THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF 'CAPACITY BUILDING':
A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF ORGANISATION
DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS' ACCOUNTS.

THESIS

Submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

in the Department of Psychology
Rhodes University
Grahamstown, South Africa

by

RYAN EAGAR

January 1999
ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore, through organisation development (OD) consultants’ accounts, the meaning of ‘capacity building’ in the South African development context. The need for theory development in this area is apparent from two interrelated vantage points. Firstly, while ‘capacity building’ is an increasingly espoused development approach, it is seen to be a confusing and ill-defined concept, for which there exists no adequate theory. Secondly, there is an growing call within the OD field to perform ‘reconnaissance’ (Weick, 1990) on OD as it is being practised in different socio-historical and organisational contexts, so as to discern future trends for this discipline. Due to the lack of documented debate which grounds OD issues in the South African development sector, OD practitioners’ ‘capacity building’ interventions were seen to provide suitably unchartered terrain for this study.

Given that theory generation was intended, the general epistemological principles provided by Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) ‘grounded theory’ methodology were adopted. As a way of avoiding some of the criticisms and limitations of this approach, this thesis followed later conceptualisations of this method, in particular its reframing within the social constructionist idiom. In accordance with this perspective, this study directed attention to the ways in which OD consultants, in a non-governmental organisational (NGO) sector known as ‘intermediary’ NGOs, accounted for their ‘capacity building’ role in this development context.

The results, based on in-depth interviews with ten OD consultants, indicate that ‘capacity building’ is an elusive and inchoate concept with more than one meaning for the participants. Their narrative account variously constructs ‘capacity building’ as value-driven OD process facilitation; funder and market regulated service provision; and people-driven product delivery. As a result of this multi-vocal construction, the participants’ accounts reveal that OD consultancy in this sector is primarily concerned with ‘managing the tensions’ of the consultants’ ambiguous and contradictory roles.

By examining how the tensions articulated by the consultants inhere in their relationship to the environment in which they operate, this thesis firstly explores how the contradiction and ambiguity attached to this concept can be traced to different stakeholder expectations of ‘capacity building’. Secondly, it examines how these different stakeholder discourses conflict with each other and with an OD perspective. Thirdly, through an explication of the core category of ‘managing tensions’, it explores the image of OD consulting as a ‘shifting and inconstant balancing act’. Fourthly, it shows how there exist wider contextual forces operating in the development sector which serve to throw these consultants ‘off balance’ and into delimited and ‘received’ service provision roles which run counter to their raison d’etre. Finally, the research examines new ways of approaching the ‘capacity building’ question and of understanding the nature of OD consultancy. It concludes with an attempt to respond to a conceptual aporia in OD literature by examining possible alternative images and metaphors for the role of the OD consultant.
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the many people who have helped make this thesis happen. In particular, I would like to thank:

My supervisor, Dr Kevin Kelly, for his invaluable comments, guidance and encouragement throughout this process. It’s truly appreciated.

My good friends, Nick, Lucy, Michele, David, Peter and my brother, Brendan, for their support and understanding and for taking the edge off my ‘small town narrative’.

The participants who took part in the study, for sharing their time and stories with me.

Ruth and Sally, for their kind help with the proof reading.

My parents, for their continued support and encouragement.

The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development (HSRC, South Africa) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.
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Introduction

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Note: Throughout the text, I have observed the economical but obviously unsatisfactory convention of using the masculine pronoun.
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In an address delivered to the OD Division of the Academy of Management, Karl Weick (1990) called for a reinterpretation of the theory and practice of organisation development (OD). He argued that this discipline had reached an impasse, that its theorists were simply concerned with rehashing old ideas, and that it suffered from 'a fatigue of the spirit'. He urged OD scholars to re-examine things they think they already understand, to re-examine their role as problem finders of the academy, and to find 'new stories' to tell. Appropriating Maslow's image of the 'Reconnaissance Man', Weick (1990, p.313) framed this challenge as follows:

OD professionals are advised to perform reconnaissance, which is defined as lowering one's defences, seeing fully, looking again at things one considers already understood, capturing previously undetected nuances, and developing high variety languages to describe what is discovered.

In Weick's (1990) call for reconnaissance, one detects a subtle yet pervasive sea change occurring within OD. Of late, a growing number of theorists have given voice to the need to re-examine OD's values, beliefs and practices so as to map out a future path for this discipline (Burke, 1997; Hames, 1994; Hanson & Lubin, 1995; Marshak, 1993). Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) have distilled this emerging posture of self-reflection into the simple injunction that attention needs to be paid to the evolving socio-historical and organisational context within which OD is being undertaken in order to discern future trends for its theory and practice.

One such context with a burgeoning OD field is the South African development sector. As the theme of the 1993 International Organisation Development Association (IODA) conference, "Capacity Building in Developing Countries", indicated, OD is entering new areas of engagement in the process of reconstruction, development and change in Southern Africa (van Schalkwyk, 1993). Louw and de Kock (1997) have noted that there now exist a considerable number of OD consulting firms operating in the public and developmental sectors of South Africa. Yet despite this increased popularity, the practice of OD in South Africa appears to be a largely unchartered terrain; it is still regarded as a new and 'fledgling art' (Harding, T., 1994a; Marks, 1996). OD Debate (1994, p.2) has observed that "there is no documented debate which grounds OD issues in our country: we are learning as we face the challenges".

The lack of clarity grounding OD issues in the South African development sector appears to be exacerbated by its alignment with the ubiquitous yet confusing notion of capacity building. Meintjies (1994, p.16) has indicated that "OD has quickly moved to the forefront of capacity building and adapting to the new phase in the struggle for social change - so quickly that many people are unclear about what it means and how best to use OD".

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1 Organisation development, or OD as it is called, is an applied domain of organisational psychology aimed at facilitating change and renewal processes in organisations so as to increase individual and organisational effectiveness (Smither, 1994). The theory and practice of this discipline are explored in depth in Chapter 2.
While 'capacity building' is an increasingly popular term in South Africa's development discourse, it is seen by some to be yet another piece of post-apartheid jargon (Booth, 1993) which generates a surprising amount of confusion (Ewing, 1996). The Community Development Resource Association [CDRA] (1994/95, p.2) has stated in this respect that "our lack of an adequate theory of capacity building reduces our ability to engage in the practice".

This research study represents a response to the challenges, briefly sketched above, (i) to perform reconnaissance on OD as it is practised in different contexts, (ii) to ground OD issues in the South African development sector, and (iii) to develop a theory of capacity building. To this end, it is an attempt to develop an understanding of what OD, in its current incarnation as 'capacity building', means in the South African development context. In order to achieve this understanding, this study has focused on a particular non-governmental organisation (NGO) consultancy sector, referred to as 'service' or 'intermediary' NGOs (Harding, D., 1994) who provide 'capacity building' services. The primary research concern has been with how OD consultants working in these service NGOs account for their capacity building role and context.

The literature review which forms the focus of the following chapter, Chapter Two, sets the practical, theoretical and meta-theoretical contexts of this study and explores why one might be interested in asking such a research question. Insofar as this study embraces a reconnaissance agenda aimed at 'mapping' a largely untheorised terrain, the general epistemological principles provided by a 'grounded theory' methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) have been adopted to explore this research focus. In Chapter Three, after a brief overview of the debates which this method has engendered, a social constructionist version and application of grounded theory is introduced and discussed. In accordance with this perspective, the results in Chapter Four provide a grounded theory or 'narrative account' of how the OD consultants who took part in this study construct 'capacity building'. Finally, by situating the theory generated by the consultants' accounts within the disciplinary, theoretical and contextual frameworks and debates provided in Chapters Two and Three, Chapter Five discusses the implications of capacity building's discursive construction. In particular, this chapter aims to use the narrative account as a stimulation to develop what Gergen (1994) calls 'generative theory', and, in this way, tell 'new stories' and open new alternatives for action for OD consulting.
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to set the theoretical and practical context of the area under study. To this end, several themes and strands of argument can be seen to underlie the theory and practice of organisation development (OD) consulting in the South African development sector. One theme relates to change and the constellation of forces that mediate change in contemporary organisations. Within this theme, specific attention will be given to the role of ‘the environment’ given the extent to which it prefigures later discussion. Another theme relates to the role of OD as a mechanism of planned change and the distinctive nature of OD consulting within this process. These themes are increasingly finding expression in a third strand: the South African development arena. The challenges facing service NGOs in the post-apartheid development terrain and the role that organisational capacity building plays therein, form the socio-historical context of the study. A final strand relates to meta-theoretical and epistemological questions currently being asked in industrial/organisational (I/O) psychology. These questions follow the ‘postmodern turn’ in the social sciences and draw attention to the relationship between theory and practice and the way we make sense of the organisational world. All four of these strands coalesce to form the conceptual and contextual framework of this study.

2.2 Towards a conceptual framework

On a number of fronts there do appear to be signs of significant forms of change permeating social, economic, political and cultural institutions and practices ... there may indeed be many respects in which we are living in new times, or more cautiously and modestly, living in an interregnum (Smart, 1993, pp.14-15).

In these ‘new times’ to which Smart (1993) refers, it appears that the topic of change is increasingly popular in management and organisational behaviour (OB) literature. Contemporary organisations are said to operate in an ‘age of discontinuity’ (Drucker, 1992), where change is an accelerating constant (Clarke, 1994) and ‘history counts for very little’ (Warrick, 1994). As a consequence, the belief that the past is no longer an adequate guide to the future is the central message of many of the influential prescriptions for today’s managers (Marsden & Townley, 1996). Morgan’s (1986; 1997) Images of Organisation, Waterman’s (1987) The Renewal Factor, Senge’s (1990) The Fifth Discipline, Peters’s (1992) Liberation Management, Hammer and Champy’s (1993) Reengineering the Corporation, and Hames’s (1994) The Management Myth are, for example, all predicated on the idea that organisations need to break with the past and with tradition in order to survive, that the new world of work requires a new framework for approaching business and organisational behaviour. We are urged to “forget your old, tired ideas” (Senge, 1990) and to “forget what you know about how business should work - most of it is wrong!” (Hammer & Champy, 1993) in order to succeed in the “new management era” (Champy & Nohria, 1996, p.xxx). To this end the publisher’s synopsis in the dust jacket of Peters’s (1997)
latest offering, The Circle of Innovation, states that "the world of business is in a permanent state of flux, a state of chaos in which constant innovation is the only survival strategy - for the individual and the organisation". ‘Change’ has evidently become the byword for organisational survival and success. Wilson (1992, p.7) observes in this respect that "the leitmotif of modern management theory is that of understanding, creating and coping with change". Testifying to the pervasiveness of this concept, Clegg and Hardy (1996, p.11) note that "we cannot imagine any theory of ... organisations that is not about change". It certainly seems that Khan’s (1974, p.487) observation that "no reasonable person can complain that written material on organisational change and development is meagre" is particularly apposite nowadays. Yet, while I/O psychology has made a substantial contribution to the understanding of change and organisations (Hosking & Anderson, 1992), Esterhuyse (1996, p.1) warns that understanding the "multi-dimensional" concept of change is not something that we should take for granted. What, then, does change mean for organisations? Wading through the recent deluge of change literature - clothed in the abstruse language of 'paradigm shifts', 'reengineering', 'rehumanising', 'downsizing', 'refocussing' - is unlikely to provide any easy answers to this question. Instead, one can quickly get lost in a sea of rival models and methods, each with their own take on the key elements of change and a handy chart summarising the essential steps in the change process (Harding, D., 1998). As Kanter, Stein and Jick (1992) warn, organisational change is a concept that has generated 'more heat than light' in organisational theory. Pfeffer (1997, p.194), echoing Eccles and Nohria’s (1992) characterisation of management theory as being obsessed with 'newness', similarly cautions that "organisation studies, because of its lack of a strong anchor either in a discipline or in phenomena, is susceptible to being caught up by fads and fashion". In providing this conceptual and contextual framework for this study, I aim to step back from this "overcrowded market place" (Harding, D., 1998, p.3) of change management models, and explore the intersection of organisations and change at a different level. To this end, Best and Kellner (1991, p.viii) provide a possible framework for exploration when they propose that "dramatic changes in society and culture are often experienced as an intense crisis for those attached to established ways of life and modes of thought" [italics added]. Clegg and Hardy (1996, p.11) write in a similar vein that both the theory and practice of organisation have changed substantially in recent years. In both cases, the changes have lead to increasing diversity and fluidity, and decreasing certainty and structure ... In observing organisations we are beset with a moving target: questions concerning what is the organisation exist today in ways not envisaged thirty years ago. As Clegg and Hardy (1996) suggest - following Hassard and Pym (1990), and Reed and Hughes (1992) - both theory and practice, both modes of knowing and modes of organising, have changed over the past three decades. Not only is there a lack of a certainty about what organisations are, but there is also a lack of certainty about
how they should best be studied and theorised, how one should best approach 'questions concerning what is the organisation'. It is consequently proposed that this prevailing concern with change in organisation studies can most usefully be located within a wider debate over what exists 'out there' in the organisational world (practice or ontology), how it can be known (theory or epistemology) and the nature of their interrelationship (Marsden & Townley, 1996).

