibility of choice in problem-finding. They say that their rational manager "should be ready to change his direction, but he should only shift to another problem whenever a good reason for such shifting is apparent. Otherwise, he is simply problem hopping, working a little on this problem, then jumping to another, then hopping on to a third. This kind of fluid, hit-or-miss approach can end only in inefficiency and confusion". (p.70). The choice involved in finding a problem has too many implications to be remade without cost. Implicit in Kepner and Tregoe's assertions is that some motive must exist for persons to find and continuously refind a series of problems rather than staying with one. Unfortunately they do not explore this motive. They recognize more explicitly than most writers the notion of choice in problem-finding because, as they say, the manager "cannot hope to handle simultaneously all or even several of the problems before him" (p.61). They say that a system of priorities (or as we might call them, values) must be employed to decide which problem to tackle first.

Jackson (1975) advocates continuous improvement on a problem-definition and offers a list of questions to prevent an incomplete definition from being accepted uncritically. They are:

1. Is this the only objective, or are there others which this obstacle prevents us from reaching?
2. Is this objective desired for its own sake, or is it just a way to reach a further objective?
3. Do we really need to reach this objective?
4. What will happen if we reach this objective?
5. If we reach this objective, will the problem then be solved?
6. Does this obstacle really prevent us from reaching the objective?
7. If we overcome this obstacle will it then be possible to
Jackson sees the process of problem-finding and refinding as being in continuous tension between the difficult situation which is conceived of as problematic and the definition that is being formulated in terms of objective and obstacle. "At first the two sides may be out of balance, because our definition does not fit our concept of the problem" (p.49). He anticipates a process of continuous redefinition on either side, until by successive approximations an acceptable definition is found.

There seems to be a relative consensus on this subtopic; each of the writers examined has some notion of choice and control in problem-finding, and there are several suggestions as to how persons can increase their choice or control. The topic contains very few generally accepted terms, unfortunately, and it is difficult to understand how the rather loosely stated practical approaches to improving problem-finding, the half-related experimental work, and the slightly less related formal modelling may be used as a platform for gaining further understanding. The phenomenon is perhaps at the same time a part of everyday life (as in such maxims as "where you stand depends on where you sit") and yet very difficult to be articulate about. The right word has not yet been found to describe the process of selection of problem by the person, for example. We acknowledge that "choice" has too many connotations of the deliberate and conscious, but it is probably a measure of how little we understand the process that no better term seems to be available to describe it.

Understanding and Problem-Finding.

With the view taken in this thesis that problems are constructed by the individual for himself out of the events and
objects around him coupled with his own values and beliefs about events and objects, it is clear that the understanding that the person has of his situation, of the dynamics of that situation, and of the way he relates to it, will be crucially important in any description of the problem-finding process. 'Understanding' is one of the more widespread concepts in the literature in this field, and only a selection of references will therefore be cited.

Wertheimer (1959) claims that, for a "sensible" solution to be reached to a problem, the person must grasp the meanings, the principles and the inner relations of the situation. In this case, problem-solving will be a dynamic, fluid process, beginning with a "centering of attention on essential elements of the situation and their relation to the fundamental difficulty, followed by reorganization or modification of principles leading to a "recentering" of attention. Only with a high level of understanding of the problem-situation can the person find a problem whose solution will have a positive effect on the discrepancies experienced.

Odom, Cunningham and Astor (1975) explain their experimental findings on the development of problem-solving ability with age in terms of perceptual salience. They give their subjects a problem-solving task with "red herrings" built in, and conclude that performance is less good where the irrelevant information offered to the subjects is highly salient to them. To rephrase this for the present context, the understanding which the person has of the situation from which he finds a problem may be affected by the salience to him of perceptions around that situation, such that he may formulate his problem to include elements that are salient, although his modelling of the situation would not have led him to
include those elements had they not been salient.

Gordon (1961), in propounding the techniques for the improvement of creative problem-solving called "synectics", describes a scheme which may be interpreted as continually understanding and then deliberately making incomprehensible again, problem-situations. After a problem has been defined, and some concentrated analysis done upon it, a stage is reached which Gordon describes as the "problem as understood; profound and determined analysis leads to this phase where the various atomistic bits of information about a problem are isolated for examination. This stage concludes the digestion of the problem as given." (pp.158-159). The analysis of the problem as understood, however, does not stop, but continues by the use of analogies to push and pull at the problem as understood until a form of the problem is found which "offers some conceptual finger-holds". He is thus commending an analytic, convergent approach to understanding the problem, followed by a divergent development of that understanding, where the person works with different understandings of the problem until he finds one with which he believes he can make progress.

Also within the synectics school, Prince (1970) describes problem-finding in terms of cycles where understanding cycles and solving cycles alternate. "Understanding consists of (a) getting a personal feel for some of the elements of the problem and (b) then imagining or dreaming a possible solution." (p.32), and solving consists of reality testing the imagined or dreamed solution, which was produced without reality constraints. Such a cyclic process, Prince claims, gives "a new and better understanding of the problem". In this case, problem-finding consists of an iterative process designed to give increasing understanding
of the problem until an understanding is found which can generate a viable solution.

Hoffman, Burke and Maier (1970) did experiments to determine whether prior experience with a simpler problem helps with solving a more complicated, related problem subsequently. The finding of their experiment was that in fact the prior experience inhibited performance with related problems. Their explanation of this was that "Previous experience may inhibit productive problem solving by providing too many false directions" (p.109). Hoffman et al. do not separate out problem-finding from problem-solving in their analysis, but it may be argued that previous experience is as likely to have had its inhibiting effect in the problem-finding of the subjects as in subsequent processes of solution; they would have recognized (erroneously) the second problem as being similar to the first, and would have thus found an over simple problem for solution.

For Jackson (1975), understanding and interpreting the problem is a whole phase of problem-solving. He says;

"If we cannot interpret and understand the problem-situation correctly the only hope of hitting upon a satisfactory solution will be by an extraordinary stroke of good luck! Understanding is achieved through interpretation by implanting the essential features of the problem-situation in the solver's mind in circumstances which permit him to perceive their inter-relationships. It depends upon the discovery and identification of the relevant features and how they are related, and on the construction of what may be called a model of the problem-situation in the mind which interprets the circumstances of the problem as an understandable pattern." (p.55).

One surprising feature of Jackson's treatment of this topic is that he regards the detailed understanding described above as
being clearly subsequent to the definition of the problem. While it may well be that the stage is conceptually subsequent, it seems likely that formulation processes such as that described in the quotation above will sometimes lead to a redefinition of the problem.

Slee Smith (1971) also emphasizes the importance of understanding the problem. "Experience itself is no longer adequate to tackle major problems because of their many faceted complexity, and the fact that before any attempt can be made to solve them, they need first to be understood". (p.101). "Problems often seem insoluble because they are not properly understood: understanding a problem is sometimes more difficult than solving it". (p.102). For Slee Smith, understanding the problem and finding it are very much the same thing. His conception of "problem" is very definitely as an externality, as something "out there", where the most critical task for the person facing the problem is to find the "real" one. Within Slee Smith's model there is one "real" problem and one "correct" understanding of it.

In this thesis we shall take the view that the problem which a person finds depends upon his understanding of the situation which he regards as problematic, and that for this reason, not only problem-formulation, which is directly concerned with the understanding and modelling of that situation, but also problem-definition, the choice of central descriptors for the problem, is dependent on this understanding.
Chapter 5: Problem-Solving in Teams.

It was said above, when discussing individual problem-solving, that the literature on the topic tended to divide between experimental work, conducted by academics for the purpose of increasing their stock of knowledge, and normative approaches proposed by those whose business it is to improve problem-solving performance, whether as management trainers or as psychotherapists. This dichotomy becomes even more apparent when we consider group problem-solving. On the one hand there is experimental work, much of which is at the level of people sitting in sealed off cubicles passing messages to each other (which may be a kind of group, but is certainly not a team), and on the other hand there are the writings and the theorizing of interventionists who aim to improve group processes, including the processes of problem-solving. There is very little general description of the process of solving problems in teams, and where there is description (e.g. Prince (1970, pp.16-20)) it is usually an extract from a meeting designed to show what can go wrong, and how the author could put it right.

One possible explanation for this paucity of description, theorizing and modelling about group problem-solving is that the label is a bad one; it would simplify matters if we could say that 'group problem-solving' does not exist, but that statement has no clear meaning when the object about whose existence an assertion is being made is a construct for use in theorizing. 'Group problem-solving' exists for some theorists because they treat it as an existing construct. However, we may suggest that this construct has failed to generate anything more than isolated,
unintegrated pieces of research because the concept is a loose one in the sense that it is not possible for most of the persons who use it to give a detailed explanation of what they mean by it. In this thesis, we shall consider that problem-solving by persons may take place in the context of teams, and that this presents some particular opportunities and difficulties for the person solving the problem. However, the cognitive aspects of solving the problem and the social aspect of the team process within the context of which it is solved will be regarded separately.

Kelley and Thibaut (1954) surveyed the literature on problem-solving in groups, and said that "Most of the analyses of the group problem-solving process appeared to derive by analogy from the stages or phases believed to exist in individual problem-solving." They say that this has been demonstrated by those researchers who have suggested that it might be more practicable to study problem-solving in group situations than individual ones, thereby implying that the process remained the same, except that it required communication between persons, and not only cognition within the person, and thus became observable. Kelley and Thibaut also examined a number of experiments intended to identify the differences between problem-solving performance of groups and individuals. They see two main types of effect of a group on problem-solving process, (1) effects of combining several different judgements and (2) modifications in the way problems are solved produced by direct social influence. March and Simon (1958) summarized their amplifications of these two types of effect as follows.

"Under the first heading, the pooling of independent judgements, they examine the following factors as possible explanations for
the superiority of group over individual problem-solving capacities: (a) The scattering of errors. Since not all group members make the same errors simultaneously, the majority judgement is better than the average judgement of individual members. (b) Extra influence of considered judgements. Not all proposed solutions will have equal weight with group members. Those proposals that appear to have the best basis will be the ones most likely to be accepted. Hence, again, the judgement accepted by the group will be better than the average of the group members. (c) Extra influence of confident judgements. Those members who are most likely to be correct are also most likely to be confident of their answers. Their confidence will attach extra weight to their judgements, and again this will improve the group judgement. (d) The division of labor. In handling some problems, the entire group need not deal with the whole problem, but may divide it up in some way and assign the parts to "specialists". This will almost certainly speed up the solution process and may also improve the quality of solutions.

Kelley and Thibaut examine the following kinds of "modifications produced by direct social influence." (a) The group members collectively will have available a larger number of possible solutions or contributions toward the solution than will any individual member. (b) There will be pressures upon individual group members tending to produce conformity to majority group opinion; (i) through effects on each member's confidence in his own judgement, (ii) through needs for approval. (c) The group environment will increase or decrease motivations toward effort and task completion, as compared with an isolated individual. Cooperative and competitive groups will have strongly different behaviours in this respect. (d) The requirements of communicating ideas to others will force group members to sharpen and clarify their ideas. (e) In the combination or weighting of individual solutions in a group solution there will be effects from direct social pressure to conform and from self-weighting of proposals by degree of confidence expressed and by relative interest in the problem under consideration. (f) The group environment may provide varying amounts of distraction.
Since the time of Kelley and Thibaut's article, a considerable volume of research has been done on group problem-solving, but mostly detailed experimental work on some highly specific part of the process; for example "brainstorming" by groups and by individuals has received much attention as a means of generating solutions to problems.

Prince (1970) found four basic handicaps in the use of a traditional problem-solving meeting. The first was to do with the objective of the meeting, where there may be several different objectives current and members may not be clear what is expected of them, and thus get confused. They say that, for example, the chairman's purpose may be to give information, to get ideas, or see how members react to some ideas of his own. An instance of such mixed purpose will be cited in Chapter 7. The second handicap that Prince mentions is that, despite the importance of creativity in solving problems and planning, chairmen often unwittingly discourage creativity and free speculation. Thirdly, leaders may use their power unwisely, as where all proposals are in line with their prejudices. Fourthly, he suggests that there is an antagonism towards ideas, where people reject and counterpropose on each others' ideas without searching for those aspects of others' ideas that are worth further exploration. Prince has defined here a series of problems which he considers to be soluble (with synetics) and which he believes to be widespread in teams. We say that he has defined problems because he is comparing an existing situation (how teams run now) with a preferred situation (how much better teams could run), rather than comparing an
existing situation (how groups solve problems) with another existing situation (how individuals solve problems).

Tarr (1973) is concerned specifically with research groups in industry. He says that a group of two or three is more effective than a single analyst. They seem to have a strong catalytic effect on each other, either because one acts as a foil to the ideas of the other, or because they can complement each other by supplying different viewpoints. He considers that more than three analysts working in depth on an aspect of a problem is usually counterproductive, and that if more than three are going to work on a problem this is best done by making the team up "of several cells each probing a particular aspect, but all linked into a coordinated team." (p.16). In this case, he says, there must be a project leader who has a sound understanding of each cell, and the demands on him are such that intensive problem-solving teams of more than about 10 analysts are very rare.

Galbraith (1974) gives a general defence of the use of groups for problem-solving and decision-making. He counters suggestions that time spent in committees and team meetings is time wasted, saying;

"Men who believe themselves deeply engaged in private thought are usually doing nothing. Committees are condemned by those who have been captured by the cliché that individual effort is somehow superior to group effort; by those who guiltily suspect that since group effort is more congenial, it must be less productive; and by those who do not see that the process of extracting, and especially of testing, information has necessarily a somewhat undirected quality - briskly conducted meetings invariably decide matters previously undecided; and by those who fail to realize that highly paid men, when sitting around a table as a committee, are not necessarily wasting more
time than, in the aggregate, they would each waste in private by themselves."

Slee Smith (1971) describes "think groups" in a way that is potentially interesting for the present research, because they have more in common with the teams within which the research supporting this thesis was carried out than do most groups described in the literature. He quotes a programme director of a Harvard "think" or "study" group as saying;

"There is almost no issue, document, idea or body of data of possible relevance to the Program's interest that does not come within the purview of the Study Group. A theme may be subjected to an informal preliminary exchange of ideas or to a more systematic effort at intellectual structuring. A pertinent recent article may be examined in detail for its illumination of some problematic issue or for new ideas it might contain. A scholar or decision maker anywhere who has knowledge or experience of any area of potential interest to the Program is invited to join the Group...." (p.109).

Substitute "field of health care" for "Program", "Health Care Planning Team" for "Study Group", and "specialist" or "expert" for "scholar", and you have an account (albeit not one that the Grey Book would recognize) of a Health Care Planning Team and its functions. Slee Smith says that "Think groups, if they achieve no other purpose, help to frame the right kind of questions and so prepare the way towards a more logical attempt to answer them." (p.109). He says that critics have said that undesirable psychological factors may play too big a part, for example, by "Specious persuasion, unwillingness to abandon publicly expressed opinions and the bandwagon effect of majority opinion." It is claimed by the proponents of such groups that it is possible to run them without these negative side effects if the members share
a mutual personal regard and intellectual respect, and can debate, 
sometimes violently, with one another, but never with malice 
intended or imputed. Unfortunately, Slee Smith relays uncritically 
the views of a programme director involved with Think Groups, and 
does not tell us either how such harmony is achieved or whether it 
persists.

Maier (1963) distils nine "principles for creative 
discussions" from his long experience of experimental research in 
problem-solving, as well as some work with case studies. These 
are;

1. Success in problem-solving requires that effort be directed 
toward overcoming surmountable obstacles. Some obstacles can 
be more readily overcome than others, and it is better to 
locate and surmount those than to persist in attempts that may 
be doomed to failure.

2. Available facts should be used even when they are inadequate. 
People tend to overgeneralize solutions instead of working 
with the few facts available.

3. The starting point of a problem is richest in solution 
possibilities. The number of possible routes from where you 
are to the goal is greatest when you are at the start point.

4. Problem-mindedness should be increased while solution-
mindedness is delayed. People tend to progress too rapidly 
towards a solution; thus in a group people are over-willing 
to accept the ideas of any dominant person who pushes them 
forward.

5. Disagreement can lead either to hard feelings or to innovation, 
depending on the discussion leadership. Fear of the leader 
or of other members of the group tends to produce conformity; 
to depart from this conformity and disagree may be seen either 
as creative or as an attack.

6. The idea-getting process should be separated from the idea-
evaluation process because the latter inhibits the former. 
Creativity requires the fragmenting and recombining of 
experience, and immediate evaluation is likely to kill the
idea after the fragmenting before the recombining can take place.

7. Choice-situations should be turned into problem-situations. Creative alternatives tend to be overlooked in choice-situations because a choice is made between the obvious alternatives.

8. Problem-situations should be turned into choice-situations. Otherwise the first successful solution possibility discovered tends to be accepted, thus terminating the search.

9. Solutions suggested by the leader are improperly evaluated and tend either to be accepted or rejected. Best results tend to come when the leader has not studied the problem beforehand. (pp.240-251).

Maier writes on the basis of some forty years' experience as an experimentalist working on problem-solving: if the prescriptions he is offering above do not seem to differ very much from more case-oriented writers, this may indicate a developing consensus in the field. The points he has made can be divided between those which concern individual processes of problem-solving (1,2,3,4,6,7,8) and those which concern group processes and need not really be about problem-solving at all (5,9).

Spadafore (1976) offers a cognitive dissonance paradigm to improve the effectiveness of multidisciplinary teams. He is concerned with admission and discharge committee members, charged with placement and treatment decisions involving exceptional children. Such committees contain several members from the fields of education, social work and clinical psychology. Spadafore says, "Because team members generally reflect their specific training bias, conflicting assumptions often occur when a team approach is employed" (p.1296). He says that the dissonance that results when others disagree with us can be reduced by changing our opinion, getting others to change their opinion, or deciding that
there is no basic disagreement. The cognitive dissonance paradigm in team problem-solving is designed to reduce the number of occasions where disagreement is seen to exist. It does so by preventing team members from criticizing each other's assumptions and diagnostic beliefs about the child concerned, and limiting the expression of disagreement to the solution, that is, the actual programme that will be employed to deal with the problem behaviour. The agreement that is needed about the action to be taken is operationally, rather than philosophically, oriented. He says, "Dissonance should be reduced by eliminating the need for disagreeing on cognitive elements involving theoretical assumptions and interpretations" (p.1297). Spadafore's approach is based on the assumption that debate over use and misuse of terminology, or differences of opinion over cause and effect, consume large amounts of time and energy from the team but provide little useful output. It seems likely that his cognitive dissonance paradigm could reduce the frustrations of multi-disciplinary teams, but it also seems likely that such an approach could work only for relatively programmed decision situations. It is difficult enough for professionals to gauge when other professionals in their organization are secretly influencing the policies and the balance of power within that organization under the cover of their professional expertise, without making discussion of the assumptions being made, and the diagnostic procedures being used, illegitimate. At the same time, we would suggest that the technique that Spadafore is advocating is one not uncommonly used (though not so consciously) in team problem-solving where members form a coalition in favour of some course of action which will serve the ends of all members of that coalition regardless of whether or not that course of action
has the same meaning to all of them; to close a ward in a country hospital may mean less travelling for the doctor and less expenditure for the accountant, but the difference in meaning does not matter, and need never be revealed, if they form a coalition to press for the closure.

Within the literature on team problem-solving, reports and case studies on problem-solving in therapeutic or social work teams, such as the example above, predominate. Another example is Curtis (1974) who brings together the "social network" of a person with unacceptable behaviour (as defined "state human service" deliverers) in order to collaborate with the person in solving his behaviour problems. This social network is presumed to be at the same time a part of the problem of the person, consisting as it does of the most significant others in his life, and therefore of those who are the recipients and judges of his unacceptable behaviour*, and also the major resources available to him for solving the problem. In Curtis' scheme, these persons are collected together and the problem turned over to them in the sense that problem-solving teams are formed from the network to work with problems identified in that network. In this work, Curtis appears to be half way towards the approach taken in this thesis whereby, in team problem-solving, different members of the team will have different problems, but it is in the nature of teams (often by virtue of the way they are organized) that the different problems within that team may be complementary. Whilst each person experiences his own idiosyncratic

* We may criticize Curtis for the simplicity of this view: for example, he treats judgement of others' behaviour as if it were an entirely individual matter, with no cultural factors to consider. This is not crucial, however, for the purposes of his analysis of team problem-solving.
problem, some commonality is found in the approaches that may be used to address these various problems. Curtis says that those in the social network of the person with the unacceptable behaviour will be motivated to help him change that behaviour because they are in his social network and are therefore the people who are finding the behaviour unacceptable. We would also point out that these persons presumably experience some problem in their situation with the central person, and that this problem will vary with the significance and meaning of the unacceptable behaviour to them. Thus they will each be seeking to solve their own, different problems with that person.

Many of the studies on group problem-solving and decision-making take what is at the group level the equivalent of a behaviourist approach at the individual level; by this we mean that they find measures of the performance or some other aspect of exhibited behaviour in the group and correlate it with some other measurable variable concerning the group. Reviews of such work may be found in the Kelley and Thibaut paper already mentioned (Kelley and Thibaut, 1954), also Kelley and Thibaut (1969), and Cummings, Huber and Arendt (1974). One major focus of experimental work in group problem-solving in recent years has been the "risky shift" phenomenon. The concept has been developed in and for experimental work and will not be used in this thesis; however, a survey of literature on the topic will be found in Morgan and Aram (1975).

In the remainder of this chapter we shall look at different levels at which problems may be solved in teams, and we shall seek to demonstrate that for team problem-solving to take place it is not necessary for team problem-finding to take place. For the
individual, problem-finding is a part of the process of problem-solving, but for the team it is not a necessary part.

The Meaning(s) of Team Problem-Solving.

In the literature on problem-solving in teams there is very little discussion of the meaning of the words used to label the process. For example, what constitutes a "problem-solution" in a team? We used the notion of "problem-solution" without too much difficulty in Chapter 3, but that was in terms of the problem-situations of persons, which we described as the person feeling that something is not as he would have it be, and feeling uncertain or perplexed about how he may respond to this unsatisfactory situation. Such feelings are, however, the properties of persons, and it does not seem to make sense to postulate some similar "feelings" when speaking of teams. These arguments against personification of such entities as teams and organizations are well rehearsed in the social science literature, but the case against them is not so clear when, as in the present research, and for reasons which will be considered in Chapter 9, ordinary language terms and concepts are taken seriously. In ordinary language, the notion that a team may have and solve a problem is widespread, and yet, as was said earlier in this chapter, that notion has been found unhelpful for conceptual analysis in this research. One reason for this discrepancy has to do with the level of analysis. To the writer, the construction of the piece of paper which you are now reading is of interest only for its colour, shape, and ability to endure when you reach the bottom of it and turn over. A chemist might have some quite different qualities on which he would want to comment on the construction of this piece of paper, and the physicist a different set of qualities, or level of analysis again. We may
take the parallel further because the chemist or physicist may consider that what they have to say about the construction of the paper has some message for, and should make some difference to, the writer, but until they demonstrate this to him, the writer will continue to feel that he has enough complexity to handle, although his views about paper are so simplistic, and he will need to be persuaded that it is worth his while to turn his attention from some other matter of consideration to the construction of paper before he will do so. Similarly, the ordinary language used by team members to consider the problem-solving in their teams will seem to them to be an adequate simplification unless it can be shown that the extra attention demanded by a more complex way of viewing teams would be more usefully spent on team problem-solving than on some other issue to which it is at present being applied by team members. Otherwise, the ordinary language usage is a convenient shorthand.

The other possibility (and the two are not mutually exclusive) is that perhaps team members do in fact experience something which is best labelled as "team problem-solving". We say that the two are not mutually exclusive because it may well be that the availability of convenient labels and the experiencing of events which these labels fit are not independent. We would propose that where team problem-solving is referred to there are three distinguishable senses in which such problem-solving may be said to have been carried out by a team, and we shall distinguish these senses by whether the function of the team is in the generation of solutions, the formulation of the problem, or the definition of the problem.

The case where generating solutions is the main business of
team problem-solving was exemplified by Spadafore. In his study the team work was deliberately restricted to the generation of solutions to problems where the recognition of the problem was done by other agencies completely outside the team, and the formulation and definition of the problem were made illegitimate topics for discussion. We may see the same emphasis in highly political team problem-solving, where one or more members are concerned to gain the agreement of one or more other members to do certain things, and where the climate of the team is such that these members are not likely to be willing to give information about their own definition and formulation of problems, as this may reduce their bargaining strength. This mode of team problem-solving has the advantage that it requires less in terms of collaboration and trust between members, and it also has advantages for those members who are high on political skill. It has the disadvantages of restricting considerably the range of solutions available for consideration, and of making it possible for the skilful to work all manner of covert issues in the name of team problem-solving.

Sometimes team problem-solving may focus on the formulation of the problem. Here a team of persons accepts (more or less) a definition of a problem, and their energy is directed mostly towards understanding the situation within which that problem exists, and thus the structure of the problem. An example of this would be a Health Care Planning Team which had spent the great majority of its time over the previous nine months considering problems to do with the elderly mentally ill. One of the members suggested that the next problem to be dealt with should be alcoholism. Other members readily agreed with this, and started
discussing the details and implications of the state of alcoholism in their community. No redefinition of the problem was attempted, and several members described their activity as "exploring" the problem, knowing that the results of their exploration would be fed on to an executive team subsequently for them to choose and implement a solution. This mode of problem-solving has the advantage that the beliefs and understanding of several different persons are brought to bear on a defined problem, but has the disadvantages that they may or may not feel committed to the definition given to the problem, and as a consequence of this, different formulations which appear to derive from different understandings of the environment of the problem may alternatively derive from different and undeclared definitions of the problem; also a team employed in this sort of problem-solving may or may not trust the executive team to make a good job of generating solutions, and thus may feel the need to start introducing solutions while still formally exploring the problem.

Thirdly, a team may be called upon to define a problem only. This is most typically the case where a team of experts, or generalists, is set up to advise or control experts. Thus committees in local authorities are expected to define problems which are then passed to their officers for formulation and solution. Such committees spend their time arguing about what the "real" problem is in a situation, or alternatively, arguing about which of the problems of which the committee members are aware are the most important ones to pass for formulation and solution. The advantages of such a scheme are that it brings in quite large numbers of people who are able to sense the problems that matter to even larger numbers of people in the community, and also that
it brings attention to bear on the often skimped definition phase of problem-solving. The disadvantages of such a mode are that it is difficult for the inerts to check that the experts have in fact formulated and solved the problem they had in mind at the definition stage. Also, such groups of inerts usually have a superordinate problem of their own which must take priority over all other problem-definition activities, for example, to keep the press off their backs, or to impress floating voters.

This is not an exhaustive typology of the modes of team problem-solving which do not necessarily entail a team being responsible for the whole process, but an illustrative one. We suggest that the fact that a team may be responsible for only part of the problem-solving process is an important complicating factor which should be remembered about problem-construction in teams; problem-finding for a person may be presumed to lead to attempts at problem-solving, but problem-finding for a team need not do so.
In this chapter we come up more sharply than before against the problem of discovering existing research and literature which is closely enough related to the present research problem to be helpful rather than misleading. Because the research is about problem-finding in teams, it becomes more crucial that research carried out on a similar sounding topic but with different models of man, different methodologies, and different purposes, be scrutinised before any passing relevance is accepted as useful for understanding; the definition of the research problem should be understood to include the model of man, the methodology, and the purpose of the investigation, and not as independent of these. The literature which we might have quoted on problem-finding in teams is mostly so peripheral that to quote it would serve no purpose beyond demonstrating that a search was made and practically nothing of relevance was discovered. It will therefore not be quoted, and this chapter will be devoted instead to considering one major piece of work which can be related to the topic, which will be presented, transposed and built upon to form the model of problem-finding in teams which will inform the remainder of this thesis.

Allison (1971) describes different ways of analysing the Cuban missile crisis. Clearly, the Cuban missile crisis would commonly be regarded as a different order of issue from those handled by Health Care Planning Teams, but it does not follow that the processes involved in handling such an issue are too far removed to be useful. It should not be assumed that the experience of handling a missile crisis as a highly placed person in government
is so very different from handling an issue to do with the elderly mentally ill in a Health District, particularly as Allison regards many of his highly placed political figures as having policy-making functions without executive responsibility. Nevertheless, the transposition from the arena of international politics to that of local health is a big one, and therefore validation will not be claimed for the model in its new context on the basis of its successful application in the original context, but on the basis of its power to illuminate its new context.

Allison presents what he describes as "a governmental (bureaucratic) politics paradigm" as the best paradigm for understanding team decisions leading up to the Cuban missile crisis. He generalizes a model implicit in Neustadt's work, viewing action as a resultant of political bargaining among a number of independent players. He says that his paradigm "takes seriously Schilling's contention that the substantive problems are so inordinately difficult that differences about goals, alternatives and consequences are inevitable" (p.162). He starts from a belief that the activity resembles bargaining in legislative assemblies. He views decisions and actions of governments as intranational political resultants, "resultants in the sense that what happens is not chosen as a solution to a problem but rather results from compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence; political in the sense that the activity from which decisions and actions emerge is best characterized as bargaining along regularized channels among individual members of the government." (his emphasis). He adopts a game model rather than a role model because he considers the connotations of the former to be more useful for the study of
active participants in the determination of policy. He says; "Following Wittgenstein's employment of the concept of a "game", national behavior in international affairs can be conceived of as something that emerges from intricate and subtle, simultaneous, overlapping games among players located in positions in a government. The hierarchical arrangement of these players constitutes the government. Games proceed neither at random nor at leisure. Regular channels structure the game; deadlines force issues to the attention of incredibly busy players. The moves, sequences of moves, and games of chess are thus to be explained in terms of the bargaining among players with separate and unequal power over particular pieces, and with separable objectives in distinguishable subgames." (pp.162-163).

Allison makes the point that, because different members of a government are at any time involved in several different games, the governmental actions relating to an issue may be "an agglomeration or collage" composed of relatively independent actions by persons and groups of persons involved in a broader game. He distinguishes between (1) actions that are agglomerations of independent actions by persons and groups, (2) formal government actions or decisions arising from a combination of preferences and relative influence of the central players, (3) formal government decisions that represent a combination of the preferences and relative influence of a special subset of players.

The organizing concepts for the paradigm can be arranged as answers to four interrelated questions; Who plays? What determines each player's stand? What determines each player's relative influence? How are players' stands, influence and moves combined to yield governmental decisions and actions? On the first of these questions, who plays?, he stresses that players are individual men in jobs. Four types of player are identified: Chiefs, who are
the top few political figures; **Staffers**, the immediate staff of each chief; **Indians**, political appointees and permanent government officials; and **Ad Hoc** players, who are other connected, influential persons. These players are in positions which define both what they may and what they must do, and a player who enters and plays in various games will do so with advantages, handicaps and obligations which stem from his position. The different games are not independent: for example, a player's performance in one will affect his credit and power in others. The player's play is affected not only by his position but also by factors personal to himself, his operating style, his sensitiveness to certain issues, commitments to various projects, and his standing with and debt to groups in society.

The question, What determines each player's stand?, can also be taken back a stage, asking What determines his perceptions and interests that lead to a stand? Firstly, players adopt parochial priorities and perceptions. "Answers to the question "What is the issue" are colored by the position from which the question is considered." (p.166). The propensities and priorities stemming from position, he argues, are sufficient to allow analysts to make reliable predictions about a player's stand in many cases, although some knowledge of the baggage that players bring to positions is also needed for sound prediction. Secondly, the player has goals and interests. In most cases, even if "reasonable men" can agree about some overall ideal, they can disagree about how that overall ideal will be affected by a specific issue. In the foreign policy field, members of an organization come to believe that the health of the organization is vital to the national interest. Some senior players are concerned with
implications broader than those contained in the organizational brief of junior players. Additionally, a player's stand depends on his personal interests and conception of his role. Thirdly, the game involves stakes and stands. Stakes are the individual's interests defined by the issue at hand, usually a group of overlapping interests which may have to do with his conception of the national interest, his organization's interests, programmes to which he is committed, the welfare of his friends, and his personal interest. In the light of these stakes a player decides on his stand on the issue. Fourthly, games are affected by deadlines and the faces of issues. "Solutions" to strategic problems are not found by detached analysts focussing coolly on the problem. Instead, deadlines and events raise issues and force busy players to take stands." (p.168). There are several causes of deadlines, but the effect of them is that issues are raised in one context rather than in another, and this importantly affects the resolution of those issues, although the contexts are not deliberately chosen for the issues. In addition, players typically come to see quite different faces of an issue, for reasons connected with their own positions, goals and interests. Thus both deadlines and the players involved affect the face an issue wears.

To the question, What determines each player's impact on results?, Allison gives the answer, power, which he says is "an elusive blend of at least three elements; bargaining advantages, skill and will in using bargaining advantages, and other players' perceptions of the first two ingredients." (p.168). He sees bargaining advantages stemming from authority and responsibility, control of resources, control of information, the ability to affect other players' objectives in other games, and access to
and persuasiveness with players who have bargaining advantages drawn from the above. He says that, "Power wisely invested yields an enhanced reputation for effectiveness. Unsuccessful investments deplete both the stock of capital and the reputation. Thus each player must pick the issues on which he can play with high probability of success."

On the fourth question, What is the game? and How do stands, influence and moves combine to yield decisions and actions, Allison responds in three ways. Firstly, the game is characterized by "action-channels". An action-channel is a regularized means of taking action on a specific kind of issue. Action-channels create structure for the game by preselecting the major players, determining their usual points of entrance to the game, and distributing some particular advantages and disadvantages for each game. Also, the recognition and determination of issues typically takes place within an established channel for producing action.

Secondly, the game is characterized by a set of rules. In the game of foreign policy making within the U.S.A., which Allison is concerned with, the rules stem from the Constitution, statutes, court interpretations, executive orders, conventions and even cultures. Rules may be explicit or implicit, clear or fuzzy, stable or changing. The collection of rules defines the game, in that (1) Rules establish the positions and the paths for gaining access to positions, the power of the positions and the action channels; (2) Rules constrict the range of possible outcomes of the game; (3) Rules permit some kinds of moves whilst prohibiting, or placing a cost upon, other kinds.

The third strand of response to the question, What is the game?, has to do with action as political resultant. Governmental
choices, according to Allison, are neither the simple choice of a
unified group nor a formal summary of leaders' preferences.
"Rather, the context of shared power but separate judgements about
important choices means that politics is the mechanism of choice."
(p.171). The meaning of the word "politics" in the last sentence
is amplified in the following quotation.