With the stage thus set, Clegg and Hardy's (1996) image of the moving target works on more than one level; it evokes both the shifting terrain of organisational practice, as well as the changing map of organisational theorising - the lens through which the target appears. This lens or theory is important because it does not only reflect the practice of organisation, but also functions to constitute that practice (Marsden & Townley, 1996).

Reflecting on the link between practice and theory, Marsden and Townley (1996) argue that if the object before us ('organisation') is a moving target then our analytical frameworks for understanding ('theory') may need reformulating. Or, as Hames (1994, p.xii) puts it, "the challenge of management today is the challenge of change. This is as true of ideas, theories and philosophies about management itself as it is about its expression in practice". Burrell (1996) notes in this regard that in studying organisations we are thus not only confronted with a changing *explanans* but with a changing *explanandum* too: not only has the traditional bureaucratic form mutated into a plethora of different organisational forms, but the once assured ideal of normal, positivistic science is increasingly challenged by alternative and contradictory views, sometimes coded under the term 'postmodern' (Clegg & Hardy, 1996).

Part of this literature review will consequently explore these two interlocking lines in mapping the 'moving target' of this project: change and/in organisations as well as changed ways of studying organisation. Both of these changes hold important implications for organisation studies. It is to these implications that we turn in the following chapter.

### 2.3 Change and/in organisations

Smither (1994, p.399) observes that "as every manager, employee or industrial and organisational psychologist knows, one of the most pervasive qualities of organisations in the late 20th century is change". Yet despite its pervasiveness, a great deal of ambiguity still seems to surround the concept of change. Raimbault and Saussois (1983, in Ernecq, 1992, p.276) remark that the term 'change' is "overused; behind it one finds a spectre of multiple meanings and contradicting interpretations".
In an attempt to discern the nature of change, Erneqc (1992) poses questions to this somewhat oversused and equivocal term. He asks, "What do we mean when we speak of 'change'? Is it an event, a phenomenon, a sociological mutation, a variable or a variance, a stimulus or a response? Does one study change and organisations, changes in organisations, or organisational change?" (Erneqc, 1992, p.277). Although he does not coherently answer these questions himself, in posing them Erneqc (1992) opens up fruitful lines of enquiry for making sense of change and provides a useful framework for exploring a potentially obfuscatory issue. In the following sections I appropriate these questions to use as points of entry into the terrain of organisational change.

2.3.1 Types of organisational change

A dominant theme that runs through a wide range of both practitioner and academic discussions concerns the nature of change facing contemporary organisations (Marshak, 1993). In response to the question, ‘is change an event or a phenomenon?’ it would seem that these discussions conceive of it as both. Different authors have different ways of describing the changes required of contemporary organisations, but most distinguish between two types of changes: those that are a continuous phenomenon and those that are a once-off event. Given the variety of changes affecting modern organisations, Goodstein and Burke (1994) note that this distinction is more a matter of degree than dichotomy.

Marshak (1993) distinguishes between developmental or evolutionary change and transformational or revolutionary change. Hammer and Champy (1993) refer to transformational reengineering and incremental change. Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (1994) differentiate between radical and incremental change. Greenberg and Baron (1997) and Norton (1997) distinguish between first-order and second-order change. Robbins (1997) distinguishes between constant and chaotic change. Despite the use of different terminology there appears to be no discernable difference in the manner in which these two forms of organisational change are conceptualised in the literature.

Radical, transformational, revolutionary or second order change is that which involves a major make-over of the organisation and/or its component systems. It involves radical changes to something entirely different to what went before (Norton, 1997). This type of change, usually precipitated by a critical event such as the introduction of a new leader or a dramatic failure in operating results, occurs infrequently in the life-cycle of most organisations (Schermerhorn et al., 1994). When it does occur this type of change is all-encompassing. Goodstein and Burke (1994) note that this ‘framebending’, large scale change usually means a change in the organisation’s strategy and culture.

A more common form of change is the continuous, incremental first order change which occurs as part of an organisation’s natural evolution. This is based on modifying what already exists (Norton, 1997) or enhancing
existing ways of operating through new products, technologies or systems, and involves no major shifts in the
way an organisation operates. This form of continuous improvement through incremental change is seen as a
prerequisite for success in today’s turbulent environment. As will be explored, ‘learning organisations’, are
emblematic of this form of continuous improvement in the way an organisation operates by continually fine-
tuning, fixing problems, making adjustments and modifying procedures.

2.3.2 Forces behind change in organisations

Erneqc (1992) asks, ‘do we speak of change and organisations or change in organisations?’. When we think of
change and organisations, change tends to connote developments external to organisations. The notion of today’s
turbulent environment or ‘new times’ as a possible inducement for organisational change has been raised above.
Traditional approaches to organisation theory are dominated by the notion that change originates in the
environment (Morgan, 1997). Goodstein and Burke (1994, p.473) note in this regard that "organisations tend
to change primarily because of external pressure rather than internal desire or need to change". Muchinsky
(1993, p.444) similarly contends that "it is not characteristics of organisations per se that cause this need [to
be developed], but rather rapidly changing environments (technological, social, political, etc.) in which
organisations exist". Changing environments are seen to exert pressure on organisations which, given their close
relationship to these environments, consequently have to change in order to survive. "The main pressure of
change is from external forces. The organisation must be properly prepared to face the demands of a changing
environment" (Mullins, 1989 in Blunt & Jones, 1992, p. 216). This conception of external change being a force
for organisational change is grounded in the ‘systems approach’ of an equilibrium-seeking organism in a wider
environment (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

2.3.2.1 Understanding organisations as ‘open systems’

Quasi-biological metaphors are abundant in organisational theory. Developed from one such metaphor, the
systems approach is predicated on the assumption that organisations, like living organisms, are in continuous
interaction with their environment and whether to survive or prosper, they must align themselves to changes
that occur in the environment (Morgan, 1986; Schein, 1980). "As the environment changes organisations must
follow suit. In fact research has shown that organisations that can best adapt to changing conditions tend to
survive" (Greenberg & Baron, 1997, p.555).

A second focus of the open-systems approach defines the organisation itself in terms of inter-related subsystems
in a state of dynamic interaction (Gerber, Nel & van Dyk, 1996). Thus organisations contain individuals who
belong to groups, who belong to departments, who belong to organisational divisions and so on (Morgan, 1986).

Within the systems perspective, "organisational effectiveness is governed by four major factors: the individuals
who make up the organisation, groups within the organisation, the organisation itself, and the environment in which the organisation exists" (Kolb, Osland & Rubin, 1995, p.512). Effective management of the interaction of these subsystems is regarded as central to organisational success. In terms of this perspective, organisations need to balance internal subsystems, and adapt to environmental circumstances in order to survive. The open systems view provides a way of talking about organisations as "dynamic entities continually interacting with their environment, changing and adapting to develop congruence between people, process, structures and external environment" (Beer, 1980, p.15). Human and Horwitz (1992, p.4) refer in this respect to the problem of achieving a symbiotic fit between an organisation and its environment as "the most basic of questions in management".

This notion of an organisation-environment 'fit' contains the essence of modern contingency theory which holds that organisations must be studied in terms of the factors in their environment that are affecting the way they operate (Smither, 1994). An important contribution of contingency theory is that there is consequently 'no one best way' to organise - different types or 'species' of organisation are needed in different types of environment (Morgan, 1986). Based on the work of Burns and Stalker (1961) concerning mechanistic and organic systems, this perspective suggests that different styles of organisation and management are appropriate in different contexts.

There are limitations to this systems approach. One is the assumption of 'functional unity', which sees political activity as a dysfunctional feature of a system which should be absent from the healthy organisation (Morgan, 1986). Within this functionalist perspective all parts are required to cooperate for the benefit of the system - a conception referred to by postmodern thinkers such as Lyotard (1984) as the 'terror of systems performativity'. This is however not a criticism I would like to explore given its irrelevance to the purposes of this study (see ch. 3 of Morgan, 1997, and Mountouri & Purser, 1996, for a more complete discussion). A more useful area to examine for my purposes concerns the position taken by most OB texts on the relationship between an organisation and its environment. The importance of this relationship to this research will become clearer as this chapter progresses.

2.3.2.2 The problem of defining 'the environment'

Kubr (1996, p.72) writes that "in a particular business or other organisation, the practical question is what to regard as its external environment. This question is increasingly difficult to answer". He then explains this difficulty in terms of the new forces 'out there' (i.e., economic, social and political changes) which are perplexing managers (Kubr, 1996). While not wishing to contest this claim - indeed, new environmental changes, constraints, requirements and opportunities are increasingly complex - I would seek to frame this 'increasingly difficult to answer' question in a different way; one which includes individual perceptions and avoids treating the environment as an independent and 'objective' fact. To appreciate the rationale for this
positioning, it is useful to briefly examine the status of 'the environment' in organisation studies.

In most OB literature, the 'environment' of organisations is generally conceived to exist as a spatiotemporal reality 'outside' the organisational boundary. It is everything that is not the organisation (Sandelands & Drazin, 1989). In this manner, organisation theorists tend to represent the environment as a constellation of external features such as technology, markets, or government, whose existence is a concrete, objective fact of organisational life.

Moorhead and Griffin (1995, p. 417) for example contend that "the organisational environment includes all elements - people, other organisations, economic factors, objects and events - that lie outside the boundaries of the organisation". Gerber et al. (1996) understand an organisation's external environment to consist of four primary sub-environments, namely the economic environment, the social environment, the political environment and the technological environment.

Clarke (1994, p.3) notes that, in terms of aligning with the environment, "the starting point for change is not organisational navel-gazing, rather it is looking outward ... and identifying what is changing and how it will impact on you. It means identifying the few important trends and issues to which your organisation is particularly vulnerable". The business environment is depicted as the following discrete set of factors present outside the organisational boundaries: technology, social trends, markets/customers, shareholders, economy, employees and suppliers (Clarke, 1994).

Tosi, Rizzo and Carroll (1995) argue that organisations must accommodate the contexts in which they exist. Within this context the 'relevant environment' contains groups or institutions "that provide immediate inputs, exert significant pressure on the way that decisions are made in the organisation, or make use of the organisations output" (Tosi et al., 1995, p.36). These authors suggest that this environment may include markets, suppliers, unions, competitors, public pressure groups, government agencies, investors, technology and science (Tosi et al., 1995). This environment may range from being relatively simple (containing a small number of relatively homogenous sectors) to being very complex (when it is composed of many heterogenous sectors). The environment also ranges from being relatively stable (when changes are small and incremental and have little impact on the structure, processes and output of the organisation) to being volatile and turbulent (when changes are more intense and new concepts and ideas are rapidly being generated) (Tosi et al., 1995).

A more comprehensive and enriching depiction of the external environment is one provided by Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (1995). Borrowing from systems theory and the 'stakeholder' concept, Stoner et al. (1995) refer to the external environment as consisting of direct action and indirect action elements. Direct action elements, also referred to as stakeholders, include "those groups and individuals that can affect, or are affected by the accomplishment of organisational purpose" (Freeman, 1984, p.25). These stakeholders fall into two categories:
internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include employees, shareholders and the board of directors. External stakeholders, which affect an organisation's activities from outside the organisation, include customers, suppliers, governments, special interest groups, the media, labour unions, financial institutions and competitors (Stoner et al., 1995).

Stoner et al. (1995, p.75) maintain that, to ensure the survival of the organisation, management must "keep the relationships among key stakeholders in balance over both the short and long term". These authors recognise that this responsibility often requires dealing with multiple and conflicting stakeholder claims (Stoner et al., 1995). Calton and Kurland (1996, p.156) articulate this 'stakeholder paradox' as follows: "How can managers exercise a fiduciary 'duty of care' to multiple stakeholders when different stakeholder interests clash (between reaping short-term profits and spending retained earnings to reduce pollution or to meet affirmative action guidelines, for example)?". For Stoner et al. (1995) the answer lies in weighing up the relative importance of the stakeholders. No details are however given concerning how this may be achieved in practice.

The indirect action element is seen to affect organisations in two ways. Firstly, these forces may influence the formation of a group that eventually becomes a stakeholder. Secondly, they comprise the climate - changing technology, economic growth or decline, changing worker values and expectations - in which the organisation exists and to which it may have to respond (Stoner et al., 1995). Elements of the indirect action environment are grouped into four broad factors: social variables, economic conditions and trends, the political process or climate, and technological developments products and processes. Stoner et al. (1995, p.79) point out that managers must "monitor the indirect action environment for early warning signs of changes that will later affect their organisation's activities".

On the face of it this model of the external environment provided by most OB literature seems simple and plausible, with relatively straightforward premises. These can be summed up as follows: Organisations are embedded within wider environments. An organisation's environment is "an objective event assessed through measures of turbulence, complexity and load" (Putnam, Phillips & Chapman, 1996, p.385). Following systems theory, changes in this environment lead to pressure for the organisation to change in terms of the functional imperative to 'fit' or 'accommodate' the new environment (Gerber et al., 1996; Human & Horwitz, 1992; Tosi et al., 1995).

Smircich and Stubbart (1985), Morgan (1986) and Wilson (1992) have however observed that defining the environment poses a key intellectual problem. It becomes problematic for reasons other than the rapid rate of environmental change as Kubr (1996) suggested. Wilson (1992) notes that conceptions of the environment fall into three broad categories:

(i) An objective ‘fact’ for individuals, with an external existence which is readily open to description and
definition. Typical accounts in this vein are found in most change literature (see eg., Gerber et al., 1996; Moorhead & Griffin, 1995; Schermerhorn et al., 1994).

(ii) A subjective ‘fact’ for individuals. Environment is seen as a tangible set of external factors dependent in definition upon a variety of subjective interpretations of individuals. Within this conception the environment remains real, material and external (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985), but individuals are trapped by a ‘bounded rationality’ (Morgan, 1986), that is, by their incomplete and imperfect perceptions of the environment. "Managers perceive their environment in different ways and they act upon their perceptions, not an objective ‘reality’" (Wilson, 1992, p.35).

(iii) Neither objective nor selectively subjective. Following Weick’s (1979) model of sense-making processes in organisations, this perspective views the environment as ‘enacted’. It both influences and is interpreted and recreated by individuals in organisations. In this sense a strict demarcation between the organisation and the environment is no longer apparent. From this interpretive view, there is no objective ‘environment’ (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Rather "environment refers to the ecological context of thought and action, which is not independent of the observer-actor’s theories, experiences and tastes" (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985, p.733).

In introducing these three categories my purpose is not to decry systems theory nor to argue for the relative veracity of the different approaches, but rather to draw attention to OB literature’s opaqueness as to the status of ‘the environment’. Most accounts generally take it as a ‘given’ and simply seek to know its implications, but are unprepared to enter into the problem of how one comes to know this environment or the dynamics of its influence over organisations. On the other hand, in light of arguments to be explored later concerning the interaction between OD and the wider environment in which it is practised, it is important to clarify how we might usefully understand the organisation - environment interaction.

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978, p.226) for instance, note a weakness in how literature on organisation - environment effects, conceptualises the relationship in too crude a manner: "It is as if a Mr Environment came into the organisation, giving orders to change organisational structures and activities". In his criticism of systems theory, Morgan (1986) has similarly noted its tendency to reify environments and underestimate the power of organisations and their members to create their own futures. He writes that these views "tend to make organisations and their members dependent on forces operating in an external world, rather than recognising that they are active agents operating with others in the construction of that world" (Morgan, 1986, p.75). For Morgan (1986), organisations and their environments can, at least to some extent, be understood as socially constructed phenomena. More recently, Malan (1997) has noted that the relationship between organisation and environment is not a simple, linear, cause and effect one. He has observed that
South Africa in 1993 was a place of turmoil and uncertainty. The political future was uncertain and events in the country oscillated from one extreme to the other. Yet in the midst of all this terror, change and uncertainty, millions of people went to work every day and businesses carried on as normal (Malan, 1997, p.13).

In light of the above concerns, it is my intention to explore the conception of the ‘enacted environment’ as a way of opening a frame of reference which avoids some of the criticisms levelled at the standard organisation - environment conception.

2.3.2.3 The alternative vistas afforded by an ‘enacted environment’ perspective

The ability of perspective (iii) above to combine ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ in defining organisation - environment relationships enables a view of the environment as ‘enacted’ or socially constructed by organisational members. It is based on a recognition that “boundaries between organisations and environments are never quite as clear cut or stable as many organisational theorists think. These boundaries shift, disappear, and are arbitrarily drawn” (Weick, 1979, p.132). Senge (1990) argues in this regard that ‘out there’ and ‘in here’ are part of a single system. At the heart of his espoused ‘learning organisation’ is the necessary shift of mind from seeing ourselves as separate from the world, to seeing ourselves as connected to the world, and seeing furthermore how our actions create the problems we experience, instead of being caused by someone or something ‘out there’ (Senge, 1990). In a similar vein, Smircich and Stubbart (1985, p.733) note that the ‘enacted environment’ perspective eschews cause-effect logic in favour of “an examination of the rules that people follow, people’s reasons for their acts and the meanings people assign to events”.

The collapsing of the organisation - environment boundary is achieved to an extent by the Stoner et al. (1995) model - and to a lesser extent by Clarke (1994) who includes employees - in that it includes internal stakeholders as part of an organisation’s environment, but these do not go far enough in terms of exploring the active role that individuals and organisations play in creating their environment. It is usually conceived of in terms of what these internal employees bring in from outside such as changing social values, demography and so on. This is furthermore still predicated on cause and effect logic: we are urged to look out and discover something waiting to be found ‘out there’ (Clarke, 1994). In this way, most OB literature appears to import the

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1 The concept of a ‘learning organisation’ is neither new nor unitary. It is grounded in diverse streams of management history and contains elements which can be traced back to F.W. Taylor’s philosophy of ‘scientific management’ developed in the early 1900’s (Ulrich, von Glinow & Jick, 1993). Of late however, the concept of the ‘critical learning system’, introduced by people such as Royal-Dutch Shell’s Pierre Wack and Ari de Geus and popularised by academics such as Chris Argyris and Peter Senge through the metaphor of the ‘learning organisation’, is one that is beginning to achieve considerable currency with regards to OD and management effectiveness (Hames, 1994). In short, Senge (1990, p.3) describes a ‘learning organisation’ as a place where "people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together".
discourse of positivistic discovery\(^2\) of pre-existing objective environments, viewed as unearthed, rather than produced, by our action of 'looking outwards'.

The logic of the interpretive perspective on the organisation - environment relationship, on the other hand, emphasises that knowledge is standpoint dependent (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985). This mirrors both postmodernist and social constructionist thinking. The latter, often viewed as a child of the 'postmodern turn' in cultural life, is a school of thought whose basic thesis is that society must be grasped in its duality as both an 'objective' and 'subjective' reality. In this sense, "subjective reality is the actor's consciousness of (social) phenomena, shaped in pervasive processes of socialisation, and sustained and modified in daily interactions" (Eberle, 1995, p.201). In addition, the acceptance of a constructionist point of view requires an attitude of 'methodological doubt' (Ibanez, 1997) concerning objective 'windows on reality' where entities in the social world are directly perceived, or 'mirrored' through words (Spears, 1997). The social constructionist idiom and its implications for organisation studies are examined in greater detail in section 2.7.

This constructionist position is one followed by Morgan (1997), who notes that instead of just responding to changes as external events, we may be able to influence the processes that produce them. In this light, he notes that "how we see and manage change is ultimately a product of how we see and think about ourselves, hence how we enact relationships with the environment" (Morgan, 1997, p.298). Organisations do not, in this sense, exist in any way separate from their environment - this distinction commonly posited in OB literature is rather regarded as an 'illusion of separateness' (Morgan, 1997). Organisations and their environments are therefore not really discrete entities, they are both part of a larger environment.

Wheatley (1992 in Hanson & Lubin, 1995, p.53) borrows a metaphor from physics to demonstrate this inter-relationship: Subatomic particles "come into being and are observed only in relationship to something else. They do not exist as independent 'things'". Senge (1990, p.67) similarly argues that "there is no outside; that you and the cause of your problems are part of a single system. The cure lies in your relationship with your enemy" [italics added]. This emphasis on interrelationships rather than simple cause and effect chains sits neatly with social constructionist approach (Gergen, 1994).

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\(^2\) Briefly put, the positivist philosophy of science conceives of the social sciences as natural sciences, to be based on objective and quantifiable data, with prediction and control of behaviour as an ultimate goal (Kvale, 1996). This paradigm emphasises universal laws of cause and effect predicated on an explanatory framework which assumes a realist ontology, i.e., it assumes that reality consists of a world of objectively definable facts which can be accessed or 'discovered' through empirical method (Gergen, 1990; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). Positivist conceptions of 'the environment' tend consequently to emphasise the recognition or discovery of what already exists 'out there', waiting to be found. While criticising the positivist philosophy is now invariably dismissed as attacking a straw man, it should be noted that there is a contemporary shift, following Kuhn and Feyerabend in particular, towards a post-empiricist view that truth is primarily a matter of perspective (Gergen, 1990; Kvale, 1996).
Typical objections to an enacted, constructionist position are the so-called bottom line ‘death and furniture’ arguments (Spears, 1997) which will be explored more fully at different points below, but which can for the moment be broadly understood as, ‘Do you mean to say there is no world out there? We are just making it up?’. Gergen (1994) would reply that constructionism makes no denial concerning death, falling currency rates, labour unrest, this table I type on or ‘the world out there’. To do so would be to make the ‘atheist’s error’ - to make a foundational claim about non-being (Stainton Rogers & Stainton Rogers, 1997a). But neither does constructionism make any affirmation about being. While it does not deny the existence of an ontic world, constructionism calls into doubt the ways we can know about that reality (von Glaserfeld, 1991). Gergen (1994, p.72) notes in this regard that constructionism is ontologically mute ... There is no foundational description to be made about an ‘out there’ as opposed to an ‘in here’ ... Once we attempt to articulate ‘what there is’ ... the process of construction commences, and this effort is inextricably woven into processes of social interchange and into history and culture.

To provide a more comprehensive answer to the ‘death and furniture’ objection and to explore how the above position consequently places language in the vanguard of concern, I would need to explicate more fully the key ideas of the constructionist idiom, which are themselves most usefully viewed in light of postmodern commentary. These and other positions introduced above are examined in greater detail below. The ideas of a social constructionist epistemology have been briefly introduced at this point merely in order to signpost its consonance with the ‘enactment’ perspective. As such, it must suffice for now to simply note that postmodernism addresses questions of how we can know the world (reality/ontology) and the role that language plays in our descriptions thereof. Constructionism is similarly concerned with knowing and not with being (von Glaserfeld, 1991). There are, for instance, many different ways of describing this object we call a ‘table’ depending on who you are, where you are standing, who you are describing it for and why you are describing it in the first place. Furthermore, as Parker (1993, p.208) would agree, organisations are not concrete and inanimate objects like tables: "As every critic of Frederick Taylor knows the organisational world is not like the natural world and cannot be kicked, tested or measured in an uncomplicated way".