"Note the environment in which the game is played: inordinate
uncertainty about what must be done, the necessity that something
be done, and the crucial consequences of whatever is done. These
features force responsible men to become active players. The
pace of the game - hundreds of issues, numerous games, and multiple
circuits - compels players to fight to "get others' attention,"
to make them "see the facts," to assure that they "take the time
to think seriously about the broader issue." The structure of
the game - power shared by individuals with separate responsibili-
ities - validates each player's feeling that "others don't see
my problem," and "others must be persuaded to look at the issue
from a less parochial perspective." The law of the game - he
who hesitates loses his chance to play at that point and he who
is uncertain about his recommendation is overpowered by others
who are sure - pressure players to come down on one side of a 51
to 49 issue and play. The reward of the game - effectiveness,
i.e., impact on outcomes, as the immediate measure of performance -
encourages hard play. Thus most players come to fight to "make
the government do what is right." (pp.171-172).

Allison points out that, whilst advocates fight for outcomes,
the terms and conditions of players' employment are not identical.
While Chiefs and Indians are often advocates of particular actions,
Staffers fight to find issues, state alternatives, and structure
games in a way which will both influence their Chief and increase
his influence.

When it comes to discussing general propositions about the
outcomes of governmental deliberation, Allison points out that his
paradigm, including as it does far more of the naturally arising complexity of a political situation than more conventional paradigms in political science, does not lead to many simple general propositions; however it is possible to identify a number of relevant factors, and if an analyst can acquire enough information about these factors, he may be able to offer explanations and predictions, all other things being equal. Allison suggests thirteen groups of such factors:

1. Political resultants.
2. Action and intention.
3. Problems and solutions.
4. "Where you stand depends on where you sit".
5. Chiefs and Indians.
6. The 51-49 principle.
7. Inter- and intra-national relations.
8. The face of the issue differs from seat to seat.
10. Misexpectation.
12. Reticence.

1. Political resultants. Many factors constituting a governmental game intervene between issues and resultants. (1) Peculiar preferences and stands of individual players can have a significant effect on governmental action. (2) The advantages and disadvantages of a particular player differ substantially from one action channel to another. (3) The mix of players and individual players' advantages shift not only between action channels but also along action channels.

2. Action and intention. Governmental action does not presuppose governmental intention. (1) Most resultants emerge from games among players who perceive different faces of an issue
and who differ in the actions they prefer. (2) Actions rarely follow from an agreed doctrine in which all players concur. (3) Actions often consist of a number of fragments that have emerged from a number of games (plus foul-ups), and thus rarely reflect a coordinated strategy; to read them as conscious "signals" is problematic.

3/. Problems and solutions. (1) Each player focuses on the decision that must be made today or tomorrow rather than on the total strategic problem, and each decision has important consequences for each player's stakes as well as for the strategic problem. The focus for a player and for a strategic analyst may thus be quite different. (2) Typically, Chiefs, confronting a deadline, may focus on an issue and look for a solution. Simultaneously, having become committed to a solution developed for an earlier, somewhat different and now outmoded issue, Indians may seek a problem.

4/. "Where you stand depends on where you sit." For large classes of issues, the stance of a particular player can be predicted with high reliability from information about his seat (where 'seat' means whom he represents).

5/. Chiefs and Indians. "Where you stand depends on where you sit" has vertical as well as horizontal application. He says;

"Most problems are framed, alternatives specified, and proposals pushed, however, by Indians. Indians' fights with other Indians .... are a microcosm of the action at higher levels. But the Indians' major problem is how to get the attention of Chiefs, how to get an issue on an action-channel, how to get the government "to do what is right." The incentives push an Indian to become an active advocate.

"In policymaking, then, the issue looking down is options: how to preserve my leeway until time clarifies uncertainties. The
6.10

issue looking sideways is commitment: how to get others committed to my coalition. The issue looking upward is confidence: how to give the boss confidence to do what must be done. To paraphrase one of Neustadt's assertions, the essence of any responsible official's task is to persuade other players that his version of what needs to be done is what their own appraisal of their own responsibilities requires them to do in their own interests." (p.177).

There is a problem here to do with implementation. The necessity to build a consensus behind a preferred policy frequently requires fuzziness. Different people must be brought to agree with slightly different things for quite different reasons, and so sometimes when a government decision is made the character of a choice and the reasons for it must remain vague. This requirement conflicts with another, which is that government decision be clear enough for its implementation to be monitored, in case there is lack of enthusiasm for the decision in the executive department concerned.

6/. The 51-49 principle. The player faces an agenda fixed by hundreds of important deadlines, and must make difficult policy choices in less time and with less agonising than would an analyst. "Because he must compete with others, the reasonable player is forced to argue much more confidently than he would if he were a detached judge." (p.178).

7/. Inter- and intra-national relations. Players from one nation who aim to achieve some international objective must attempt to achieve outcomes in their intranational game that add to the advantages of players in a second country who advocate an analogous objective.

8/. The face of the issue differs from seat to seat. Where
you sit influences what you see as well as where you stand.

9/. Misperception. Games are not played under conditions of perfect information. A proposal that is widely accepted will be perceived by different persons to do quite different things and to meet quite different needs. "Misperception is in a sense the grease that allows cooperation among people whose differences otherwise would hardly allow them to coexist."

10/. Misexpectation. Because of the pace at which multiple games are played, only limited attention is available for each game, and concentration is given to priority games. In lower priority games, the tendency to expect that someone else will act in a way that will dispose of a problem is unavoidable.

11/. Miscommunication. The pace and noise level in a game merge with propensities of perception to make communication problematic. "In a noisy environment, each player thinks that he has spoken with a stronger and clearer voice than the others have actually heard."

12/. Reticence. With each player engaged in multiple games, there are considerable advantages in reticence, in that it reduces leaks that would be harmful in higher priority games and permits other players to interpret an outcome in a way which is comfortable for them and their spectators. It gives an ill-focussed target of attack. Reticence between Chiefs and Indians permits each Indian to offer a charitable interpretation of the outcome.

13/. Styles of play. These are affected by the type of career chosen by the player and also by the terms of reference in which the player conceives of his action.

Allison goes on to point out that information about differences in perception and priorities within a government on a
particular issue is rarely available, and that accurate accounts of the bargaining that led to resolution of the issue are rarer still. He says, "The use of public documents, newspapers, interviews of participants, and discussion with close observers of participants to piece together the bits of information available is an art." (p.181). By this he appears to mean that the processes of gaining and integrating the understandings needed are too complex for the person gaining that understanding to be fully explicit about them or even conscious of them, and we should therefore label them as art rather than as science.

The Governmental (Bureaucratic) Politics Paradigm Transposed.

Allison's paradigm is about men in jobs, with different power bases, different terms of employment, different interests, and different skills; each of these points relates equally well to members of Health Care Planning Teams as to members of the United States government. He is concerned with how such men take individual actions, from their own positions and in their own interests, and these actions come to be regarded as the entity of "government action". We are similarly concerned with how team members take individual actions and make individual contributions, from their own positions and in their own interests, and these actions and contributions come to be regarded as problems identified by, or recommendations of, a Health Care Planning Team. Allison says, "The context of shared power but separate judgements about important choices means that politics is the mechanism of choice" (p.171). We consider that "shared power but separate judgements" describes very well the starting position in any team meeting with respect to any issue, and politics, by which in this case we mean the internal politics of the organization, is indeed
the mechanism of choice.

Although Allison makes repeated genuflections to the importance of the politicians whose actions he is analyzing, and stresses the number, difficulty, and time pressure of the decisions they make, it may be suggested that to experience the decisions one has to make as numerous, difficult, and rushed is extremely widespread. We would suggest, although we can not demonstrate, that extreme time pressures of the sort that mean that issues must always be defined by deadlines are in a sense a matter of choice even for the President of the United States and his cabinet. We may take it that President Carter was implying this when he said in an early cabinet meeting that he did not want any marriages breaking up through loyalty to himself. In any case, the experience of great time pressure and of multitudinous and complex issues needing handling, which Allison describes for his politicians, sounds familiar to those who have worked with or who have examined the British public services. Allison's model, we would claim, seems, when the specifically governmental and foreign policy words are taken out, to fit well with and to illuminate problem finding in Health Care Planning Teams. There too there are men in jobs with different power bases, different terms of employment, different interests, and different skills. Furthermore, just as with foreign policy making in the U.S.A., it may be argued that "the context of shared power but separate judgements about important choices means that politics is the mechanism of choice" again. These politics are the same processes in both cases, - the processes of entering and playing games which lead to outcomes as described by Allison.

The four organizing concepts which Allison stresses in his
framework will be seen to have an important bearing on the questions that are addressed later in this thesis. Who plays? Categories will be presented in Part 4 which have to do with the different standings of players, their advantages, handicaps and obligations in different games, and personal factors such as operating style and sensitiveness to particular issues. What determines each player's stand? Several categories were developed in this research which had to do with different stands and how persons believed that they and other persons came to adopt their stands. What determines each player's impact on results? Whilst we shall be presenting some categories later which bear upon this question, it will also be seen to be important to question how far players could agree as to what results were achieved. Our findings would have more bearing on the question, What determines other players' estimates of each player's impact on results?

Fourthly, What is the game? and, How do stands, influence and moves combine to yield decisions and actions? The game, in Health Care Planning Teams, is clearly not only the team meetings. Also, in these as in most teams, the players are involved in numerous different games, and usually any two team members will be involved in more than one game with each other. The rules by which stands, influence and moves combine to yield decisions and actions in Health Care Planning Teams will be considered in Chapter 13.

Considerable heuristic use has been made of Allison's paradigm in this thesis; because the use has been heuristic rather than explanatory the parallels between our findings and Allison's paradigm will not always be drawn out exhaustively. One important difference between his work and ours is that he allows himself to theorize in his own terms on the basis of (documentary) data about
'real-world' events, while our theorizing is deliberately orientated to the concepts and theories of team members who collaborated in our research. As a consequence, our theorizing is less organized and coherent than Allison's, but we can make stronger claims for its being grounded in the reality of those from whom data was collected. We shall return to this theme in Chapter 9.
PART 3

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEMA
Chapter 7: Preliminary Studies.

In Part 2 of this thesis, our review of existing work and knowledge around the topic of this thesis showed little that could form a basis either for conceptual development or for planning data collection. The researcher felt the need for preliminary studies because the topic was previously almost totally unexamined in the research literature, which meant that there was no body of accumulated wisdom to draw upon in finding out how to find out about this topic. The exploratory studies performed two functions for the researcher. Firstly, they enabled him to test out certain methods of data collection to see what kind of data these methods produced for him and what kinds of data were obscured, distorted or produced only haphazardly by the methods. Secondly, in collecting and interpreting relatively small pieces of data which he knew were not going to form part of his main study, the researcher found a need for considerable development of his conceptual framework whilst trying to understand the data from the studies and relate it to his framework. To put it another way, it was at this stage that he learnt to relate conceptual notions (which he had derived from, but developed beyond, previous observations) to observable or discoverable operations in the accounts of others.

Pilot Study A.

In the first exploratory design tested, the plan was to discover the constructs used by each member of a team to understand problem-situations, rank the constructs on a central-peripheral dimension, and to test hypotheses about the way in which problems are constructed within a team. The following general hypotheses
were made for this study:

1. Peripheral constructs are more likely than core constructs to be the basis of a problem-definition.

2. The degree of hostility or support an individual accords to a problem-definition will be inversely related to the distance of the constructs used in the definition from the individual's core constructs.

3. The individual will propose peripheral rather than core constructs in team discussion of a situation.

4. The individual's status will influence the degree to which he proposes core constructs; the higher the status, the greater the degree.

5. The degree of differentiation with which the individual views the situation will influence (a) the degree to which he proposes core constructs and (b) his degree of support for the solution.

6. An individual's peripheral constructs will change according to the support he gives to a problem-definition.

Figure 1 is the schedule which was planned for this study, showing the process to be carried through at each stage, the outcomes expected from this process, and the hypotheses that were made about these outcomes. The stages outlined here were designed to be used with an existing work team, where agreement could be reached with the chairman of the team to introduce to the agenda four issues which were considered important but not particularly urgent, one of these issues to be introduced at each of the next four meetings.

A pilot group was set up, consisting of five people, all university lecturers in the same school as the researcher and all in their first four years of teaching. They were chosen as persons likely to be amenable to joining an experimental team in order to assist the research. All those invited to join the group accepted. This was an artificial team for which interviews
Figure 1.

Schedule for Study A.

Stage Event

1. Interview 1. **Process.** The person is asked his opinion about 4 topics which will be brought in to the agenda over the next 4 meetings. What are the salient points for the person about these topics? What are the opportunities and problems that they see in them? **Outcomes.** Taped interviews from which, with content analysis, can be derived 20 significant work situation constructs for the person (with inter-rater reliability tests). **Hypotheses.** (1) That different persons will have different work situation constructs. (2) That these constructs can be seen to be related to the person's technical or experiential background.

2. Interview 2. **Process.** The person is asked to rank order the importance of the 20 constructs elicited in interview 1 in consideration of topic 1. **Outcome.** Ranked list, with core constructs ranked high, peripheral constructs ranked low.

3. Meeting 1. **Process.** Topic 1 is introduced to the agenda by the researcher. The period while it is under discussion is tape recorded by the researcher. **Outcomes.** A tape of the team discussing/formulating topic 1. Analysed to show which constructs are introduced by whom, and what becomes of these constructs. Proposals of constructs will be categorized as firm/tentative/Aunt Sally. Responses to proposals as Accept/Qualified accept/Qualified reject/Reject, coupled with Additional proposal/Counter proposal/Modifying proposal/No proposal. **Hypotheses.** (1) Persons will propose
peripheral rather than core constructs in
discussion. (2) The influence which a person
sees himself as having in the team will affect
the degree to which he introduces core
constructs. (3) The degree of differentia­
tion with which the individual views the
situation will affect (a) the degree to which
he proposes core constructs and (b) the
strength of his support/rejection for another's
formulation. (4) Peripheral constructs are
more likely to form the basis for a formulation
than core constructs. (5) Degree of
hostility/support for a formulation will be
inversely related to its distance from core
constructs.

4. Interview 3. Process. (1) The person is asked to rank
order the importance of his 20 constructs in
consideration of topic 1, but now retrospec­
tively. (2) The person is asked to rank
order the importance of his 20 constructs in
consideration of topic 2.
Outcomes. (1) A new rank order for issue 1.
(2) A rank order for issue 2.
Hypotheses. (1) An individual's rank
ordering will change according to the formul­
ation reached and his acceptance/rejection of
it. (2) This ranking will be different for
different topics.

5. Meeting 2. As Meeting 1.
6. Interview 4. As Interview 3.
7. Meeting 3. As Meetings 1 and 2.
Outcomes. (1) As Interviews 3 and 4. (2) A
rank order for issue 4 from which will be
predicted the formulation of the problem
achieved by the team (after all the interviews).
Hypotheses. (1) As Interviews 3 and 4.

**Process.** As other meetings.

**Outcomes.** Actual formulation for comparison with predicted formulation.

**Hypotheses.** That a formulation of the problem will have proved predictable for this meeting.
and meetings would be set up to test the whole procedure outlined above. Topics for the meetings were selected by the researcher which were likely to be of interest to the team but which were not a specialist interest of any member. The topics had to be related so that a common set of situation constructs could be used throughout the series of discussions. The topics selected were:

1. Are examinations a good way of testing our students?
2. Should there be assessment of in-course projects and assignments?
3. What should be the norms about class of degree awarded?

Interviews were conducted with each member of the pilot group to cover these topics as in stage 1 of the schedule shown in Figure 1, the interviews lasting between 30 and 45 minutes each. This exploratory study showed four main weaknesses which would have arisen in using this research design to investigate this topic.

Firstly, the mode of data collection produced the best data accidentally, and would probably have continued to produce good data only as an unreliable by-product. The intention was to content analyse the interviews in order to derive the constructs which each individual was using in talking about the evaluation of students, with the interviewer playing a minimal role so as not to supply the constructs. The actual questions asked, which had seemed clear to the researcher before the interviews, proved ambiguous to some of those interviewed, and in the context of this research on the definition and formulation of problems, the most interesting feature of the interviews was that each of the interviewees seemed to define quite differently the problem of being interviewed by the researcher and of answering his questions. This would not have hindered the use of content analysis to derive
the constructs being used by the interviewees*, but it did
demonstrate that the tightness of the design being tested was such
that it would restrict the types of data examined and might lead
to the most relevant data not being examined.

The second major weakness of such a design shown up by the
exploratory study was that those being interviewed were to be
excluded from a full understanding of the research process. In
fact they were being treated as "subjects": they were being asked
to behave as if they were members of a team which was to discuss
certain topics, but they were not being fully told why. If this
design had been continued in the main study, although in that case
the persons interviewed really would have been members of a team,
at the time of the parts of the team meetings used as data they
would have been in a clearly experimental situation. They would
have been called upon in the presence of a researcher and his
tape recorder to discuss a topic which, while relevant to the team,
would not otherwise have been discussed at that meeting: in
addition they would be in the abnormal situation of having recently
been interviewed about the topic. In fact the situations in
which the data were collected would have been clearly labelled by
the researcher, and presumably the researched, as 'experimental'.
This would have led to a characteristic problem of experimental

* except in one case, where the interviewee would not respond to
questions until he had made the researcher clarify several of the
words in which they were phrased; in this case the researcher had
been seduced in to supplying several constructs by the end of the
interview, and the interviewee had taken up most of these and used
them. It would not have been clear in this case what constructs
the interviewee would normally use to understand the situation.
research, which is that there are two situations running concurrently; there is the one which the experimenter has set up and believes his subjects to be behaving as if they were in (e.g. "team definition and formulation of problems"), and there is the one which the subjects believe themselves to be in (e.g. "an experiment about team definition and formulation of problems; let's get this over as soon as possible, but not so soon that he asks us to do it again"). Research on "subjects" following the rules of the situation "experiment" could not have answered the questions raised in the research problem being addressed here.

Thirdly, the research results would not have been usable by members of teams and their consultants, because they would have been couched in academic language and concepts rather than team-member language and concepts. Thus while it would have been interesting in the body of research related to personal construct theory to know that people in team meetings were more likely to introduce peripheral than core constructs in their defining of problems in situations, it would not have had much practical value, because none of us know what are the peripheral and what the core constructs of our colleagues or even of ourselves, and nor can we know this in the day-to-day life of a team without laborious measurement.

Fourthly, the research design being explored was restricted to a very small part of team life. Data were to be taken only from structured, issue-centred interviews with the individual members of the team conducted by the researcher, and from the discussion of one agenda item at each of four team meetings. That the most significant factors in team problem-finding would be revealed by such data would be a very big assumption, and one
difficult to justify in this uncharted field. The researcher and his colleagues had observed that some team development exercises founder if the scope of the exercise is restricted to team meetings, apparently because the processes of team work can only be understood in the light of circumstances and processes outside the formal team meeting. It was quite possible that important aspects of the processes of teams setting up problems to work on also took place outside the agenda time allocated to the item.

**Pilot Study B.**

In the light of Pilot Study A, a second pilot study was set up to explore a less rigid technique for collecting data and building theory related to the research problem. The technique explored in this study was to differ in five principal ways from the technique explored in Pilot Study A.

Firstly, the research was to be made useful to the teams and persons with whom the research was done. To achieve this, the categories and theoretical concepts used had to be derived from the research data, employing only categories and concepts used by the persons in the situation being investigated; in other words, the research had to be "grounded" (Glaser and Strauss, 1968). Of course the researcher has a large and inevitable role in selecting which parts of the available data shall be chosen as those in which the data shall be grounded, and in the selection of "categories" used by the actors in the situation of his research for further exploration or development. Nevertheless, the categories at least remain those of the actors: in other words the variables are grounded, but they can never be more than a selection (made in part by the researcher) from all the grounded categories that could have been discovered, and therefore the
grounding of the theory is less certain.

Secondly, the research was to be conducted with "collaborators" rather than "subjects". The members of the pilot group, and of the groups in the main study, were to be seen as persons engaged in activities which had meanings for them. To investigate these activities without investigating their meanings is both impossible and useless; impossible because even the experimentalist is not truly able to observe and measure action independently of meaning, but rather understands, and chooses the variables for measurement of, the actions according to his own framework of meaning; useless because the reason why one action rather than another was taken, and why one response rather than another is made to that action can only be understood by reference to the meanings intended and ascribed by the actor and respondent respectively. The researcher contends that if you wish to know the meanings of actions you must discover them in collaboration with the actors, and that treating the actors as "subjects" hides the meaning of actions from the researcher, instead of producing the 'objectivity' that is intended.

Thirdly, and related to the above, personal accounts of intention, behaviour and meaning should be regarded as valid, and more valid than accounts and ascriptions by the researcher alone. The reasons underlying this contention and that in the last paragraph will be considered in Chapter 9.

Fourthly, the research should be capable of comprehending a wider context of team behaviour and experience than just team meetings. For reasons stated earlier, it had become apparent that research omitting evidence from other parts of team life could only be of limited value as it might well miss factors which
could be crucial to anyone trying to make things happen differently within a team.

Fifthly, the mode of data collection was to be flexible, so that data which was important to the investigation of the research topic might be followed up wherever it was seen. By the unexplored state of the topic the research was bound to be essentially exploratory, and it was likely that not only the researcher but also the members of teams collaborating in the research would identify some data not previously regarded as within the purview of the research as being important to the investigation.

In this second exploratory study, the objective was to discover the categories and concepts used by members of work teams to describe the process of bringing an issue or problem up for discussion by their team. The collaborators in this were the same five persons who had formed the pilot group in the first study. The researcher interviewed them about the process of problem-finding in their teams, using the interview schedule shown in Figure 2, together with supplementary questions following the five precepts described above.

Most of the members of the pilot group had some difficulty with the first question, "What problem-solving or decision-making teams or groups do you belong to within the university?". This concept, at least in these terms, was clearly not part of their understanding of their world for any of them. Difficulties arose with the question such as: should a group of self-and-one-other be included? Should a group which exists on paper and which meets as subgroups, but of which a meeting has never been called by its chairman, be included? Should a large and diffuse group such as a school be included? Where a person considers himself to be a
Interview schedule for Pilot Study B

1. What problem-solving or decision-making teams do you belong to within the university?

For each of these teams of groups in turn:

2. At the last meeting of this team, what problems or matters for decision were raised? Where did these come from?

3. Can you tell me about two issues (or problems or matters for decision) which you have brought to this group recently? If not, why not?

4. Were those two issues then discussed in the group? Did the discussion stick to the point? If not, why not?

5. When these two issues were discussed in the group (if they were) did you find your perspective on these issues changed at all? If so, how?
member of an inner circle in a formally larger group, should both be included? Does the group of people with whom a person usually drinks coffee constitute a team for this purpose? Most of these questions would not arise in the main study, which was to be done with an existing work team whose boundaries might either be assumed to be unproblematic or be defined by the researcher in agreement with the chairmen of those teams. Nevertheless, by including all these teams to begin with, it was possible, by hearing the collaborators give accounts of problem-finding in more normal teams and problem-finding in these peculiar teams, to learn some features of their models of problem-finding in teams which would not have emerged had they not had some opposite with which to contrast. In the remainder of this chapter we shall consider some of the matters which arose from this pilot study which are of importance for the main study.

What is and what is not a team.

The two persons in this pilot study who described their experience of "teams" consisting of themselves and one other both seemed to regard the experience of such a team as being quite different from that of a larger team. Their views of two-person teams made it difficult for them to respond to the questions laid out in Figure 2. As one of them said:

"The structure of the group, and we as people, just don't work in a way where it makes sense to say that someone came along with a problem A which was debated and turned into problem B, and then worked on. This group does not fit the structure you are suggesting. The (other, larger) group did."

The other member of such a group commented that, in a group of two, no one in particular takes the initiative. After considering this a little longer, he said that, on reflection, he
had taken the initiative in several of the issues discussed in
the last "meeting", but it evidently had not made sense to him to
speak in this way of it earlier. These points were not followed
up further because they are not central to our study. It is
clear, however, from the interviews with the two persons who
included two-person teams in which they were involved, that they
had difficulty answering questions which were intended to make
sense in terms of larger teams. In the case of the other three
persons, it is unlikely that none of them are involved in such two-
person groupings, but they assumed without questioning that such
groupings should not be included. We may conclude that the
models which these five persons held of teams and behaviour in
teams did not extend for them in their applicability to teams of
two persons. As we have said, it was not the focus of the present
research to discover just what persons did mean by the word 'team',
but one of the respondents volunteered after an interview (and
after the tape recorder had been switched off) that he felt he was
usually only present for about five minutes in a one-hour meeting,
and that when he makes a contribution to a large meeting he feels
he is addressing two or three people in it, and the rest are
cardboard cut-outs. Most of the other questions which were raised
about whether or not a particular entity constituted a team were
more easily answered. Having found that the list of questions
devised for this pilot study seemed to make sense to the respondents
as being appropriate issues to talk about when speaking of that
which everyone would expect everyone else to be able to recognize
as a team, it was sufficient that, if they could answer the
questions without considerable hesitation and difficulty, then they
were talking about a team. It seemed to the researcher, however,
that there was a warning in the difficulty which was experienced by the respondents in answering his first question. He had saddled himself with a method which required that he use more or less the same form of words with each person in asking the questions, in order not to supply them with too many of his constructs and concepts, but to leave them free to use their own. As a result of this pilot study, when it came to the main study no such fixed forms of question were used. This work was not intended to be an experiment and the persons being interviewed were not subjects. It is normal in conversation that the two persons conversing try to accommodate one another by using words and phrases that they believe the other will understand. This is a very rapid, intuitive process, and seems to include a tendency to pick up words which the other person has used. After all, malapropisms apart, the fact that the other party to a conversation has just used a word is a reasonable indication that they have some understanding of it, and will understand a communication that contains it. It seems highly improbable that an interviewer can gather better data from someone by using such stilted conventions as a fixed form of words for asking a question and attempting not to give the respondent clues about the words and concepts that are meaningful to the interviewer, and which the respondent can thus know will be effective conveyors of meaning to him. We shall return to this topic in Chapter 9.

What is and what is not problem-finding.

Another question which needed a preliminary answer from the pilot studies was whether there was any such thing as problem-finding in teams; one helpful colleague had suggested to the researcher that if he were investigating something which had as little
literature about it as seemed to be the case with this topic, he
would begin to think it did not exist. It was at least necessary
to make sure that the label, expanded beyond the characteristic
tense incomprehensibility of labels to a brief description of the
subject, could be sufficiently meaningful to members of teams that
they could describe their experience of team process as it related
to this topic. As was described in Chapter 1, the researcher had
gathered informal data from his own and others' observations of
teams which led him to find the concept useful; now he needed to
find out whether others could also take up and use this concept for
understanding, or at least talking about, their own team experiences.
Would respondents in this pilot study, for example, talk about
what was and what was not problem-finding in teams?

An encouraging feature at this stage of the study was that
respondents usually adapted the questions they were asked and the
notions implicit in those questions for their own circumstances.
For example, after listing out the problems or matters for decision
which had been raised at the last meeting of a particular team, and
when asked where these issues came from, one of the respondents
replied:

"I honestly can't remember which person. Some of them seemed to
be derived through a lot of cross-talk. I think some of the
original notions actually came through (the chairman). That's
right. He stuck up a few objectives on the board, and that was
developed considerably throughout the group. So I can't
identify for the moment any one particular individual, even one
or two. I think it was a cross-fertilization of quite a few,
prompted originally by (the chairman's) framework."

With this person's data, it was possible to characterize two
parts of the process he described of problem-finding in that
particular team. These two parts are shown in Figure 3.
Figure 3.

One respondent's view of one type of meeting.

Prompt from chairman's framework \rightarrow Cross-fertilization framework

\rightarrow Issue for resolution

\rightarrow e.g. I make a proposal.

I sense approval (little discussion).

I felt reinforced.

I was free to take action.

Another member disagrees with my formulation.

Issue was left in limbo.
The next respondent, in talking about the first of the meetings he described, said:

"(These meetings) are curious things. It is very difficult at times to point out who instigates what, and how pronouncements enter group consciousness. I am not a skilled politician, and I do not know enough to observe competently."

He went on to say that he had never raised an issue at this type of meeting, although he might have done so if he had had greater moral courage.

"If you have anything you want to quibble with you are obliged to do all your homework in advance.... Nothing that has come up has really mattered that much to me personally."

We see again a person not being aware of who first defines an issue for a team, and we also have here a description of some disincentives to finding problems for a team. In the next team that this person described, an issue had been raised from one of the subgroups about whether teaching should not be carried out outside normal teaching hours for the benefit of students who wanted to work full time and do a course as well. This, according to the respondent, had been handled by changing the issue from 'Everybody should be doing this' to 'Those who want to may do this', which made the issue uncontentious.

Another respondent described how he never went to any meetings of more than two persons at which it would be appropriate to raise an issue. At larger meetings he found it interesting to learn how others viewed some topics, but felt that those who brought up anything which might be construed as a problem would change nothing by so doing, and would in fact only weaken their own position, because now everybody would know how they felt. Another respondent described a different meeting in which problem-finding
would not take place by saying:

"It seems to be done fairly autocratically by (the chairman), with a high degree of collaboration from other people because he had already done long negotiations with them beforehand. ....Meetings seem to be just formal punctuations of one-to-one discussions that he has."

The fifth respondent believed that neither he nor any of the other respondents would be able to tell the researcher anything of problem-finding in teams, because the respondents were not spread over responsibility levels, but were all relatively junior. Having said that, he went on to describe some of the problems that had been raised in teams of which he was a member. When asked where one of the problems he had mentioned came from, he said;

"Well, I think it was me, I'm not sure. It's very difficult because things arise and often there is an obvious progression. It's difficult to know whether it's obvious to me and therefore I make it happen or whether it's obvious to everyone and someone else might have said it first. But clearly, as far as I could see there was a problem, and I assume as far as the others could see there was a problem over how to schedule a two month period with people coming and going at different times. Who actually said "Let's discuss this now" I'm not sure. It could have been me. It could have been (the team leader). I can't remember."

This person went on to make a more general comment about how issues arose in that team, saying;

"There are various issues arising all the time for review and for development, and sometimes it's the person who is responsible who brings up the issue, and sometimes the person who isn't responsible brings up the issue to reassure himself that the other guy is doing as much work as he is. So it's very difficult often to know who brought up the issue. It's much easier to identify who is responsible for that issue rather than to identify who actually brings it up at any particular time."
This respondent also characterized a distinctive form of problem-finding which took place in an informal grouping within the school to which he belonged.

"The great thing about these discussions is that nothing ever comes of them, and in fact I think that has to be the case because people wouldn't discuss it if they felt that they were then going to be under an obligation to do anything about it. It is really more of a therapy in terms of moaning and groaning. If someone said "Right, chaps, who's going to do something about this?" then people would start to avoid that person or they'd just not talk about issues where action could be taken. They would confine themselves to what they saw on television."

The last quotation introduces two notions which came to be an important part of the framework as the main study progressed, namely rules about what problems may be defined in what teams, and sanctions against those who disobey those rules.

Most of the richness of the data from the second pilot study has been lost in this account. Here we have only attempted to give examples which show how this study influenced and shaped the main study as well as giving confidence that such a study would produce data which would be helpful in gaining the type of understanding of the research topic that was being sought.
Chapter 8: The Context of the Main Study:

Health Care Planning Teams.

The placing of this chapter between the chapter on preliminary studies and the chapter on methodology may need some explanation. In the last chapter we described some ways in which the methodology adopted for the main study was influenced by the preliminary studies. Another important influence which must be understood if the reasoning behind the methodology is to be understood is the particular context within which the research was carried out. This is so for three interrelated reasons.

Firstly, the meaning of any action or account can only be properly understood in the light of the context of the person who performs that action or gives that account. As Eden and Sims (1977a) say:

"Elements which make up a defined situation are not independent but 'field-dependent'. That is to say, an element X has meaning to the definer because he sets it within the particular context of V, Y and Z; this is different here from the meaning of X in the context of A, B and Z." (p.7).

For example, consider the action when one man places his hand on the shoulder of another. According to the context in which we see this action taking place, we might see the meaning of it as giving confidence, giving reassurance, warning, expressing sympathy, attracting attention, or amorous advance. Within the behaviourist research paradigm this issue can be avoided by saying that the phenomenon to be explained is the behaviour, that is, one man placing his hand on the shoulder of another, and not such 'mentalistic' notions as meaning. We, however, shall follow Harré and Secord (1972) in their assertion that "When we describe
actions in terms of movements, we lose the real significance of the action as a part of human social life." (p.39). In this thesis, it will be taken, for reasons which will be described further in the next chapter, that actions and accounts gain their significance for our purposes here from the meanings which they have for the persons involved. To understand those meanings it is necessary to have some understanding of the context. This chapter will be concerned with the context in a rather global sense, - Health Care Planning Teams as against Joint Consultative Committees, District Management Teams, Area Teams of Officers etc., and the particular context will still need to be supplied when actions and accounts are referred to. However, if we see this global context as the generality that lies behind the particular situations in particular teams about which accounts were given, then we may see that it is at this rather global level that it has relevance for methodology: general characteristics of the Health Care Planning Teams (HCPTs) in the Bath Health District influenced the methodology which was to be used for finding out about particular teams at particular times.

Secondly, the research methodology to be employed in this project was to be an ideographic one; by this we mean that the research was intended to discover particular processes and characteristics in particular teams without formalizing how any assertions made about particular teams might be generalized to apply to other teams. Although this is an exploration of the individual realities of a small number of teams, this does not preclude the researcher from hoping that some use may be made of his findings outside the context of the particular teams in which the work was done. For this reason it seems important to
describe that context as an aid to the thinking of those who may wish to build on this work in other contexts.

Thirdly, it will be argued later that the generality of ideographic research lies in the generalizability of the methods for finding out about the particular. There is also a category of information which the researcher has gathered, and which is important for understanding the significance of the particularistic data, but these other data were gathered by quite different means from the bulk of the data of the main study. These general data were gleaned from published documents, both governmental and academic, and from documents and statements which, while unpublished, were of the kind that may be handed over to a researcher who is as yet virtually unknown to the persons in the organization, and whose purposes are not yet clear to them. In other words the sources of the data used in this chapter were either published or of the kind that someone involved in the HCPTs thought "Whoever this person is, and whatever it is that he wants to know about Health Care Planning Teams, he had better know this as background". This communication is of a totally different order from a personal account of an event or situation, and is very much easier to collect than the latter.

Health Care Planning Teams in General.

Health Care Planning Teams came into existence with the reorganization of the National Health Service in 1974. This reorganization was intended to improve the planning and provision of effective health care by means of a more integrated approach than had been employed previously. The 'Grey Book' (Department of Health and Social Security, 1972) says:
The general aims in reorganization are first, that there should be a fully integrated Health Service in which every aspect of health care can be provided by members of the health-care professions and second, that this care should be provided so far as possible locally and with due regard to the health needs of the community as a whole." (p.9).