With regard to organisation-environment relations, Weick (1979) notes that there is ecological change ‘out there’ which provides the enactable environment, but this is neither foundational nor the linear cause of organisational

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3 The ‘death and furniture’ arguments refer to a phrase coined by Edwards, Ashmore & Potter (1995) to describe typical objections to talk of ‘the social construction of reality’. To invoke these arguments is, according to Stainton Rogers and Stainton Rogers (1997a), to assert the bottom line through, say, slamming the table *(bang!)* and arguing, "Death is part of human existence, it is pure nonsense to say that it is a social construction". Edwards, Ashmore and Potter (1995) seek to show how these attempts to refute the constructionist standpoint are themselves rhetorically crafted. As they demonstrate, given a variety of convincing intelligibilities, it is surprisingly easy to question a table’s reality. Physicists, for example, can very effectively call into question the everyday assumption that tables are solid objects. See also Gergen, 1994, ch. 3 for further elaboration.
effects. He writes in this respect that

it is certainly the case that organisations bump into things and that their bruises testify to a
certain tangibility in their environment … the enactment perspective doesn’t deny that. But
it also does not accept the idea that organisations are not usefully viewed as reactive sensors
of those things that happen outside (Weick, 1979, p.166).

A consequence of the above is that one should be wary of asserting what the environment consists of.
Environments are multiple and exist in the eye of the beholder (Weick, 1979). As a result, reality as perceived
by organisational members becomes more the source of selection within the organisation than reality as
perceived by some omniscient less involved observer (Weick, 1979). Sandelands and Drazin (1989, p.463)
contend that "there is no organisation environment as such, only a multiplicity of environments, one for each
organisation member". As a result, this problematising of simple inside - outside distinctions directs attention
to the centrality of individual accounts or definitions of ‘what there is’ (Wilson, 1992). It leads furthermore to
the conclusion that the best way to understand, say, an OD consultant’s environment is to examine the rules he
follows, the reasons he provides for his actions and the meaning he ascribes to events (Smircich & Stubbart,
1985). Why one might want to undertake such an exploration is a question to which I direct my attention below.

2.3.3 Planned and unplanned change

The above discussion tends to pre-empt Ernec’s (1992) question ‘is change a stimulus or a response?’. Once
we eschew cause and effect logic, it is both and neither. Senge (1990, p.69) refers in this sense to a "shift of
mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active
participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future". The following section
aims to explore ways in which organisations attempt to manage their environmental relations.

So as to cope with the forces for change, managers have developed strategies that emphasise ‘management-
initiated change’ (French, Dittrich & Zawacki, 1978). This follows the notion that organisations should not
simply submit to external changes, but should manage and initiate internal changes to modify environmental
relations. This aspect of change management, rather than mere reaction reflects a consonant shift in attention
from external environmental change to internal organisational change; from change and organisations to change
in organisations.

Change can be unplanned or planned, accidental or deliberate (French & Bell, 1995). The former is spontaneous
and random such as a ‘wildcat’ strike, or the sudden need to cut prices in the face of competition. The
appropriate goal in unplanned change is to act immediately to minimise negative consequences and maximise
possible benefits (Schermertorn et al., 1994). Such change is adaptive and reactive; the organisation has not
planned it and does not usually recognise a need until a crisis has occurred. Kubr (1996) observes that it is a
sign of poor management if an organisation is continually reactive in confining its total change effort to inevitable unplanned and ad hoc changes. So as to avoid hasty and unplanned changes made in an atmosphere of crisis, OB literature contends that organisations should plan, introduce and actively create their own programmes of planned change. As Clarke (1994, p.1) observes, "unless we link organisational change with changing market realities we are merely tinkering with cosmetic results, lurching from crisis to crisis, restructuring ad infinitum". In this literature review it is the process of planned change, and particularly that which comes about as a result of efforts of an OD consultant or change agent, that is of interest.

Planned change provides the framework and tools to make organisations more responsive to environmental shifts (Morgan, 1986). Porras and Silvers (1991) and Goodstein and Burke (1994) argue that, as a result of rapidly changing environments demanding equally fast responses from organisations, "the shift from emergent to planned models of change has been sure and steady over the past decade" (Wilson, 1992, p.11). Managers are encouraged to adopt a proactive entrepreneurial style to realise the achievement of 'fit' in the systems conception. To this end, the management of change becomes a managerial prerogative, evoking a picture of the manager as 'change master' (Kanter, 1983) or 'doer' in Peters's (1987) terms.

Schennerhorn et al. (1994) note that success of planned organisational change depends on change agents who facilitate and support the change process. Change agents can be managers or non-managers, employees or external consultants (Robbins, 1997). It is the latter which form the focus of this section. Robbins (1997) observes that for major change efforts, management often hires the service of outside consultants to provide advice and assistance. Warrick (1994) similarly notes that in our present age of dynamic change, all organisations, large or small, should have access to one or more change agents. In response to this perceived need, there are a large number of management consultants who have proliferated to help organisations deal with the complexity and uncertainty that characterises modern business environments, and to help managers initiate desired organisational changes (Hanson & Lubin, 1995). As one such consultant recently observed, "other people's problems are our opportunities, and there is a bull market in problems at the moment" (Bryan, 1997 in The Economist, 1997, p.2).

2.4 The management consultant as 'change agent'

One of the biggest growth industries today is that of advising and helping managers and business leaders on managing their organisations more successfully in a changing context (Tearle, 1992). Hundreds of thousands of private businesses and public organisations in both industrialised and less developed countries have used the services of management consultants (Kubr, 1996). In South Africa the management consulting industry is booming: in 1995 it was reckoned to be worth R1.5 billion, and growing at an annual rate of 35%, compared with a 25% growth internationally (Ryan, 1996).
Reasons for this growth are not hard to find. As the new frontiers of a post-apartheid, sanction-free economy open up, tariff levels are lowered and foreign interest increases, companies are being exposed to foreign competition as never before (Asbury, 1996; Ryan, 1996). In addition to these external threats there are also internal challenges posed by the need for South African organisations to transform so as to reflect the norms and values of the new social order (Norton, 1997). In short, "managers are confronted with a new set of challenges for which the old solutions are inappropriate" (Asbury, 1996, p.4). As a consequence, businesses are increasingly turning to consultants for guidance in negotiating these changes. Kubr (1996, p.72) notes in this regard,

Making clients aware of the new complexity and dynamics of environmental changes and of new opportunities provided by them, and helping them to react to these changes promptly and effectively, will be the most important and forward looking area of management consulting at the turn of the millennium.

Consultants attempt to improve things in an organisation, through a process that in its broadest sense can be thought of as 'helping' (Schein, 1987). But what sort of help or guidance do they provide? Before examining the OD model of change management, it is useful to briefly explore the concept of consultation and how it has come to be used in much management literature.

Management consulting is practised in many different ways, reflecting a diversity of conceptual approaches, business contexts, consultants' expertise and so on, and it is therefore difficult to generalise about the purpose and process of consulting. In the face of this diversity, Kubr (1996, p.8) does however provide the following sufficiently generic definition:

Management consulting is an independent professional advisory service assisting managers and organisations in achieving organisational purposes and objectives by solving management and business problems, identifying and seizing new opportunities, enhancing learning and implementing changes.

Kubr's (1996) definition provides an instructive entry point into some of the key characteristics of management consulting. These characteristics and others will briefly be explored in the following section. The role of the consultant will be further elaborated upon in the examination of OD consultation. One common characteristic of management consultants is that they assist in the planning and implementation of change in client organisations - "change is the raison d'être of management consulting" (Kubr, 1996, p.71). Kubr (1996, pp.18-19) identifies two critical dimensions of change which need to be addressed in any effective consulting approach:

(i) The technical dimension, which concerns the nature of the management problem faced by the client and the way that this problem can be analyzed and resolved. "Advice on structures, systems, resource allocation and utilisation, and similar tangible, quantifiable and measurable issues such as production,
technology, finance and accounting” (Kubr, 1996, p.18) assumes a centrality in this regard.

(ii) The human dimension, which concerns interpersonal relationships in the organisation. If these can be resolved in a manner which motivates, energises and empowers organisational members, then the solution of the other problems will be greatly facilitated. "The relationship between the consultant and the client as persons" (Kubr, 1996, p.18) assumes an importance in this regard.

These dimensions identified by Kubr (1996) are consonant with other ways of conceptualising planned change, and fit with the socio-technical approach; an approach which is well established in organisation studies (Smither, 1994) and which shares many values with OD (Hanson & Lubin, 1995). The basic idea of the socio-technical approach is that every organisation consists of a social system and a technical system, and that changes in one will necessarily result in changes in the other (Smither et al., 1996). Stoner et al. (1995, p.417), for example, observe that "an organisation can be changed by altering its structure, its technology, its people, or some combination of these features". Greenberg and Baron (1997) similarly identify organisational structure, technology and people as the three key targets of organisational change. Recognising the interconnectedness of these dimensions, Schemerhorn et al. (1994, p.638) note that "the manager must recognise that the various targets of planned organisational change are highly intertwined ... technological and structural changes can in turn necessitate changes on the part of an organisation's members".

In terms of the relative importance accorded to each of these dimensions there are different strands of management consulting. Robbins (1997) notes that OD involves all dimensions but with an emphasis on the human side. French, Bell and Zawacki (1994) note in a similar vein that while OD attends to other issues such as structure, technology and task design, it focuses primarily on the human and social aspects of the organisation. Much of contemporary organisational consultation goes under the ambit of OD (Erchul, 1993) and it to this form of planned change that I turn my attention in the following section.

2.5 Organisation Development

OD, as both a theoretical discipline and a professional practice, has emerged to meet the increasing demand for management initiated or planned change in contemporary organisations. Reference was made earlier to the systems approach which sees organisations as ‘living organisms’, developing and changing as they adapt to various circumstances. The theory of OD provides frameworks on how to effectively manage this change (Norton, 1997). In a typical OD situation, management discerns a problem within the organisation and contracts the services of an OD consultant to study the situation and recommend or implement changes (Smither, 1994).

Following systems theory and using the conceptual framework of congruence or ‘fit’, Beer (1980, p.7) notes that "organisation development may be seen as a process for diagnosing organisational problems by looking for
incongruencies between environment, structure, processes and people". In a similar vein, Schermerhorn et al. (1994, p.671) define OD as "the application of behavioural science knowledge in a long-range effort to improve an organisation's ability to cope with change in its external environment and increase its internal problem solving capacity".

OD is however more than simply a method that can be used to achieve organisational and individual congruence and effectiveness in an increasingly interdependent, complex and turbulent world. It involves theory, techniques and a set of values amounting to what has become known as the 'OD movement' (Hanson & Lubin, 1995). In some senses OD could probably best be understood as a philosophy or perspective on how to provide help to organisations, rather than a given technology or intervention style (Blunt & Jones, 1992). The intention of the following overview is to explore the main features of the OD perspective with specific reference to the role of the external OD consultant.

2.5.1 Defining Organisation Development

Because OD encompasses a wide range of change approaches and is a diverse and rapidly evolving field with indistinct boundaries, it is difficult to provide a single all-encompassing definition. Despite the vast amount of OD literature which has accumulated over the years, debate still persists over its definition, its boundaries and its limits (Blunt & Jones, 1992). Hanson and Lubin (1995, p.xiii) observe that as the field of OD has expanded it has developed its own discursive practice: "A language, with its attendant technical jargon, has thereby developed that has tended to both obscure or change the meaning of familiar definitions and at the same time, to increase the size of our current vocabulary". Most accounts and definitions consequently tend either to differ in terms of the aspects of OD they accentuate or to be rather vague and generic, perhaps in an attempt to encompass all of OD's different applications.

In this regard, OD is seen by some authors as encompassing any form of planned change in organisations. Muchinsky (1993) for example, notes that OD signifies all concepts and methods used to improve the ways in which organisations are managed. Smither (1994) similarly contends that at its most basic and generic level OD involves the use of behavioural science knowledge - including sociology, anthropology and psychology - to improve organisational functioning, and Robbins (1997) likewise notes that OD refers to systematic, planned change. This all-encompassing approach led Kahn (1974, p.491) to suggest that "OD is only a convenient label for a bunch of activities".

Whilst these generic definitions are not necessarily incorrect (planned change is the basic idea of OD), Kahn (1974) is correct in pointing out that they are arguably too broad and inclusive to facilitate productive discourse on this subject (French et al., 1994). Just because OD is a terrain which is not easily summarised under a monolithic definition, should not mean that 'anything goes' as long as it involves planned organisational change.
Furthermore, as Beckhard and Schein (1992, p.xv) have observed,

we are beginning to see some real convergence in the underlying assumptions of OD ... we are still far from having a single ‘theory’ of OD ... [but] we are beginning to see patterns in what works and what does not work, and we are becoming more articulate about those patterns.

With a view to articulating these patterns, a more specific and certainly widely referenced definition of OD (French et al., 1994; Guest, 1984; Hanson & Lubin, 1995; Stoner et al., 1995; Zawacki et al., 1978) is one provided by French and Bell (1973). This definition is loosely synthesised from the series of books published by Addison-Wesley in the late 1960s written by some of the leading OD practitioners of the time (Beckhard, 1969; Bennis, 1969; Blake & Mouton, 1969; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969; Schein, 1969; Walton, 1969). Reflecting on the problems of trying to summarise a rapidly growing and diverse field under one umbrella, which was the aim of the Addison-Wesley ‘OD six-pack’ (French & Bell, 1995), Schein and Beckhard (1987 in Schein, 1987, p.v) later remarked that "we … recognised that there was no one OD philosophy, and hence could not at that time write a textbook on the theory and practice of OD, but one could make clear what various practitioners were doing under that label". In a way this could be seen as an enterprise which is being continued with this research study. Integrating these developments, OD in its ideal form was defined as

A top-management supported, long range effort to improve an organisation's problem solving and renewal process, particularly through a more effective and collaborative diagnosis and management of organisational culture ... with the assistance of a consultant-facilitator and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioural science, including action research (French and Bell, 1973, p.15).

This definition has remained consistent throughout subsequent editions of French and Bell’s (1978, 1984, 1990, 1995) *Organisation Development* - testament perhaps to its suitability over time - and includes a number of key phrases which help establish parameters for a discussion of the OD perspective. The more salient of these OD issues will be explored below.

### 2.5.1.1 OD is a long range, planned and sustained effort

OD can be viewed as a long-range, planned and sustained effort both in terms of the length of time it takes and in terms of its effect throughout different levels of an organisation. Management commitment needs in this regard to be predicated on the recognition that OD is a long term process, not a ‘quick-fix’ strategy (Liebowitz & Mendelow, 1988). It is rather more accurate to describe the type of organisational improvement that OD aims to engender as "a never-ending journey of continuous change" (French & Bell, 1995, p.28-9). French et al. (1994, p.10) note that "there is a long range perspective on the part of both the client system and the consultant in OD programmes ... A one-shot intervention into the system is thus not OD according to this criterion".
The reasons for this long-range conception are several. OD efforts affect the entire organisation (Muchinsky, 1993) in a system-wide change effort (Beer, 1980). As Hanson and Lubin (1995) observe, to produce a change in an organisation’s culture - one of the definitional criteria in French and Bell (1973) above - one has to address facets of that culture that may involve long-standing, habitual and ingrained patterns of behaviour. Changing these patterns does not occur overnight. Furthermore, OD makes the assumption that organisational problems are multi-faceted and complicated. They are seen as symptoms of underlying issues which are not always immediately apparent (Kaplan, 1992). Resolving these issues usually requires some kind of holistic organisation wide intervention which "aims to move the entire organisation to a higher level of functioning" (Stoner et al., 1995, p.420). One-shot interventions are unlikely to solve such problems, and "they most assuredly cannot teach the client system to solve them in such a short time period" (French et al., 1994, p.11).

OD programmes are planned and sustained efforts. They are not accidental, but rather the result of the deliberate entry of an OD consultant into the client system (French et al., 1994). They are furthermore based on the assumption that effecting organisational change requires a sustained effort and some form of follow up in the organisation is likely to be necessary (Beer, 1980). Given its long-term perspective OD is invariably coupled with strategic planning processes (Hanson & Lubin, 1995). French et al. (1994, p.11) recognise that "consultants and clients develop overall goals and paths to goals in OD programmes and these guide the programmatic activities". This notwithstanding, consulting is a temporary service. Consultants are not meant to work indefinitely in organisations; instead, clients turn to consultants for help over a delimited period of time (Kubr, 1996).

2.5.1.2 OD aims to improve an organisation's problem-solving and renewal processes

The underlying rationale of OD could be seen to be based on the oft quoted adage, 'Give a person a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a person to fish and he can feed himself for a lifetime'. As Hanson and Lubin (1995, p.78) observe, "you can teach somebody to solve a problem, but the person may not have become a better problem-solver. What the individual may not have learnt was the process for solving problems". OD aims, in this regard, to facilitate a process whereby organisations are empowered to problem solve from within, and thereby "become more conscious and more proactive with regard to forward planning and to controlling its own environment and circumstances" (Kaplan, 1992, p.22). According to French et al. (1994, p.13), "OD consultants try to inculcate diagnostic skills, self-analytical skills, and reflexive skills in organisation members, based on the belief that organisation members must be able to diagnose situations accurately in order to arrive at successful solutions".

The aim of OD is to help the organisation members develop the skills and ability to solve future problems themselves, without the consultant’s facilitation (Blunt & Jones, 1992; Hanson & Lubin, 1995). The consultant’s skills should thus be ‘left behind’ or internalised by the organisation. As will be explored, the role of the
consultant is thus not simply to present the client with answers, but rather to facilitate the organisation in self-diagnosis and in discovering its own solutions. "He trains members to do their own OD so that the organisation can carry on without him" (Beer, 1980, p.9). This aim to create the capacity for self renewal is a reason why Schermerhorn et al. (1994) refer to OD 'planned change plus': "that plus is the goal of creating change in such a way that organisation members develop the capacity for continual self-renewal by learning how to implement similar [steps] in the future" (Schermerhorn et al., 1994, p.674).

This intention that the client system become proficient in solving its own problems borrows from Rogerian non-directive therapy notions which suggest that the responsibility for improvement and change rest with the individual (organisation) and not an outside agent (French et al., 1995). To this end, the way in which the client system sees itself and its problem must be brought into dialogic relationship with the way these are viewed by the OD consultant (Chin & Benne, 1976 in French et al., 1994, p.121). Schein (1987, p.11) observes that in this manner "the process consultant seeks to give the client insight into what is going on around him, within him, and between him and other people".

Organisations need, in OD jargon, 'to learn how to learn'. This capacity for self-renewal is vital in a changing environment where constant, incremental, first order change is the norm. "One aim of OD is to improve an organisation's self-renewal process so that managers can quickly adapt their management style to new problems and opportunities" (Stoner et al., 1995, p.421). An important aim of OD in this regard is the creation of a 'learning organisation' or a 'critical learning system' (Senge, 1990). Blunt and Jones (1992) observe that a crucial test of the effectiveness of an OD intervention is the extent to which the organisation has developed into a learning community.

2.5.1.3 OD emphasises collaborative diagnosis and management

There are two implications contained in this principle. In the first sense, OD aims to increase participation and collaboration between management and employees. Secondly, the OD consultant aims to establish a collaborative relationship with the client system.

Sashkin and Burke (1994) note that employee participation and involvement are hallmarks of OD practice and values. An aim of OD is sharing management power with employees (Stoner et al., 1995) and ensuring that employees have a greater responsibility and participation in decision making (Hanson & Lubin, 1995). OD is guided by principles which assume that individuals have needs for growth and development that are most likely to be satisfied in a supportive and challenging work environment (Schermerhorn et al., 1994). In this sense, OD is predicated on a concern for democracy; it aims to foster autonomy, responsible involvement in goal-setting, decision making and problem solving amongst employees (Hanson & Lubin, 1995). OD aims furthermore to create more of a "partnership between manager and employee" (Hanson & Lubin, 1995, p. 80) embodied in
a commitment to collaborate with others in defining problems and work together in coming to solutions (French & Bell, 1995).

Beer (1980) notes that OD places more emphasis than other approaches on a collaborative process of data collection, diagnosis and action for arriving at problem solutions. French et al. (1994) argue that this collaborative relationship of relative equality between the consultant and the client system is 'fundamental' to OD. Kubr (1996) similarly refers to the creation and maintenance of a true collaborative relationship as the 'golden rule' of consulting. In terms of this collaboration, neither side does all the work whilst the other passively waits for solutions. Both consultant and client meet as equals, "each possessing knowledge and skills different from but needed by the other" (French et al., 1994, p.11). As Hanson and Lubin (1995, p.112) describe, "in essence they become a 'consulting pair' ... : both partners learn from each other, each providing a different perspective, one external, the other internal". The consultant’s role in this regard is not one of expert on matters of substance, but rather that of facilitator: "the consultant acts primarily as a question asker and secondarily as an answer giver" (French et al., 1994, p.12).

As mentioned above, this facilitative role is often described as non-directive in the OD literature (French et al., 1994; Hanson & Lubin, 1995). As van Schalkwyk (1995, p.3) observes, the ability to "facilitate processes often requires an OD person to remain firmly in the background at all times, to avoid being seen as the 'expert'". Thaw (1995, p.3) similarly argues, "the OD facilitator must be non-partisan ... the work of OD is not to influence people to the facilitator’s viewpoint". Hanson and Lubin (1995, p.118) contend that "when consulting it is not helpful to make or pass judgements on clients such as telling them they are right or wrong, good or bad, fair or unfair".

French et al. (1994) and Kubr (1996) explain that this collaborative, non-directive role rests on three related beliefs. The first is an affirmation of the division of labour and responsibility: the consultant structures activities geared toward enabling the client to assess a problem, the client system brings its special knowledge and expertise to solving the problem. As Beer (1980, p.76) observes, "OD interventionists simply try to get managers in touch with the reality of existing pressures rather than forcing changes using their own or others’ authority". Consultants do not have direct line authority to decide on and implement change decisions (Block, 1981; Kubr, 1996). The consultant is thus responsible for the advice or help, the client is responsible for actually carrying the suggestions or advice out. There are many things that the consultant cannot do effectively if the client is reluctant to collaborate (Kubr, 1996).

The second assumption is based on the belief that the "best solution to the problem is likely to be found in the heads of the client members and the challenge is to structure situations to allow it to become known" (French et al., 1994, p.12). Kubr (1996) observes that often management is unaware of the competence and strengths already existing in the organisation. Through non-directive collaboration, "consultants help clients to uncover
and mobilise their own resources" (Kubr, 1996, p.55).

The third rationale of the non-directive approach is that when organisations generate their own problems and solutions, there exists a greater likelihood that they will 'own' the change. Human systems often reject changes imposed or proposed from the outside (Kubr, 1996). A wholly directive approach may achieve compliance but seldom commitment from the organisation (Beer, 1980). It is also unlikely that a directive, expert approach will enable the client system to 'learn how to learn', which is one of the basic purposes of OD consulting. As Kubr (1996) argues, organisational learning does not occur by defining terms of reference at the start and then accepting or rejecting a final report some time later. It requires a strong spirit of collaboration and active client involvement throughout the process.

This notwithstanding, the consultant stance is not regarded as exclusively non-directive: "the consultant is both expert and directive on matters relating to the best way to facilitate/enable the client group to approach, diagnose and solve its problems" (French et al., 1994, p.12). This is, in other words, direction in terms of process rather than content. The tension which is reflected in this facilitation role is illuminated by Kaplan (1992, p.26) as follows:

> The art of facilitation means knowing when to intervene in organisational and group processes and when not. It means knowing how to be assertive without being directive; how to be nurturing without being flaccid; how to draw some people out and reduce the imposition of others ... It means, in essence, finding the correct balance between non-directive group counselling and directive intervention where necessary.