Within this general aim the Grey Book lists more specific aims, two of which are:

"a. Co-ordination of the planning and provision of all personal health services (including health education, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation) with each other and with local government services.
b. Planning of services in relation to needs of the people to be served (e.g. the elderly, the mentally ill, the physically handicapped) irrespective of whether the services are provided in the home, in the doctor's surgery or in hospital." (p.10).

Health Care Planning Teams were one of the structural devices brought in to meet these aims. The Grey Book, which outlines management arrangements for the reorganized National Health Service, and has been regarded as the blue-print of reorganization to the extent that it receives continuous vilification by those working in the Health Service (one seminar speaker even goes so far as ritually and publicly tearing up a copy of the Grey Book before his seminars), says that the District Management Team is "responsible for identifying gaps in its services in relation to needs and for developing ways of improving its services to use existing resources better." (p.31). For this purpose, it says "The DMT (District Management Team) will establish a number of multi-disciplinary health-care planning teams to concentrate on planning services to meet particular groups of needs." HCPTs may be either permanent or ad hoc, depending on the needs as perceived
"The composition of these health-care planning teams will need to be adjusted to particular situations, but there will probably have to be representation of general practitioners, consultants, hospital and community nurses, health visitors, relevant paramedical staff and representatives of local authority services, particularly social services. They will be supported by the District Community Physician and an administrator."

Four kinds of activity were envisaged for the teams by the Grey Book:

a. Continuously reviewing need of particular groups and the services being provided to meet those needs.
b. Contributing to policy recommendations and to development of the annual District plan.
c. Carrying out special studies to establish ways of bringing about beneficial change.
d. Assisting the DMT to monitor and co-ordinate the implementation of projects and assess results.

The Grey Book was of course a prospective description. Levitt (1976), although writing after reorganization, does little more than paraphrase the Grey Book in a less official, more readable format when addressing this topic, though she does also make the point that "The success of the health care planning teams really depends on the interest and enthusiasm of its members, and on the attention that the DMT pays to their work when drawing up its planning proposals." (p.82). In general, she seems to believe that the reality of HCPTs has turned out very close to the intentions of the Grey Book. It seems possible, however, that Levitt's work is based on nothing but the Grey Book and her own opinions of what may be necessary to make Grey Book structures work.

Despite the prominent place of HCPTs in the reorganized service as planned, it is noticeable that Cooper (1975), in his
book on the economics of the Health Service, mentions these teams only once, and even then gets the name wrong ("Health Planning Teams" - an interesting concept). Towell (1977) gives a better grounded assessment than either Levitt or Cooper when he says:

"The initial enthusiasm for this idea seems to have quickly given way to considerable doubts about both the functions of HCPTs and their likely usefulness. Different views exist among Community Physicians about whether HCPTs should participate in planning or be more consultative bodies: whether they should focus on limited special problems of the District or deal more widely with the needs of particular client groups; and whether they could or should become anything other than pressure groups for the 'Cinderella' services. In this situation, particularly where there is a lack of support staff for these activities, some Districts have seen it as practical so far only to establish one or two pilot HCPTs. In view both of the lack of experience in planning among staff and the weaknesses in management arrangements for particular services, not uncommonly it appears that such teams have become displaced away from planning on to more immediate issues of operational co-ordination. The conflicts inherent in the Community Physician's role may also have encouraged some DCPs to exercise a less than central influence on these processes. After two years of experiment here, the further central guidance to health authorities on 'Joint Care Planning', with its emphasis on joint planning with local authorities at Area level and an associated (if rather implicit) redefinition of the functions of HCPTs as District Planning Teams, is generating further pressures for a reappraisal of the appropriate form for this kind of planning activity." (p.177).

The variety in the interpretations of the Grey Book in the setting up of HCPTs makes for some problems in generalizing about their nature and performance. For example, Eskin (1974) describes the setting up of the HCPTs in Barnsley, where there were meetings to discuss representation in great detail, and then formal approaches to the appropriate disciplines via the correct bodies
within those disciplines, to ask for a representative. In a progress report, Eskin (1975) goes on to talk about working parties set up by HCPTs to deliberate on particular subjects, and then to report back formally to those teams. The formality and decorum of the processes Eskin describes would be very alien to Bath Health District.

Watkin (1975) talks of the different implications of consultation and participation - a distinction which was touched on in the quotation from Towell above - and hints at some consequences of these implications for HCPTs.

"Consultation implies: decide what you think you will do, ask the other person if he agrees. Participation implies that you both sit down together to decide what ought to be done. The setting up of health care planning teams is clearly an attempt to secure participation in planning by those who provide the services and who might be expected to have the most lively sense of existing deficiencies and opportunities. Participation is, however, time-consuming, more so than mere consultation. ...it is hazardous to offer people participation and then allow them to discover that in reality what they have got is consultation. Clinicians in particular will ask, when it is suggested that they give up some of their clinical time to planning, 'What is in it for me, or my patients?' and at a time when the answer can seldom be 'the chance to pre-empt additional resources' the only alternative bait is genuine participation and real influence. ... I suspect that by the time some HCPT proposals have been incorporated in district plans and then in area plans they would not be recognised by their original authors, and when perhaps some aspects of the area plan are critically commented on by region the point may be yielded by area simply because the reasoning behind the original HCPT proposals has been lost en route."

Castles (1979) reports a discussion which came to a frustrating conclusion, typical of discussions in this field, and
8.8

concludes that "The planning system was too complicated and too
time consuming, but HCPTs are essential." (p.65). She touches
incidentally on another problem of the form of the teams, but this
time one that may be an inherent problem of multi-disciplinary
teams, when she says that in the discussion "Both finance officers
felt that finance had more to offer planning than any other
discipline".

Weller (1977) summarises more recent thinking on HCPTs as
follows.

"HCPTs, following guidelines given them by the DMT, are meant to
examine the needs of, and services for, groups of people who
have common characteristics or problems (e.g. the mentally
handicapped), looking at the whole range of health and related
services used by that group. ... HCPTs represent, at the level
closest to the field, the philosophy underlying the new planning
process. They are intended in the first instance to look at
long term goals and to undertake a radical reappraisal of
services, to be followed by the development of annual plans.
... The intention behind HCPTs emphasises the 'learning process'
aspect of planning, for on HCPTs those responsible for the
delivery of services may share and begin to understand their
differing perspectives, their different 'appreciative judgements'.
... HCPTs are also one of the places where those who will be
responsible for implementing plans will be closely involved, and
where the community may, through the CHC if it has representation,
put its point of view at an early stage." (p.3).

Health Care Planning Teams in Bath.

The HCPTs in Bath operate on a cycle more or less coinciding
with the academic year, where each iteration of this cycle begins
with some stocktaking and regaining of identity and purpose as a
team, and culminates with the preparation of the District Annual
Plan, to which the HCPTs contribute. There is then a gap of two
months or so over the summer holiday period before the cycle begins again. This research was conducted throughout one such iteration of the cycle, from September 1976 to July 1977.

During the period of the research three HCPTs met regularly, being the ones concerned with geriatrics, mental illness and mental handicap. These were "permanent" in the sense of the quotation from the Grey Book above. There had previously been HCPTs for maternity and for child health in the District, but these were considered to have done their work, and to be no longer required. During the research, however, the Court Report (Department of Health and Social Security, 1976) on future directions in child health care was published, and the HCPT (Child Health) was reconvened for two meetings to consider and debate the implications of that report.

Each team meeting was arranged at the preceding meeting, and arranged so that as many members of the team as possible could attend. The gap between meetings tended to be one or two months, although this grew longer towards the end of the planning year as several dates had to be rearranged because only a few members would have been able to attend. The HCPT (Geriatric) was typical with seven meetings between October and June. The District Community Physician chaired two of the regular teams, whilst delegating the third to one of the community physicians on his staff. The Assistant District Administrator was also involved in two teams and had delegated a third one. Different consultants were involved in each team, and different general practitioners. Because the Bath Health District overlaps the territories of three County Councils there tended to be several social workers present at any particular meeting, one of whom was involved in all the teams,
being responsible for coordination between the three counties and the Health District. One of the county social service departments was represented by the same delegate at practically all team meetings, one sent different delegates to each of the three teams, and one scarcely ever sent anybody anywhere. The Area Health Authority's specialist in community medicine was a member of all three teams, whilst the nurses and community nurses tended to be different for each team. Thus numerically the teams were weighted in favour of those who belonged to one team only, but this was not how it felt to the researcher when he was in the teams, as the most central and noticeable members of the team seemed to be the common ones. On one occasion, one of the common members began an HCPT (Mental Illness) by saying that one of the other common members would "live to regret his remarks on Friday to the end of his days". The remarks referred to had been made at the HCPT (Geriatrics), but it did not seem to be regarded as particularly inappropriate to resurrect the debate at the HCPT (Mental Illness).

Both the climate of the team meetings and the arrangements for convening them were informal, contrasting with the formal procedures described by Eskin (1974, 1975). On two occasions when joint meetings were held with the Community Health Council, the members of the latter were conspicuous by their use of formal committee procedure. The composition of the teams followed more or less that suggested by the Grey Book, although as has been mentioned, the fact that Bath Health District is very far from coterminous with any County Council meant that a larger social worker representation than normal was required. Opinions differed as to how the members of the teams had been chosen, but it seemed that the choices were made by the DMT under the
particular influence of the District Community Physician, the
District Administrator and the Assistant District Administrator.
The membership of the team was on the agenda for each of the teams
for their first meeting in the cycle, and was occasionally raised
through the year. Team members were asked if they could think of
any types of person of whom they should have a representative in
the teams, or if there were any particular persons who, they
believed, could make a contribution as members. A Community
Health Council member attended two of the teams regularly.

At the first meeting of each of the teams for the cycle, their
chairman asked team members if the terms of reference for the teams
were satisfactory. It was apparently a surprise to many members
to know that there were terms of reference, and so these were
circulated again. They are reproduced in Figure 4. Their
influence on the work of the teams will be considered a little more
in Chapter 13.

It is one of the perils of research in the National Health
Service that the bodies or limbs in which you carry out your
research may very well not exist by the time you have completed it.
In the case of the research reported here, the bodies still exist,
but they were renamed "District Planning Teams" during the autumn
of 1977. This does not reflect a complete change in function, as
the teams appear to have continued on their previous courses, but
may well reflect the change of emphasis described in the quotation
from Towell (1977) above.
OVERALL AIM.

To continually review needs of the health care group and the services being provided to meet these needs and develop long-term policy on behalf of the District Management Team.

1. TO refine existing information available on need, demand and resources into a detailed definition of the present service offered in the Bath Health District.

2. TO compare this information with Regional and National patterns of care and to investigate reasons for any differences.

3. TO identify areas of unmet needs and the opportunities for improvement.

4. TO examine ways to modify existing patterns of care by an alteration of operational policies and systems.

5. TO examine the balance between hospital and community care and recommend to the District Management Team redeployment of existing services.

6. TO develop annual programmes of action and to submit to the District Management Team.

7. TO carry out any special studies or surveys required to establish ways of bringing about beneficial changes.

8. TO improve co-ordination of services and to ensure that the implications of one service on another are taken into consideration.
Chapter 9: Methodology.

As will be appreciated from the chapter on preliminary studies (Chapter 7) this research was not planned, conducted and reported with one recognizable and definable methodology throughout. Instead, the five years during which this research was being conceptualized, planned and conducted was a time of continuously learning about and experimenting with different methodological approaches. During this time we had a clear idea, though not necessarily one that we could articulate, of the topic that we were investigating. In better developed fields of enquiry, such an awareness of the topic might well have implied the methods that were appropriate for investigating it, since there would be a body of experience within the research community which would suggest that certain methods were appropriate for finding out about certain things. In this case, however, there appeared to be no such existing body of experience, and we were dependent on learning from our own (and necessarily smaller) experience as we went along.

There were several criteria which had to be met by any methodology used for this research which, while they did not strictly conflict with one another, were on different dimensions and at different angles to such an extent that any potential methodology considered would have to be acceptable in terms of each criterion. Indeed, criterion is too simple a word, or connotes something too unitary to describe the five categories below, each of which is more like an "area of criteria". Nor is acceptability in terms of any of these areas of criteria a matter of meeting or failing to meet some measurable standard, but rather
a matter of being adjudged adequate by the researcher on a particular count. We do not apologize for this: by judging a methodology as a whole, against its limitations (also taken as a whole), the researcher was able to consider much more of the complexity of the situation than would have been possible had he constrained himself to producing measurable, pass-or-fail type rules. These criteria are related to, but are not the same as, the five ways outlined in Chapter 7 in which Pilot Study B was to differ from its predecessors. The five areas of criteria are:

1. The research should be comprehensible to the members of the team whose problem-finding was used as data.
2. The research should be academically acceptable and justifiable.
3. The methodology should be appropriate to the topic.
4. The methodology should be consistent with the researcher's model of man.
5. The research should be in some way generalizable, and thus useful to some members of, and some consultants to, teams.

Comprehensibility.

At no point was there a realistic hope that the research might be fully endogenous (Maruyama, 1974). It was, however, the view of the researcher that an investigation which was incomprehensible to the team members whose processes were being investigated was highly unlikely to cover the important aspects of their team life. Such an investigation, conducted without concern for comprehensibility, could employ concepts which could easily be related to other parts of the academic literature, but it was our view that satisfactory validation of the research could only come about if the terms used, and hence the account given, could be understood by the team members whose accounts were collected in the research. Only they could tell the researcher if his
deductions matched their experience, as opposed to matching merely his own existing frameworks. In addition, it is hard to see how any data of much meaning can be collected by a researcher from persons who are not able to understand the purposes he is pursuing. In asserting this, we are going against the tradition of deception experiments, and following the reasoning of Mixon (1972), who says;

"An experimental subject who believes the experimenter will try to deceive him adjusts his behaviour to this expectation and eventually one can be faced with an experimental situation in which it is difficult to determine who is deceiving whom." (p.145).

As Harré and Secord (1972) put it;

"Deception experiments are really two experiments, the one that the experimenter thinks the subject is in, and the one that the subject thinks he is in." (p.314).

Whilst these arguments were formulated in their original context against the use of deception experiments, they may also be taken to demonstrate the value for a researcher of having those among whom he is doing the research, and from whom he is collecting data, know what it is that he is trying to do. We may counter any suggestion that the person who knows what the researcher is trying to do will behave in some special manner, and that the validity of the research data will thus be impaired, by arguing that behaviour in any social situation is influenced by the actor's perception of what the other is trying to do, and so such a bias will always exist; however, the researcher who tells the person what he is trying to do will have a much better chance of knowing the situation that the person considers himself to be in than will the researcher who for any reason keeps silent about this. For the same reason, 'non-directive', Rogerian methods of interview were not used for the team members, as the researcher believes
that these lead not to less direction being given to the interviewee by the researcher, but only to the researcher not being aware of what the direction is that he has given. The view was taken in this research that such techniques, far from being 'non-directive' in their effect, or from allowing the interviewee to define his own relevance, may be quite fiercely directive, as the interviewee is placed in an ambiguous situation where he is likely to try to guess the intentions of the researcher and behave according to them, and where he is less likely to influence the situation himself than he would in the less ambiguous situation where the researcher had declared his object.

The concept of the actors in the situation, rather than the researcher, defining relevance, however, is regarded in this research as very important. A very general problem with conducting research case studies is that they have to stop somewhere, and it seems to us that only the actors involved in a situation can make useful judgements about where a case study of that situation should end, and then only if they know enough about the nature of the research to feel themselves able to make such judgements. Thus one of the ways in which it was seen as necessary to "ground" (Glaser and Strauss, 1968) this research was that once persons in teams believed they understood the nature and purpose of the research, they were encouraged to tell the researcher what they did and did not regard as being relevant material for his investigation. This aim was not always achieved. Like many people in public organizations, the majority of those interviewed had been "subjects" in research before, and believed that they were in a situation where it was not legitimate to ask the researcher what he wanted to know, or to tell the researcher what they thought he ought to
want to know, but rather were in a situation where they had to make as good a job as possible of guessing what questions meant, and then responding to them.

This brings us to the topic of the relationship between researcher and researched. As Gadlin and Ingle (1975) say:

"Conducting research means entering into relationships with people, and these relationships significantly affect the outcome of the research. Our present methodology prescribes these relationships as impersonal ones, leads us to minimize the effects of "personal" factors, turns our attention away from a consideration of the relationships, and facilitates treating our subjects as objects. Alternatively, we are suggesting that there is no way in which human research cannot be relational and that psychological methodology must attend to the relational quality of research; this is the beginning of reflexivity."

We have already explained why we do not believe that a relationship founded on deception, whether it be the classical deception of the social psychology experiment or the humanistic deception of the non-directive interviewer, is likely to be a fruitful one for gaining accurate data. We have also stated, without explanation, our rejection of a fully endogenous model of research. This model, as propounded by Maruyama, views the researcher as a back-up resource to the researched, with the latter conducting the research, defining the terms of the enquiry, choosing the methodology, and using his own theory of knowledge to determine what shall be held to be valid research. This approach did not seem appropriate to the researcher on two counts. Firstly, he could not see any basis on which he could, at the outset of his relationship with them, persuade the health service teams to which he had access to plan, conduct and evaluate such a programme
of research upon themselves. Secondly, whilst Maruyama uses a notion of "resonance" to express how the research interests of the researcher and the researched must relate for endogenous research to be successfully carried out, the process he describes sounds more like acceptance by the researcher of the research interests of the researched, so that the research is carried out in what Eden and Sims (1977b) have described as an "empathetic" paradigm as distinct from a "negotiative" paradigm. In the present research, the researcher hoped that some resonance would occur between his own research interests and those of the researched, and would have been prepared to negotiate with them, had this proved to be necessary, a focus of interest such that both would be satisfied. He was not, however, prepared to accept a situation where the research interests of the team members alone would determine the direction of the research.

Friedlander (1968) has suggested that an alienation between researcher and subject characterizes behavioural research. His argument runs like this:

"In the physical sciences, learning takes place entirely within the scientist and not within the materials which he treats. ... In the behavioural sciences, a mutual learning emerges from the research situation. These mutual, interactive changes which evolve from any study in which humans rather than inanimate materials are studied adds both complexity and excitement to these endeavours. In essence, two (or more) people are simultaneously exploring their experiences and testing these experiential data. ... The determination of who is researcher and who is subject in behavioural research is somewhat arbitrary, since it depends entirely upon one's point of view - both parties have interacted and have learned something about the other in their exchange. Similarly, the designation of just what are research results and what are irrelevant background data is
arbitrary." (pp. 487-488).

Friedlander goes on to develop the notion of a research game, game here being used in the sense of Berne (1964). The transactional analysis of the research game need not concern us here, except that it leads Friedlander to conclude that the only authentic relationships are between "researcher playing role of researcher" and "subject playing role of subject", and "researcher as authentic participant" and "subject as authentic participant". He finds no basis to suppose that there can be a useful transmission of data if the researcher is playing the role of researcher and the subject is being an authentic participant (as is assumed to be the case in traditional social psychology). He says that "Where the two parties are interacting at different levels, results are misleading and the transaction is potentially destructive." (p. 495). In the present research it has been taken that Friedlander is right in suggesting that many researcher-subject relationships are characterised by alienation, but it seems that such alienation and the misleading information that results from it will be reduced to the extent that the research can be made comprehensible to those among whom it is conducted. We shall consider the views of Harré and Secord on this issue when we discuss the model of man employed in the research, but their message touches also on the issue of comprehensibility and research relationships. For example, in speaking of the checking of accounts, they say:

"There is no possibility of an absolutely objective, neutral account by which ... ambiguities may be resolved. Accounts can only be negotiated." (p. 17).

The following quotation shows how inextricably the relation—
ship between researcher and researched is linked with the model of man held by the researcher for Harré and Secord.

"The 'passive subject' is not really passive; he is apt to have ideas concerning the meaning of the experimenter's acts and the purpose of the experiment. If these are not taken into account, the results obtained are apt to be misleading at best and false at worst. But even more crucial is the inadvisability of designing an experiment as if persons were passive subjects responding in a mechanical fashion instead of as a thinking, self-directing agent, since the processes by which their behaviour is generated will, generally speaking, be thus automatically excluded from empirical investigation." (p.297).

The relationship with the team members which the researcher sought in the work reported here was one in which they were aware of what he was trying to do and in which they could see something of the relevance and interest which the topic could hold for them, whilst at the same time they were not expecting specific improvements in their own performance from the work. He sought, and gained, different strengths of relationship with different team members, spending more time with those who seemed more interested in the research than with others. This was not survey research, and there was no requirement to sample the opinions of members. On the other hand, several interviews were conducted with team members who did not seem particularly interested in the research, in order to learn whether this was because their problem-finding activities were not problematic to them, or whether there was misunderstanding, or whether they did not consider problem-finding in these teams important to them, or whatever other reason seemed to underly their disinterest. These interviews provided useful data about the limits of the project.
Acceptability.

It was the researcher’s intention to submit this work as a thesis, and it was therefore important to him to meet some standard of academic acceptability. In addition, being employed by a university and spending much of his time in a research community, there were social pressures on him to be able to justify his research work to his colleagues. At the same time, there is not very much of a research tradition to guide the researcher in this field as to what constitutes an academically acceptable piece of work. This is not an area in which ‘all sensible people’ can be expected to agree as to what constitutes a ‘good thing’. Even the few generalizations which might apply to such research and are rarely contradicted do not stand up well to closer investigation. For example, many researchers agree that they should be as aware of (and as explicit about) what they are doing as possible. Even such a statement as this, however, must be relative in its application. Awareness is a limited commodity, and awareness in one area is achieved at the expense of awareness in others. If awareness is concentrated fully on methodology and the process of research, this will be to some extent at the expense of awareness of the situations in which the research is conducted. Clearly only a balanced awareness of both will lead to research of any value. To be explicit about what you are doing is a time consuming activity, and here the explicitness and the doing must be balanced against each other. Most such statements that can be made about what constitutes ‘good’ research do not seem to be capable of formalization as rules, but are dependent on the intuition of the researcher.

It is none the less necessary to justify the use of a
9.10

non-quantitative, holistic, case-study based, ideographic research method in this work. The data presented in this thesis contain no quantitative measures or operational variables. Justifications of such a standpoint in comparison with some other methods may be drawn from Diesing (1972). Comparing the holistic standpoint with formal research methods, he says:

"The concepts used must be relatively concrete and particularized, close to the real system being described, rather than abstract mathematical concepts developed in some other science and imposed on the subject matter a priori or concepts that grow out of a testing instrument and get their meaning from the instrument. As many of the concepts as possible should be derived from the subject matter itself, from the thinking of the people being studied; and the other concepts should at least not be foreign to their way of thinking." (p.139).

In comparing holism with the type of theorizing that takes place for experimental or survey research, Diesing says:

"It may be possible to capture the holistic qualities of a human system by means of an apparatus of variables and indices, but no such thing has in fact occurred. In practice, investigations of this sort have been confined to a few variables of interest to the investigator. The variables have been selected in advance, and observation has been mainly confined to them. Even if enough variables could somehow be assembled to produce some approximation to the complexity of the real system, the resulting avalanche of numbers and arbitrary operational definitions would have no recognizable resemblance to the original. Variables, indices, and operational definitions are in current practice selected to meet such requirements of scientific method as measurability, controllability, verifiability, and above all, general applicability, rather than for their faithfulness to the particular subject being described. Consequently they are likely to be highly abstract and general, applicable in some way to many human systems but not expressing the unique qualities of any particular system." (pp.139-140).
Diesing also presents a justification for the use by a researcher of himself as a major research instrument in ways which, for reasons given above, it is not practicable to describe in their totality. He says;

"Accompanying this attitude is a feeling that the only instrument that is good enough for studying human beings is man himself. Only the human observer is perceptive enough to recognize and appreciate the full range of human action; only the human thinker is able to draw the proper implications from the complex data coming from human systems. Mechanical recording devices are sensitive only to the specific, isolated facts for which they have been programmed, and the mechanical reasoning associated with mathematics, symbolic logic, and computers cannot transcend the static, abstract formulas with which it must work. The only acceptable mechanical devices are those that assist the human observer, like cameras and tape recorders, rather than pretend to substitute for him. And if a model is to be constructed, the only adequate one is the scientist himself, who in the course of his observations turns himself into an analogue of his subject matter. No machine, no computer, can be complex enough to replace the human personality as a model of some other human system." (p.141).

Harré and Secord make a similar point when they say;

"...Machines, computers in their present state of development, and animals, are all inadequate, though none are wholly useless, as sources for concepts with which to delineate a sufficiently powerful model of man, which can be of any real use in the scientific understanding of ourselves as the basis for the understanding of others, and our understanding of others of our species to further our understanding of ourselves." (p.87-88).

Harré and Secord's views on validity and acceptability of research have more to do with the role being enacted by the researched than with reliable, repeatable measures. They say;

"For many areas of social behaviour we may even need to abandon
the laboratory for the actual world. In the typical psycho-
physical experiment, the person plays the part of an information-
processing machine. The judgmental aspect of his behaviour is 
emphasized, and those aspects of perceptual process that operate 
in non-laboratory situations, such as exploration, are excluded."
(p.50).

The supposed impurity which characterizes field research 
because of the 'contaminating' effect of the presence of the 
researcher has been commented on by Tresemer (1976), who says;
"Interestingly, the observer is considered an intruder in the 
field while the experimenter in the lab is only sometimes 
considered an influence, and in this case as another quantifiable 
variable (in terms of sex, race, and age)." (p.49).

Whilst the contamination of experimental research by the 
presence of the experimenter cannot be used as justification for 
the contamination of his field by the fieldworker, we have argued 
above that such contamination is best dealt with in a situation 
where the researcher and the researched are clear about each 
other's role; we have also suggested that the researcher may be 
viewed as a research instrument rather than as a contaminant.

The validity of research conducted with holistic methods 
is frequently challenged by those who favour a 'scientific' 
approach (which, as Harré and Secord have pointed out, has often 
been taken by social scientists as prescribing the methods of 
Mendeleev, which have been virtually unknown in the scientific 
community before or since). Two attempts at testing validity 
are mentioned by Diesing, together with his comments as to why 
these are unnecessarily restrictive.

"Hypotheses or interpretations derived from direct observation 
and informants' reports can be tested by asking informants' 
opinions about them. For some British ethnologists this is
said to be the ultimate test of an interpretation, and nothing that fails this test is acceptable, no matter how strong the other evidence for it may be. ... Nevertheless it seems to me that this type of evidence is no more dependable than any other, and that informants' opinions are as much in need of interpretation and evaluation as any other bit of information." (pp.152-153).

"For some American ethnologists this seems to be the ultimate test; they understand the culture when they are able to act as a regular member of it. ... But evidence that one is acting as a member is provided by others' reactions which must be interpreted in turn." (p.153).

It seems, then, that no pre-determined yardstick of validity is available to the holistic researcher. This is by no means to suggest that all holistic research is equally valid no matter how it is conducted. As Harré and Secord say, "In ethogenic social psychology, precision of meaning corresponds to accuracy of measurement in physical science." (p.126). Harré and Secord do also suggest one more definite indicator of validity in this type of research:

"In the standard case of accounting there will be a concordance between the anticipatory commentary, the monitoring commentary and the retrospective commentary, and in the extremal case these commentaries will differ only in tense. When that occurs we are inclined to accept the commentaries as authentic." (p.162).

In the present research, in several cases accounts were collected from team members to give both an anticipatory commentary and a retrospective commentary on the same situation; although it was not possible to collect monitoring commentaries this was to some extent compensated for by the presence of the researcher in the situation. Concordance between the anticipatory and the retrospective commentaries was not easy to evaluate. The most
honestly-intentioned interviewee will still have been cued in to a particular way of viewing his actions in a meeting by his anticipatory commentary upon them, and it is therefore difficult to evaluate the significance of a concordant retrospective commentary. It is suggested however that the commentaries given before and after the situation will only have been understood enough to have been used by the researcher where they seemed to him consistent with what he saw in the situation, and it is thus likely that the accounts upon which the reasoning in Part 4 of this thesis is based are relatively authentic.

The holistic researcher is usually open to accusations of value bias. Connor and Becker (1977), in their discussion of value biases in organizational research, say that "Value biases, both individual and collective, can confound research data and lead to spurious inferences." (p.428). Connor and Becker offer a quotation from Gunnar Myrdal which addresses this problem.

"There is no other device for excluding biases in the social sciences than to face the valuations and to introduce them as explicitly stated, specific, and sufficiently concretized, value premises."

Although Connor and Becker say that Myrdal's recommendation has not been easy to put in to practice, Diesing does suggest how it may be done by the holistic researcher.

"Personality biases can be located, interpreted, and allowed for on the basis of self-knowledge. ... Theoretical biases can be located by having one's theories made explicit to oneself, and by consciously searching for evidence that contradicts one's theories and hypotheses." (p.151).

Although Diesing doubts whether anyone actually does search for evidence to contradict his own theories and hypotheses, we
would argue that it can be demonstrated that people at least recognize and admit such contradicting evidence by the fact that some persons, sometimes, change some opinions.

Before leaving the topic of the academic acceptability of the research, a little more should be said of what does constitute validity in this research. Diesing says:

"The holist is not concerned with reliability because his method is not impersonal, but he must be concerned with something analogous to validity in the sense discussed above. He need not be concerned with the atomistic validity of an isolated test response or profile predicting a single character trait or attribute; his concern is rather with contextual validity."

(p.147).

Thus Diesing points out that "reliability" is a concept that has no place in ideographic research, but at the same time underlines the importance of contextual validity. By this he means that an observer always has several different kinds of evidence available to him, and can form some impression of the validity of any one of these in the context of the others. This may be a matter of spotting a piece of data which can be described as "false" on the basis of reasoning that can be made explicit, or it may be something as ill-defined as not feeling quite happy with some particular statement, feeling in some indefinable way that something does not fit. Such feelings have been taken seriously by the researcher in his attempt to investigate his topic, on the grounds that he, in common with other human beings, is an effective research instrument, equipped with intuitive measures of significance, confidence levels etc., which, whilst he cannot place so much reliance on them as he can on those reasonings which he can make explicit (at least to himself), are
none the less valid and justifiable ways of handling far more of
the complexity of human interactive situations than would otherwise
be possible.

**Appropriateness.**

Where research is, as here, intended to be useful beyond the
academic community and for some purpose other than building more
research on it, that research may focus either on order or on
change. To focus on order implies that the researcher can
usefully tell the persons whose situation he is researching something
about that situation as it now is; greater awareness of some
aspects of the existing situation is expected to be helpful to,
and to affect the actions of, persons in the situation. To focus
on change implies that to understand order more fully is not
enough, and it may indeed be irrelevant to the person wishing to
act upon his situation. If this view is taken, study will focus
on the processes of change and on the possibilities that exist for
persons to make changes. The distinction becomes a little less
clear when it is remembered that, in an organizational context,
the way something changes, for example in adaptation, may be
regarded as part of the stability in the situation. Most decision
processes in organizations are intended to lead to some kind of
change somewhere. We would categorize these, however, as being
within the existing order of the organization, and thus distinguish-
able from organization development activities which are intended
to change the way the organization changes. Our focus in the
research reported here is on understanding the order to be seen in
team problem-finding. As Mennell (1974) says, "Any theory which
successfully explains that something is static because certain
specific conditions are met, also necessarily explains that it
would change were these conditions no longer to be met." (p.3).
Thus in considering what methodologies may be appropriate to the
topic, it should be noted that our topic here is primarily
organizational order, and not change.

At several points in this thesis it has been stressed that
very little research has been carried out on problem-finding in
teams, and that we are therefore handling a relatively primitive
research topic. Pylyshyn (1972) discusses discovery procedures
in "normal science" and "pre-paradigmatic science". He says;
"By pre-paradigmatic we mean simply that an area of science has
not yet acquired the type of acknowledged theoretical and
methodological paradigms which turn the enterprise into the
kind of puzzle-solving which characterizes normal science." (p.190).

He is thus making a point akin to that made earlier in
this thesis where it was asserted that this topic was primitive in
the sense that there was no body of research tradition from which
the researcher could gain vicarious experience. Pylyshyn con­
cludes by saying:

"Just as discoveries in normal science resemble the exploits of
Sherlock Holmes, so those of revolutionary science resemble the
discovery of a hidden picture in one of those psychological
tests of perceptual closure or the discovery of a second
picture in Leeper's classical wife-mother-in-law illusion. No
discovery procedure can do much for us in this realm but perhaps
something can be learned from the history of science that may
help in detecting blind alleys: alleys such as, for example,
those into which we are led by the blinding hope of finding
discovery procedures, objective empirical methods for capturing
truth, and other such myths of this age of heretic positivism." (p.192).

Pylyshyn is thus suggesting that the only generalizable
procedural rule for conducting appropriate research in a field such as the present one is that there can be no general procedural rules.

Glaser and Strauss (1968) have argued that the potential of research has been restricted by an overemphasis on the testing and verification of theories, at the expense of the generation of theories. Silverman (1970) summarises their argument as follows:

"Put very simply, their argument is that the a priori assumptions about the objective characteristics of social situations which are often made at any early stage of the research process (in the form of hypotheses and operational definitions) serve to mask important features of social reality. Research must instead be used to generate 'grounded' theories which, rather than forcing data into a preconceived 'objective' reality, would seek to mobilise, as an explanatory tool, the categories which the participants themselves use to order their experience." (pp. 229-230).

In terms of the stages of theory development which Glaser and Strauss propose, the current research goes as far as the development of "grounded substantive theory" and will take a first step towards "grounded formal theory".

Levine (1977) indicates one way in which an understanding appropriate to the topic may be built up. Speaking of the understanding of the significance that others place upon their activities he says;

"Notice that the social psychologist working within his own society has already achieved (like any other member of his community) much of this understanding - albeit very unsystematically. He 'naturally' knows at least the outlines of various episodes. Research must then aim at the detailing and systematization of the conventions which define such episodes." (p. 238).

It is this broad understanding of the nature of the
episodes within which other people are acting that sensitizes a researcher to appropriate methods for learning about them.

Diesing says:

"The holist chooses his data-collecting techniques not for their reliability and validity, as the survey researcher does, but for their appropriateness to the subject matter. He tries to select those techniques which will fit the characteristic modes of expression of his subjects, and that will bring out the particular facets of their lives that he wishes to study." (p.154).

Given the freedom to do so by the researcher, some persons will answer his questions with relatively brief verbal answers, others will give discursive verbal answers, others will include diagrams, either ones that they draw or ones that they demonstrate with their hands, in their answer, others will prefer to go away and give their answer into a dictating machine on their own, and so on. Some people prefer different modes of expression according to the topic of the question. In this research, it was the intention to allow persons to use whatever means of expression they felt happiest with, rather than, for example, to assume that 'better' data would be produced if they were deprived of questions and thus induced to ramble.