**2.5.1.4 OD is a process that focuses on organisational culture, process and structure using a systems perspective**

The process orientation of OD has been raised above. OD is regarded in the literature as "a journey not a destination ... an unfolding and evolving series of events ... moving over time toward the goals of organisational improvement and individual development" (French & Bell, 1995, p.5). OD also concentrates on process issues. Hanson and Lubin (1995, p.42) observe that "the OD consultant thinks primarily in terms of process, that is, how things are done, how people relate to each other, how decisions are made, and how involved people are in those decisions that affect their work situation". Vaill (1989) consequently refers to OD as 'a process for improving processes'. Within this process, OD is predicated on the assumption that organisational culture, processes and structures are crucial leverage points for organisational interventions (French & Bell, 1995; Kaplan, 1992).

The prominence of organisational culture in the above definition is based on the belief in the centrality of culture in terms of affecting behaviour in organisations. French and Bell (1995) regard culture as being of primary importance in any change effort. Organisational culture refers to the shared assumptions, beliefs, norms and
values of an organisation that drive the shared patterns of behaviour - 'the way we do things around here' (Egan, 1994) or 'the software of the mind' (Hofstede, 1991). Schein (1985) views organisational culture as the set of basic assumptions and beliefs that reflect how the organisation views itself and its environment. Beer (1980) has observed in this regard that these basic assumptions and beliefs tend to perpetuate 'ways of doing things' even after there are signals from the environment that change is needed - a phenomenon Blake and Mouton (1969, in Beer, 1980, p.33) have termed 'culture drag'. Given its profound effect on behaviour, planned change in organisations must involve some change in an organisation's culture (Smither et al., 1996).

For OD consultants, "culture and process are important strategic leverage points in an organisation for bringing about organisation improvement and change" (French et al., 1994, p.14). Processes refer to how things get done, and are, according to French and Bell (1995), relatively easy to change. OD programmes encourage organisations to stop doing things one way and start doing them another way. A common theme in OD literature is that the way to improve organisational effectiveness is to improve organisational processes. These include communication, resource allocation, decision-making, conflict resolution, human resource practices and the like. "Change becomes permanent when the culture changes and the new ways are accepted as the 'right' ways" (French & Bell, 1995, p.30).

Organisational structure refers to the overall design of an organisation - the blueprint for how the parts are connected together to produce the whole (French & Bell, 1995). The aim of OD is to get people to work together in such a way that they are stimulated rather than constrained in their development by the rules which regulate their cooperation (Kaplan, 1992).

In OD literature, culture, process and structure inter-relate to effect organisational functioning (French & Bell, 1995). Following a systems perspective, Kaplan (1992, p.24) notes that "while culture is primary, there is abundant evidence to show that new values and norms will not last unless congruent structures, systems and procedures are put in place to reflect and support them".

2.5.1.5 OD utilises the theory and technology of applied behavioural science

Smither (1994, p.401) has noted that "OD is the process of using knowledge from the behavioural sciences - including sociology and anthropology, as well as psychology - to improve organisational functioning". There are many ways to change organisations - including introducing new management structures, technical systems or physical layout - but these are not necessarily OD (Smither et al., 1996). The use of social science knowledge, particularly concerning relationships (between individual, group, organisation and environment), is emphasised in the OD literature.

Guest (1984, p.200) observes that the development of "OD reflects the growing confidence ... in the ability
to apply the behavioural sciences to solve organisational problems and help organisations become more effective". This integrative, behavioural science knowledge base has been a feature of OD to the present day and "contributes to its distinctive gestalt" (French et al., 1994, p. 13). To this end, OD is seen as an applied field in which theory and practice from sociology, psychology, social psychology, education, economics, psychiatry and management are applied to organisational problems (French et al., 1995). Along with a set of theories and frameworks developed from the behavioural sciences, OD practitioners also share a set of values, assumptions and beliefs which constitute a central part of OD. These values tend to be humanistic, optimistic and democratic (French & Bell, 1995, Hanson & Lubin, 1995).

Most accounts in OD literature locate the origins of the field to the 1940s, born as an attempt to better understand group process and dynamics through behavioural science frameworks, and thereby humanise work at the group level (Muchinsky, 1997). The majority of the early OD practitioners were behavioural scientists who shared a belief in the importance of democratic values in the workplace and a scientific ethos in studying organisations (Hanson & Lubin, 1995). OD is, as a result, grounded in values reflected in "a concern for our fellow man, experimentation, openness and honesty, flexibility, co-operation and democracy" (Bennis, 1966, p. 169).

2.5.1.6 OD utilises action research methodology

Action research is a mode of inquiry, research and development which supports the active involvement of individuals and organisations in their own development. It is a process which encourages organisation members to be more aware of their own practice, to learn to critically reflect on it, and to be prepared to change it through this understanding. Action research involves three essential ingredients: the participative nature of OD, the consultant role of collaborator and co-learner, and the iterative process of diagnosis and action (French & Bell, 1995).

Blunt and Jones (1992) contend that action research is important in OD because it respects the learning needs and abilities of the client. Briefly put, the action research process involves: (i) preliminary diagnosis of the problem by the OD consultant, (ii) data gathering to check the diagnosis, (iii) feedback of the data to the organisation members, (iv) joint exploration of the data and action planning by the organisation members and the consultant, (v) taking appropriate action and (vi) gathering data to reassess the new state (Schermerhorn et al., 1994; Stoner et al., 1995). The consultant assumes an active facilitative role throughout (Blunt & Jones, 1992; French & Bell, 1995; Schermerhorn et al., 1994).

Besides the action research framework, OD literature provides many models and theories of planned change. These range from the rudimentary, such as Lewin's (1951 in Norton, 1997) influential 'unfreezing, change, refreezing' process, to the more comprehensive and complex, such as Porras's (1987) 'stream analysis model'.
While it is not appropriate for the purposes of this thesis to enter into an examination of these models, many aspects of these and other models - such as the other two major change frameworks, 'intervention theory' and the 'planned change model' (Smither, 1994) - are implicit in the action research process and the discussion of consultant roles which follows below. Inherent in most of these models is a picture of the change process involving several stages: analysis and diagnosis; objective setting; choice of strategy; implementation and evaluation (Guest, 1984).

2.5.2 The role of the OD consultant-facilitator

Although raised above, it is important to return to the role of the OD consultant given its centrality to OD implementation and its relation to the research focus. French and Bell (1995, p.4) note that the "fundamental difference between OD and other organisation improvement programmes is found in the OD consultant's role and relationship to clients". Bell and Nadler (1979, p.39) similarly argue that an understanding of the client-consultant roles is important to in order to "specify mutual expectations and minimise confusion, and help the consultant identify the skills and competencies associated with different roles". The manner in which these roles are adopted is seen by Wooten and White (1989, p.653) to be a function of contingencies in the change environment and to "greatly determine the change relationship and the effectiveness of the change effort". How environmental contingencies relate to the OD consultant role will be examined in greater depth below.

As has been explored, the consulting process involves two partners working in a collaborative relationship. Kubr (1996, p.51) observes that while it may be fair to assume that both parties aim to achieve the same purpose, "the reality is infinitely more complex". Despite this apparent complexity, there appears little guidance for consultants in terms of appropriate roles. Instead, the "discussion of the change agents role in stimulating and sustaining organisational change has been purposefully vague about who a change agent might be" (Beer, 1980, p.77). Wooten and White (1989, p.653) observe that "little literature is available concerning role effectiveness of change agents". The aim of this section is to provide a condensed version of behavioural roles for an OD consultant as suggested by the literature. Although there exists no neat typology of consultation processes, OD literature contains several related conceptions or metaphors of the consultant-client relationship.

2.5.2.1 The consultant as 'catalytic outsider'

It has been said that a consultant or change agent is usually used as a facilitator or catalyst to effect change (Gerber et al., 1996). Catalysis is a concept normally used in chemistry to describe a type of reaction. A catalytic agent, when added to certain other substances, brings about a change in the speed of reaction which would not have otherwise occurred (Blake & Mouton, 1976). In an OD intervention, the consultant is viewed as the catalytic agent, entering a status quo with the aim of assisting those within the organisation to improve their modes of operation.
To be sufficiently catalytic, OD literature stresses the importance of an ‘outsider perspective’ to effect change. Beer (1980) notes that this outsider may be a consultant, a new manager or an enlightened manager who is able to step outside the norms and traditions of the organisation. In bringing this outside perspective, and in allowing organisation members the opportunity to approach problems in new ways, the change agent becomes a major part of any OD intervention (Beer, 1980). To the extent that the consultant is not a ‘carrier’ of group history, he will likely not have the same unknowing commitment to consistency with the past, nor blindness to new possibilities (Blake & Mouton, 1976). Mosse (1994, p.8) observes that "by definition consultants have a stance outside the daily life of the institution. This makes it easier for them to observe and to think about what they observe without getting caught up in institutional defences". French and Bell (1995) articulate the importance of the third party role in terms of the perceived objectivity, neutrality and expertise which consultants are seen to bring to the situation.

It is the dialogic relationship created by the discrepancy and conflict between the change agent’s ‘outsider’ perspective and the organisation’s traditional one that is seen to create the impetus for change. OD ‘happens’ through the relationship. "While the differences in knowledge, values and beliefs between the change agent and the organisation creates difficult problems for the person in this role ... it is an essential feature of all OD interventions” (Beer, 1980, p.76).

As Beer (1980) has noted, a lot of the complexity derives from this outsider position. There are many reasons why a consultant’s advice may not be understood or accepted. French and Bell (1995, p.271) note that the relationship of mutual trust which is critical in consultant-client interaction, may be hampered by the fear of "an outsider interfering in the system". Beer (1980, p.77) argues that research and theory are far from settling the issue of how much the change agent should confront the organisation or be discrepant from it. OD literature provides very little guidance on this issue.

2.5.2.2 The consultant as ‘expert’

French and Bell (1995) observe that as a result of unfamiliarity with the OD process, clients frequently try to position the consultant as an ‘expert’ on substantive content. These authors argue that while the consultant may be seen as an expert to the extent that he presents a range of options to the client, "any extensive reliance on the traditional mode of consulting, that is, giving substantive advice, will tend to negate the OD consultant’s effectiveness" (French & Bell, 1995, p.273). Schein (1987) refers to this conception of the consultant as expert as falling into either the ‘purchase of information or expertise model’ or the ‘doctor-patient role’.

In the ‘purchase of expertise model’, the client has made up his mind what the problem is, what kind of help is needed, and whom to go to for this help. In this scenario the client is responsible for defining the objectives of the consultation and the consultant assumes a directive role until the client is comfortable with the particular
approach selected (Kubr, 1996). Later in the relationship the consultant may help implement the recommendations he has made. In this case, if the solution does not work, then responsibility lies with the consultant for its failure. Schein (1987) notes that this consultation model is only appropriate when the clients have diagnosed their needs correctly, have correctly identified the consultant’s capabilities, have accurately communicated their needs to the consultant, and have thought through the consequences of the help they have sought.

The ‘doctor-patient model’ is a variation of the above. It involves the additional consultant responsibility to diagnose the problem and recommend what type of help is needed (Schein, 1987). In this sense, the client experiences something being wrong, but is unaware of the causes or how to resolve this. Schein (1987, p. 29) observes that this model is most appropriate when the client is experiencing clear symptoms, has correctly perceived the sick area, is willing to deal with what the consultant intervention will require for diagnosis and is willing to become dependent upon the consultant for both diagnosis and implementation. This model "implies that the patient is willing to 'take his medicine' and thereby cure the ills, but he will probably not learn how to take care of himself better or do his own diagnosing and healing in the future" (Schein, 1987, p.29). To the extent that the consultant solves the client’s problem, the consultant prevents the client from solving future problems independently (Smither et al., 1996).


Although this role is frequently demanded by clients, French and Bell (1995) identify the following reasons why the consultant should avoid adopting the expert role. These have been referred to above, so they will only be covered briefly. Firstly, as Schein (1987) has suggested, this role does not help the client system develop its own resources. Instead it fosters a likely dependence on the ‘expert’. Secondly, this role invariably requires the consultant to defend his advice and recommendations. The resulting selling and persuading of the client soon puts paid to any collaborative, developmental approach to improving organisational process (French & Bell, 1995). Thirdly, the more expert advice that the consultant provides, the more substantive recommendations the client is likely to expect - "thus negating the OD consultant’s central mission which is to help with process" (French & Bell, 1995).