In Chapter 6 we described the paradigm used by Allison (1971) to explain the genesis of governmental decision, in which he finds it appropriate to view bureaucratic politics in a game framework. We shall at times find such a framework to be of value in the present work for illuminating particular aspects, and our reason for considering it appropriate is similar to his, that is, it seems to fit readily with the study of active participants in the determination of policy. Some other useful notions about games will be included too. For example, Harré
and Secord distinguish between

"those games which are under the control of a referee, with the power of discipline, that is, with the power to identify an action as not in accordance with the rules or specifically forbidden by them, and consequently to decide and pronounce sentence, and those games in which the adherence to rule is self-imposed." (p.194).

They also point out an intermediate category of games which are exemplified by childrens' games, where there are several players and no referee, and "adherence to the rules is maintained by 'force of public opinion' as we might say, which amounts in fact to the disciplinary effect of the criticisms by the members of the play group of the one whose actions infringe the rules." (p.195). Harré and Secord also identify a consequence of using the game model which is consistent with its appropriateness here. They say;

"The point of using the game model is to provide a conceptual system for analysing the action of an episode. What we identify as the elements of the Act-action structure will be crucially dependent upon what the final outcome of the 'game' is supposed to be." (p.195).

Harré and Secord further identify three main features of game and game-like episodes:

"1. There are rules and conventions which specify the type of action which is part of the game. These could perhaps be called specifications of the play.
2. There is a specified form of outcome, in which one or more of the participants are winners and others losers. There may be a third category of people involved, exemplified by linesmen, umpires and ball-boys in tennis tournaments.
3. Conditions (1) and (2) ensure both that there is an outcome and that the exact form of it is uncertain. This leaves room for skilful play, which includes efficiency in the performance
of permitted actions, and strategies." (p.197).

For Harré and Secord, game models are always subservient to a general dramaturgical standpoint; games may be simulated within a play script (p.206). They follow Goffman in supposing that "The proof that these are performances is found in the fact that certain facts about the performers would discredit the performance and must be concealed." (p.207). Whilst we have no argument with their dramaturgical standpoint as such, we do not find it particularly helpful in understanding the topic of this research. What we are concerned with here are the games and the players of those games, and it does not seem necessary for the present purpose to extend our analysis to other parts of the plays within which the games are simulated, except where the actors have told us that they are relevant to the games. Nevertheless we find the concept of the whole play useful because there is an important distinction between studying games which are acknowledged to be set in a context of a play rather than studying games in isolation; so far as the outsider can know at the outset, the most important events in a team might take place between team meetings, not at them, for example, and thus analysis of the game as it takes place in meetings would be quite misleading.

Model of Man.

There is a point at which arguments about the appropriate relationship between researcher and researched run out, and the decisions taken on how to make sense of the activities and accounts of the persons amongst whom research is carried out must be acknowledged to be based upon something other than rational points about collecting data in an efficient or effective manner. At
this point there is a choice between several different models of man which have been developed in the literature of the social sciences. Although the proponents of different models conduct occasional skirmishes at the borders to suggest that one model is inherently superior to another, there is no basis for assessing them in terms of truth or falsity, but only in terms of clarity, usefulness, credibility or propriety, when employed in understanding the world. As Mennell (1974) says:

"Philosophers of science of various shades of opinion have increasingly recognized the importance of 'pre-theoretic elements in theory'. These include taxonomies, conceptual schemes, and the general assumptions - conscious, semiconscious and unconscious - which scientists made about their subjects. They are not directly testable themselves, but enter into or point towards more limited and specific propositions." (p.2).

Whilst we cannot attribute truth or falsity to any particular models of man, they remain of crucial importance in the conduct of social research. The model of man held by a researcher will influence the data that he seeks, the theory of knowledge that he uses to build those data into theories, and hence the whole theoretical outcome of his research. Acknowledging then that the model of man employed is essentially a pre-theoretic element with major consequences for theory, the model employed in this research is an anthropomorphic model whose genesis has been described by Harré (1971) in the following terms;

"Joynson's Dilemma derives in part from the feeling that the only adequate conception of the nature of human beings is the physiological picture, while if the psychologists' conception of man is assimilated to this picture, the science of psychology as an autonomous discipline no longer exists. But all is not lost - there remains the anthropomorphic model of man, the generalization into a scientific concept of the natural human conception of
ourselves, the concept of a **person**. The idea that human beings are people has not been much tried out in the mainstream of official, professional psychology." (p.115).

Harré and Secord describe this in more detail. Contrasting their model with "mechanical" models of man, they say:

"We should treat people, for scientific purposes, as if they were human beings, as we know and understand them in everyday life. Thus we shall find the source of our model in contemporary ideas about the nature of a person which are rooted in the way that concept functions in the grammar of our language, and in the forms and systems of our commonest thoughts." (p.87).

They go on to suggest that a human being is of a different order of complexity from any other existing system, as is shown by the fact of human self-awareness and human linguistic powers. Their argument here links with the issue of appropriateness, in that they view all modelling activities based on analogy between the human being and any other system as misleadingly inappropriate for the study of human beings. The quality of human awareness is crucial, because they say, "Awareness can be identified, for our purposes, as being capable of commenting upon an action." (p.102). So we have a notion that the most appropriate model for understanding human actions is not that of an information-processing machine, or of an organism responding to stimuli, nor even that of a scientist, as propounded by Kelly (1955), but rather is the concept of a person as found in common usage and refined in recent philosophical practice, notably by Strawson (1959) and Hampshire (1965). Amongst the consequences which Harré and Secord draw from using an anthropomorphic model of man is that a biological individual need not always exhibit a consistent social self. They say;
"We shall not attempt the impossible task of trying to find an underlying consistency in the social behaviour of a single biological individual. Instead we shall begin by supposing that a normal biological individual is capable of manifesting a variety of possible social selves, each of which has some measure of coherence, and may resemble the personas presented on suitable occasions by other biological individuals." (p. 92).

People may not exhibit consistent social selves, but more problematic still for the researcher is that people may falsify their accounts in order to appear more consistent, or clever, or good. Despite this, Marsh, Rosser and Harré (1978) argue that the person is the best, though not necessarily the ultimate, authority on his own actions. They say:

"But what about the fact that people lie, that they are perfectly capable of remaking the record to appear in a good light? In particular, what about the point that people like to appear much more rational and in command of affairs than it sometimes seems from an outside viewpoint they really are? All these points can be acknowledged without serious effect upon the method. We are not claiming that an account is a verisimilitudinous description of the antecedents of action on each and every occasion. Ethogenics is not introspection under another name. Rather we suppose that in both accounts and in actions, the same knowledge of what is socially potent and proper is revealed. It is only in the long run that a match gradually emerges between what is seen to happen and what is said to happen. But however that may be, we take it as axiomatic that unless it can be established to the contrary, the best authorities as to what went on are the actors themselves." (pp. 21-22).

Another consequence that Harré and Secord draw from their anthropomorphic model of man is that social behaviours are seen as mediated by meaning, and they argue that meanings are the major phenomena of social psychology. Scheflen (1967) illuminates the concept of meaning thus:
"Any member of a culture recognizes the behavioural configurations common to his own background. Without having to be conscious of it he has learned to perform and perceive the units and their divisions, the progressions, the distribution of roles among the interactants, and so on. He can predict, to a point, what will occur. He can fathom and commune with the ongoing stream of events." (p.9).

The emphasis on meaning places ethogenic research in total distinction to behaviourist research, which would be unlikely to value such a mentalist concept. The model of man adopted in the research reported here was a deliberately anthropomorphic one, and it has therefore been a major concern for the researcher to discover both the meanings which team members wish to convey by their words and actions and the meanings which they attribute to the words and actions of others, and in the light of which they in turn speak and act. Rubenstein (1977) has provided some theoretical justification for those of us (and we would suggest that this includes most of us humans) who believe that we can, to some extent, know the meanings that other persons attribute to events and things. He does this by showing how Wittgenstein's work rejects the shared premise upon which the debate between behaviourism and phenomenology depends.

"(Wittgenstein) does this by showing that there are essential connexions between mental states and public behaviours and that meaning is not a property of private experience but of the relationship of an action to its context." (pp.232-233).

As to how the realization of this may be achieved, Psathas (1968) advocates an "imaginative, introspective, subjective" approach, on the grounds that;

"Overt behavior is only a fragment of ... total behavior. Any social scientist who insists that he can understand all of man's
behavior by focussing only on that part which is overt and manifested in concrete, directly observable acts is naive to say the least." (p.510).

He is thus commending the social scientist to proceed to understand the meanings of words and actions for others by an act of imagination. This brings us back to the points drawn from Diesing, and Harré and Secord, earlier, that the social scientist is his own best model of other persons.

Generalizability.

Throughout this chapter the emphasis has been on research methods which capture the unique, particular qualities of a person, group, or situation. This must raise a question about whether such methods can produce findings which have any consequence whatever outside the persons, teams and situations where the research was conducted. Diesing addresses this problem as follows;

"The basic solution is to move from the particular to the general and back in small steps rather than in one grand jump. One first compares one's case with a similar case, then to another and another, then to one somewhat more different. Potential generalizations discovered in the first case can be tested against the other cases. The generalizations that survive these tests are not claimed as universally valid, but valid only for cases similar to those studied. Gradually one moves to still wider generalizations and a more heterogeneous range of cases, though the scope of previous generalizations may also be narrowed in this process. This is the comparative method, which is always used in case studies to produce or to apply generalizations." (p.183).

We believe, however, that there are two different ways in which case studies may have implications that go beyond themselves, other than the comparative method proposed by Diesing. One of
these is that they may provide a tentative form of knowledge which is entirely appropriate for a previously unexplored topic, and which may be used and added to the existing stock of knowledge in a consciously experimental, and not over-confident manner. Chin (1974) describes this kind of knowledge building.

"For me, I adopt an evolutionary perspective in knowledge building, that is, knowledge is a cumulation of selectively retained tentatives.

The implication of this position is that we do not strive for a finality of answer in applied behavioral science and, operationally, a once-and-for-all crucial experiment. We do strive for a patient and constantly alert evaluation of existing knowledge and current practices, holding on to what we have judged by explicit standards to be of "value" and yet seeing what we are holding on to as nothing more than a set of selectively retained tentatives." (p. 26).

Another reason for adopting tentative knowledge from a case study approach such as the present one without depending on a process of comparison may be derived from William James in a paper reprinted in Wolff (1969). James identifies three categories of options, according to which a decision about a belief may be classified, which are:

1. Living or dead.
2. Forced or avoidable.
3. Momentous or trivial.

For the present purpose it is the option between forced and avoidable that will concern us. As James says, the classical academic situation is one of avoidable choices about belief. If there is insufficient evidence to accept or to reject a particular piece of knowledge with any confidence it is both legitimate and practicable for the scientist to say that, for the present, he does not know. However, in many other situations the options may be
forced. For example, if a person believes that somebody is about to attack him, he may not see it as practicable simply to suspend judgement until either they do so or you discover that that was not their intention. Even if you do so without complete confidence, you prepare yourself according to one belief or the other, but not according to both. We believe that because social theory is concerned with the persons who read and write it as well as others, the options on belief are usually forced for them, because they in some way encounter continuously situations that connect with the theories, and they are thus compelled to behave in a manner either consistent or inconsistent with particular theories; the possibility of suspending judgement is thereby denied them — they have to behave one way or another. Whilst this property of human behaviour is tiresome to the experimentalist, because his methodological inclination to suspend judgement at times does not fit with it, it may be an advantage to the holistic researcher who can propose that, since persons are continuously placed in situations where they are forced to opt between social beliefs, findings based on limited case work may be of most value to other persons if the further development of case studies on the topic is done by those other persons for themselves, with the cases being the situations in which they are forced to opt between beliefs. What holistic research does here, then, is firstly to alert a person to a decision between social beliefs where he may not have been aware of the existence of anything to decide about before; being social beliefs, the option is forced, and so, secondly, the holistic research will generate for the person a belief to hold tentatively whilst conducting his own holistic research in his own situations.
The other major way of generalizing from holistic research not envisaged by Diesing is to propose that the most significant thing about the research is not 'discoveries' concerning 'realities', but rather is in the use and development of a way of understanding a situation which can be applied to other situations. In this case, no guarantee can be offered that the way of gaining information and understanding which informs a particular research project will prove illuminating to any particular person for any particular situation. Nevertheless, a researcher does choose and document a means of finding out about his particular topic, and thus even if other persons wishing to make use of his work do not wish to make tentative use in other situations of his theorising for the research situation, they may wish to make some use, after suitable adaptation, of the methods he has employed to learn about particular phenomena with particular people in a particular situation.

In terms of the present research these two modes of generalization would mean, firstly that other persons who have dealings with teams, whether as members or as consultants, might reasonably be led by the research to consider some concepts about what is going on in those teams which they would not otherwise have considered, and to formulate, and behave according to, some tentative beliefs about problem-finding in teams. Secondly, persons involved with teams might seek to find out the sort of information which will be presented in the next Part of this thesis, about the problem-construction styles of the persons and processes of their teams. The two approaches, while distinct, are linked by a connexion very similar to that between the study of change and the study of order; the first process experiments with and
develops beliefs about what would happen with a purpose which may be presumed to be change, whilst the second seeks a way of studying the existing order of processes of problem-finding, although again the ultimate purpose may be presumed to be change.
PART 4

FINDINGS: SOME PERSONS' BELIEFS, RULES, AND SANCTIONS
Chapter 10: General Beliefs about Problem Construction.

In the light of the methodology outlined in the preceding chapter, the title of this chapter needs some explanation. The researcher went to meetings of the HCPTs and these meetings were, of course, always particular meetings of particular teams. Similarly, the principal topic of the interviews which were carried out with team members was not 'problem-construction' as a general notion, but the construction of particular problems in particular teams. The researcher has noticed a widespread inclination to offer comment upon, and develop models about, problem-construction by Her Majesty's Government and by the boards of large public corporations. Whilst such beliefs are interesting in their own right, they are not the topic of the present research. We are concerned here rather with the beliefs that people have about the problem-construction processes they are involved in, because they may then be presumed to have the fullest knowledge or at least the closest contact with these processes, and they are therefore the people who have the greatest opportunity for intervening in those processes; in other words, because of our orientation towards conducting research that will be useful to team members and consultants to teams, it is the beliefs of those team members about teams in which they are involved with which we are primarily concerned.

Since the observations of meetings, and most of the questions in interviews, were about particular meetings of particular teams rather than generalities, most of the beliefs elicited were of that more particular type. We would argue that persons do have beliefs about problem-construction in particular teams on
particular occasions, and that this is evidenced by the fact that the various actions that take place during the time when a problem is being constructed by a team do not appear either to their perpetrators or to other persons present to be random or purposeless, but rather appear to be taken in the light of some more or less pervasive personal theoretical belief about problem-construction. It seems to us, however, that the evidence that persons have a general model or belief about problem-construction is much less strong, but then it is bound to be so, because there is no such thing as a general observable phenomenon of problem-construction to which one can point persons in order to elicit their general belief. However, some statements were made to the researcher by team members which did appear to be propositions about problem-construction in the Health Care Planning Teams in Bath Health District as a whole, rather than about any one such Team. We would also expect persons to differ on the extent to which they either use or reveal general theoretical constructs about particular team processes. As one of the team members pointed out, for example, doctors are more prone to the recitation of strings of case studies than administrators, who tend to make generalizations. Whether or not this particular generalization holds good, it is clear that some people prefer to talk about events in their particularity, whilst others prefer to talk in terms of the invisible generalities which they believe generate those events.

In this chapter we shall present categories in the form of propositions. These categories were drawn principally from respondents' statements in the interviews conducted, and we shall present some amplification of the categories to make more clear
the meaning we believe they had for their original users. To ease the communication between writer and reader, the categories have themselves been categorized in five groups. These second order categories are imposed by the researcher in order to organize the material, and it is not claimed that they are either grounded in the data, except in so far as the researcher finds them useful for categorizing the data, or that any special theoretical significance informs them. The five groups that have been used are:

1. Problems as constructions.
2. Problems as personal constructions.
3. Other features of problem-construction.
4. The effects of teams on problem-construction.
5. The effects of organizations on problem-construction in teams.

Problems as Constructions.

It is the researcher's view that he might have discovered more categories to do with this group had it not been that in introducing himself to the teams, and to particular members when he talked to them, he always explained his own orientation of regarding problems as constructions rather than as 'things' with an objective existence external to the persons who experience them. It seems likely, in retrospect, that team members did not feel encouraged to challenge or comment upon this issue. The researcher believes that the main response he was seeking when he introduced himself in these terms was one which showed the respondent to be either intrigued or happy with the idea of problems as constructions, and beyond that it was not too important for the further progress of the research whether they agreed or disagreed
with the idea, or whether they had any other opinions to offer about its value as a way of thinking about problems in teams. We think it is for these reasons that we found only three categories within this group.

(1) Problems may or may not be seen as constructed.

Whilst nobody rejected the proffered concept of problems as constructions, some interviewees said that they did not find this a useful way of looking at all problems; not all problems had to be found. For example, one member said:

"They (the problems) were mostly self-evident. ... The problems are there already."

Other similar comments were made during the course of the research, but they mostly referred to a single term or a single period in the life of a team, and were used to contrast it with other teams or other periods. The fact that some members were happy to rework the concept of problems as constructions to a more partial concept where problems are constructions in some cases, but in other cases entail such a pressure of events that they see them

Throughout Part 4, many verbatim quotations from team members have been used. In some cases, brackets have been added to explain the meaning of a phrase where that has been lost with the context; in other cases brackets have been used to replace a particular term with a general one, for reasons of confidentiality. The two uses will be easily distinguishable, - if the statement can be read without the contents of the brackets, then those brackets were explanatory. To protect anonymity we have made arbitrary sex changes among our respondents. The precise wording of two quotations has been slightly changed, in a way which has no bearing on the categories which they are used to support, to maintain confidentiality.
as things, encouraged the researcher in his belief that being open about the theoretical position he was bringing to the research would not be likely to inhibit those to whom he talked from stating their own, different positions.

(2) **Knowing what a problem is.**

The concept of 'problem' as used in this researched seemed to create fewer difficulties for the public servants interviewed here than they have been found to create for some private-sector groups. Indeed one team member gave a description of the notion of 'problem' very similar to that given in Part 2 of this thesis, saying;

"You can get a group of people sitting down because they want something. As of now they haven't got it and they want it, and they think that is what a Health Care Planning Team is for, to give them power to their elbow to get what they want."

When that is the meaning attached to the word 'problem' by a team member it is not surprising that there were no reactions of the kind, 'We don't have problems here. We may have needs, and things which are not quite how we would like them to be, but problems, no.' At the same time, a notion of 'actual' problems appeared with a rather different significance from that of 'real' problems as discussed in Part 2. Thus one member speaks of eventually getting round in a meeting to;

"A list of actual problems and actual things which could be done, at least in my terms, I could actually spend money on, reorganize something to cope with."

(3) **Problems may be multi-faceted.**

This concept was produced by one of the respondents after a question from the researcher to do with the difference between
definition and formulation of a problem. As will be seen from the quotation, the category does not belong exclusively in this group, as the respondent connects it with the function and potential product of a team. He says:

"This problem has ten facets; six of them, the only way of solving these is by building something, three of them can be solved by putting staff here rather than there, and whatever are left is because so-and-so is an awkward bugger and we will have to wait until he retires or something. That is what I would like to be able to do with a Health Care Planning Team when it has really thought about something."

He has thus developed a notion of a multi-faceted problem and of the potential use of a team for exploring those facets.

Problems as Personal Constructions.

The next group of categories is concerned with what in terms of the research paradigm may be seen as a natural consequence of the last group. Because problems are viewed as constructions placed by people upon their world, these constructions will in some way be peculiar to the person who makes them. This group of categories is principally concerned with the effects that differences between persons have on the way those persons construct problems.

(4) Some people will construct a problem where others would not.

In terms of the general statements made, only one member articulated this category, although it seemed to be implicit in many of the statements made, and is perhaps implicit in all the other categories in this group. The statement on which this category was based ran;

"I think I could define what I'd like to do, but I'm damn certain
10.7

that X can't, because he's that sort of chap somehow; he's confused and muddled and everything else, and just because something arrives on his desk he thinks he's got to do something with it. ... Something hoves into his ken, he thinks it's his problem, and tries to do something about it."

The second part of the quotation enriches the category a little, or possibly starts a slightly different category, where it is stressed that it is for himself that the person being described will construct problems where others would not.

(5) Different people construct different problems.

This category is not intended to be about individual differences in personality, definition of the situation, perception etc., but rather about differences between groups of persons according to either occupational role or background. For example, one member said of his profession:

"I think we tend to see problems in terms of things that require moving of resources from one place to another, people going about things a different way, rather than, this chap has got raised blood pressure, what are we going to do about him? Is it a fair analysis? It can be said that doctors are trained to be self-sufficient and confident and arrogant, and big-headed even, about that patient in bed there; not about the 300 patients that are on his waiting list, and not about the last 300 patients he dealt with, but that one who is actually in front of him. But once having been trained to be confident and self-sufficient in your judgement about that patient in bed there, it carries over into everything you do as a doctor, and they think they know

*Letters such as X, Y, and Z will be used in this Part of the thesis to substitute for proper names in quotations; a particular letter does not necessarily refer to the same person in different quotations.
about health-care or health overall, but - surgeons are always
the incisive ones, "Right, that's a problem, right, do it
boomboom" - all problems are like that as far as surgeons are
concerned."

A similar category was used by another member in answering
a question about why some figures that had been presented at a
meeting had seemed difficult and excited no real interest in the
team. He said;

"Well, it's all right for me, I mean, I've had a certain training,
X has had a certain training. The consultant members will have
had no training, I doubt very much whether any of the social
workers present had."

(6) A person may construct a particular problem because of his
past experience.

One member, when asked how a particular group of issues
which seemed to carry across between teams came to be important to
him, related an experience of some years before when he had visited
a 'problem family'. The mother of the family had commented that
she scarcely had time to do anything because of the continuous
stream of people who came to see her about her problems; she
reckoned she was spending all her time serving tea to them, and
could not afford the tea anyhow. Because of this, the team
member concerned had investigated how many different people might
visit a problem family, and found it to be 35. He believed this
was the reason why he was often inclined to see problems around
different agencies dealing separately with the same client.

(7) A person may construct a particular problem as a result of
reading papers and journals.

A recurring theme amongst members was that they believed
that they came to construe a particular problem because they kept
in touch with the papers and journals. There seemed to be several different ways in which this led to problem-construction. One way was that an article would suggest some means of improving things which would leave the person dissatisfied with the current situation and so lead him to construct a problem. Another way was that articles might alert persons to expected future changes which, if no action were taken to cope with them, would lead to an unsatisfactory situation and thus the construction of a problem. A third way is that an article might lead a person to pay attention to an aspect of their work they had not considered recently, and that they then might construe a problem in that area.

In most cases, persons thought of papers and journals as an input to the construction of problems without analysing it further.

(8) A person may construct a particular problem as a result of talking to others in a similar position.

The Health Service is rich in opportunities for people to talk to their opposite numbers from other places, and this was another recurrent theme in people's descriptions of where they got their problems from. Whilst one would expect that this operated in several ways, much like the preceding category, nobody said so.

Other Features of Problem-Construction.

In this group, we have placed categories which have to do with team members' beliefs about sources of variation in problem-construction which arise outside the person construing. These include normative statements about the qualities and costs of problem-construction, descriptions of some choices available to be made by the person constructing the problem, and notions about the implications, or lack of them, of problem-definition.
Problem-construction may be done better if solution is not considered.

One member considered that the business of the Health Care Planning Team was to define the problems without reference to the difficulty or ease with which they could be solved. This, they considered, was better treated elsewhere as a completely separate responsibility. This member said:

"There does seem to me to be too much concern with whether we will get what we want; it isn't our concern, it's somebody else's. (There followed an example about joint funding, and the administrative director who transferred money around so that a county could make use of joint funding despite the revenue implications). But that's his business. It was our business more to say what we wanted to do."

The argument here is for the complete separation of problem-construction and problem-solving as activities.

Problems may be constructed on different time scales.

A view was expressed that it would be possible for a person to construct problems on various differing time scales from apparently the same situation, and at the same time there was some concern that maybe the task entrusted to the Health Care Planning Teams was to construct problems on a long time scale, but they were letting themselves be diverted into constructing on a short time scale. A respondent said:

"But you know there is a problem in that we are doing things which in fact has benefit for future years, but we are only getting there by accident. ... I can honestly believe that we could reach a point where we couldn't think of anything else to worry about, because we may not be looking at it the right way, if too many of us are thinking too seriously about what's wrong now, what is the problem that we've got at the moment that we could resolve. ... The trouble is that very often the Health
Care Planning Teams are really only caring for these problems as problems of the moment."

Here it is being proposed that Health Care Planning Teams should define long term problems, but that at present, so far as they are achieving this, it is by the indirect and unsatisfactory means of constructing short term problems which it is believed will need long term solutions. This is not quite the same thing. Although no team members explicated the difference we may see the proposition being made as analogous to the difference between constructing a problem to do with making sure that the buckets under the hole in the roof are changed before they overflow and constructing a problem to do with getting the roof repaired. It should be noted that this is different from a choice between solutions in that there is still a very wide field of solution possibilities available for either range of problems.

(11) **Problems may be big or little, difficult or easy.**

This category did not imply for all users that they believed the problems they were referring to were inherently big, little, difficult or easy, because most of the comments that were made about size of problem were quite complicated, size being considered on several dimensions which might give conflicting impressions of it. For example;

"(The problem is quite small) in that we are only talking about 8 or 9 beds, but we are also talking about an incredible amount of human unhappiness, when you get down to it; ... it is one of those problems that people don't like getting hold of."

So the problem is small in terms of administrative size, and yet large in terms of the perceived unhappiness of other people, and difficult in terms of people not knowing how to construe it.
The question of the size of problems was also related to personal styles of construction by a respondent who said of a particular non-member;

"Problems were dead easy. You just solved them, just like that. Decide what you have got to do and do it."

Another member used a similar category when suggesting that the importance to be attached to definition and redefinition might vary between problems. He said;

"There must be some times when you get a specific problem, you haven't had an example there, but there is a very specific and carefully defined problem, which obviously must be a much smaller scale problem, that you could define it and not need to redefine it in any way and merely carry on in the solution."

(12) Problem-construction is time-consuming.

The researcher believes that this point was regarded as obvious by most people, and not worthy of stating. Indeed the only direct references to it in the interviews came where the researcher asked an interviewee whether this was what he was intending to imply in one of his statements. For example on one occasion during an interview where the topic was the way a particular team member saw himself using the teams, the researcher said;

"Am I understanding you right, that you are saying that if you had more time you would like to use them (the teams) as problem-formulators?"

The respondent agreed with this, and went on to explain other ways in which he was using them at present, owing to the lack of time, as he saw it, to use the teams in problem-construction.

(13) Perhaps you could go and get a batch of problems at one go.

This is related to the last category; the persons who
stressed this idea also stressed the time-consuming nature of Health Care Planning Teams, and seemed interested in looking for ways of achieving more with those teams at the cost of less time. As one member put it;

"What I would rather do with Health Care Planning Teams I think, is to have one for the mentally ill, and it would meet intensively for a year or however long it took, and I would ignore the mentally handicapped and the elderly, and we'd work out ten years programme so far as we could for the mentally ill and then not bother to meet again, and then maybe at the same time we would be doing the elderly or maybe you wouldn't. You'd probably do the elderly the year after and go into each subject one at a time rather than this feeling that, oh hell, every month we must have a meeting of the Health Care Planning Team between September and April."

A similar notion of a concentrated collecting of problems as a deliberate and finite activity was proposed by another member;

"There hasn't been enough liaison in the past, and a quick burst of liaison now to get the message over so that we all know what each other's problems are, and possibly an annual check thereafter will get us working together."

(14) Problem-definition does not mean that you know what to do about it.

This notion is very important to the theoretical framework employed in this thesis, because it is saying in different words that there is the possibility of problem-construction which stops, or at least pauses, there, rather than going straight through to solution. If the latter were the case it could be argued that problem-construction is a dispensable theoretical construct to do with an unobservable phase of problem-solving. However, the appearance of this category in members' responses means that we may argue that for those members problem-construction is a
convenient label for an experientially discrete part of the problem-solving process, which is thus observable, at least to the one who experiences it. One member said:

"And then that, there on paper is where we are on the elderly mentally ill, which is, would you believe, yes we know there's a problem, but no, we don't know what to do about it. In fact I've actually said it; "The District has so far only defined the problem". And I honestly wasn't thinking about you when I wrote it."

(15) Verbal definition of a problem is not necessary during problem-construction.

A shortcoming of the words 'problem-definition' and 'problem-construction' is that they may be taken as implying a degree of conscious articulation and awareness which the researcher did not intend for them. One of the members introduced this category as follows:

"I always have in mind what the problem is we are discussing, and I never try and define it. I've never felt any need to. Obviously at times you might say to a specific individual "Ah yes but we're really discussing this problem", but you don't need to define it very closely and keep it within those lines."

The Effects of Teams on Problem-Construction.

In this group we shall consider general categories which team members use in talking about the difference that is made to problem-construction by its being carried out in a team. The topics of categories include the effects of the climate of the team, the internal politics of a team, and the influence of particular persons on a team.

(16) A problem-construction may be built within a team.

This category was presented as an ideal rather than as a
description of present actuality, – an ideal in which problems would not be so much brought by a person to a team, and there redefined and reformulated, but where the team itself would collaboratively produce the formulation. The member said;

"It's the opposite of that you've got to have to run a team, in other words, let everybody have their head and discuss, because it is this generation of an idea as it goes across the table and around the table."

(17) A team may have a particular orientation in problem-construction.

This category seemed to be principally about different branches of the service and the way in which a team, by being oriented principally to the perspectives of one branch or another, might be influenced in its work. A respondent said;

"Here was really our opportunity to integrate our thinking on what was best for our clients within this geographical area. Now the first year we were all new boys and it didn't seem to notice very much that we were very hospital oriented, but it did notice during the second year."

This (non-hospital) person went on to explain how such a hospital orientation had had a detrimental effect on the performance of the team in setting up its problems aright.

(18) A person may define the problems for a team.

Sometimes this is taken on by a person as a role, as in the case of one member who said;

"I think my role is to find problems to give people to discuss."

Sometimes such a role of problem-finder for the team is combined with that of either chairman or secretary (which for our present purposes means agenda-builder). Thus one respondent was able to say when looking at the agenda of the next meeting;

"Now I made that agenda up on my own, although I should have
done it in consultation with X, but logistically he phoned me and I phoned him, and we never actually got together before the agenda had to go out, so we may well have some more things on the agenda that X wants to talk about that I didn't know about. ... All I did with the agenda is to pick up two items from last time which I know need further expansion."

To be the definer of problems for a team was not necessarily a coveted role. Thus one person, whose responsibilities included taking the output from the team and integrating it into the annual plan of the District said;

"Second year, again, some of the items I produced without reference to anybody almost, or at least I went to talk to people and then just wrote it, or at least a lot of things I said "This is the problem" ... and people just said, "Yes, I'm sure you're right". Because they hadn't thought about it.

Interviewer. Problem-definition by default?
Respondent. That's right. This year, less and less of the plan that could be said of.

Interviewer. Why?
Respondent. Well, because I didn't define all the problems. I didn't say "This is the problem", other people came up and said "This is the problem"."

In other words, this year other people had become active problem-definers for the team, and the respondent went on to explain that he considered this a very good thing.

Thus we see that a person may find himself cast into the role of definer of problems for a team, without wishing to retain that role, but rather because he sees it as a job that needs to be done by someone; he will then relinquish that role gladly when he sees the opportunity.

(19) A person may try to persuade a team to take on his problem.

A person may not have the power to define problems in a
team, indeed he may not be a member of that team, but may still wish to get a team interested in his problems so that they make it in some way their own. One member gave an account of this in the following terms;

"They (referring to a man from a social service department, a housing director, a home help organizer and others who had come to read papers or present cases at Health Care Planning Teams) are trying to bring in a problem, and I think their objective, obviously their objective, I mean you can't be too naive about this, they're coming because they have a problem. These aren't vital problems, they are highlighting opportunities for planning."

So far as the researcher could see, no explanation was offered by team members for the widely varying degree of success which appeared to be experienced by the different persons who brought their problems to teams. Perhaps this issue was of interest only to the researcher.

(20) A person may accept another person's problem-construction in order to get agreement on one of his own.

This category was employed by a member who was contrasting the working of Health Care Planning Teams, as he would like to see them, with the working of committees, as he understood the term. He said of the teams;

"Obviously in many quick points it is really working like a committee, or it's a board of governors or directors' meeting type of thing where people will not disagree, for one reason in order to get agreement on another, or they have no particularly strong ideas, and really there is an implied vote in much of it."

This member and others seemed to believe that such 'internal politicking' processes were detrimental to the effectiveness of the teams, and regretted their persistence. In the quotation above, the speaker clearly believes there must be some better way
of constructing problems in a team than by a voting process where persons can collude to accept one another's constructions of problems for reasons other than conviction.

(21) One person may construct a problem and get other people to construct sub-problems.

This may be done either with the original problem-definer present throughout or with him passing the problem on to someone else for the subsequent construction of sub-problems, and absenting himself. An example of the former type was given by a member who said;

"I think we tend to express a problem and then people will add to the problem, won't they, in the sense that they will define the problem by discussion as much as the solution is discussed. Because a bald statement of a problem is never quite enough."

An example of the second kind, where a problem-definer passes the problem to somebody else to continue the construction, was given by a respondent who said;

"The overall problem has been recognized by the Department of Health, if you like, that places like Roundway should be run down and places like the mental illness unit in Bath should be encouraged, but then, how do you do it? That's a whole new set of problems, and they're much more difficult ones to solve, because you're talking in the end about what individual people do, and what they've been doing for the last twenty years and trying to change what they do for the next twenty years, which is much more difficult."

(22) Some people's presence in a meeting can affect the kind of problems that are constructed.

This category was presented in terms of negative effects, and the negative effects were attributed to occupational role rather than personal traits; they did however come early in the
researcher's relationships with the respondents concerned, and he suspects that it may have been politeness which caused people to state these in terms of role. One team member, when asked if a Health Care Planning Team did a good job of finding the right issues to discuss, said;

"No, not really. Partly the reason for that lies in the fact that we come from so many different disciplines, associated fields but not in some cases very closely associated, and we're constantly getting what I can only describe as a sort of dilution in what comes out by the fact that you've got a heavy weighting on some occasions from the Area, and on some occasions that dilution will be absent because they're absent. So for some meetings you get fairly good, clear issues coming forward based on the experience of the people who are working in the various aspects of the field, and then on other occasions, which sets the whole thing back again, the dilution effect coming in, or swamping it. ... I think they (representatives from Area) get issues totally fogged, because they seem always to throw spanners in."

(23) Persons may confound problem-constructions in teams.

This category appears closely related with the preceding one, except that it is stated more baldly. One team member said of a group of others at a meeting;

"The level of discussion tended to be fragmentary because they were bringing in other confounding issues to break things up, so to speak."

(24) To construct problems in a team, everyone should have the power to make commitments.

It was stated by some members that the teams suffered from the fact that, whilst some organizations were represented at team meetings by senior persons who could make commitments on behalf of their organizations, others were represented by people who had to
refer back on all issues to higher authority. This imbalance in
the extent to which members could commit their organizations was
regarded as detrimental to the construction of problems in the
team because it meant that Health Service employees might feel
defensive towards social service employees who were in a
relatively safer position because it was known that they could
only bring problems, not commitment to action, where the Health
Service members might bring both.

(25) Sometimes you have to convince people that it is worth
defining problems.

This was presented as a difficulty, and it is not certain
whether or not it has been resolved yet. One member did explain
that he did not regard it as worthwhile to take problems to the
HCPT because he saw himself as having sufficient other outlets
for them, and he preferred to conceive of the HCPTs as places
where the implementation of solutions could be agreed. Another
member talked of his efforts to get people to define planning
problems for the teams. He said;

"The trouble is convincing people that it is worthwhile doing,
and I have a feeling that whatever I presented to them, wherever
it came from about the form of planning for the mentally ill,
they would have said "Yes", because they would not have believed
it mattered."

That particular member gave an example of how some persons
were gradually becoming convinced that in the reorganized National
Health Service the only way to get money was to define problems
that could be addressed with planning, that is, long term problems.
However, another member was concerned that, if people did become
convinced it was worth defining problems, they would be short
term problems. He said;
"People are being encouraged to bring things to the team, but in a rather desperate sort of fashion. You know, the implication is, if you don't bring us ideas we will run out of things to talk about. And I am not really sure how many of us are scratching around for things to talk about. And of course motivation comes into that. If you see somebody getting a ward for multiply handicapped children by plugging it at Health Care Planning Teams do you bring your own particular hobby horse in and plug it?"

(26) **Team problem-construction is affected by the way the team is run.**

It would have been very surprising, and a little suspicious, if all the team members to whom the researcher talked had appeared to share a common taste in style of chairmanship. One member proposed a connexion between the style of running meetings and the type of problems that got constructed as follows:

"I think why the team isn't as clear in getting out what it needs to get out is because we have a very loose chairmanship control. I think we could do with a much more structured use of the agenda. ... The issues tend to get so spread in discussion, they never get brought together at the end to say, well what is the team concluding at the end of this discussion."

This category seems to be related to the one above labelled "A problem-construction may be built within a team", although the quotations that have been used to support and amplify the two categories represent opposite views.

(27) **Persons may or may not be committed to a problem.**

Although the above phrasing has been preferred for this category as expressing more closely the believed intention of the original, it might have been rephrased to show more clearly the connexion with the category "Sometimes you have to convince people that it is worth defining problems" (25). The rephrasing of the
present category could have been "Sometimes you have to convince people that it is worthwhile taking on other's definitions of problems. As one member said when talking about monitoring information from Region;

"Typical reaction to information, that people just sort of looked at it, found some things they didn't like about it or mistakes in it or whatever, and the whole lot was sort of wrong, and there's been a big Regional debate going on since about the whole way this whole sort of monitoring thing, so called, has been introduced. It was started on the community physician net and not the administrative net, and one of the conclusions that has just come out about it is that if you don't do it through the administrators it doesn't get done, because if they feel left out, slighted or whatever they are in a position to obstruct anything else. Which is what happened. I felt no commitment to helping Region sort this one out, because it had not been done through the administrative net."

It is of course unusual to find a respondent so aware of why he is uncommitted to a problem; it appears to the researcher, however, not at all unusual to find respondents uncommitted to a defined problem.

(28) Specialism can lead to some problems being of no interest to those who could help with them.

One of the members said;

"Something that's being said elsewhere about both the elderly and the elderly mentally ill, and there are G.P.s saying this, that we never had these problems until we had specialists in geriatrics and specialists in the elderly mentally ill."

He went on to explain that because specialists know what they are and are not interested in, some problems (and in this case the problems are patients) will not fit the interests of any specialist. This problem of problems which none of the experts are prepared to
make their particular problem was one which the member who raised it planned to try to persuade some of the teams to take an interest in.

The Effects of Organizations on Problem-Construction in Teams.

This group of categories is concerned with the few generalized propositions that were made by team members about the consequences for problem-construction in terms of those teams being set within the context of an organization.

(24) The task of a team may be problem-construction.

Such a strategic category as this would have been unlikely to make sense to members other than the chairman and secretaries of teams, who saw it as part of their role to make wider judgements on the purpose, and effectiveness in achieving the purpose, of teams. One such person, when asked whether he thought it was right to think of Health Care Planning Teams as problem-finders for the District Management Team said;

"Yes. Yes I do. I don't think they do what the District Management Team tells them to, I think they also tell the District Management Team what should be looked at. There should be a dialogue. I am not for a moment suggesting this works very well."

While this member and others envisaged that it might be the proper task of a team to construct problems, nobody seemed sure that there were any teams successfully filling, and sticking to, that function.

(30) A team may or may not be an arena for problem-construction.

Whilst it is a much weaker assertion to say that a team may be an arena for problem-construction than to say that its task may be problem-construction, there were still members
prepared to challenge this. As was mentioned under the category "Sometimes you have to convince people that it is worth defining problems" one member did not believe that Health Care Planning Teams were at all an arena for constructing problems. Part of his reason for asserting this was that he believed that only one branch of the service had the appropriate information to know what the problems really were (as it happened, it was his branch of the service). There was thus no input that could usefully be offered by anybody else, and certainly no place for a whole team to work on problem-construction.

Another member, in a quotation that has already been used, also suggested that the use for which he had the teams in mind, while it had to do with problems, was not to do with problem-construction, when he said;

"... a quick burst of liaison now to get the message over so that we all know what each others' problems are, and possibly an annual check thereafter will get us working together."

In other words, he did not see the team as an arena for problem-construction, but rather as a place where problems might be shared so that different groups knew what problems faced other groups and were better able to cooperate; this is quite different from coming together to construct a problem together.

When problems are constructed in a team, they may still have to be accepted by higher authority.

Beliefs amongst members seemed to vary considerably on this topic, and to those who do not believe that problem-construction in a Health Care Planning Team may be rendered useless by the action of a higher authority of course this category is not particularly meaningful. To those who took a less optimistic
view of how their teams related to the power structure, however, this seemed to be a category of some importance. One member said;

"One almost gets the feeling that the HCPTs are a sort of con to give the impression of a democratic formulation of plans, which are completely knocked aside by either the Area or the Region, whichever happens to be the strongest at the time, and then you get this ridiculous idea of the HCPT all working together to produce a plan, but because it does not happen to fit with what the Region has decided is the best policy for the whole of the Region ... then it's got to be disregarded even though it fits the needs of the District."

Another member spoke of this category in a way which links it more clearly with the preceding category. He said;

"Whether the Health Care Planning Team can take on board that sort of problem I don't know. It seems to me that it's fairly limited in terms of what it can push up the line in terms of a problem. ... I think it's the best instrument possibly for the dissemination of information."

Summary: the Groups and Categories of this Chapter.

Problems as Constructions.
(1) Problems may or may not be seen as constructed.
(2) Knowing what a problem is.
(3) Problems may be multi-faceted.

Problems as Personal Constructions.
(4) Some people will construct a problem where others would not.
(5) Different people construct different problems.
(6) A person may construct a particular problem because of his past experience.
(7) A person may construct a particular problem as a result of reading papers and journals.
A person may construct a particular problem as a result of talking to others in a similar position.

Other Features of Problem-Construction.

Problem-construction may be done better if solution is not considered.

Problems may be constructed on different time scales.

Problems may be big or little, difficult or easy.

Problem-construction is time-consuming.

Perhaps you could go and get a batch of problems at one go.

Problem-definition does not mean that you know what to do about it.

Verbal definition of a problem is not necessary during problem-construction.

The Effects of Teams on Problem-Construction.

A problem-construction may be built within a team.

A team may have a particular orientation in problem-construction.

A person may define the problems for a team.

A person may try to persuade a team to take on his problems.

A person may accept another person's problem-construction in order to get agreement on one of his own.

One person may construct a problem and get other people to construct sub-problems.

Some people's presence in a meeting can affect the kind of problems that are constructed.

Persons may confound problem-construction in teams.

To construct problems in a team, everyone should have the power to make commitments.

Sometimes you have to convince people that it is worth defining problems.

Team problem-construction is affected by the way the team is run.

Persons may or may not be committed to a problem.

Specialism can lead to some problems being of no interest to those who could help with them.
The Effects of Organizations on Problem-Construction in Teams.

(29) The task of a team may be problem-construction.

(30) A team may or may not be an arena for problem-construction.

(31) When problems are constructed in a team, they may still have to be accepted by higher authority.
Chapter 11: Beliefs about Problem Construction in Particular Teams.

In this chapter we shall present and consider a number of the categories employed by team members to tell the researcher about the processes of problem-construction in individual teams, as distinct from their categories about HCPTs in Bath in general. We have again arranged the categories elicited in five groups, this grouping being imposed on the categories by the researcher to make the complexities of life more bearable for reader and writer. The major disadvantage of this method of presentation is not in the connexions that it makes but in the disconnexions that it implies; whilst we shall stress the relationships between some categories it would be entirely consistent with our methodology and our intentions if a reader, coming as he does with a different array of personal cognitive frameworks, were to see some different relationships and to gain some extra understandings from the data presented.

The five groupings that have been used for the categories in this chapter are:

1. The nature of problems.
2. Problem genesis.
3. Interpersonal and intergroup differences.
4. Team work.
5. Organizational relations.

The Nature of Problems.

This group of categories has been brought together because they all have something to do with the views of respondents on topics such as 'What causes problems?', 'What is a problem?', and thus they fill out for us the meaning which the term 'problem'
had for team members. This is another group of categories which the researcher believes he did not particularly encourage inter­viewees to tell him about. It was, after all, their beliefs about the construction of problems that he was interested in, not their beliefs about the nature of problems. It seems likely that the motivation for persons to tell the researcher about the categories in this group would have been that they saw their particular categories as noticeably different from those either of their colleagues or of the researcher; thus we may expect here a preponderance of beliefs which are believed by their holders to be ones that are not necessarily held by all men.

(32) **A problem may be self-evident.**

This belief was elicited on some occasions in response to questions from the researcher framed in terms of 'finding' problems for teams. In one case a team member said:

"The problem was so self-evident that again it didn't need to be looked for - that Dr. X is a consultant without beds."

The researcher did not have any success with attempting to get behind and beyond such assertions. For example, he would have liked to have known, if a problem was self-evident, just how did it evidence itself. Such questions did not however seem to be meaningful to those who used this category, who seemed rather to be saying that such problems were part of their world-taken-for-granted, and that it made no sense to explore where they came from.

(33) **Problems may have been identified some time ago, and nobody remembers by whom.**

We see this category as linked to the preceding one; a problem which is so accepted that nobody can remember who identified
it will probably be seen as self-evident (though none of our respondents made this connexion). One member, in explaining the several different ways in which the problems about the elderly mentally ill came to be recognized, said;

"The problem has obviously been recognized by other people, and I don't think it was just the fact that we didn't have a service for the elderly mentally ill that meant that, - there was a claim in for a new psychiatrist, and it was decided by the psychiatrists that he should be a consultant psychiatrist with an interest in the elderly mentally ill ... I really can't remember now whether it was my influence or somebody else's."

(34) A problem may be identified with no idea of what is causing it.

Nobody described a problem which they themselves had for which they did not either know or hazard a guess at the cause, but it seemed that persons may believe that other persons have a problem without knowing what causes it. For example, it was said in connexion with Regional infant mortality figures;

"If you look at (another District) they've got some very high figures there, - significantly high. They've got a problem. Nobody knows what's causing the problem, they've got a problem."

Even when referring to the problems of others there seems to be a strong inclination to postulate a cause for the problem. So the respondent above continued with;

"It could be that their Rubella immunisation's lousy."

We take the respondent to be implying that if he were in the position of the people who have got the problem, he would know how to go about finding out what is causing it; this is consistent with our suggestion that persons believe that others may have a problem and not know what is causing it, but do not conceive of this happening to themselves.
(35) Problems may have more than one cause.

It is noticeable how many problems are identified and
assumed to have a single cause, whether or not that cause is at
present known; problems which were described to the researcher as
having multiple causes were relatively few. Here is an example
of one which was;

"I think a problem has been identified in that there are
increasing numbers of young-to-middle-aged mentally handicapped
people who are living with their parents, whose parents are
dying or becoming incapable of looking after them, and who thus
are being thrown on to the health services or to the social
services in the broadest sense. And because families are
changing, the level is also increasing because people don't want
to look after their batty relatives anyway."

(36) A 'problem-definition' is always partial.

Not all team members were happy with the researcher's use of
the term 'problem-definition'. For some of them it connoted a
process which would be detrimental to effective work on a problem.
For example, one member said;

"After all, to define a problem you automatically imply that you
don't write a 5-page report on a problem, you define it in a
sentence, you know, which is impossible because it's always got
its sort of subtleties on it."

The researcher, incidentally, saw this criticism as quite
valid. Except that 'problem-definition' is an established phrase
in the literature, the concept as it has been described and used
in this thesis would be better connoted by the phrase 'problem-
description' with 'description' driving out 'definition' in the
same way, and for the same reasons, as described in Chapter 3.

(37) A problem may be important without being urgent.

The scope of the term 'problem' as used in this research
was intended to include a wider range of situations where something was not as someone would have it be, and not just problems narrowly defined as deficiencies. The researcher had therefore envisaged that he would need sometimes to make it explicit that his interests embraced opportunities, needs etc., within problems. For some persons however 'problem' could have some implications for urgency. One member described how this was not necessarily the case as follows;

"It's not a matter of urgency. It won't be a disaster if we don't have an assessment panel for the elderly for another five years; what will happen is that in five years time we will still have old people living in the residential homes because they were put there because they became a crisis, they went into a crisis situation, they had to be housed, the only vacancy was in such-and-such a place, so they put them there, but it was the wrong place for them, and over five years several other people who should have been put there will not be able to get in."

(38) Reformulating a problem to make it more soluble will not necessarily help. If a problem comes to seem difficult or intractable to a person or team, one possible way forward is to reformulate that problem until it comes to be in a form in which it is more soluble. However, it is then possible that solutions to the reformulated problem, while they may relieve the pressure on, and give a feeling of satisfaction to, the team which did the reformulation, may not solve the original problem which some person had and which caused them to seek the help of the team. One member, talking of reformulation as if it were a temptation in this case, said;

"For example we could have been influenced - thank God it didn't happen on Monday - we could have been influenced when we were talking about a 60 or 90 bed unit by the fact that most of us
round the table knew that we wouldn't get a 90 bed unit, because of the financial strictures, and if we would say that 60 would do, we would have a better chance of getting it. But what's the good?"

(39) **You could run out of problems.**

A team which is charged, as Health Care Planning Teams are, with finding problems, must somehow ensure that they can always find some problems if they are to continue as a team. One member said;

"So I see the Health Care Planning Team for the elderly going on and on and on. There seems to be no shortage of problems which it's worth while for them to consider, whereas for other teams, the maternity one is being superseded by Bath Health District Obstetric Committee ..."

This particular category has some interesting implications if linked with a view of problems as constructions rather than things, since there is no reason why any person or team should ever run out of potentialities for constructing problems. However, the researcher did not persuade any of the interviewees to develop this theme.

**Problem Genesis.**

The categories in this group all have to do with how it is that particular problems do or do not come to be recognized and defined as problems. We have here the more general of such categories, whilst those that bear on the finding of particular problems but also on how some persons and teams come to find particular problems or on team work factors will come in the subsequent two groups.
Problems may be identified from norms and statistics.

The Department of Health and Social Security publishes various figures for norms of health care provision per unit of population (or sometimes per unit of a particular type of population), which may be used by Districts to compare with their actual figures. Whilst these are referred to as 'ministry norms', so far as the researcher could establish they are in fact average figures. One member, when asked how he got interested in a particular problem, answered:

"One of the reasons is, would you believe, purely because there are ministry norms which say you should have \( x \) acute services, \( y \) maternity services and somewhere near the bottom you get to services for the elderly mentally ill. One of the things I have done since I have been here is to make a table of what we ought to have on ministry norms and what we have got, and it's very noticeable indeed that elderly mentally ill should have \( x \), got - none, actually defined that way, so that is one of the reasons why there's a problem."

It appeared to the researcher that the norms and statistics could only lead to problem-finding when coupled with some other means of perception; the totality of the norms and statistics available to team members may be presumed to be too big to be used without selective searching on the part of the members, and that selective searching must be guided by some preconceptions of where problems may be found. It seems that norms and statistics are more likely to be employed for confirming and formulating a defined problem. One of the team members said that he quite often used a categorization of needs that he had once been taught, as - normative need, felt need, expressed need, and comparative need. He said that the further up the hierarchy you have to go to deal with a problem, the more you have to talk in terms of normative
need. He believed that people started with felt, local needs, and then had to translate their problems into terms of normative need if it was important that their constructions should be acceptable to Region or the Department.

(41) There is a lot of information already available which could be used for problem-finding.

This category is clearly related to the preceding one and may be regarded as an amplification of it. A respondent said;

"The way a few problems have come up, but nothing like as many as should be, is for me to look at a large page of statistics ... What I would like to do is to spend my time, and I would like several other people to be spending their time, just using the information that already exists on official returns and everything else, and just pointing out what looked to be anomalies, problems and whatever, 'cause there's lots of them, and then, talking with the people concerned with the problem, i.e. the Health Care Planning Team, getting some ideas, going back, doing some more devilling, and perhaps eventually agreeing that there is a problem in XYZ, and agreeing what we can do about it. The trouble is, I just haven't got time."

The last sentence of that extract may be taken as supporting the argument under the preceding category that it is unlikely that norms and statistics will be used for the initial perception of problems.

(42) Field-workers may be a better guide to problems than the norms are.

There seemed to be a belief underlying many statements from respondents which ran something like this: 'the problem-perceptions which are most worth following are those of the primary field-workers who provide the care being talked about.' For example, the researcher asked one member how he knew there was under-provision of a particular service which he had said was
underprovided in Bath. He said;

"I keep quoting the figures in Bath that we have got 100 kids in Bath who could use such a unit, so the social workers say who look after these kids.

Interviewer. So it's figures from the social workers rather than comparison with norms, is it?

Respondent. Well as far as I'm concerned yes, because I think norms are, well they're just figures. I think this is a false attitude. ... I think you should look at what actually is happening in your area rather than look at norms overall, because there are so many different things that can happen."

Another member said, when describing a team meeting which the researcher had missed;

"The consultant came in at this point to say that it was all very nice getting these figures, but, - I've actually got a direct quote here, - "There's a risk of getting figures which do not mirror the problem"."

Thus it seems that several people judge the norms and statistics by the problems they see rather than discovering problems from the norms and statistics.

(43) Problems may be defined for a team by consensus.

There may be a link here with the notion of problems being self-evident (32). Sometimes in a team members feel that they had all shared a common perception of a problem from the outset. For example one member described a meeting which he attended of a group of consultants who defined a problem, which later came to the Health Care Planning Team, in the following way;

"They are all over the place, they are in old peoples' homes, they're in hospital, there is no one service for them looking at their needs in particular, they are rolled up with everybody else, and the psychiatrists who they are normally treated by wanted to all get together and talk about how there could be such a service."
Whether an historical analysis of that team meeting would lead us to agree with the respondent that no particular person was responsible for finding the problem, but that all those involved simply came together on it is beside the point. Even whether the respondent would believe that, if questioned more thoroughly, is beside the point. He believes now that those psychiatrists all wanted to get together to talk about the problem, and that is the belief according to which he will take decisions and act.

(44) Some problems may be discovered by generalizing from cases.

There seemed to be considerable agreement over this category, which administrators regard as a characteristically medical way of going about problem-finding. One interviewee spoke of an assessment team that he belongs to as follows:

"Those in contact with the family come along with the family's problems. And when you hear it repeated often enough you realize there is a problem, not just an individual problem, not just a particular family's problem but a general one. ... The health visitors are very useful, because they are in contact with the family, whereas we tend to forget the customer - the problem is how to deal with the customer, not the customer's problem."

We see here a link with the idea that "Field-workers may be a better guide to problems than the norms are" (42). Also here, implicitly, is the notion that the same customer may provide different sorts of problem for different members of a service. To one group he may be a person whom they have the problem of helping, and to another a person whom they have the problem of preventing from being a nuisance to them. Another member said:

"I think the team for the elderly has got more life than practically all the others put together. Maybe because everybody knows about the elderly so to speak, they can identify, sit and tell stories about their own experiences with their elderly
relatives, and are prepared to talk about it. And I think that this idea of looking at small areas has worked quite well. There's a lot of mileage in that, identifying local problems, making suggestions about how they should be solved."

Another member, in describing one of several factors which led her to define a particular problem, said;

"Every time we meet as an assessment team there is one or sometimes two cases who could use such a daily living skills unit."

(45) **A problem may come to a team through people complaining to one of the members.**

This category is related again to the one about field-workers being a better guide to problems than the norms are (42). When asked how an issue that he said he intended to raise at a Health Care Planning Team meeting came to be an issue for him, one member said;

"Well it came up to me from the wardens complaining, "Am I really expected to bath old Mrs. Bloggs," sort of thing ... constantly coming up."

(46) **Whole areas of work may be defined as unproblematic.**

Ultimately one cannot say how some circumstances come to be defined as problems without saying something about how other circumstances come to be defined as not problems. An interviewee told the researcher why he did not see the need to look for problems in one area.

"The service for children in this District is not bad at all really. Very few of them come into hospital, which is what the main bit of guidance about children is, - don't bring them into hospital, we run peripheral clinics all over the place, so that mums don't have to travel long distances on buses. There's not that many problems with children, so far as one knows."
Sometimes a problem is only felt in the light of a solution. Sequential models of problem-solving have usually assumed that the person will become aware of a problem before becoming aware of a solution to it. It seems that sometimes, however, it may be that awareness of a solution leads people to feel a problem. On one occasion a social worker who had been experimenting with a new form of relief arrangements for parents of mentally handicapped children came to address a Health Care Planning Team. One member said afterwards;

"I think to some extent it answered a problem they didn't know they had, and don't now. ... These few emergency situations, it obviously is an answer to that, but is that really a problem?"

He went on to explain that in the past parents had obviously found some way of accommodating this situation, but that now a possible solution had been shown to the team, the team might regard the lack of a support service to parents as being a problem. Another member identified a similar process which, as it happened, occurred in the same team on very much the same issue. He said, of another relief service;

"Because we had the service in a ward at St. Martin's for about three months over the holiday period and we had a fantastic amount of letters from them saying you know, great, specially families where there are normal kids in the family, it's the first time they could have gone off on holiday and not had to worry about Johnnie. It's a great relief to have a period of even a couple of weeks away like that, because it must be a great strain."

The solution once having been found would mean that the problem was recurrent. This notion is similar to that of producers creating the demand for their products.
Sometimes things may come together so that a problem is defined by its solution.

This category is closely related to the preceding one, but here there is a sense of the problem and solution being perceived more nearly at the same time. Rather than a solution being perceived and a problem being defined for it, some other change takes place in the perceptual world of the problem-finder such that he sees two objects in his world as being problem and solution to each other. One team member, when running through the agenda for a forthcoming meeting, said of an item:

"Item 5, Rural training for probation and settlement of mentally handicapped, was an article I found in a magazine, and from my point of view it's something that I think we could look at for St. George's, because St. George's is in a rural area and has got several acres of land around it."

He went on to explain that the article had commended a particular mode of action, and that by following its recommendations several different problems would fall into place. Another interviewee described a similarly complex process of slotting in of problems and solutions:

"The problem tended to be defined as people were defining solutions, and the two are very sort of subtly intermixed I think in that way."

Another member gave a fuller account of one of these cases where several problems and solutions were intertwined.

"For a long time it has given me some concern that a very large nurses' home stands more or less empty down there, heated, cleaned and wasting valuable resources because space is as much a resource as anything, isn't it? And not being used, and we began to talk about it, staff here, the senior staff and I, about the possibility of some sort of day unit being opened there ... The assessment team was formed ... Within a few months it was very obvious that there was a crying need for the very
sort of unit that we eventually thought up."

The interviewee went on to explain two other factors which linked in with this, one of which was an awareness that institutionalized mentally handicapped people needed training before they could achieve any measure of independence in that they needed to be taught daily-living skills (and assessed as to the extent of their learning), and the other was that it was no use saying that they could assess people on the ward where they were under the care of the nurses who had looked after them for years. Thus a whole group of factors had been brought together in such a way that, by the end, it would have been very difficult to say what was the problem and what was the solution. Another example of a similar process was given as follows:

"This idea of having a mental illness unit in Bath big enough to cope with not only the existing Bath catchment area but Somerset as well has certainly been in the back of my mind since—certainly June or some time, when we heard that the existing consultant who does the job was retiring in February, and we were asked you know what was our very long term attitude to it."

Another example, and it is difficult to say whether this one belongs to this category or to the preceding one, is again a statement made about the question of relief services for the parents of mentally handicapped children.

"I think, funnily enough, this answer that we were given there was an answer not necessarily to the problem that it was an answer to, I think it's probably an answer to other problems, as much as that. Whether it's a workable answer for this Area, of course, is another matter, and of course this is the social services' decision anyway. ... We were considering that this was an alternative to holiday relief type care that we were thinking of in an institution, but it turned out to be much subtler than that, and the problem the parents had posed in this
was of course completely different to the one that we had assumed they had."

The problem to which he was referring in that last sentence was that parents who had not made any use of the service had expressed great relief at its existence; it seemed that the availability of the service had revealed an anxiety among parents about what they would do in the case of an emergency which no one had known of before and which was never observable until it was allayed.

(49) Systematic problem-finding is time-consuming.

By the word 'systematic' here we mean problem finding which checks through the places where there might be problems one by one to see if there are any. One member said of problem-finding from norms and statistics;

"I love doing it, and I wish I could spend more time doing it, but the way things have been going in the Health Service in the last couple of years, I keep on firefighting."

Another member made a similar point, saying;

"Somebody made the point, which I think is a perfectly reasonable one, that services are often given to those whose relatives shout the loudest, and not to those who live on their own without relatives. Which is a very valid point. Really we ought to go out problem-spotting, but of course we don't, or on very rare occasions, but I have done it."

Interpersonal and Intergroup Differences.

In this group are gathered categories to do with interviewees' beliefs about the way in which different individuals or groups of individuals affect the process of problem-finding in particular teams.
One person may see something as problematic where others do not.

This was quite a widespread category, but one which was usually to be found implicit in what a member said, rather than as an explicit statement. For example, one person said:

"We had somebody here to talk to us from social services about their minimum support home in Trowbridge, how it functioned, and I was absolutely horrified when it came to questions at the end to find that there was no preparation of these people ... They haven't been taught how to lead this quite new life."

The respondent here is telling us of a problem which she saw, and saw as serious, in a situation where others had not seen anything problematic. We suspect that the reason why this category is usually found in such implicit forms is that most respondents regard the point being made as obvious, and therefore not worth making to an interviewer.

Different types of person may formulate different types of problem.

This category arises in two senses. In the first of them, persons often attribute to a whole group or profession of other persons a particular propensity, according to their stereotype of that group or profession. Thus one member said:

"Doctors see clinical problems, individual ones; the administrators are the ones who seem to see the bigger ones."

As it happens, this was said by an administrator.

In the second sense of the category, it may be seen as a part of the organizational role of the different functions or professions to define different types of problem according to what they are able to offer in the way of solutions. One member, who thought this, went on to point out the consequent difficulty, which is, how do you know that the person who in fact formulated a
significant definition of a problem. One member said:

"This is the trouble with consultants of course. If a chap wanted to specialise in surgery of the big toe he specialised in surgery of the big toe because he thought that was the most important thing in life he could do."

This may make for dedication but it is not likely to be conducive to consensus problem-finding in teams.

(54) Specialist perspective may be helpful in problem-construction.

This is the converse of the preceding category; in this case it is considered that, the world being a big and complicated place, specialization is necessary in order to achieve 'good' problem-finding. It was said:

"Obviously the services are so complicated that it's good to identify sort of one health care group and have a group who are specifically involved in dealing with that group to decide which is the way that group should go."

(55) Other persons' ways of formulating problems may or may not be seen as adequate.

Quite a lot of judgements were made by persons about differences between different persons and different groups in their problem-finding which seemed to recognize that there may be different approaches without one necessarily being better than another. At the same time, there was considerable evaluation as to whether other persons or groups were contributing to problem-finding in a 'good', 'helpful' or 'successful' way. One member described how he had dealt with a group whose style of problem-formulation he was finding inadequate.

"It was a lovely meeting, typical doctors' meeting for the first hour. It was all "I had a case of so-and-so and so-and-so", "Oh, yes, I had one like that". We went on and on and on,
nobody thinking about the overall problem, and I said, "Come on, what problems have you got, Are they ones you could solve by tomorrow or do they require somebody to give you some money or build something, and we eventually, after another hour, got round to a list of actual problems."

(56) Persons in a team may discourage the formulation of a type of problem.

Categories such as this will be considered more in Chapters 13 and 14 when we look at some rules which seem to operate in problem-finding and the enforcement of those rules. They are also connected with the present topic of interpersonal differences. Here is an example of how the formulation of particular problems may be inhibited.

"Figures are a very difficult thing to put over. But frankly I might as well have been talking Russian or something mightn't I? I exaggerate, but there was no real interest was there in those figures? I mean I can't be objective, it is very difficult. I mean one of our colleagues was doing his best to illustrate his lack of interest by falling asleep - quite deliberately, of course he wasn't asleep at all, you realize that?

Interviewer. Well I couldn't see from where I was.

Respondent. No he wasn't asleep, he was playing a game. He always does that; it's his way of saying he doesn't like that particular topic."

(57) It may be difficult for some persons to contribute to realistic problem-finding.

Realistic here must mean realistic in the terms of whoever it is who is making this observation. One of the members described this difficulty as he saw it for some other members, saying;

"In their hearts, the geriatricians would like to run a more sort of tuned-up, high what-do-you-call-it, you know, getting people early on in their disease and having emergency admissions and things like this, but on the other hand they know that you need
about five geriatricians to run a thing like that in the District, not the two that we've got. In terms of what there ought to be in the main District general hospital, they find it very difficult to project themselves. Still, I think we shall have screwed an idea out of them."

In other words, this member saw the other members concerned as having difficulty in finding and working with the relatively small problems that could be handled as against the need they felt for a very radical improvement in their service. A similar difference between the problem which the person would ideally like to define and the problem that he can regard it as practically useful to define may be seen in the following quotation.

"You could just sort of say "Right, you know, the Health Service is filling in for social services at the moment, and it's expensive. We can no longer afford to do it. Social services and housing, get on and provide what you are meant to do, and I don't want to hear any more from you until you have. Great. If I was the local dictator. But it's just not realistic, we aren't going to be able to overcome the shortage of social service and housing sort of things for years and years and years, so we have to carry on thinking about things that we can do that don't cost as much money."

(58) A person may bring to a team a problem which he sees as being caused by another member of that team.

There are usually some rules against doing this in a team, but some respondents saw one of the benefits of a multi-disciplinary team such as the Health Care Planning Teams as being that members of one profession could make members of another profession aware of some consequences of their actions which they might not otherwise have known about. Thus one social worker told the researcher how she had used the Maternity Health Care Planning Team to make doctors aware of the consequences of ordering home help for a
patient without specifying how long that help should continue, leading in some cases to unnecessary dependency on the part of the patient, and unavailability of the home help service for others more needy. In this case the respondent believed that awareness of the problem on the part of the doctors had led to its disappearance.

Team Work.

This is a group of categories that derive from statements made by team members about the implications which the interpersonal processes in those teams and the problem-construction activities in them have for each other. This group is perhaps of particular interest in that, by the way it has been defined, it is likely to contain the most direct statements of team members' beliefs about problem-construction in their teams.

(59) An overall problem may be defined in a team for other problems to fit within.

The more general notion that one may construct a large problem which contains several smaller problems seemed to be quite widely shared, and thus the present category may be seen as an acknowledgement that a person may construct a problem at either the more general or the more particular level. For example, one interviewee said to the researcher:

"The basis of the Health Care Planning Team, when we first met is that we decided we should aim to consume our own smoke on all aspects of mental handicap, and that's what we're going to try to do."

He went on to suggest some of the more particular problems that had been constructed in that Health Care Planning Team within the overall problem definition quoted above. Another member, in
describing the same problem-definition in the same team, linked the notion of an overall problem with that of a self-evident problem, which we have discussed above. He said;

"I mean, our initial problem, baldly stated, was, we haven't got the resources within our District to deal with mentally handicapped. Self-evident problem, everybody should have realized it by then, that's why they're in there."

Another member of this same team sharpened up the category a little by talking about how there had been a massive problem for the team generally because of the almost total lack of provision, but her own problems were rather different, because she was running almost the only facility that existed; she thus identified a difference between the overall defined problem of the team and the constructed problem of one of its members. This member also described how it had been necessary for the team to "break down" the overall problem to pieces that they could handle. She said;

"Actually this breaking down, this sort of deciding how we could even begin to tackle the problem, was something that took up a lot of our early meetings."

We are not aware of having met this category of separable levels of defined problem in the context of purely individual problem-definition, although it was quite a widely held belief about team problem-definition.

(60) A person may need help on a part, but not all, of a problem-formulation.

This is rather analogous to the preceding category, except that it is one level more specific. This category is about the situation where a person constructs the problem but needs the help of some other person or persons with some definite part of that construction. This help may often be specialist information,
and since it is probable that the person knows what information it is that he wants to collect from other people, it is better conceived of as a personal problem-construction than as a team one. One member gave the following example of how he had got help with part of a formulation:

"What do you do with the kids when they get to the age of sixteen, and they are no longer the responsibility of the education authorities? I mean, it is said that they can stay on at school and so on, but it seems both by statistics and subjectively that there is not very much for people to do, there's not enough places in adult training centres. I mean, who's training anyway, so to speak. What we need is sheltered work, and there's all sorts of rules about sheltered work that if you are in a sheltered workshop you've still got to be able to produce either a half or a third as much as an ordinary person and some of the mentally handicapped are not even capable of that, but still need somewhere to go rather than hang around at home. ... I found that out by going to talk to X, the consultant for rehabilitation."

(61) One person may be able to predict or control the problem-finding of a team.

We use the phrase "predict or control" because, although we shall give what we believe to be one example of each, it is often difficult to tell the difference. In terms of a prediction, one member said;

"If you look back at the original agenda for the first meeting of the Health Care Planning Team ... it listed, well being big-headed I listed, on that agenda, what I thought was going to be the things for that year, and lo and behold, that's what we have been talking about for the last year too."

It may be suspected that this member was not sure that his prophecy had not helped to cause its own fulfilment. A more direct example of a person controlling the problem-finding of a
team, however, will be found in the following extract, in which a team member is talking about how the problem of the elderly mentally ill came to be a recognized problem in the District. A meeting had been called by a newly appointed psychiatrist, who had an interest in the elderly mentally ill written in to his job description.

"And what they did was sit round for three hours and tell stories about the problems they had with the elderly mentally ill. And if you read the notes of the meeting, I mean two of them afterwards said, "How the bloody hell did you get that lot out? That's not what we said at all" so to speak. And it wasn't. But I mean if I had reported what they said it would have just been an absolute nonsense ... they just sort of talked. And I wrote notes which said the number of elderly people in the district is so-and-so and all this sort of stuff, and ended up by saying, "It was agreed there should be a further meeting involving nurses and social workers and people like that."

Interviewer. This was all your invention, was it?
Respondent. Yeah. Well, X's and my invention actually. But X is quite willing to be guided by me.

(62) One person may persuade others to go along with his construction of the problem.

This is connected with the preceding category in that persuading others to go along with a construction of a problem is just one overt way of controlling problem-finding in a team. A respondent said;

"What came out of that meeting was a disagreement between X and the Roundway consultants about what the problem was in terms of Roundway, and they were saying "We haven't got enough beds, and we can't get any people in, and they're all a bloody nuisance when they're here anyway, sort of wandering around trying to find their handbags which they haven't had for twenty years and all this sort of stuff," and X saying "Well there is something that can be done for the elderly mentally ill, and you don't have to
admit them for ever just because they come in once" etc. etc. etc.. And what's happened is that Roundway have come round to that way of thinking, in that instead of moaning about their problem they in fact surveyed it (and found it not to be very big)."

It seems that on this occasion rational persuasion was used to encourage a team to reconsider and reformulate a problem.

(63) A team can only address so many issues at a time.

Whilst no team members said how many issues would be too many for a team or what indicators they would use to recognize when too many issues were being attempted, there did seem to be a category of a certain number of issues that could be handled, and that there could be such a thing as an excessive number. At one meeting, according to an interviewee;

"We weren't dealing with specific issues; we were rambling round a whole lot of things with no particular plan in mind. Thursday strikes me as being a very crucial meeting with far too many issues to be considered at that one meeting."

(64) A problem may not be identified if there are other problems being worked on.

Some persons see problems as Hydra-headed: when you solve one you always discover another one in its place. For example, it was said;

"There is a problem. Having solved all our other problems, we now recognize that we are not doing anything for wandering alcoholics etc.."

(65) Problem-finding may be choked off if the problems are not then being solved.

This may be seen as an amplification of the previous category in that it is not the finding of problems but the solving of them which leads to the discovery of new problems. If however problems
are found and not solved, then new problems may not be found. As one member said:

"I wonder what the mental handicap team is, I think it's going to find it difficult to find things to talk about for the next year, because I think it has identified problems and proposed solutions to its own satisfaction, and until somebody else does something about those problems ... or says they're going to do something about them, I don't think they'll go any further."

(66) **Small problems may be easier to handle.**

This is connected with the first category in this group (59), about overall problems being defined for other problems to fit within. One member described how, in a group faced with a big overall problem, which was proving to be time consuming, small problems were almost welcomed.

"In fact perhaps that's why small projects like mine found quite a bit of favour at the start with the group, simply because it was easier to deal with small individual items like that than to decide at the beginning how to tackle the larger."

(67) **You cannot keep problem-finding and problem-solving separate in a team.**

The researcher refrained from arguing with the team member who said;

"You can't argue what the problem is for half an hour, and then argue what the solution is for half an hour. It just doesn't work, because if you define a problem everybody is thinking of solutions as you define it. This is the way we think, isn't it, as normal human beings."

As the person who said this was quite capable of talking in terms of defining and finding problems as separable from solving them, we should probably interpret the above quotation as meaning that problem-finding and problem-solving cannot be kept separate
in time as sequential stages, although they can be distinguished as separate activities.

(68) **The usefulness of teams may be for gaining commitment to a problem rather than for problem-finding.**

This category was used with particular reference to consultants, whose commitment might be gained through a team if in no other way. One member, when asked why he needed anybody to collaborate with on problem-finding, said:

"The reason you need them there is because there are things like persuading a consultant to go and do a clinic in Melksham rather than Corsham, or not doing a clinic at all."

Consultants, it appears, have considerable power to inhibit the taking of actions by other members of the health service unless they know the reasons for those actions. If you have either the appearance or the reality of problem-construction in a team which includes that consultant or a representative of his discipline, he will believe that the subsequent problem-solving measures are justified. Such a process also protects persons from accusations of high-handedness. One member said:

"There's another thing about the strategic planning; I wanted to make sure that everybody around that was committed, particularly the two consultants. I didn't want anybody coming back later saying "We weren't consulted"."

(69) **People may agree that a problem is important and yet not want to own it.**

It is difficult to envisage how a clear example for this category could come up, because if nobody is prepared to take ownership for a problem, even if people do think that problem important, it is not likely to be raised. The researcher asked one team member how he felt about the way the issue of alcoholism
had been raised and looked at in a team meeting. He said;

"Bit premature, really, to say very much on this. They didn't throw it out altogether. Nobody showed any great enthusiasm for the problem, but at least I got it aired. I don't think we shall achieve anything, quite honestly."

He went on to explain that this pessimism was because nobody was likely to take a special interest in the problem. On the question of housing the elderly, the view of one of the members was that everybody probably thinks that everybody else is trying to pass the buck to them. Again the belief seemed to be that team members regarded the problem as important enough that they would have supported any member who wished to define and formulate that problem for the team, but in the absence of a member with such a wish, no action would be taken.

(70) Some persons may bring problems to the relevant team indiscriminately.

One member said;

"If X hears of any problems at all to do with the mentally ill or geriatrics or whatever team he puts them on the agenda."

On another occasion, one member had been present at a different meeting with another member, where it had been agreed not to bring a particular problem to the Health Care Planning Team. To his surprise, that member raised the problem at the next team meeting.

"I'm not sure whether he just sort of thought "I'm at a Health Care Planning Team about mental illness, my biggest problem is the elderly mentally ill, therefore we must talk about it", forgetting that something else - something slightly different - had been agreed somewhere else, or not. I think it was probably actually that he had forgotten."

This category is perhaps most interesting because of the
implication it carries that in fact most persons do discriminate about whether to bring problems to the relevant planning team.

(71) Persons may be invited to a problem-finding meeting for all sorts of reasons.

Teams are not to be thought of as carefully and rationally selected groups of ideal problem-finders. One member described how he believed he came to be invited to a particular meeting.

"The reason I was there I think is because I get on with him extremely well. He is about the same age as I am. He said "Come along and hold my hand, so to speak, because the rest of the buggers don't believe me anyway, and it would be nice to have somebody there who knows a little bit about it."

Organizational Relations.

The final group is of categories to do with relationships between different teams or different organizations, and the effect these have on problem-construction in teams.

(72) Problems may come to a team by order of an outside body.

One reason why teams come to regard some issues as being a problem needing to be worked upon is that they have been told so to regard that issue by someone from whom they take orders. For example, in describing where one item on an agenda had come from, a member said;

"It is the Area Health Authority who decided the need for strategic planning; I am not sure that they know themselves what strategic planning is; I rather think they are after information."

On another occasion, also talking about where items on an agenda had come from, a member said;

"Don't forget to some extent I am not my own master in this. I mean this was something the Region had asked us to do. So this
was one of the reasons it was put on the table, that Region had produced the figures."

(73) Problems may be defined by fashions in the opinion of superordinate bodies.

This is significantly different from the last category, because whereas in that case the power was exercised by one body giving an order to another, in this case it is exercised more subtly by one body believing that something is or is not approved of by another. Thus one member, in telling the researcher where a team got its problems, said:

"Do you think you need to know about - large psychiatric hospitals in isolated places are no longer the in thing as far as the Department is concerned, and you ought to have mental illness units in each District General Hospital, - because that is part of the background of where they get their problems from certainly."

Another member went into more detail on this, but this time the relationship described is with Area rather than the Department, and that gives the added complexity that there are members from Area on the Health Care Planning Team. He said:

"One underlying problem we've got in the mental handicap Health Care Planning Team at the moment is that Area seem to see the services going in a very modernistic approach to looking after the mentally handicapped, you know, driving them as far as possible to get their fullest potential in large units such as the R.U.H. ... whereas people like X and myself and I think Y is the same view tend to think that the services we've already got like St. George's, Semington, for example, are doing a good job, and we should develop it there rather than develop it here. So we're looking to develop St. George's, improve it there, where the Area are looking to set up new units, perhaps on the R.U.H. site. So there's a bit of a dichotomy there between the two of us, and of course they're members of the team as well."
To get a team's formulation of a problem accepted by higher authority, informal politicking may be called for.

Evidence for the importance of this category, and to a lesser extent this goes for this whole group of categories, turned up more or less fortuitously, as the researcher did not become aware of the importance of it until he was well into the fieldwork and it started emerging from the data. A decision was then made not to focus on this area; there is undoubtedly much more here to investigate, in fact too much to be investigated without making a special study of it. However, some respondents did make statements on this topic. One of them said:

"I am not supposed to approach Region, I am supposed to do it all through Area, but in fact I reckon it was worth an investment of a couple of pints of beer to a friend of mine in a pub in Wiltshire, and I showed him round Semington en route and explained what we are trying to do, and so far as I know we shouldn't have a problem now except when it formally goes (for decision by the Area Health Authority, rather than the Officers). But it wouldn't - I don't think they would have accepted it without that."

Here is another example:

"I think that clearly the Health Care Planning Team has been a reasonably formidable pressure group in this. I mean, clearly there was a considerable amount of work which you don't see going on outside with me talking to various people, trying to persuade them to the Health Care Planning Team's point of view."

You may have to go ahead with solving a past problem.

The organizational constraints on, for example, planning in the Health Service are such that the disappearance or changing of a problem can not be assumed to mean that the solution should also disappear or change. Here are some extracts from a conversation between the researcher and a team member on the building of a new
maternity unit.

"Interviewer." Does the problem that that was designed to meet still exist?
Respondent. No.

Interviewer. It doesn't.

Respondent. But the incredible lead time on planning Health Service buildings means that we are going to get, I mean we need a maternity unit ... but it certainly doesn't need to be 112 beds. But, the trouble is, you are meant to plan Health Service buildings to last sixty years. Well who the hell knows what is going to happen to birth rates in sixty years, If you look at what's happened in the last sixty years it's done that (draws a graph in the air with his finger). We have a quick war and the birth rate goes down, and then everybody comes home again and - whoopee. ... We certainly don't need 112 beds, although we certainly need a new maternity unit. But to get the bloody thing at all, we now have to convince everybody else that we are going to use the whole thing for maternity, and the only way you can do that is by restricting the number of births that take place in small hospitals. Therefore you have to close beds.

Interviewer. So why do you carry on with the same plans then, the same plans for 112 beds?

Respondent. Why?

Interviewer. Yeah.

Respondent. Because it takes something like four years to go from "Let's have 112 beds" to "Here is a document which you can go out to tender on", and if we said "We've changed our minds, chaps, we now only want 60 beds or 90 beds or something," that's three years."

(76) Problem-constructions and solutions may be traded off between groups.
Sometimes groups may proceed to achieve something together if they can negotiate a problem-construction which is acceptable to both of them. As one member put it;

"Two groups of people, two groups met, over one problem. They both had their solutions in mind. They both meant different
things till they got together, and then they both realized they both meant the same thing or almost and traded it off."

Unfortunately no further elaboration of this category was forthcoming.

(77) Several teams may be expected to find and address the same issue.

One member said;
"You've got this quite ridiculous situation of the five different bodies at different levels all considering the same thing; there's the HCPTs, the Joint Planning Teams who discuss mental handicap as well, there's the Area group for strategic planning, and then there's the Regional one, and all those teams or groups are getting together on the same material, and somehow producing all separate things, none of which are ever kind of brought together, and it seems to be almost as though the strongest in the end is going to win."

(78) A person with cross-membership of teams may come to see them as equivalent for some purposes.

This category is very closely related to the last, the difference being that, where in the last category different teams addressing the same issue are seen as being a duplication of effort, in this case a person with membership of more than one team may see plenty of work for each of those teams, even if he gets confused about which of the teams in a particular discipline he is talking about, as for example in the following fragment;
"We got the Health Care - well in fact we got the Obstetric Committee, but it doesn't matter, we got a Health Care Planning Team in all but name ..."
Summary: the Groups and Categories of this Chapter.

The Nature of Problems.

(32) A problem may be self-evident.

(33) Problems may have been identified some time ago, and nobody remembers by whom.

(34) A problem may be identified with no idea of what is causing it.

(35) Problems may have more than one cause.

(36) A 'problem-definition' is always partial.

(37) A problem may be important without being urgent.

(38) Reformulating a problem to make it more soluble will not necessarily help.

(39) You could run out of problems.

Problem Genesis.

(40) Problems may be identified from norms and statistics.

(41) There is a lot of information already available which could be used for problem-finding.

(42) Field-workers may be a better guide to problems than the norms are.

(43) Problems may be defined for a team by consensus.

(44) Some problems may be discovered by generalizing from cases.

(45) A problem may come to a team through people complaining to one of the members.

(46) Whole areas of work may be defined as unproblematic.

(47) Sometimes a problem is only felt in the light of a solution.

(48) Sometimes things may come together so that a problem is defined by its solution.

(49) Systematic problem-finding is time-consuming.

Interpersonal and Intergroup Differences.

(50) One person may see something as problematic where others do not.

(51) Different types of person may formulate different types of problem.
(52) Different groups may have different ideas about what is needed in problem-formulation.

(53) Specialists will have a limited perspective when it comes to problem-finding.

(54) A specialist perspective may be helpful in problem-construction.

(55) Other persons' ways of formulating problems may or may not be seen as adequate.

(56) Persons in a team may discourage the formulation of a type of problem.

(57) It may be difficult for some persons to contribute to realistic problem-finding.

(58) A person may bring to a team a problem which he sees as being caused by another member of that team.

**Team Work.**

(59) An overall problem may be defined in a team for other problems to fit within.

(60) A person may need help on a part, but not all, of a problem-formulation.

(61) One person may be able to predict or control the problem-finding of a team.

(62) One person may persuade others to go along with his construction of the problem.

(63) A team can only address so many issues at a time.

(64) A problem may not be identified if there are other problems being worked on.

(65) Problem-finding may be choked off if the problems are not then being solved.

(66) Small problems may be easier to handle.

(67) You cannot keep problem-finding and problem-solving separate in a team.

(68) The usefulness of teams may be for gaining commitment to a problem rather than for problem-finding.

(69) People may agree that a problem is important and yet not want to own it.

(70) Some persons may bring problems to the relevant team indiscriminately.

(71) Persons may be invited to a problem-finding meeting for all sorts of reasons.
Organizational Relations.

(72) Problems may come to a team by order of an outside body.

(73) Problems may be defined by fashions in the opinion of superordinate bodies.

(74) To get a team's formulation of a problem accepted by higher authority, informal politicking may be called for.

(75) You may have to go ahead with solving a past problem.

(76) Problem-constructions and solutions may be traded off between groups.

(77) Several teams may be expected to find and address the same issue.

(78) A person with cross-membership of teams may come to see them as equivalent for some purposes.
Chapter 12: Observations of Problem Construction Processes in Teams.

The data on which this chapter is founded are relatively minor compared with other bodies of data used in this research. As was stressed in Chapter 10, the topic of this research is the beliefs that people have about the problem-construction processes they are involved in. In the course of collecting data on these beliefs about problem-construction processes the researcher attended many team meetings, and so formed a number of categories of his own for understanding the problem-construction processes of the Health Care Planning Teams in Bath Health District. For two reasons, however, these categories should be regarded differently from the grounded categories which have been presented in the last two chapters. The first reason is methodological. The object of the research was to discover the beliefs of persons other than the researcher about a topic on which the researcher believed they must have beliefs, but that those beliefs might not be very well articulated, or even conscious, for the person who held them. As this topic has been of major and long-standing interest to the researcher, his beliefs about it are relatively articulate and conscious, and he thus needed to guard continuously against the superimposition of those researcher-beliefs, which are not the topic of the research, on the beliefs of team members, which are the topic. Because of the tendency of confident statements to drive out less confident ones, there is clearly some risk entailed in the researcher articulating his categories about problem-construction in these teams. The second reason for regarding researcher-categories differently is practical. The data for the observations of problem-construction processes in teams were less precise than the data on the beliefs of team members, because
while the latter were tape-recorded, the former depend on copious notes taken by the researcher during those meetings. At the time when the research was conducted, financial restraint in the Health Service had created an atmosphere where the convenor of the team meetings felt that some members might feel very inhibited if their words were recorded in a form in which they could not deny them. Face to face with any one person, the researcher considers that he was able to convince that person that confidences would be respected, anonymity would be preserved, and particularly, that he had no wish to feed any tasty pieces of information to the local press. The convenor, however, was anxious that others might be anxious on these counts if a tape recorder was used in team meetings, and the researcher did not push very hard on this because, with his major phenomena being the beliefs that the members held about what was going on, the most important reasons for his being present at meetings were that he would have contextual data to use in understanding the accounts members gave, and that members would know that he had that contextual data, and hence give freer and fuller accounts without feeling the need to spend a lot of time filling in technical background. Also, it may be presumed that the convenor's fears about inhibitions among team members if meetings were recorded were based upon better data than the researcher's expectations that such inhibitions would not be felt. In this case it would have been very detrimental to the research if the researcher's data collection methods had had the effect of encouraging team members to define and address only problems which they saw as trivial in team meetings, and to deal with those which they regarded as serious somewhere else.

Nevertheless, there is an aspect of the topic where the
researcher's observations of team meetings may be regarded as legitimate subordinate data. There is no reason why the decision to take the accounts of team members seriously should preclude taking their actions seriously as well. There is a limitation on this in that the actions can only be described in terms of the meanings attributed to them by the researcher, but we would argue that this disadvantage is not a devastating one in subordinate data, because a level of proficiency in this skill of correctly ascribing meaning is widespread among members of a culture (as is shown by the fact that those not possessing considerable proficiency in understanding the meanings of others' actions are regarded as peculiar in their lack of social skill), and the researcher may therefore be presumed to be reasonably accurate in his attributions. Also, where the researcher did check with team members as to whether he had correctly understood the meanings of their actions, they told him more often than not that he was right (but not always, which indicates that it was possible for them to tell him he was wrong).

The researcher-categories which will be introduced in this chapter have been arranged in three groups, which are:

1. Problems and non-problems.
3. Competing problems.

Problems and Non-Problems.

This is a group of categories that have to do with processes by which a situation comes to be construed as a problem or not a problem for a team.
To stop the solving of non-problems may be defined as a problem.

As the teams got under way for the new planning cycle, there was an item on the agenda for each team to discuss generally whether the team was doing what it should be doing. Incidentally, two of the team members believed that they were responsible for introducing this item to the agenda, while a third believed that it had been placed there at the command of the District Management Team. In the discussions of the effectiveness of the team the point was made several times that there is a limit to the usefulness of a planning team when there is no extra money available to plan with. This usually drew a response from some other member such as the one below;

"The object is not only to meet unmet need but also to identify where a need is being met twice over. In the next five years, to do anything new we shall have to stop doing something else."

Similarly, the point was often made that, in the Health Service, people were very good at turning taps on but not very good at turning them off, and that planning was in fact more important when money was short. For this reason some members of teams argued that it was as important to stop solving problems that did not need solving as to define and formulate new ones.

A person may stop a problem-construction by showing that it is outside the scope of the team.

This may be done in two ways, either by showing that the elements of the situation being constructed in to a problem need not have the implications they are believed to have for the team, or by showing that the problem as defined is properly someone else's business. For an example of the first, in a team meeting where debate had started on the future of a particular building, and
whether it could be put to good use in the near future, the following contributions were made:

**Consultant.** In the short or medium term it does not matter about Rock Hall. It is only important for the land, and that is only significant in the long term.

**Doctor.** There is going to be long term too expensive for us.

In this fragment, the consultant was demonstrating that the facility being talked about could not be used in the way being envisaged for it, but could only be useful in a long term way which the other team members had not been discussing. The other doctor who spoke then suggested there was considerable doubt as to whether it could be used in that way either. Between them they had effectively stopped an incipient problem which was being constructed in the team about how to get hold of that building. The other way of showing that a problem under construction is outside the scope of a team is exemplified in the following quotation.

**Administrator.** Avon say we can have the ambulances if we pay for them.

**Nurse.** But we are not management, but a Health Care Planning Team, so we should ask and see what the management can do.

**Doctor.** This should go back to the D.M.T.

The problem being constructed should not, argued the member, be the business of that team. This was apparently agreed by other members who acquiesced in the proposal to take it back to the D.M.T.

(81) **A problem may be explored and then dropped.**

This was a phenomenon which the researcher observed quite often, that someone would bring an issue to the attention of a team, there would be a little discussion of it, and then it would simply drop, without any definite or public decision having been made not to address it. It seemed that this could happen to an issue
raised by anybody, including those who usually appeared to be influential and to have the ear of the other team members. When the researcher talked to members, to whom he believed this had happened, about it, they usually said something along the lines of "It was important to get the problem aired". It did not emerge, however, just why it was important to get problems aired or what consequences members believed this would have. In the first of two examples we shall give of this, a team is discussing the District Annual Plan as it relates to their discipline, and one member is questioning a possible omission.

Social Worker. I wondered about adolescents.
Social Worker. Should we not be thinking about that?
Chairman. What sort of numbers?
Social Worker. There is a ratio - quite small.
Administrator. The reason why there is nothing about that is to do with the Wessex/South West boundary. There are two chaps retiring in Wiltshire, and something will have to be sorted out.
Consultant. In this, everybody has a few problems, but nobody has enough problems to deal with it.

At this point the chairman led the conversation off on to another topic, and the issue was not raised again during the planning cycle. Our understanding of what happened here is that the issue was effectively dropped. The point which the administrator made about forthcoming retirements meant that there were possibilities for action. The question was dropped, presumably because of the point made by the consultant. The second example of this category arose after discussion of an item on voluntary service organizers.

First Social Worker. One of the gaps which shows up within the Health District is a council for voluntary services which comes together to decide what is needed in the District.
Second Social Worker. There is one in (one of the towns) which just meets to reestablish their differences.
12.7

Area Doctor. But does not the machinery already exist in Bath?
First Social Worker. Yes, but it works very slowly.
Chairman. Anything else on the notes of the last meeting?

In this example it should be said that the Chairman's
interjection was less peremptory than it might sound; the
discussion noted above had become very slow, and nobody appeared
to want to contribute further to it.

(82) In a team, one person's information may lead to another
person's problem-construction.

In the flow of discussion and debate within a team, whilst
most of the information presented by members is not contentious,
some of it may create a problem for another team member, in that
he may become aware that a situation which was not problematic
within his understanding of it is proving problematic to another
person in the context of their different understandings or values.
For example, in one team they were discussing how drug dabbling
could create a long term problem because the dabblers were thrown
out of their homes, and homelessness, rather than the drugs,
damaged them.

Chairman. Homelessness is a local authority matter if there is
no medical problem.
Consultant. Wiltshire does nothing about homelessness.
Social Worker. What?
Consultant. Only for families. I will look through my
discharges for the past year and I think there will be about ten
discharges which should have gone to a hostel.
Chairman. That would help a lot.

The social worker came from Wiltshire, and if the consultant's
allegation was true, then the social worker had found a problem, in
that the County could be criticized for not meeting social
obligations, and possibly not meeting statutory obligations too.
While in this case the connexion between information and problem-
construction was not apparently intentional on the part of either party, in the following example it is intended.

**Housing Director.** I am really here to find out in what way we are ill-informed or advised. I am really here to listen. We do have problems over management of sheltered accommodation. The warden was meant to act like a good neighbour. There is a crunch coming because housing authorities are seeing their wardens becoming involved in nursing type activities.

**Doctor.** I think the position of the warden needs redefinition.

**Social Worker.** A group of us think that social services should employ the wardens and provide them to Housing.

Here the housing director explains that he is at the meeting in order to learn from other people's information what extra problems he should construct. He goes straight on to give some information of his own to lead other people into problem-construction for themselves.

(83) A solution to one person's problem may prevent the solution of another's.

One social worker said of Health Service voluntary service organizers;

"The half-time appointments at (two towns in my area) have stymied me in getting a coordinator for social services voluntary help."

In team meetings where separate but interdependent services are represented, it may well happen that solving the problems of one service may make the difficulties in another service appear slightly less; because the problems appear less bad, the persons in that service cannot argue as strong a case with their bosses, local authorities etc., and hence they are left with a slightly smaller problem which they cannot solve rather than a slightly larger one which they could have solved. Implicit in this is the
belief that, while the person with the problem can see that the 
action in one service is not going to relieve his problem in 
another service, this will not be apparent to those who hold 
budgetary authority.

(84) A team may agree that problems be taken away for formulation.

A frequently recurring pattern when a problem is first 
introduced to a team is for one or two persons either to volunteer 
or to be asked to go away and collect more data which would be 
useful in formulating the problem. For example:

Chairman. What about housing, because (a housing director) wants 
to slink off.

Housing Director. Can I ask, am I vitally involved in item two 
on the agenda?

Chairman. A nursing officer and I have had a problem over the 
provision of nursing care for the elderly.

Housing Director. Well an exercise done by the J.C.C. involved 
me and all other directors of housing in the District.

Questionnaires given to wardens have thrown up a lot of inade­quacies which I could, with a bit of work, boil down to a few 
hard cases. If that would be a helpful exercise. But not 
here and now.

Chairman. One specific problem is bathing people.

Housing Director. They may also be unable to feed, dress, bath 
and walk.

Area Doctor. But a lot of these people should be in public 
housing.

Housing Director. Oh yes. All I am saying is that we should 
have, and can prepare, data on this. At least as officers we 
can define what the problem is.

Several team members told the researcher that they regarded 
'homework' on problems facing the team as being a very valuable 
exercise, and one which they wished the team members were pushed 
into more often.
Negotiating Problem-Constructions in Teams.

In this group we present categories concerned with processes that take place because a construction of a problem will not be acted upon unless it is accepted and agreed by a team as being the team's problem.

A person may need to argue that it is worth constructing a problem.

Persons often raise, more or less directly, the question of how efficacious a particular team can be in helping them deal with any problems they construct in that team. The first example is on a theme which was mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Chairman. The other thing is unmet need, because we shall probably only have one more meeting before the annual plan.
Social Worker. The difficulty with unmet need is that it is difficult to meet it without money. Should we ignore money?
Chairman. Yes, otherwise we get in to a vicious circle.

Those who wanted the Health Care Planning Teams to be problem-finders had frequently to produce such arguments to show that it was worth finding problems even in times of stringency. In the next example, this was done particularly effectively.

Chairman. Perhaps we should look at financing.
Consultant. We might as well go home. There is no money to spend.
Chairman. How would we spend an extra £10,000 if we had it next year?
Consultant. With a minimum-cost day centre.
Nurse. Yes, that would be a good idea, because that money would be a drop in the bucket at (one particular hospital).
Consultant. Then you would get that money in subsequent years, because the community would get interested.

In quite a short conversation here, the consultant has been turned round from saying that it was not worth constructing a
problem because of lack of money to working out with some
enthusiasm something which could usefully be done with virtually
no extra money. The third example is to do with relationships
between the team and superordinate bodies within the hierarchy.

Chairman. Shall we set ourselves the task, then, of long term
planning about adult mental handicap?
Social Worker. I think what's frustrating about it is that we
seem to take it so far, and then it turns into an Area or
Region matter.
Chairman. Yes, but we may have started Area and Region arguing
about it. I think this is an awfully useful thing. But I do
think that when we have produced an idea we should get a comeback.

Here it may be suggested that the chairman has subtly
redefined the problem which the social worker raised, in that he
is suggesting that the problem is not that issues are taken over by
Area or Region who then ignore the Team's work, but simply that
Area and Region never communicate back to the team what they have
done with their work.

(86) A person may behave as an advocate for a problem.

Some persons are such regular advocates for particular
problems that as soon as they start to speak people laugh because
they believe they know what they are going to say. In less
extreme situations we often see people introducing a problem at
every possible turn until such time as either it is taken up by
the team or they are dealt with. For example, one consultant
before a meeting had ensured that neonatal care had been listed as
a topic on the agenda. Early on in the meeting the following
conversation took place about why regular meetings of the HCPT
for children were not necessary.

Administrator. Also, the services in Bath are good. No problems.
Consultant. Yes there are.
Doctor. It's good compared with others.
Consultant. It is the neonatal area that worries me.
Chairman. Yes, that is on the agenda.

The conversation was resumed when the correct point was reached in the agenda.

Chairman. Can we go on to neonatal? Doctor X, you are concerned?
Consultant. Yes, starting from Court*, he says that intensive care should be at Regional level. I am worried. We have enough problems transferring four miles in Bath. It would be far worse if it were twelve to fifteen miles in the Region. One thing I want to emphasize is the question of transport incubators. What we need to save life is two decent transport incubators. Why have we not got them? It is bogged down in the administrative structure.

Administrator. It is bogged in medical, not administrative, committees.
Consultant. I don't think this should wait for the committee structure.

In this case we have the extra complication that the person advocates a problem, in the sense of getting it on the agenda, and raising it whenever possible, and then when the time comes to handle the problem, he takes instead a different problem which would not have been regarded as so legitimate for that team to work on. In our other example, too, the problem being advocated seems to change. The discussion here is about ambulance provision for a geriatric day-care centre, where there is a unit which could take fifty people, but only ambulance provision to move thirty of them.

Nurse. Could I raise ambulances again? They are asking us for our support, because they have to get things in their annual plan and wait a year like we would. They need to plan their

service.

Chairman. In time we will need all those places.

Consultant. We could not make a case for it on population grounds.

It is only staffed for thirty beds; it was only built as fifty to fit a standard pattern of building.

Nurse. What I am really concerned about is that these people have asked us to support them and we are not doing so.

Administrator. There is no need.

This person had persistently raised the problem of ambulance provision over several team meetings. This was the first occasion on which data had been presented to suggest that there was in fact no problem with the provision of ambulance services, and the upshot is that the person who had been advocating the problem, when it is shown that that problem is not important, goes on to advocate a different problem which would lead to the same action.

(87) A person may attempt to persuade others to define or not to define a particular problem.

As was said above, very often when persons first bring a problem to the attention of a team, it is given to some person or persons to take away and prepare for discussion next time. In our first example, this is happening, as well as a successful attempt by the chairman to persuade others to accept his definition of a problem.

Chairman. I always worry about parents of a young mongol. Their only contact is a health visitor who may or may not be aware of what is available.

Social Worker. Perhaps this is something we should know about and put down on our agenda for another time.

The second example is one where a problem was defined, and all team members agreed that there was a problem, and that the problem should be taken away for formulation, but so far as the
researcher could see, nothing further happened. Some team members suggested to him that this was because, while they would all accept that this was a problem which somebody should do something about, nobody was interested enough in it to be the person to do something.

First Consultant. If we talk of unmet need, the next after the elderly must be the alcoholics. That depends on somebody being interested.

Social Worker. The problem is nowhere to live, since the Salvation Army went.

Second Consultant. That closed because of the fire regulations. The best thing the city could have done is to do the fire regulation stuff for them. Could we do it by joint funding?

Social Worker. These people are being labelled as alcoholics, not just homeless.

Second Consultant. Perhaps we should approach the Salvation Army about it.

Chairman. There's a lot of them in Abbey Churchyard. There's a couple with T.B. I would love to get my hands on.

Social Worker. This city is different from others in that hostels is under housing and not social services. Perhaps we should put in the annual plan that we will research this need.

Second Consultant. Who is we?

Social Worker. This team.

Chairman. Let's get to the basic need. Do you get trouble with this, X?

Second Consultant. With who?

Chairman. Itinerant alcoholics.

Second Consultant. No, they don't get to us because they have no C.P. attention.

First Consultant. The drifting alcoholic is refused in mental hospital.

Social Worker. Sometimes they turn up in general hospitals and have a rest until they find they cannot manipulate the system.

Nurse. There are alcoholics around in the bus station.

Social Worker. We need research.

Chairman. It is a matter of defining the problem.
Second Consultant. There's a research department in Lewis House. 
Chairman. Is there? 
Social Worker. Yes, social services.

With that, the problem of itinerant alcoholics was abandoned, for want of specialist interest. Incidentally, the chairman afterwards told the researcher that he was responsible for raising the topic, and that it was important that it should be raised, though there was not much interest; it appeared to the researcher that the first consultant had raised the topic, but all could agree that there was not much interest. The third example of this category is one in which a person is attempting to persuade a team that they do not need to define a particular problem in the context of their present discussion. The team was preparing for a meeting in which their chairman would have to explain their plans to the strategic planning committee of the Area. One particular scheme is under discussion, which is the creation of an assessment centre in an existing hospital.

First Consultant. Does it involve rebuilding? 
Nurse. No - minor capital. 
Area Planner. In that case this does not fit in strategy anyhow. 
Nurse. Assessment has been misunderstood ... 
Doctor. Words are difficult. Does everybody know about budgets for furniture? (Explains how the furniture budget system works) ... 
Social Worker. We could produce figures about how many people we would send to the assessment centre. 
Nurse. We have got long term problems, but also we have got immediate needs. Which problems should we be solving now? What are our terms of reference? 
Area Planner. But you have to get the long term plans done first. What you don't get in to this plan may wait for three to five years, if ... 
Second Consultant. We have flogged this. From the practical point of view I am the only consultant in this specialty in (a
part of the District). Think also of the consultant costs and thus make a case for concentrating the mental health service in one place, and children in Bath. Put the unit where the expertise is.

Social Worker. What as a Health Care Planning Team can we do with (the area planner's) suggestion that the screws are put on the D.M.T.?

Chairman. But it has to go further.

Area Planner. Not if it is on minor capital.

(Silence)

Chairman. The trouble was, it was an awkward time in our discussions to have to put things down on paper.

Second Consultant. Can we get on?

Administrator. Would it be useful to have a sub-committee?

The team did eventually act on the area planner's point that there was no need to construct this problem for their present purpose, but there was quite a lengthy period of debate about the problem despite this. Whilst the conversation as reported may seem disjointed, the researcher would claim that although in note-taking he shortened the statements made considerably, the account is otherwise quite accurate, and statements from different persons did not, so far as he could see, bear any more relation to one another than is suggested here.

(88) A person may attempt to persuade others to redefine a problem.

A person who brings a problem to a team does so in the knowledge that he may need to accept some modifications in the construction of it, but this category goes further to cases where the change urged is in the actual definition. Our first example is an attempt that failed. The topic is the setting up of an assessment centre.

Consultant. Perhaps we should clarify what we mean by assessment.

Area Doctor. It assesses a person's viability or requirement
Chairman. We conceive this as combined with rehabilitation.

Area Doctor. What do you want?

Social Worker. A centre ...

Area Doctor. Forget the word, what do you actually want?

Area Planner. What seems to be emerging is a proposal for an interim assessment centre.

Our understanding of this strange little episode (the account of which is full of the cross-talk, non sequiturs and multiple conversations which characterize team meetings), was that the area doctor is here trying to bring about a fundamental redefinition of the problem in terms of the need to be fulfilled rather than of the organization required. This redefinition does not, however, take place, as no one else is interested in abandoning the definition of the problem already arrived at in favour of a looser one.

Another attempt to persuade a person to redefine a problem failed in a team meeting with a consultant who insisted that if each specialism got its own house in order no coordination would be needed between specialisms, and thus no joint studies to look for unmet need would be helpful, but then by the next meeting this consultant was willing for such studies to take place, and even permitted one to be set up in the area in which he worked. A team member told the researcher that three members had had a meeting in the meantime in which they had decided that they must "crack this one this time". They had decided as a strategy to suggest that a local survey of problems be done at the opposite end of the district from the consultant concerned. He had agreed to this, and then had been unable to disagree when another doctor suggested that a second local survey be conducted in the consultant's own part of the district. He had thus been coerced or manoeuvred into redefining the problem.
If a solution is not found to a problem, it may be redefined. Perhaps this most commonly happens between meetings, so that a member will come to a meeting finding that he is expected to speak to an item on the agenda, and it is then that redefinition will take place. In the following discussion about the provision of relief facilities to take mentally handicapped children during the holidays, various solutions are considered and rejected before the problem is redefined, in this case, as someone else's.

First Consultant. The point that we are up against is that we are reducing the service to a section of the community who desperately needed it.

Doctor. We would not get nurses, would we?

Area Planner. What is important is to think of this as a stopgap until we have a service.

Chairman. I think that to have it summer holidays alone could be a drawback.

Area Planner. You should build this in to your strategy for next year's district plan.

Doctor. It was in the plan, but Area have told us to balance our books.

First Consultant. The paediatric wards can't cope.

Social Worker. There is obviously some willing help from parents. There is a spare building on Claverton Down.

Doctor. There are plenty of buildings.

Chairman. The difficulty is in staffing. If we could get staff we could run it for two or three years at Winsley.

Nurse. Could the team not ask the D.M.T. to look elsewhere for economies?

Second Consultant. We must protest; our loyalties are to our patients. We should ask the D.M.T. not to look on it as a development because it is a basic necessity.

People may pick up their own ends of a problem. According often to organizational role, persons may fall naturally into the construction of complementary problems.
the following example, a social worker is beginning to construct a problem arising out of a scheme for the relief of parents of mentally handicapped children which had been described to the team, and the administrator immediately joins in to anticipate and handle the administrative problems.

Social Worker. I thought it was terribly encouraging. What was so exciting was that the department and the people involved had been able to hold on to the tremendous aggression etc. and listen to what the parents were saying. I would like to make an approach to my assistant director on this.

Administrator. If you want to, we should get it in to the Annual Plan.

Social Worker. Joint funding?

Administrator. For revenue or capital?

Social Worker. Revenue – paying parents.

In this exchange both parties had done the definition and initial formulation of separate problems which they were to take up and work with later.

Competing Problems.

This group of categories is really a subset of the last group, because the situations where problems compete are situations of negotiation in the same sense as were those looked at in the last group. The special characteristic of this group is that the competition is between different definitions of a problem, rather than, for example, problem and non-problem.

(91) 'Objective' problem-indicators do not necessarily lead to agreed problem-constructions.

This was particularly noticeable with problems indicated by norms, which might reasonably be expected to be agreeable by all, at least as far as whether there was or was not a deficiency in terms of the norms. However, the following conversation was not
extraordinary.

Chairman. We have done a paper for the strategic planning committee showing that we are sixty beds short; proposing that these beds should be scattered in three centres for ages 1-15. First Consultant. How do you get sixty?

Chairman. Norms.

First Consultant. This book says 120, though I don't believe it.

Chairman. Yes, extraordinary.

Second Consultant. Actually 60 is a bit above the norm.

What the norm was, or what the provision for the district should be according to the norms, never was discovered.

(92) Conflicting constructions of problems may be offered in a meeting.

This category would eventually merge in to the notion that different solutions to problems might be offered in a meeting. In most cases here, however, the members are not talking of solution or even of strategies for solution, but of an even more fundamental phase which is most conveniently thought of as problem-construction. The following example is drawn from a joint meeting between a HCPT and a working part of the Community Health Council (CHC). The last two statements stem from fundamentally different problem-constructions.

First Social Worker. I am concerned as to whether we are really listening to what the parents of handicapped children really want. We have developed mutual support systems for parents and leaflets which tell them all about the benefits etc. which are available.

First Consultant. I am frequently surprised by how little information gets to parents of these children. To have something written down would be very helpful.

Second Social Worker. This is something we could manage between us with help from the District management.
First Social Worker. We are developing such a booklet. It is simple and very helpful.

CHC Chairman. Speaking for the CHC, we would like to be in on that, perhaps as an outlet.

Second Consultant. Can the CHC tell us about unmet need in this field?

Area Doctor. You have to remember that it takes a lot of families a long time to accept that a child is handicapped.

CHC Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would beg that from the point of view of the CHC that a lot of parents accept the situation, but they need help and guidance, especially in the first few years.

In our next example of this category, the two consultants conflict continually on the problem-construction when the topic is long term planning for the elderly mentally ill.

First Consultant. The one certain thing is the death of our graduates.*

Administrator. What do we do about the elderly mentally ill?

First Consultant. We have at last achieved a meeting of geriatricians and adult psychiatric consultants at Roundway on November 3rd.

Second Consultant. I think this is bunk; the number of psychogeriatrics depends on how many beds you have got. If all the psychogeriatric beds are full, the only thing that is changed is the number of psychogeriatrics in the community. But it does not show up on the hospital statistics.

Social Worker. But also, perhaps joint assessment is needed.

First Consultant. I submit that elderly mentally ill should be the first object of our deliberations this session. We did not do much for them last time. ... What about a survey?

Administrator. Maybe the problem is not surveyable.

First Consultant. A good (GP) practice will know.

Doctor. A carefully thought out sample survey would tell you.

First Consultant. I doubt it.

Second Consultant. I had an invitation to talk to Wiltshire Ladies Luncheon Club today. It might have been as good value to

*Long stay, institutionalized mentally ill patients.
go there as to come here. None of us are experts on surveys here. We are doing nothing now.  
Administrator. I think we are saying that we do not know the size of the problem of the elderly mentally ill.  

Perhaps this example should be seen as an attempt to sabotage problem-constructions rather than a true conflict between different constructions. In another team meeting, members were discussing whether the ambulance service for a day unit was adequate. A social worker had questioned whether the existing service was getting patients to the centre at the right time.  
First Consultant. If you are worried that consultant time is being wasted, it is not.  
Social Worker. No, I was wondering whether we are using the patients' day well.  
Second Consultant. I don't think the day hospital is unhappy about the service it is getting.  
Social Worker. Perhaps we should discuss it at the end.  

The social worker has recognized his total clash of perspective with the consultants, who do not see poor use of the patients' time as a problem, and decides to deal with this conflict in problem-constructions outside the meeting. The next example comes from the same meeting, with the majority of those present trying to formulate a problem to do with lack of coordination between services in part of the District, while the consultant responsible for that part tries to formulate a problem about improving the excellence within disciplines, which he regards as a prior task to coordination. A paper has been presented to the meeting which explores some of the problems arising from lack of coordination.  
First Social Worker. This paper was triggered off, I think, by cases that were not really covered by the geriatrician or the psychiatrist.
Consultant. Some of the problems you talk about should be dealt with between social workers. Many decisions need a medical decision before the social service need can be decided. Also such a meeting might have the function of papering over the cracks in other peoples' services. This could breed competition. What you are asking for is a teaching session for social workers.

Second Social Worker. No. We are looking to stop overlap in the service.

Chairman. We are short of information about what goes on.

Consultant. We don't want more information.

Here there are clearly three different problem-constructions going on, two connected ones about coordination and information, and a third one about professional independence. As was related above under "A person may persuade others to redefine a problem" (88), this last view was eventually crushed by a cabal which manipulated the consultant away from it.

(93) Conflicting constructions of problems may be resolvable in a meeting.

That conflicting constructions are often not resolvable may be seen in any of the examples for the proceeding category, where in every case the problem-construction eventually chosen seems to have more to do with the internal political processes of the team than with any merits that construction might have in terms of fit with the outside world. However, one example of a resolution in a meeting was given by a visitor to one of the teams, who was describing the setting up of an emergency fostering scheme. Representing her local social services department, she had a meeting with parents at a school for mentally handicapped children.

"What they wanted was a hostel, and I knew we could not afford a hostel. I proposed to a hostile meeting that we have two professional foster couples. They howled it down. The dirty word turned out to be foster. We explained the costs of a
hostel. It turned out that what they wanted was an ordinary house in an ordinary road with ordinary people. We explained we wanted the same thing. So we dropped the word foster and they dropped the word hostel."

The researcher does not consider that he saw any examples of the resolution of conflicts about problem-construction in the team meetings he attended, despite seeing many conflicts about problem-construction. Such resolutions as took place all happened outside the meeting; it appears to be extraordinarily difficult to resolve such conflicts in a meeting.

(94) A person may define a problem in the way a team is going about its work.

This is a shift in the focus of problem-construction from the substantive issues on which a team is working to the process of how the team works. For example, on one occasion, an Area representative said;

"Let us question how we are planning. Firstly, it is bad planning to assume the existing services; they may be in the wrong place. Secondly, you have to plan for a District as a whole. Thirdly, assessment centres are very high cost. You will have to justify it well."

In this example we would say that his first point is about the way in which the team is going about its work, his second point is a rule which he believes the team should obey in doing its work, and his third point is a piece of substantive material on the issue that was under discussion at that time. There follows an example of a conversation about the way in which a team goes about its work.

Chairman. As we cannot make decisions, do you feel inhibited about putting forward your point of view?

Social Worker. I sometimes find the geographical framework
inhibiting. It might be helpful if we had local sessions sometimes.

Chairman. This really came out of a plea from a social worker in Chippenham at the geriatric Health Care Planning Team. But let's get back to this team. I don't feel we have done much in looking for current needs.

Administrator. I agree. This team tends just to react to questions. Perhaps because there are so many teams in the field.

Consultant. We tend just to jack something up for the book.

To say that this team was constructing a problem here about the way it goes about its work would be an overstatement. However, there seems to be a consensus amongst them that some sort of problem does exist in that field.

Problems may be defined on different scales.

As one social worker said in one meeting:

"It seems that to get down to details you have to get down to quite small areas."

Considerable attention was paid in the teams to trying to discover the appropriate scale for constructing any particular problem. On some occasions it was felt that the District might be an appropriate unit to consider, very rarely was it felt that anything bigger than the District might be appropriate, and quite often a preference was expressed for considering problems in terms of towns. That then left a subsidiary question about the catchment area for particular services, which was not necessarily the same as towns, and other difficulties arising from the District being very rural, so that travel patterns had to be considered as well. This category operated as an extra dimension of choice through all the other categories above.
Problems and Non-Problems.

(79) To stop the solving of non-problems may be defined as a problem.

(80) A person may stop a problem-construction by showing that it is outside the scope of the team.

(81) A problem may be explored and then dropped.

(82) In a team, one person's information may lead to another person's problem-construction.

(83) A solution to one person's problem may prevent the solution of another's.

(84) A team may agree that problems be taken away for formulation.

Negotiating Problem-Constructions in Teams.

(85) A person may need to argue that it is worth constructing a problem.

(86) A person may behave as an advocate for a problem.

(87) A person may attempt to persuade others to define or not to define a particular problem.

(88) A person may attempt to persuade others to redefine a problem.

(89) If a solution is not found to a problem, it may be redefined.

(90) People may pick up their own ends of a problem.

Competing Problems.

(91) 'Objective' problem-indicators do not necessarily lead to agreed problem-constructions.

(92) Conflicting constructions of problems may be offered in a meeting.

(93) Conflicting constructions of problems may be resolvable in a meeting.

(94) A person may define a problem in the way a team is going about its work.

(95) Problems may be defined on different scales.
Chapter 13: Rules Operating in Problem-Construction.

In the last three chapters we have proposed a number of categories which are employed in understanding problem-construction in teams. In this chapter and the one that follows we shall consider an extra dimension of analysis of the topic, which does not seem to us to be adequately covered by the analysis of actors' categories. In general, our categories have had to do with how a person evaluates the different options for behaviour open to him, while rules have to do with how it is that a person does not see as options open to him some possibilities which an observer might think should be among the options considered by the person. The division between rules and other categories used by members about problem-construction in the teams is not a sharp one; many of these other categories have some evaluative component to them, which suggests that teams 'ought' to do so-and-so or to be like such-and-such. For example, "Problem-definition does not mean that you know what to do about it" (14), "The task of a team may be problem-construction" (29), and "Some persons may bring problems to the relevant team indiscriminately" (70) all have quite definite implications for the rules to be followed in a team. Therefore the title of this chapter should not be understood preemptively; this chapter is about the rules operating in problem-construction, but that should not be taken to imply that the previous three chapters were not about this topic.

The Nature of Rules.

When we speak of the rules of problem-construction in Health Care Planning Teams we do not mean that there is in existence some piece or pieces of paper setting out rules that are to be obeyed
on pain of punishment, like Acts of Parliament, nor that there is some body of rules which may or may not be enforceable but seem to be primarily intended to make the activity work better for everybody, like the Highway Code. We are using the notion of rule-following metaphorically rather than ontologically; by this we mean that we do not assert that, in some absolute sense, the processes we are investigating are rule-following activities, but rather that we can learn more about them by considering them as such. Nowhere is there written down a body of rules about what persons may and may not do in problem-construction in Health Care Planning Teams. Nevertheless, people quite frequently use concepts such as what ought or ought not to be discussed at a team meeting, whether a team is being used rightfully, and whether particular points of view should be heard.

Marsh, Rosser and Harré (1978) distinguish between rules of interpretation and prescriptive rules. They say;

"Rules of interpretation are thought to be effective in the orderly ascription of meaning to objects and events. They are involved in the way things are defined and made sense of. Prescriptive rules, on the other hand, are seen as directions for action. They are the rules which enable members to choose between possible modes of conduct available to them and to maintain a sense of propriety and social legitimacy. Put simply, rules of interpretation are to be found in answers to questions such as 'What is going on?' or 'What does this mean?', whilst prescriptive rules are to be found through asking 'What should one do?' These two kinds of rule are not, of course, independent of each other. Indeed, before one can decide what action is appropriate one requires an understanding of the social context in which one is acting and an interpretation of the actions occurring in that context. Rules of interpretation, in attaching meaning to situations and their constituents, determine which prescriptive rules are applicable." (pp.16-17).
In this chapter we are concerned more with the rules of action than with those of interpretation.

There is one body of written rules for the Health Care Planning Teams in Bath, and that is the terms of reference for the teams. As we said in Chapter 8, these were introduced as an agenda item in the first meeting of each team in the planning cycle, and many members seemed surprised to know that there were terms of reference. If they had ever had copies of them, they had lost them. This is not evidence, however, that the terms of reference were not acting as an effective body of rules for governing the activity of the teams; it was not possible to say to what extent the terms of reference influenced actions taken in the teams, because the terms of reference were themselves a reflection of the views of influential team members as to what the teams should be doing. However, reference was never made, apart from the initial meetings where it was an agenda item, to the terms of reference, even when issues came up which revealed differences of opinion about what the terms of reference actually followed in the teams should be. An example of such an issue will be given later on in this chapter. It seems then that any influence from the terms of reference over the rules followed in the team is connected with the history of the body of rules, rather than with the way that body is at present maintained and shaped.

Whilst we find it helpful to conceive of a body of rules, we do not wish to imply that these rules are interpreted in the same way by all the members of a team. The rules for conducting problem-definition in teams are to some extent common and to some extent particular, at least in the sense that different persons interpret and remember rules differently. In this respect they
are like the Highway Code. To explain this partly shared, partly
individual, nature of rules in a team, let us turn to the notion
of games.

Games and Rules.

The concept of games, deriving via Allison (1971) from
Wittgenstein's notion of non-trivial games was explored in Chapter
6. Further material, this time deriving from Harré and Secord
(1972), was given in Chapter 9, in the section headed "appropriateness". To summarize what was said earlier, rules may be: —

Explicit/Implicit.

Clear/Fuzzy.

Stable/Changing.

Controlled by referee/Self-controlled/Controlled by public opinion.

The functions which rules may fulfill include to:—

Establish positions.
Establish the paths for gaining access to positions.
Establish the power of positions.
Establish action channels.
Constrain the range of possible outcomes.
Permit some kinds of moves.
Prohibit other kinds of moves.
Specify the type of action which is part of the game.

There are some complicating factors which need to be taken
into account before a rule framework can be put to explanatory use
in the present context. For example, as Allison noted, many
players are involved in several different games, and thus find
themselves in a strategic situation where they believe that play in
one game will have some effect on play in another game in which they
are involved; this is important to us because many of the members
of Health Care Planning Teams are involved in several different
games together. Multiple games may mean that some actions are
taken to build up a general 'credit balance' with another person, or to repay another person (positively or negatively) for actions taken at preceding times or in other places. In addition, some of the actions taken by persons in teams may be designed to communicate rules to other persons in the team. We shall return to this in the next chapter, but for the present purpose it should be noted that the rules followed by a person in a team are not independent of the actions of the other persons in that team. A person's criteria for choosing moves in a game may include not only the wish to get a satisfactory outcome in that game, but also to affect the beliefs that another person has about the rules of the game which they are playing.

Rules and the "Informal" Team.

We have said in Chapter 8 that meetings of the Health Care Planning Teams in Bath Health District were informal. Traditional committee procedures were not followed, and it was noticeable and peculiar if anyone did follow them. As we have also said, the terms of reference were not closely adhered to, at least not consciously. Thus there was very little in the way of formal, explicit rules for members to follow. We would claim, however, that this does not mean that rule-following behaviour was not taking place. This point should be readily understandable to anyone who has felt uncomfortable about his behaviour at a party. At parties, in our culture and at our historical period, there is a strong norm of informality. Officially, you may wear what you like, talk to whom you like about what you like, and do what you like, and yet the person who never feels himself to be out of place at one of these events, to have struck the wrong note in
dress or conversation, is either fortunate or insensitive or both. Whilst the code of rules remains implicit, we nevertheless behave as if there were such a code. As Marsh, Rosser and Harré (1978) say:

"Many of the routine social situations we find ourselves in are clearly rule-governed, but it is often extremely difficult to specify exactly what the rules are or what are the potential breaches of the rules. We can, however, instantly recognize the actual instances where rules are broken. In everyday language we use phrases such as 'he behaved inappropriately' or 'she should know that she can't wear trousers here', or even 'it's not cricket!'" (p.17)

One of the evidences for saying that rules are being followed in these 'informal' situations is the amusement, embarrassment or punishment that follows rule-breaking, and one of the worst blunders in such a situation is to be seen to be following formal rules; that is why it was so noticeable and peculiar if anyone followed committee procedure at the Health Care Planning Team meetings. Another evidence that rules are being followed in these meetings is that some participants gave the researcher accounts of rules, rule-following and rule-breaking.

It is sometimes argued that the existence of a formal set of rules leaves persons freer to act than the supposed absence of rules. Underlying this argument is the supposition that rules exist in any case, and that if rules exist, and if persons behave as if rules exist, they will be freer if they know what those rules are rather than trying to avoid breaking a rule whose precise nature they can only guess. We know of no evidence on this issue. It seems clear, though, that rules may exist in the sense that they may constrain the behaviour of persons at least as much in an informal situation as in a formal one.
Some Transgressions.

Rules seemed to become an issue for team members only when they were broken, and thus the accounts that were given by team members of rules and rule following in the teams all begin from a transgression of the rules. In the remainder of this chapter we shall present some examples which occurred during the course of the project. It should be recognized that we have been highly selective on this point. The rules that are followed in problem-construction in teams were not one of the original foci of the research, but came to seem significant as the fieldwork progressed. A thorough analysis would need to consider the rule framework within which each team member was operating, and the relationship between those frameworks. The present research does not claim to provide such a thorough analysis, but only to break the ground in readiness for one.

From the accounts that we were given, three distinct types of transgression emerged, which were accidental transgression, excusable transgression, and inexcusable transgression.

Accidental Transgression.

A team member may break the rules, and be seen by the other team members as having broken the rules, without any blame being attached to this. For example, in the following quotation, some members have introduced an issue while other members know that that issue is shortly to be overtaken by events.

"They also raised, didn't they, what to do about children and adolescents and what to do about secure units, although secure units was immediately brushed aside, because, I knew as well, they're planning to build one in Salisbury for the entire Region."

The issue of secure units is brushed aside because the
persons who brushed it aside know that any problem that might be constructed about that has already been solved. The solution, however, was not public knowledge at the time of the meeting, and those who knew did not tell those who did not know. The issue was not a legitimate and worthwhile one for the team to take up, and in that sense, those who raised it had broken a rule, but they did not know, and could not be told that they had broken a rule, and such an accidental transgression would go unpunished, although it would reveal to other team members that the transgressor did not have access to some of the information that they had. Although it has the same consequences, this is a quite different process from the 'plop' which occurs when an issue is introduced to a group by a person and is not taken up because of either lack of listening to that person or lack of specific interest in that issue, despite the fact that to the researcher sitting in the meeting, and possibly to the person or persons who introduce issues which break the rules in this way, the two processes are indistinguishable. For this reason, and because data was not specifically sought on this topic during the interviews, it is not possible to guess how common an occurrence this was in these teams.

Excusable Transgression.

The example we have chosen of an excusable transgression of the rules of a team is to do with a consultant who raised persistently at a team meeting a holiday relief scheme for the parents of mentally handicapped children which was to have been suspended as part of a package of spending cuts within the District. One member gave the following account of what happened.

"A ward became available for a short period. Now the Health Care Planning Team was used because the consultant who wanted
that ward couldn't get it through his own colleagues who were also battling for it. He went elsewhere and he used the Health Care Planning Team, very adroitly and successfully. He got what he wanted. Now I don't consider that that's a rightful use. The only value, the only thing that was right about that was that it highlighted the situation for future planning. ... I think that if the objective could not be reached in any other way, then I'm as ruthless as the next, if not more so, and would use whatever I could get my hands on. That doesn't make it a rightful use of a Health Care Planning Team.

In this case, rules about the type of issue that a Health Care Planning Team should handle have again been broken, but here the respondent believes that they have been broken in full knowledge of what the rules were, and with full awareness that actions being taken would break the rules. The problem was an immediate, operational one, where the proper work of the team was seen by the respondent to be with long term planning issues. Nevertheless the transgression is seen as excusable because it was justified by the ends to which it was directed, and the respondent admitted to colluding with the 'wrongful' use of the team to the extent of finding additional supporting evidence to assist the transgressors in the case they were making.

It should be remembered here that a set of rules such as that which guided the member quoted above is the set of rules which a particular person believes either should or does (the difference is very hard to gather from accounts) operate in a particular team. One of the other team members saw this as an inexcusable abuse of the team, because it was trespassing on issues which it had no business to be considering, whilst yet another member quoted the same case to demonstrate that the teams really were useful, could perform their tasks successfully, and were not powerless or
ineffective as some had suggested. This illustrates the point that rules may be to some extent peculiar to a person.

Inexcusable Transgression.

We saw that one team member regarded the preceding example as being an inexcusable transgression of the rules while others did not. The example we shall use now was seen by several members as a very serious transgression. Like the two previous examples this has to do with rules about what problems it is proper to construct in a Health Care Planning Team. One member had said in a meeting that the teams were to do with health, and should not discuss matters which were the province of Social Services or local government. One member said later to the researcher;

"So I think we're on the way to an overall service, rather than trying to do the impossible and split wellbeing. Which is why, of course, there was such an explosion at one Health Care Planning Team meeting you were at when X tried to dispute that particular philosophy. ... It was pretty shattering to think that we hadn't all travelled the same road. I think that's what it was.

Interviewer. Was that the problem?
Respondent. Well, I think that was the problem. I think it just hadn't occurred to us, some of us, that we weren't all thinking along the same lines. And to be taken back to square one all of a sudden was salutary, destructive, and actually of course made us realize a gap we hadn't appreciated existed."

The person referred to in this quotation had employed a strategy which was intended to affect the rules followed by other members of the team. His strategy, however, had been unsuccessful, and some members, like the one quoted above, considered that the attempt betokened a view of the functions of the team which was quite contrary to what they thought the function of the team should
be, and which would have serious negative effects, so far as they were concerned, if it were to be adopted. This transgression of the rules, coupled with the refusal of the transgressor to recant, led to some severe sanctions which will be described in the next chapter. The more usual case is a little different, in that such an inexcusable transgression usually leads first to firm but polite disapproval, and this is commonly followed by repentance on the part of the transgressor. The example quoted was more striking than that more common occurrence, in that the transgressor did not repent.
Chapter 14: Sanctions used to Enforce Rules of Problem Construction.

"Finally there is the problem of the authority of a rule, and the origin of the sanctions which ensure that a person who adheres to it follows it on the appropriate occasions. We are concerned with the rules of social behaviour and so with the authority and sanctions that operate in that realm. In our view this field has not been much studied. It is clear that the discovery of the sources of authority operative in ordinary social behaviour by the identification of the real and operative sanctions is a matter of great practical as well as theoretical import. Much work remains to be done in this area, both philosophical analysis of the concepts involved and detailed empirical exploration, though social psychologists have made some progress on questions of authority and sanctions." (Harré and Secord, 1972, p.183).

We have spoken, in the preceding chapter, of a framework of rules, and of team members behaving as if there were such a framework when engaged in the actions of problem-construction. If we see these actions as being conducted under rules, we must ask, why does anybody keep these rules? How do they come to be treated as authoritative? The problem that was mentioned in the last chapter, that data were not collected with that purpose and that topic in mind, is even greater for the present chapter. That team members behave as if there were a body of rules governing problem-construction emerged during the course of the research, and the data collection about it was less systematic than it would have been had that been envisaged as a framework from the outset. That such rules must be enforced by sanctions emerged even later in the work, and thus even fewer questions were asked of team members which might have uncovered their beliefs about this. Nevertheless, if team members are behaving as if there were a body of rules, it seems important to know how that body of rules comes to seem either legitimate or authoritative to them. In this chapter we shall
give an example of one of the most extreme cases that occurred during the research of sanctions being applied to a rule breaker, and then go on to explain and illustrate how sanctions are more commonly applied for rule-breaking in this area.

_Sanctions for a Gross Offence._

One member of the Health Care Planning Teams proposed what appeared to be a radically different attitude to the kind of work those teams should be undertaking. This person, whom we shall call Z throughout this section, was seen by several other members as breaking the rules of problem-construction within those teams. He was an Area Doctor, and this, according to some other members, predisposed them to be hostile and not to listen to him. However, he was not willing to accept the limitations which arose from this predisposition, and tried to play an influential part in team meetings. In addition, his position at Area means that people see any statement from him about the role of teams in the District as being coloured by District-Area competition. In the view of District people, Area always try to keep "wider implications" - relations with social services, housing etc. - to themselves, in order to carve out a role for themselves. The role which he was proposing for Health Care Planning Teams was one which should not only not be accepted, but should not be discussed, in the view of members. He was constructing a problem about the nature and purpose of the team, but there was a team rule against discussing that, at least in terms as radical as he wanted to. The researcher has no doubt, on the basis of being at team meetings and talking to people afterwards, that the other team members perceived a transgression of the rules. Also from data from the meetings, and
from his discussions with Z, the researcher knows that Z was aware that he was breaking rules of the team, and was being punished, and would continue to be punished, for doing so.

Before the first meeting of the HCPT (Geriatrics) for the planning cycle, the researcher asked Z where the various items on the agenda had come from. Z responded mainly in terms of an item about the role of the Health Care Planning Team, and said;

"This whole item is just you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. There is nothing one could do about this anyway. It's just play."

However, Z did not leave untested his belief that you could do nothing about this. From his behaviour in the meeting (and he confirmed this interpretation in a subsequent interview) he tried at first a mild test, which is shown in this fragment of the dialogue, as recorded in the researcher's notes.

Chairman. If the D.M.T. decided to disband this team, would anybody mind?

Z. Or would you rather change the name to District General Planning Team?

Chairman. I would rather not get bogged down in that at the moment. It is coming up at a District/Area meeting. Let's have a look at our terms of reference."

So the issue was brushed aside for the time being. However, a little later on in the meeting, when the chairman raised the question of whether members thought that the membership and chairmanship of the team were right, Z said;

"I think we should think what Health Care Planning Teams should be doing. As set up in the Grey Book, it should not be health in the wider sense. It should not be about social services because they are separate."

When he says that "it should not be health in the wider sense", he is implying that the HCPTs should instead be considering health in the narrower sense, that is, the prevention of clinically
This event took place at only the second HCPT meeting which the researcher had attended, and while he was aware that there were some dismissive and even angry responses, he did not realize at the time the extent to which rules which were important to team members had been broken by this statement: nor, unfortunately, did he have time to take note of the responses, beyond a general impression. It was the statement quoted above which provoked the team member quoted in the last chapter to talk about the 'inexcusable' transgression in the way he did. He went on to say of Z's statement on this occasion:

"It shook us all to find it there amongst us. It was a bit like realizing you have got a red under the bed right there in your own bedroom, sort of thing. But we've had trouble with that gentleman always, all of us do, but he's not been that outspoken, he's not been that foolish, because, - anyway."

This person then went on to explain why he and others in his part of the service valued Health Care Planning Teams particularly, and therefore presumably why any such move to redefine their purpose would be firmly resisted. He did not explain who else was included in the "all of us" who had always had trouble with Z, and nor did he elaborate on why it had been "foolish" of Z to say what he had.

Meanwhile a sanction was coming from another direction. In the notes of the meeting concerned (the equivalent of minutes for a more formal meeting) it said:

"(Z) said that the Team should remember it was called a health care planning team and should limit itself to discussing health services for the elderly. This was universally condemned as being against the spirit of recent guidance on planning, and indeed the philosophy of reorganization, which is concerned with
better co-ordination of services offered by all government agencies to meet the needs of people whatever their situation."

The "notes" in which these remarks appeared are circulated to a number of organizations within the health field, including some others which Z may have wished to influence, as well as Z's employers. At the next meeting of the HCPT(Geriatrics) the researcher's notes show the following exchange.

Z. I want to protest about how the minutes of the last meeting were written. It is not good minute writing to say that someone was universally condemned.

Doctor. How about 'roundly'? Z. (Shows a memo from the D.H.S.S. to suggest that HCPTs should be about Health Service planning, as opposed to wider health and social service matters).

Secretary. In Wessex we know more about planning than the Department does.

Z. I am more modest.

Social Worker. Are you trying to change the name or the function? Z. I think we should plan health care, and the social service representatives should alert their services to any consequences.

Nurse. What does the 'bible' say about this?

Chairman. (Historical description of the Health Care Planning Team pilot study in Dorset).

Social Worker. If the 'bible' provides for a forum, we should take advantage of it.

Chairman. Yes. But the idea that we should not plan together I would condemn.

At this point the chairman led discussion off to another issue.

The remarks recorded in Chapter 8 were also sparked off by this event, where one of the other team members said the following week at a meeting of a different Health Care Planning Team that Z would "live to regret his remarks on Friday to the end of his days". As Z was also a member (although absent on this occasion) of the
team at which that remark was made this may be seen as a continuation of the sanctions against him. This is capable of another interpretation, however, which is that this was simply an attempt to prevent Z from achieving the same redefinition of role for this team that he had proposed in the other. Another example of the continuing sanctions against Z occurred when one team member introduced the researcher to another with the words "He has been to see Z, unfortunately." The sanctions which were applied which seem most likely to keep potential rule-breakers within bounds here are the less demonstrative ones by which no further inputs from Z are examined or evaluated; they are simply ignored. Z acknowledged this in the following extract from a later HCPT (Geriatrics).

Consultant. I think we must look at community alternatives to hospital beds. Things like group tenancies and fostering the elderly.

Social Worker. Most of the District Councils are in favour of minimum support schemes. It has so far been mostly for the mentally ill and handicapped, not for the elderly.

Chairman. Well, the correct way of talking to Councils is through Area.

Z. I don’t understand why. Are we going to relieve hospital space. If not, why are we giving advice to the Councils?

Chairman. You have lost us. We are planning ahead.

Z. But Health Care Planning Teams do not plan social services. I am the odd person out here, so I stay quiet most of the time.

An example of the way in which Z's ideas were not, at least openly, listened to in the HCPT (Geriatrics) may be seen in an issue about criteria for admission. Z repeatedly proposed, at almost every meeting in the planning cycle, that criteria for the admission of elderly patients to the various different services available for them were needed, and that without such criteria no
person, profession or service could definitely say that any particular old person was or was not their responsibility.

Different persons presented different objections to Z's arguments on different occasions, but one influential member of the team, who had not supported the idea in the team meetings, said to the researcher towards the end of the cycle:

"I mean one of the things that we have been arguing about, if you try and distil this down to the essential features, and the thing where (Z) keeps rocking the boat all the time, and I'm afraid if you analyse it very carefully that (Z) is probably right (laughing). I'm not sure whether he is or not, I mean it depends what he actually means, which I think is in some doubt. But if he is saying that you need to have criteria, particularly criteria by the social services and by the Health Service and sheltered housing, if he's saying that they need to have criteria which are complementary to each other, alright. I'm not quite certain whether he puts that last bit in - "which are complementary to each other"."

A similar point was made by another influential team member in a quotation which was used in Chapter 11 when he said;

"If it's the doctor who happens to be called to the old person, they get doctored. If it's the social services, they get social serviced, so to speak, and the doctor will end up in hospital and the social services will end up in Part Three."

Despite these views which apparently concur with Z's, however, there was never any public acceptance of his views in the team meetings, nor, as was shown by the first quotation above, any willingness to find out more precisely what his position was.

Other Forms of Sanction.

As we have said above, Z's infringement of the rules of problem-construction in the Health Care Planning Teams was regarded as extreme, and on no other occasion were sanctions of that order
seen. Actions which could be interpreted as milder sanctions did take place, as in the case of the consultant who demonstratively fell asleep during one team meeting, and whose action (and in this case, falling asleep was an action) was seen by another team member as signifying dislike for the topic the team was discussing. Another member of that team commented that no other discipline would have dared to behave like that, and that suggests to us that different sanctions may be available to different team members to operate.

We meet a problem here in terms of the essential unobservability of the data which would properly demonstrate our point. A similar problem of the unobservability of a process is described by Lukes (1975), in attempting to study his three-dimensional view of power*. Lukes suggests that the powerful person can not only make the person over whom he has power do what he wants, and, further, prevent the discussion of issues which he does not want discussed, but can also affect that person's understanding of his own interests so that he sees those interests in a way that is beneficial to the powerful person. Lukes notes as a problem with this view that it is very difficult to carry out empirical research on it, because the research would be about things which do not happen and the reasons why they do not happen, and it is not easy to make convincing observations of non-events. Exactly the same problem obtains with sanctions which give authority to rules in teams. The first stage of sanctions against a rule breaker is

*We refer to Lukes for the methodological problem in observation; for an understanding of power in social situations we would refer to Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1970) and Berger and Luckman (1967).
usually simply not to take up his statement, and not to let it influence the problem as it is constructed in the team. The team member with reasonable social skills and only a moderate concern with the issue that he was trying to raise will stop at this point rather than suffer any more serious sanctions. The team member whose use of the team is described in the section "Excusable Transgression" in the last chapter was given to understand that he was breaking the rule, but he still carried on and used the team successfully to construct the problem he wanted constructed. However, some members believed that some cost must attach to this, either to that particular member because his actions would be suspected of transgressing the rules, and would thus be more closely scrutinized in future, or to the team, in that it would somehow lose authority from having permitted the rules of the kind of problem that should be constructed in it to be broken; nobody seemed clear as to just what the cost would be, however.

It seems possible that rules of problem-construction in teams are generally enforced by a shared belief that there are sanctions with which either the person or the team is punished when the rules are broken, but that the nature of the sanctions is not precisely known, except for the commonest of all, which is that of ignoring a person or his statement. To the extent that a person sees a team of which he is a member as a forum for problem-construction, in which he is trying to influence the problems eventually constructed by that team (and passed on for solution elsewhere in the case of HCPTs), for a statement which was intended to influence problem-construction to be ignored is likely to operate as an effective sanction.

As we have said above, it is not easy to demonstrate that
rules are being enforced by sanctions which do not need to be invoked. We cannot pretend that the notion of sanctions is 'grounded' in the expressed beliefs of team members. The researcher did ask several members if they could give him an example of a problem which it would not be right to raise at a particular HCPT, but none of the members asked seemed to find this a meaningful question. This is not surprising; when rules are operating really effectively, persons may not even consider ways of breaking them. Also, when the rules are informally made and transmitted, it may be that persons do not know that a particular action would break the rules until they show that they intend to take that action, and begin to pick up warning cues from the behaviour of others that they are in danger of transgression. We would suggest, for want of better information or conceptualization at present, that problem-construction in teams does take place as if there were rules which governed how it might be carried out, and as if those rules were enforced by sanctions; that team members are aware of those rules in the sense that before bringing a problem to a team, or before making a statement about a problem in a team, they are able to test the problem or the statement for legitimacy within the rules, that is, they are implicitly aware of the rules and sanctions. They are not aware of the rules and sanctions in the sense that they would be able to give to someone else, out of context, a list of those rules and sanctions; they are not explicitly aware of them. Furthermore, rather than discover for themselves what sanctions come in to effect for a particular transgression, team members are likely to take the less risky path of changing their problem-construction, or at least their statements about problems, until they fit the rules.
PART 5

CONCLUSION.
Chapter 15: Drawing Together the Categories.

In Part 4 of this thesis a number of categories were presented which derived from persons' beliefs about problem-construction in teams, and also some descriptions of rules which seemed to be followed and the sanctions which were used to enforce those rules. We have attempted to be clear about whose these various categories were, being in some cases the categories of team members, inevitably with some degree of interpretation from the researcher since it is not, we believe, possible to present another person's views without giving some interpretation to them, and in some cases, as we have said, we have used different words in the category labels with the intention of conveying the meaning of the belief (as we understood it) to the reader more accurately; on other occasions the beliefs on which the categories are based are those of the researcher. This is true, for example, of most of the categories presented in Chapter 12. To base categories on researcher-beliefs is justifiable where it is done explicitly, and is in line with our views on using the person of the researcher as a research instrument, as expounded in Chapter 9. The situation with the data on rules and sanctions is a little different in that the data on these topics are, for reasons which were explained in Chapters 13 and 14, more sparse than the data on beliefs about problem-construction, and are not sufficient to generate categories in the same way.

Frequent apologies were made in the text in Part 4 for the arbitrariness of the ways which were used to divide up the material. When presenting data on holistic research it is probably inevitable that any piece of data is data not only on the topic for which it is presented, but for many other topics also. The data (and in
this respect it resembles many persons' experience of organizational life, and many persons' understanding of problem-construction in teams) will not fit neatly into compartments. Since we have attempted to let the compartments be generated as they were required by the data, it is not surprising that the compartments also do not fit neatly with each other. In this chapter we shall organize some of the categories and some of the uncategorized data from Chapters 13 and 14 in a different way from our original organization of them. This time we shall consider the data in terms of what it has to say about the eight topics which were listed in Chapter 1 as being topics about which our formulation of the research problem would lead us to ask questions. These were:

1. What a person sees as a problem.
2. How a person views a problem.
3. What sort of problems a team should construct.
4. How a team should go about formulating problems.
5. Roles in team problem-finding.
6. Good use of a team.
7. Peculiarities of problem-construction in teams.
8. Team problem-construction in its organizational context.

What a Person Sees as a Problem.

There seemed to be some consensus that seeing problems is a fairly individual matter. That "some people will construct a problem where others would not" (4) and that "one person may see something as problematic when others do not" (50) seemed to be fairly uncontentious categories. We would suspect, however, that they are of the sort that most people would agree with if asked, but would not be conscious of if not asked; for a person consciously to hold these categories might well lead him into much of the thinking that has gone in to this thesis, and it may be presumed
that many team members would prefer not to expend their energy this way. Amongst those for whom these categories were explicit and articulate there were beliefs about how a person comes to see some particular problem. "A person may construct a particular problem as a result of reading papers and journals" (7) or "because of his past experience" (6) or "as a result of talking to others in a similar position" (8).

A category of "knowing what a problem is" (2) also emerged. The notion of 'problem' was familiar to many team members and was used in a way which did not necessarily imply deficiency, but only that something was not as someone would have it be. There was also a notion of "actual" problems, which was different from the notion of "real" problems found in some of the literature and criticized in Chapter 2. "Real" problems are usually constrained with "unreal" or fantasy problems, whereas "actual" problems was used by some team members to refer to problems which they believed they could do something about, as opposed to those which they could not address.

How a Person views a Problem.

In propounding a way of looking at problems such as that proposed in this thesis, it is easy to slip into regarding the only available options as being to accept the view proffered or not to accept it. However, one of the categories that emerged was "problems may or may not be seen as constructed" (1), and by this we mean that some persons could accept the notion of problems as constructed things but insisted that this notion did not apply in some cases; they were able to see some problems as constructed but others as simply existing, as in the case where "a problem may be self-evident" (32).
Even if persons agree that a problem exists in a situation, the problem they see there may be different. "Problems may be big or little, difficult or easy" (11), "different people construct different problems" (5), or to make a more general but related point, "different types of person may formulate different types of problem" (51). The second of these categories is presumably one of the causes of the first. Sometimes one person will recognize more than one definition as applying to one problem because "problems may have more than one cause" (35), and therefore several problem-definitions could be regarded as correct by one person, as relating to a single problem-situation. Again, "problems may be multi-faceted" (3), to choose probably a different way of modelling the same belief.

Several categories emerged which have to do with the limitations on problem-perception by the person. "A problem may be identified with no idea of what is causing it" (34) means that problem-recognition may take place, but without the persons involved being able to proceed with problem-diagnosis. At the other end, "problem-definition does not mean that you know what to do about it" (14) means that the stages of diagnosis and of finding a way of resolving the problem are, at least for those who employed this category, distinguishable, since they can talk about defined problems without thereby implying the solution. The phrase 'problem-definition' itself connoted something too complete and rounded for some team members who insisted that "a 'problem-definition' is always partial" (36). It also seemed that it was not necessary for a problem-definition to be something which could be made explicit. One of the categories was "verbal definition of a problem is not necessary during problem-construction" (15);
this category did not apparently mean that definition was not necessary, but rather that a person might know what the problem was but not be able to say.

One particular difference in how persons might view problems was reflected in the category "a problem may be important without being urgent" (37), and it seemed possible that differences in opinion on these two qualities and confusions between them might have a considerable role to play for persons wishing to open up the topic of problem-construction in a team, as it seems likely to be a widely found issue, and one that many team members would regard as worth while without being threatening. That, however, is speculation.

It should be noted that in many of the accounts of the "inexcusable transgression", and the sanctions which followed this, given in Chapters 13 and 14, the criticism of the transgressor is not for his manner of introducing his problem-construction to the team; it is more that the way he viewed a problem was seen as illegitimate by the team members, who were shattered that "they had not all travelled the same road".

What Sort of Problems a Team Should Construct.

The notion that there was potentially great choice in the problems that are constructed in teams seemed to be well born out by the number of categories which emerged of different types of problem which might be constructed in a team, usually with some evaluative statement being made as to which of two or more sorts was the better or more appropriate. Thus "problems may be constructed on different time scales" (10) and some persons believed there either were or should be rules as to the time scale
of problems constructed in Health Care Planning Teams. The similar category, "problems may be defined on different scales" (95) did not appear to have any such rule connotations. As well as different scales, there are different sorts of problems according to the source from which they are recognized. "Problems may be identified from norms and statistics" (40), or, and this is very similar though more general, "there is a lot of information already available which could be used for problem-finding" (41), although there is another school of thought which believes that "field-workers may be a better guide to problems than the norms are" (42). There are conflicting notions here about which are the 'best' sources for problem-finding, and it may be expected that the two schools of thought reflected in the last sentence will compete to get rules accepted in the teams which embody and codify their approach.

Some categories suggested that there might be a positive role for 'problem-losing' in a team. For example, "to stop the solving of non-problems may be defined as a problem" (79), and also "a person may stop a problem-construction by showing that it is outside the scope of the team" (80). It is almost as if there were a prevailing tendency towards either problem-finding or problem-losing in teams at particular times. Whilst in one team at one time problem-losing may only take place if it is deliberately initiated, at other times "a person may need to argue that it is worth constructing a problem" (85).

Connected with what we said above about the scale of problems was the idea that "an overall problem may be defined in a team for other problems to fit within" (59); a statement about the terms of reference or 'tasks' of a team may be seen as such an overall
problem-definition. This may be one of the reasons why "a team may have a particular orientation in problem-construction" (17), although there is some difference in that an overall problem usually operates as part of the body of rules governing problem-construction, where a particular orientation in a team may be because of rules, or may be because of many other factors such as specialisms represented and history of the team.

Many team members have some more or less definite ideas of what sort of problems a team should construct, on the basis of which they may consider, for example, that "it may be difficult for some persons to contribute to realistic problem-finding" (57) where they know that those persons find the rules which they consider should operate in problem-construction in a particular team irksome or distasteful. Most of the transgressions of rules that were observed in the teams were offences against one or other of the categories that have been mentioned in this section.

How a Team Should Go About Formulating Problems.

Whereas the last section was concerned with categories about the type of problems which may be defined in a particular team, this section is concerned rather with categories about the processes of problem-construction, and in particular formulation, within teams. These processes may of course be the topic of a problem-definition themselves, as where "a person may define a problem in the way a team is going about its work" (94). A specific example of a problem that was identified in the way teams go about their work may be seen in the view that "to construct problems in a team, everyone should have the power to make commitments" (24), which was clearly not the case in Health Care Planning Teams. Another
category which suggests a more specific problem in the way a team goes about its problem-finding is found in "some persons may bring problems to the relevant team indiscriminately" (70).

There were some who considered that "you cannot keep problem-finding and problem-solving separate in a team" (67); where this means that the stages must overlap, or indeed cannot be distinguished at all, there would not have been great support for this category in the teams. Where, however, it means that problem-solving affects problem-finding and not only vice versa, there were other categories which seemed to fit well with it. For example, "a problem may not be identified if there are other problems being worked on" (64) means that the activity of problem-solving may prevent the activity of problem-finding, and at the same time "problem-finding may be choked off if the problems are not then being solved" (65), or in other words, if problem-finding does not lead to solution, further problem-finding is inhibited. This does not conflict with the category that "problem-construction may be done better if solution is not considered" (9), which makes the different point that considering the solution of a particular problem under discussion, during formulation, may limit that formulation in an uncertain and possibly undesirable way. Of course, "if a solution is not found to a problem, it may be redefined" (89), but "reformulating a problem to make it more soluble will not necessarily help" (38) because in making it more soluble the problem may have been so changed that its solution has no bearing on the problem as originally experienced.

When we talk about 'teams formulating problems' this is a short way of saying that persons in teams initiate the activities of definition and formulation of problems, several other persons
may contribute in some way to that definition or formulation, until a problem-construction is arrived at which is accepted by the team. For any one team member "other persons' ways of formulating problems may or may not be seen as adequate" (55). For example, "some problems may be discovered by generalizing from cases" (44), and while this may be the ideal source for problem-finding for some, others regard it with suspicion. It seems that "conflicting construction of problems may be resolvable in a meeting" (93); of course they may also well not be resolvable, or at least not be resolved, but in general where there is some pressure on a team to agree a construction, such conflicts are resolved, even if only by the relatively crude exercise of power. A rather different paradigm from the one suggested at the beginning of this paragraph underlies the view that "a problem-construction may be built within a team" (16), that is to say, there can be occasions when initiators of definitions and formulations are not apparent, but rather these definitions and formulations emerge in the interactions between team members, rather than appearing as something they might have brought to the meeting with them.

A different connexion between problems and solutions from those considered above also emerged. One category runs "sometimes a problem is only felt in the light of a solution" (47); where things were regarded as satisfactory before, newly perceived possibilities for action may lead to the experience of a problem. A slightly different point is that "sometimes things may come together so that a problem is defined by its solution" (48), meaning that there may be a whole 'mess' of events, difficulties, uncertainties, discrepancies, unfulfillment etc., and that understanding of this 'mess' within a team may lead to the perception of
a solution which, by being seen as a solution, defines a problem from the 'mess'.

Along with ways in which a team should go about formulating problems there are ways in which a team should go about not formulating problems. It certainly seems that "whole areas of work may be defined as unproblematic" (46), that is, the members of a team accept a definition that some area with which they might concern themselves is in such a good state that they need not scan it for problems.

Roles in Team Problem-Finding.

As with other activities, in problem-finding the use of a team gives opportunities for the division of labour which would not exist otherwise as the members take on certain individual roles within the team. In some cases it seemed that "a person may define the problems for a team" (18), and even if there is no such clear dominance in problem-finding as that, it seems that "a person may attempt to persuade others to define or not to define a particular problem" (87). In some cases "one person may be able to predict or control the problem-finding of a team" (61). These three categories have all been concerned with roles which persist in a team beyond the consideration of a particular problem-situation. Roles may also be taken up in a more situation-specific way, for example when "a person may behave as advocate for a problem" (86). Such advocacy may be in terms of bringing a problematic area to the attention of a team, or it may be that the person has a fairly definite construction for the problem that he is advocating, as where "one person may persuade others to go along with his construction of the problem" (62). If the problem comes from the
area of work and sphere of responsibility of the advocate, then it may be an example of how "a person may try to persuade a team to take on his problem" (19).

The research on which this thesis was based was conducted in multi-disciplinary teams, and this is reflected in a number of categories that emerged about the roles of different specialisms in problem-construction. Most generally it was said that "people may pick up their own ends of a problem" (90), that is, different specialisms or functions may define separate and complementary problems for themselves simultaneously during a team meeting. The advantages and disadvantages of a team with many specialist members both seem to accrue from the notion that "specialists will have a limited perspective when it comes to problem-finding" (53). On the one hand "a specialist perspective may be helpful in problem-construction" (54), in bringing more understanding to complex issues, while on the other hand "specialism can lead to some problems being of no interest to those who could help with them" (28). In addition, it is often difficult for different specialisms to take seriously each others' problem-constructions. The differences between specialisms apply not only to the content with which they construct problems but also to the team processes through which problem-constructions are reached in teams. "Different groups may have different ideas about what is needed in problem-formulation" (52).

Roles may be distinguished in team problem-construction according to the size of the problems constructed. For example, "one person may construct a problem and get other people to construct sub-problems" (21). In rather the same way, "a person may need help on a part, but not all, of a problem formulation" (60),
in which case he will presumably retain responsibility for construction of the overall problem, and also for constructing the parts other than those on which he wants help. One of the more general roles in team problem-construction, other than that of proposer of constructions, is that of persuader of people to put their energy in to the problem-construction process. For example, "sometimes you have to convince people that it is worth defining problems" (25), and "a person may attempt to persuade others to redefine a problem" (88).

Some roles in a team may be played less consciously than the ones that have been categorized above, as in the case where "in a team, one person's information may lead to another person's problem-construction" (82). In other words, information presented by a member may, without his having intended this, lead another member to construct a problem. Another example of a role which is not deliberately played is that "a problem may come to a team through people complaining to one of the members" (45), though on other occasions a person will see it as a role consciously to adopt to 'keep his ears to the ground' for the team.

The role of the chairman is clearly also important, as "team problem-construction is affected by the way the team is run" (26). Both the chairman and the secretary of a team have a particularly important role where "problems may be defined for a team by consensus" (43). Our data has shown that the sensing of consensus, and the recording of just what it was a consensus about, are activities which give the persons who perform them considerable opportunities for control.

Good Use of a Team.

Mary persons say that they resent spending a lot of time in
teams, and have doubts about the value for time which team meetings provide. This gave rise to a number of categories about what constituted good use of a team. This was particularly salient in the Health Service, where "several teams may be expected to find and address the same issues" (77).

We are concerned here with good use of a team as that relates to problem-construction activities, and not in other respects. In some cases, some team members believe that "the task of a team may be problem-construction" (29), but within the same team may be those who believe that "a team may or may not be an arena for problem-construction" (30), and that whatever the formal rules may be about terms of reference of a team, their evaluation of that team as a suitable place to attempt a problem-construction will depend on the competence which they believe it has to make others take notice of its constructions. After all, "problem-construction is time-consuming" (12), which is one of the reasons why "a team may agree that problems be taken away for formulation" (84). Where rules operate in a team which say that the team should be seeking to ensure that unmet need is met, this places some requirement on teams to search for problems in a systematic way, and "systematic problem-finding is time-consuming" (49). One of the solutions which has been proposed for this is that "perhaps you could go and get a batch of problems at one go" (13). While this may lead to greater efficiency in problem-finding, it would need to be balanced against the consideration that "a team can only address so many issues at a time" (63). One specific type of good use of a team which emerged as quite significant in the research is that "a person may bring to a team a problem which he sees as being caused by another member of that team" (58). Not all persons or all teams are able
to handle this situation effectively, but for those who can, the multi-disciplinary team meetings provide a valuable forum for members to tell one another how one man's solution is creating another man's problem.

**Peculiarities of Problem-Construction in Teams.**

A number of categories emerged in the research which do not fit well under any of the other areas for question that were identified in Chapter 1, and do not yet form distinct groups of categories of their own, which we would nevertheless regard as having important things to say which we can lump together as 'peculiarities of problem-construction in teams'. This is as far as we can go with them on the basis of the present work. Further research would be needed to discover and develop these and other categories until they might be fitted together in a more coherent whole.

"Conflicting constructions of problems may be offered in a meeting" (92), and while we have said above that such conflicting constructions may be resolved(93), it appears to be very rare for different constructions to be evaluated by comparison with one another and an open decision made on that basis. More commonly it appears that the problem-construction with the more powerful or influential perpetrator is accepted. Sometimes trading seems to be involved here, as where "a person may accept another person's problem construction in order to get agreement on one of his own" (20). The influence is not always seen as being encouragement of one type of construction rather than another; some categories suggest influence processes that are more nebulous in their operation, such as where "some people's presence in a
meeting can affect the kind of problems that are constructed" (22). Either because it is against the rules that they think should be operating in problem-construction in the team, or possibly because it is inconvenient for them to have certain types of problem defined, "persons in a team may discourage the formulation of a type of problem" (56). If a person is operating on a very different set of rules about problem-construction from some other members of the team, his actions may be described by the category "persons may confound problem-construction in teams" (23).

In a team, it sometimes happens that "a problem may be explored and then dropped" (31) without any explanation being given or any explicit decision being reached not to proceed with work on that problem. The mechanism by which this happens was not apparent in this research, although one of the explanations for it is that "persons may or may not be committed to a problem" (27). This may even show itself in a positive lack of commitment, as where "people may agree that a problem is important, and yet not want to own it" (69). What is perhaps most interesting here is that problems are dropped, fail to find commitment, or are agreed to be important but are not taken up, and yet to get that far, some person or persons had to take the initiative to bring the problem to the notice of the team. Team members are very often quite vague, or seemingly inaccurate, about who it was that initially defined a particular problem in a team. This applies not only where "problems may have been identified some time ago, and nobody remembers by whom" (33), but also in cases where more than one person told the researcher that they had been responsible for first bringing a particular problem to the attention of the team, and also where persons claimed such responsibility and this conflicted
with the researcher's observations.

The order in which problems are constructed (and passed on for solution) is sometimes puzzling, but one of the factors involved may be that "small problems may be easier to handle" (66). Conflicting constructions of problems cannot always be helped by appeals to the 'facts', since the interpretations and meanings of those facts may be quite different for different persons and different disciplines; thus "'objective' problem indicators do not necessarily lead to agreed problem-constructions" (91). One potential source of such conflicting construction is where "a solution to one person's problem may prevent the solution of another's".

Two other quirks of team problem-construction deserve to be mentioned here. One is that "persons may be invited to a problem-finding meeting for all sorts of reasons" (71). It may be on the grounds of personal liking, the wish to keep that person informed, or some sort of political manipulation, rather than a belief that he has some particular contribution to make to the problem-finding. The other remaining quirk is that "you could run out of problems" (39), and while no detailed accounts were collected of what the consequences might be of running out of problems in a Health Care Planning Team meeting, the way this category was used suggested that members saw running out of problems as a difficult and embarrassing situation which should be avoided, rather than an indicator of success.

**Team Problem-Construction in its Organizational Context.**

In this section we shall review some categories which relate problem-construction in teams to the wider organizational setting
of those teams. It follows from what we were saying in the
previous section that "the usefulness of teams may be for gaining
commitment to a problem rather than for problem-finding" (68);
this may be one explanation for the way in which several team
members may believe that they were the one to discover a particular
problem for a team. It is at least possible that one of the
strategies open to a skilful problem-definer is so to present
information to the team that several other members will 'discover'
the problem for themselves and thus become much more committed to
it, and to formulating it in terms of their own part of the
organization, than would otherwise be the case.

A team in an organization will usually have relationships
not only with persons but with other teams in the organization.
These relationships may be through common members; it has been
noted that "a person with cross-membership of teams may come to
see them as equivalent for some purposes" (78). The relationship
may also be one of reciprocality or complementarity of function,
giving a situation in which "problem-constructions and solutions
may be traded off between groups" (76).

The teams in which this research took place were, like most
teams, part of a hierarchy with other teams set in authority over
them. A superordinate team may direct some problem-definitions
in a team in that "problems may come to a team by order of an
outside body"(72). Even if they do not actually direct the
problem-construction, they may influence the terms in which a
problem is constructed, as where "problems may be defined by
fashions in opinion of superordinate bodies" (73). If the higher
authority's influence is not felt before construction, they may
still have to be approached afterwards. "When problems are
constructed in a team, they may still have to be accepted by higher authority" (31). This may not be straightforward; "to get a team's formulation of a problem accepted by higher authority, informal politicking may be called for" (74). The formal procedures of a hierarchy of authorities may take some considerable time to operate, and the time between problem-construction, problem-solution, and implementation of a solution, particularly for a planning team, can be such that "you may have to go ahead with solving a past problem" (75).
Chapter 16: Directions for Further Research.

It has been our claim in this thesis that we are breaking new ground, in that the research reported here seems to be quite some way distant from other investigations that have taken place. It would be inconsistent with our methodology to propose at this point a range of studies which the researcher, or others, could then go out and perform in order to build up the total stock of knowledge in the field. Such a list would be severely limited by being written as if knowledge could be sought effectively without knowing for what purpose it was being sought, and would also take no account, if the possibility were envisaged of other researchers becoming involved, of the particular qualities and attributes of the principal research tool involved in such work, that is, the research worker. What we can do instead, however, is to list out the directions in which it is apparent that further work would be helpful to the understanding which we are seeking in this work, and to give some examples of the research problems which might be constructed in those directions. We shall characterize the six directions of which we are aware as follows: -

1. Continuing.
2. Testing.
3. Transposing.
4. Reverting to fundamentals.
5. Narrowing.

1. Continuing.

The concept of a rule framework within which problem-construction was carried out in particular teams emerged as significant during the research, but not early enough for deliberate
16.2

account to be taken of it in the data collection. We have sought to demonstrate in Chapters 13 and 14 that this may be a fruitful line of enquiry to follow, and it would make sense to continue the line that was followed in the research supporting this thesis by conducting a further investigation of the processes of problem-construction in teams, conceived of as a rule-following activity. Such a conception would generate questions along the lines of: –

How do members of a team communicate the rules that they believe do or should operate within that team to one another?
How are rules enforced?
To what extent should we conceive of rules as being common to members of a team, and to what extent as particular to individual members?
What sort of effects may we expect from seeing the team members as mostly being involved in several different games at once, and therefore as playing under several different sets of rules at once?

Further research in this direction could be expected to offer some considerable pay-offs for those who wished to understand team problem-construction better in order to affect the way in which it is carried out in a particular team, or the way in which an individual carries out his part in it.

2. Testing.

The analysis which has been presented, both through categories and in less organized forms, is not of a type which is amenable to testing by replication. It is, however, intended to be useful beyond just understanding the (now historical) events in teams from and for which those analyses were generated. It would be valuable for a research worker (who might well be a team member) to attempt to use the categories, and other analysis, for understanding the processes of problem-construction in a team similar
to those in which the research was conducted. It would certainly be very disappointing if the categories were found to be not at all helpful in understanding processes of problem-construction in other teams. Previous work with techniques of grounded theory, such as that of Glaser and Strauss (1965), suggests that such a process of further exploration of the categories would show that some categories are saturated, that is, they operate successfully in assisting understanding and do not seem to require further elaboration or analysis, whilst other categories would require that further work be done on them. There is no clear way of distinguishing teams, situations, persons and research workers who are similar enough for further work to be described as "testing" from those that are different enough for further work to be regarded as "transposing". Probably the best criterion for deciding which of these two is being undertaken in any particular piece of work is the more or less tautological one that whichever was intended was the one which was performed.

3. Transposing.

Instead of testing the categories by collecting further data in as similar a situation as possible, we may deliberately try using some of the analysis that we have derived on what we believe to be different kinds of team or person constructing different kinds of issues within a different institutional framework. This may show us that some of our categories have more general application, while others need to be changed to fulfill such a wider function; sometimes, the function we wish them to fulfill may be not wider but simply different, as for example when we are interested in understanding one particular team of a different kind
rather than steadily expanding our understanding by incorporating data from moderately similar teams until we have generalized to the level that we wish. The difficulties over criteria, which we mentioned in the previous section, continue to be difficulties. Terms we have used such as "different" and "moderately similar" do not have any more precise meaning than that they are thought of by whoever is contemplating doing such work as "different" or "moderately similar".

Deliberate transpositions of the categories to use in other moderately similar teams will lead to the development of categories which may be used more generally with more confidence than may the categories as they stand in this thesis, but at the same time, the categories thus developed may be less helpful in understanding teams that are very similar to the ones described here. There is no ideal level of generality at which categories should be developed. In the present research, we have already departed from pure holistic particularism. We have generalized about a class of teams which may be called "Health Care Planning Teams in the Bath Health District", which meant, at the time of the investigation, principally three teams. We have also generalized longitudinally by drawing together categories arising over several months in the life of those teams. The levels of both of these generalizations can be justified in that they constituted a mixture of unity and diversity which seemed satisfactory both to the researcher and to his collaborators in the teams: the level of generalization is guided by the level of analysis which is expected to be useful. If the categories which have been developed in this research are to be used more widely about problem-construction in other teams with any confidence, they would need to be generalized by seeking to
apply them elsewhere in a way which encourages the processes of development and elaboration described in the last section. It might be particularly useful to attempt such a transposition to a team whose members did more of their day-by-day professional work together rather than coming together only for occasional problem-construction sessions.

4. Reverting to Fundamentals.

Another direction in which the work from this thesis might be developed is by concentrating on the more fundamental categories around problem-construction by individual persons, and taking that as a prior conceptual task to understanding how persons come together in teams and develop and accept problem-constructions within those teams. It seems from the present research that such a line might most fruitfully be taken by developing categories about the beliefs that persons have about their own, and other persons', individual problem-constructions. Individual problem-construction does not of course entail observable behaviours in the same way that problem-construction in teams does, unless some experimental situation is set up to elicit such observable behaviours; having set up such a situation, it would become questionable whether we are still dealing with the same activity. It would, however, be quite possible to get additional slants on the individual process, apart from those gained by further elaborating and testing the categories already developed, by devising a way for persons to give accounts of what they were doing in problem-construction activities while they were actually doing it.

In describing the individual processes of problem-construction as more "fundamental" than the group processes, we do not
intend to imply that the former are like building blocks for the latter, or that the latter are the former writ large, or any other such simple relationship. Factors to do with what meanings, beliefs and values are common among members of a team, and what are peculiar to one or some members, make the relationship more complicated. When we speak of individual analysis as more "fundamental" we mean quite literally that analysis, breaking things down, must make the individual more fundamental than the group. It is not a necessary assumption from this that individual research is more 'basic' than research on groups, and that the latter should be done after the former. We would argue that our research on problem-construction in teams could usefully be developed by someone wishing to look more thoroughly into problem-construction by individual persons.

5. Narrowing.

The subject matter of this research was, as we argued in Part 2, in a primitive stage of development, and it seemed important that the present study should cover as much as possible of the activities of problem-construction in teams. In a further study, it might be wished to take just one aspect of the range of discovery of the present study and explore it with much more thoroughness. This might be just around one category. For example, it would be interesting to take up the category "A problem may be explored and then dropped", and to attempt to discover how it can come about that a problem which appears to be under construction in a team may be dropped without any overt decision to do so, and despite the fact that there is some person present who put energy into drawing that issue to the team's
attention in the first place. Many other categories would similarly have enough content of the strangeness about them that they could be the subject of a full-length study. However, we do not consider that it would be likely to be fruitful to set out to demonstrate the truth or falsity of any of the categories. They are intended (and phrased) to be useful for understanding rather than truthful. It is therefore more likely to be fruitful to explore in greater depth a category which seems to illuminate, or bring into focus, some situations of concern: if a category does neither of those things for a person, then it is not likely to act as a successful delimiter of a research field for that person.


We have mentioned that most research on team processes confines itself to that which goes on within team meetings, and we have suggested that this is a significant weakness in such research. Outside the meetings there takes place a range of side deals, threats, offers and so on, as well as other games which may not appear to have anything to do with the team, but are to do with friendship patterns, other teams and the like. It would be widely agreed, we suspect, that much information is passed at lunch time or in the tea room which has significance for the conduct of problem-construction in teams, but might not have been picked up by the data collection methods employed in this research: some of it was picked up, but the data collection procedures were not designed to collect this reliably. The researcher once worked for an oil company where, during the recurrent crises of that industry, members of project teams were not allowed to 'bother' line managers. Senior members of these teams would therefore pay
frequent visits to the lavatory, where they would be sure eventually to 'happen upon' whichever managers they wished to contact. An analysis of problem-construction in those teams at that time which took no account of conversations beginning in the lavatory would have been incomplete. We suspect that many organizations have some such quirks about the way in which internal politicking is carried out, and that, in line with our belief in taking accounts seriously, we could collect accounts from team members of the nature and significance of events and actions outside the team meetings for the processes of problem-construction in those teams. The research could thus be developed by taking fuller and more deliberate account of categories which affect the construction of problems in teams, but which may not have been discovered in the present study because the categories relate to things which do not actually take place within the teams.
APPENDIX.

In this appendix, some of the problem-*** terms used in this thesis are given brief descriptions, and their relationship suggested by a diagram. This is done so that the reader has some help from the outset in understanding the different terms: however, the descriptions and relationships here are only partial, and are intended as a basis, not a substitute, for the iterative definitions that the terms should collect through a reading of the text.

```
PROBLEM-SOLVING
  includes
    PROBLEM-CONSTRUCTION
      includes
        PROBLEM-FINDING
          includes
            any part of
              PROBLEM-DEFINITION
                includes
                  PROBLEM-EXISTENCE
                    gives rise to
                      PROBLEM-SITUATION
                        together constitute
                          PROBLEM
```

Diagram of Problem-*** terms
Descriptions

Problem-solving is a label used for the total process by which a problem comes into awareness, takes form, and is disposed of. This label thus embraces the notions of 'problem-construction' and 'problem-disposal'.

Problem-construction is a label which we use to denote the whole process by which there comes to be a belief that a problem exists, and a definition and formulation are developed for that particular problem. This label thus embraces the notions of 'problem-definition' and 'problem-formulation'.

Problem-disposal is our label for the process of getting rid of a problem which has been defined and formulated. We follow Ackoff and Emery (1972) in believing that a problem may be disposed of by solution, resolution or dissolution.

Problem-finding is a label for any part of the process of problem-construction where one does not wish to imply the entire process of problem-definition and problem-formulation. Most of the acts of persons in teams during problem-construction can most happily be described as 'problem-finding', since they rarely reflect the whole of any of the processes of problem-construction, problem-definition or problem-formulation.

Problem-definition is used to denote the process of coming to believe that a problem exists, and of deciding what is the central discrepancy which may be used to identify this problem. These two features of problem-definition are so interdependent that for most purposes we combine them in the one label. However, 'problem-existence', which is embraced by the notion of
problem-definition, is occasionally used as a separate concept.

**Problem-formulation** is the process by which an understanding is built up of that which has been defined to be problematic through a model of the world as it impinges on the defined problem.

**Problem-existence** is that part of problem-definition which has to do with a belief that there is something around which is problematic, even though it may not be possible to say what that is. This gives rise to what we have labelled a 'problem-situation'.

**Problem-situation** is a term used where problem-existence is felt, but where there is not necessarily any clarity about what the problem is. This is sometimes referred to as a 'mess', where one or more problems have yet to be defined out of a situation where something is wrong.

**Problem** is a label for the upshot of problem-definition and problem-formulation on a problem-situation, where the product of these gives rise to difficulty and uncertainty as to how it may be disposed of.
Bibliography.