The above notwithstanding, there are situations, particularly related to the learning process itself where the consultant should adopt the expert role. Schein (1969, p.120) notes that the consultant "should be careful not to confuse being an expert on how to help an organisation learn, with being an expert on the actual management problems that an organisation is trying to solve".
This role is one articulated by Lippet and Lippet's (1978), Wooten and White's (1989) and Kubr's (1996) role of 'trainer/educator'. As Kubr (1996, p.62) argues, "in this aspect of the helping relationship, the consultant can play a role in bringing to bear the learning process that can best be employed, critically and creatively, depending on the situation and the need". French and Bell (1995) argue that another exception consists of providing the client organisation with a range of available options and implications of decisions that need to be made. This is a role which Kubr (1996, p.63) calls 'alternative identifier'. He notes that in this role "the consultant is not a direct participant in decision making, but a retriever of appropriate alternatives facing the decision maker".

2.5.2.3 The consultant as 'process specialist'

In the process specialist role, the consultant aims to facilitate a process of self-diagnosis and change. The aim is to pass on the OD approach and values so that the client organisation can diagnose and remedy its own problems (Kubr, 1996). To this end, Block (1981, p.23) notes that "the more the consultative process can be collaborative, the better the odds for implementation after the consultant has left".

Schein's (1987) notion of process consultation rests on the assumption that the client must share the process of diagnosing what is wrong and must be actively involved in generating an appropriate response. The role of the consultant is, in this sense, aimed at facilitating an understanding of the problem but is not concerned with telling the organisation what to do or doing their work for them. This form of consultation is most appropriate when the nature of the problem is such that the client not only needs help identifying the problem, but would benefit from participation in the diagnostic process (Schein, 1987).

Assumptions underlying the process consultation perspective are largely consonant with the definition of OD advanced by French and Bell (1995). They refer to this model as "a good description of what happens in OD" (French & Bell, 1995, p.33) and it is no surprise that this process consultation model is the one adopted in most OD literature (see e.g., Blunt & Jones, 1992; French et al., 1994; Hanson & Lubin, 1995; Schermerhorn et al., 1994). Smither (1994) notes that it is, along with survey feedback and teambuilding, one of the most common approaches to OD. Smither's (1994) observation notwithstanding, it seems that process consultation is more a perspective than simply an intervention. Schein (1987, p.205) notes in this regard that "ultimately process consultation is a philosophy or a perspective on how to provide help to human systems, not a technology or a given intervention style".

Inherent in this process consultation OD model is the view that consultants should practise as organisational therapists (Bloomfield & Best, 1992). Bennis (1966) talks of the consultant as someone who helps a client to 'see reality'. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) talk of the need to not get co-opted by organisations they work for - and to provide 'conceptual therapy' for clients. The consultant is seen as someone who "seeks to help an
organisation define and clarify its own issues, values, problems and resources ... then collaborates with that organisation in developing the best method to mobilise its resources to deal with the issues it has identified" (Hanson & Lubin, 1995).

There are other roles explored in OD literature. One is the consultant as ‘researcher/theoretician’ (Wooten & White, 1989) or ‘fact-finder’ (Kuhr, 1996) - in this role the consultant is basically functioning as a researcher. Another role positions the consultant as a ‘model’ (French & Bell, 1995; Wooten & White, 1989) where the change agent models appropriate behaviours for organisation members to learn from. French and Bell (1995, p.280) note that "to maximise one’s effectiveness, it is necessary continuously to practice and develop the effective behaviour one wants to instill in the client system". The extent to which these roles are clear and well structured will enhance much of the success of any intervention. "One of the major inhibitors of the advancement of OD as a science and as a profession has been the inability to identify key behaviours of change parties that lead to effectiveness" (Wooten & White, 1989, p.665).

2.5.2.4 Role conflict and ambiguity in OD consulting

Given the variety of different roles available to the OD consultant, conflicting and ambiguous expectations and obligations are invariably likely to be present. Wooten and White (1989) argue that the very nature of OD processes frequently gives rise to role conflict and ambiguity. Role conflict occurs when the consultant is exposed to incompatible behavioural expectations (Norton, 1997). This experience Katz and Khan (1978 in Wooten & White, 1989, p.663) define as "the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult". Furthermore, consultants may experience role ambiguity when there is an uncertainty concerning the expectations of others (Schernerthorn et al., 1994) and the goals and objectives of their role are unclear (Norton, 1997). Wooten and White (1989, p.663) identify the following forms of role conflict and ambiguity that may be present in OD consulting:

(i) *Intra-sender conflict*: This occurs when either the change agent or the client system have expectations of themselves that are incompatible, inconsistent or unrealistic.

(ii) *Inter-sender conflict*: This occurs when expectations of either the change agent or client system are in conflict with expectations from the other party.

(iii) *Inter-role conflict*: This occurs when the role(s) expected of either the change agent or client system are in conflict with other roles already played.

(iv) *Person-role conflict*: This occurs when the role requirements of either the change agent or client system violate moral or ethical principles held.

(v) *Role ambiguity*: This occurs when either the change agent or client system is unclear as to their role(s).

The efficacy of an OD effort is predicated on the joint negotiation of appropriate roles at various stages of the
process to as to provide clarification of roles and to avoid conflict and ambiguity (Wooten & White, 1989). The importance of a collaborative client-consultant relationship in OD has already been explored. This is a relationship which is predicated on clear role definition. Block (1991, p.23) warns that without this clarity, "you get too intertwined with the client, your expertise will somehow get diluted and blurred".

2.5.3 Contemporary and critical issues for the OD consultant

To explore critical issues facing OD in the 1990s, it is necessary to invoke the broader frame of systems thinking raised earlier in this chapter. Alderfer (1977) has suggested that the terrain of OD consultancy, as reviewed in the preceding pages, can usefully be viewed as an interrelated professional system in interaction with an increasingly complex and turbulent environment. Like other systems, OD has a functional imperative to first survive and then grow and adapt as its context changes.

In their exposition of the variety of consultant roles, Wooten and White (1989, p.653) briefly refer to the influence of the environmental context of OD when they observe that the consultant's stance is "a function of contingencies in the change environment". Kubr (1996, p.xvii) similarly points out that "to be relevant and useful to clients, consultants have to keep abreast of economic and social trends". In fact, in recent years a growing number of authors (Burke, 1997; Hames, 1994; Hanson & Lubin, 1995; Marshak, 1994; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Smither et al., 1996; Weick, 1990) have pointed to the need to attend to the evolving socio-cultural and organisational context in which OD is being practised so as to discern future trends for this discipline. As Smither et al. (1996, p.464) succinctly state, "given the many changes taking place in organisations and their environments, the role of the OD practitioner can also be expected to change".

In tracing the genealogy of OD from the 1960s to the 1990s Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) demonstrate the powerful role that the socio-historical context in which OD is undertaken has played in shaping its theory and practice. Their article demonstrates how the theory and practice of OD is historically contingent - it acquires its character within particular historical circumstances and in response to particular client-system problems. Historically, the field of OD arose in North America to offer technologies for solving various social problems that were arising in organisations, and later, between organisations and their environments (Alderfer, 1977). From its outset, the field was based on a number of different values - for example, a concern with human development, fairness, openness, choice, and autonomy (Burke, 1997) - which resonated with the culture and climate of America at the time. OD consulting was, in its early days post World War II, confined to a small number of relatively homogenous, economically secure organisations which - enjoying post-war stability and affluence and sobered by the excessive authoritarianism of the war times - were willing and able to explore the potentials for democracy, teamwork and collaboration (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992, p.60) argue that "regardless of whether or not this era can be seen as ‘romantic’ ... it was a period in which values, practices, assumptions and beliefs within the field were congruent with each other".
Nowadays the increased dissemination of OD techniques and approaches in a wide variety of diverse contexts and settings is seen to threaten this congruency. Not only is OD now practised worldwide in Australasia, Latin America, Europe and Africa (French & Bell, 1995), it also a technology used in a variety of arenas outside traditional business organisations, such as in schools (Gant & South, 1989), trade unions (Bonner, 1997) and non-governmental organisations (Kaplan, 1994). These different contexts and settings confront OD practitioners with differences in client problems, power relations, goals and technologies far more than in the past. As OD interacts with its increasingly complex external environment, the nature of the field has changed to reflect those often conflictual dynamics. Alderfer (1977, p.218) argues in this regard that "to be effective in increasingly turbulent systems, OD must deal with the conflicts inherent in those systems".

As OD achieves increasing popularity, practitioners and theorists are, in turn, being forced to take stock of the field of OD and become clearer about its priorities and values, in the face of the tensions that its dissemination is bringing forth. Alderfer (1977, p.218), for instance, observes that "professionals can no longer comfortably assume that there are no trade-offs between productivity and quality of life in organisations or that the interests of all groups in a system can be brought readily into alignment with each other". The need to respond to the conflictual issues that OD work in these new contexts raises, has been a source of much recent polemic in the OD field. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) distil these lines of debate into three main issues which will be explored below. They suggest that for the field of OD to continue and flourish, attention needs to be paid to:

(i) the core values and shared understandings that continue to shape the ethical boundaries of the field,
(ii) the major principles of theory and practice that distinguish OD from other interventions and
(iii) the ways in which the climate of the country in which OD is being practised in will keep the field alive and responsive to environmental demands.

2.5.3.1 OD and core values

OD has always operated from a distinct value base. Every description of OD contains some reference to values: "concepts such as trust, openness, honesty, fairness, mutuality and integrity can be found on practically every page of the literature" (Malcolm & Solokoff, 1989, p.61). Lately an increasing amount of attention is being paid to this topic of OD 'ethics' or 'values'. This attention frequently centres around the troubling question: "Are OD practitioners behaving in ways congruent with OD's espoused values?" (Boccialetti, 1989, p.83).

Burke (1997, p.7) has recently observed that "a number of senior practitioners in OD ... believe that the profession has lost its way - that its values are no longer sufficiently honoured, much less practised, and that the unrelenting emphasis on the bottom line has taken over". In the soul-searching article, "The new agenda for OD" (Burke, 1997), he calls for a greater self-reflexivity in the discipline, more clarity on the agenda of the OD practitioner and a return to foundational values of the field. Although the conflicts he articulates are by
no means 'new' - they are arguably a function of the more deep-seated people/profit, individual/organisation conflict which has been inherent in OD from its origins - his article can be understood in the context of the increased questioning of values and ethics that currently confronts OD practitioners and theorists. As Sashkin and Burke (1994, p.56) observe, "although we in OD have always been confronted with the conflict of the individual versus the organisation, what is unprecedented is how deep this issue had become. Never before have we had to face so squarely our own beliefs, values and ethical standards".

As has been explored above, OD aims to improve both organisational performance and the individual employee's 'quality of work life'. Hanson and Lubin (1995) conceptualise the profession of OD as an attempt to work with both sides of the equation: human and organisational needs or, put another way, people and profit. OD seems to concentrate on process goals and then assume that a product will follow: "a basic assumption of OD is that productivity increases as the organisational process (i.e., how people work together) receives due consideration" (Hanson & Lubin, 1995, p.47).

In an increasingly competitive marketplace however, managers are tending to concentrate on tangible results and measure success in terms of cost cutting, increasing revenues, profits or market share (Liebowitz & Mendelow, 1988). In the current context of increased organisational re-engineering, downsizing - terms often euphemistically used to describe laying people off (Smither et al., 1996) - and a shifting employer-employee social contract, working with both sides of this equation is increasingly implying conflict rather than complementarity (Burke, 1997; Sashkin & Burke, 1994). As Church, Burke and van Eynde (1994, p.6) observe, "today's emphasis is overwhelmingly on results, whereas OD's focus is on process, thus how one achieves the bottom line is just as important as the bottom line itself". This conflict between organisational bottom line and the humanistic values of OD is, in turn, forcing practitioners to take a position on thorny questions such as: "What is fair treatment of employees today? Do we practitioners support the organisation from whence our salary comes or the individual being considered for outplacement? Who is our client?" (Sashkin & Burke, 1994, p.56).

Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992, p. 67) suggest, in light of the above, that "OD practitioners would benefit from adopting a 'Janusian' perspective, by which these practitioners could recognise the need to integrate the seemingly opposing values of corporate efficiency with the more humanistic OD perspective". In a similar vein, Sashkin and Burke (1994) and Burke (1997) have joined a growing chorus calling for a need to "reawaken the messianic spirit" (Margulies & Raia, 1990 in Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992, p.67) and recover "the forces of light" (Boccialetti, 1989, p.83) that guided the founding practitioners of the OD field. Contemporary OD literature appears to increasingly advance the need to recapture the fundamental values and seminal principles of the OD

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4 Janus was an ancient Roman god of doors, always represented with two heads facing different ways. His chief temple in Rome faced east and west, where the day begins and ends, and had two doors, between which stood his statue with two faces, one young and one old (Hamilton, 1969).
field and to balance these with current contextual demands. These values are seen to provide OD’s definition and distinction (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992) and are viewed as a touchstone upon which OD finds its way (Burke, 1997). Blunt and Jones (1992, p.226) argue in this respect that "the overt value base of OD strategies is what makes the approach so distinctive. Meddling with its value base will not modify OD; it will take away the elements that make it what it is".

However, while this point may be simply stated, its recognition does not immediately solve any problems for OD. In fact, beyond talking broadly about "integrating both perspectives to create synergy" (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992, p.68) all the authors reviewed above provide little guidance on how these dilemmas may be broached or resolved. Their discussions tend instead to suggest that an understanding of some of the paradoxes of OD theory and practice will result in a resolution of these dilemmas. In this regard, this debate is perhaps best viewed as a ‘call to arms’ to construct new ways of approaching the project of OD, as more of a gesture than a solution.

2.5.3.2 OD’s principles of theory and practice

For OD to make a unique and meaningful contribution, it is important that practitioners and theorists are clear about when OD is being learned and practised and when it is not (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). As was referred to above, this need for clarity is hampered by the lack of coherency in this discipline. There is no single theory that encompasses OD research and practice, nor is there a code of ethics toward which practitioners subscribe (Sashkin & Burke, 1994). The gradual diffusion of OD techniques across different disciplines and settings may, some argue, result in a loss of focus or a watering down of the essentials of OD. French and Bell (1995, p.354) ask, "if OD becomes everything or anything, then what is it?". French and Bell (1995) argue that these techniques may, as a result, be used without a proper understanding of their theoretical, research and historical foundations. A possible likely consequence is the misapplication of OD techniques and consequent resistance from clients.

To prevent this possibility, Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) argue that the substantive content of OD needs to be clearly articulated and that OD needs, in this way, to take a 'position'. In a similar vein, Thaw (1997) contends that we lose the essentials of OD when it becomes anything people want it to be; that OD needs to have content, purpose and be rooted in a value-driven agenda. Much of what has been written above in exploring the key elements of French and Bell’s (1995) definition (see section 2.5.1) is an expression of this normative OD agenda and so will not be repeated at this point. In order to clearly map this content and purpose, Marshak (1993, p.393) argues that we need more research into assumptions inherent in OD model of change, "not only to inform current OD practice but to expand the range of change theories and methods available for dealing with contemporary organisational issues".
2.5.3.3 OD and its environmental context

It has been explored how OD is increasingly being used in a diversity of contexts and settings. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) argue that in defining OD's role in the 1990s one needs to pay attention to the way the culture and the climate of the country in which OD is being practised will keep the field alive and responsive to environmental demands. They demonstrate how the theory and practice of OD is historically contingent (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992) - it acquires its character within particular historical circumstances and in response to particular client-system problems. It is, as a result, impossible to understand OD outside of the context in which it is being practised.

With the stage thus set, it follows to explore the socio-historical situatedness of the theory and practice of the OD as it pertains to this research. In this regard, there are now a wide variety of organisations who "actively stimulate and encourage the growth of the discipline of organisation development as applied to and within the [South African] development sector" (CDRA, 1996/7, p.15). The environmental context of this study, its attendant demands and particular client-system problems are explored in section 2.6. Before embarking on this exploration, it is important to briefly reconsider the recent debate in the OD discipline - distilled into the above three spheres of concern by Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) - especially given that it is a debate which comes to figure in the rationale for this study.

2.5.3.4 OD's 'reconnaissance' agenda

As was raised above, the aforementioned OD debates are emblematic of a increasingly perceived need to take stock of OD issues so as to map out a future path for this discipline and practice (Burke, 1997; Hames, 1994; Hanson & Lubin, 1995; Marshak, 1993; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Smither et al., 1996; Weick, 1990). As Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) note, the development of the theory and practice of the OD field will benefit from resolving dilemmas related to philosophy, values and practice. In an ostensible attempt to engage with these dilemmas the discipline of OD is increasingly entering a domain characterised by a posture of self-reflection. To this end, Burke (1997, p.18) observes that it is now time for OD practitioners "to challenge issues and actions that we know to be wrong, to run counter to the very foundation of the field, and to cause us to wake up in the middle of the night to question ourselves". This need for self-reflection is aptly captured by Weick (1990, p.313) who, advises OD professionals to

perform reconnaissance\(^5\), which is defined as lowering one's defences, seeing fully, looking again at things we consider already understood, capturing previously undetected nuances, and developing high variety languages to describe what is discovered. Reconnaissance should also

\(^5\) 'Reconnaissance' is defined as an examination to discover the nature of the terrain or resources before making an advance. As Weick (1990) notes, it involves mapping and problem finding, i.e., working ahead of others in order to facilitate their advancement into unchartered realms and landscapes.
be applied to the values, beliefs and practices of OD to determine their validity.

Taken together, these interlocking arguments for reflection, reconnaissance and self-examination constitute an increased call to map OD as it is practised in different contexts, and furthermore, through this mapping, to facilitate the advancement of the discipline of OD through the opening up of fresh discourses of functioning and new vistas of theory and practice. Developing this idea of reconnaissance as 'map-making', Weick (1990, p.317) argues that "there is a growing consensus that science is more like cartography than like the board game 'Mastermind' (Fay, 1990, pp.36-37) in which people try to discover a pre-set pattern". In other words, in order to map OD and how it is being shaped by its environmental context it would be appropriate to perform reconnaissance on the rules OD consultants follow, their reasons for their acts and the meanings they assign to events, rather than try to discover the pre-set environment 'out there' waiting to be found (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985). For reasons which should be increasingly clear at this stage, the 'reconnaissance' agenda is one which is taken up by this research study.

2.6 OD in context: The South African development industry

Much like the body of literature on contemporary organisations and their turbulent environments explored above, literature on post-apartheid South Africa also reflects a strong call for adapting organisations to a rapidly changing context (Mentz, 1993). Mohamed (1996, p.236) observes that "present day society in South Africa is characterised by conditions of instability, uncertainty and continuous change - indicating a society in the process of transition and transformation". Post-apartheid transformation has meant that in communities, businesses and industries, schools and universities, both individuals and organisations are confronted with the need to change so as to discover "new horizons for the process of value creation in organisations in particular and in the nation in general" (Nasser & Vivier, 1993 in Norton, 1997, p.829). Some authors conceive of this change as being quantitatively and qualitatively more challenging than is the case in many other countries; in South Africa we have 'mega-change' (Moharir, 1996).

As a consequence of this change, the generation of new ideas, knowledge and approaches becomes necessary (Platts, 1995). Rosholt (1991, p.2) has observed that "we all accept that relationships, institutions and programmes now needed are absolutely different from those offered in the past". Louw and de Kock (1997, p.134) note that due to the dramatic political, social and economic changes in South African society, "decision-makers are confronted with a totally new scenario for which there are few precedents". So as to fit this new scenario, organisations are being increasingly pressured to change and, as a consequence, the need for organisational change and development in South Africa is regarded as urgent (Blunt & Jones, 1992; Smit, 1992).
2.6.1 OD consulting services in a changing South Africa

It is within this changing context that the possibilities of utilising OD approaches become important to examine. Norton (1997, p.829) has recently observed that "an understanding of the principles of OD is particularly important for South Africa". It is thus no surprise that the role of OD consultants has had a consequent upsurge in importance of late (Louw & de Kock, 1997). As the CDRA (1996/97, p.14) notes, "there are more consultants now, more need of their services and more opportunity to use them". This notwithstanding, OD as a discourse and practice is still fairly new in South Africa (Marks, 1996); it is regarded as a growing area: "a fledgling art" (Harding, T., 1994a). OD Debate (1994, p.2) observes in this respect that "there is no documented debate that grounds OD issues in our country: we are learning as we face the challenges". This lack of documented debate makes this terrain all the more suitable to map in terms of a reconnaissance agenda (Weick, 1990).

With OD's growing dissemination in Southern Africa, certain authors have raised questions about the applicability of OD for organisations in developing countries (Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987; Srinivas, 1996). These criticisms tend to centre around the assertion that OD is a Western approach to managing change that is not cross-culturally transferable. Jones (1983 in James, 1997, p.3) refers to "the absurdity of technique peddling by Western management consultants in Africa, exemplified by bizarre attempts to undertake OD consultancies (with their accompanying American individualistic, humanistic values) in African organisations". A conclusion which could be drawn from this position is that the OD approach needs to be modified if used in the African context. However, as Blunt and Jones (1992, p.226) note, "meddling with its value base will not modify OD; it will take away elements which make it what it is". They consequently argue that the task is to find out which of OD's value assumptions is consonant with African cultural values, and to use the OD model as a guide for the construction of a more suitable organisational change approach for African organisations (Blunt & Jones, 1992).

The viewpoint which regards 'Western' OD as inappropriate in an African context has, however, been criticised for providing a reified and static view of OD as well as of African culture. While it is clear that one needs to take account of the cultural context in which OD is being practised, James (1997) argues that OD can and does concur with African cultures. Much of the criticism of OD in developing countries comes, he contends, from writers who use a 'romantic primitivism' caricature of African culture, use limited definitions of OD, and who fail to distinguish between poor implementation of OD and the nature of OD per se (James, 1997). Furthermore, questions about the applicability of OD frequently rest on the assumption that the values of the change agent and client system should be congruent. Golembiewski (1991 in Blunt and Jones 1992, p.226) suggests that "such a comfortable situation may not produce the confrontation of problems which an open debate about values might initiate".
It is arguably this 'open debate,' and these boundary skirmishes concerning OD's values and principles of theory and practice, which Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) intimated would help define OD's future. This said, Blunt and Jones (1992) note that they have been unable to locate descriptions of OD interventions within African organisations that raise questions about appropriateness. Mamputa (1997, p.7) similarly observes that "what makes it difficult for practitioners to fully utilise their skills and therefore be more effective in the South African situation is the lack of local values in the [OD] discipline". Paralleling in certain respects Weick's (1990) call for reconnaissance, Mamputa (1997) consequently frames the challenge for local OD practitioners as being to develop a body of knowledge to inform OD in South Africa.

2.6.2 OD and non-governmental development organisations

One area with a burgeoning OD practice is the South African NGO sector. Although the practice of OD consultancy is usually synonymous with the private sector and the commercial world, it has been explored above how this is no longer the case. Rather, as the theme of the 1993 International Organisational Development Association (IODA) conference, "Capacity Building in Developing Countries", indicated, OD is entering new areas of engagement by assisting in the process of development in Southern Africa (van Schalkwyk, 1993). The CDRA (1996/97, p.14) observes that there exists "the increasing recognition - within the development sector - of the need for organisational capacity and the increasing recognition of the role that can be played by OD consultancy". Louw and de Kock (1997) similarly note that a unique feature of the South African situation is the increased existence of a large number of relatively small consulting firms operating particularly in the public and developmental sectors. In short, it seems that "many African NGOs are having to adjust to radically new environments and are struggling to deal with the inherent tensions of their own growth and development - they are looking to OD for support" (James, 1997, p.3). Marks (1996) notes that OD tools and concepts have provided South African development organisations with a sustainability lacking in the past.

To understand this increased reliance on OD, it is useful to examine the kinds of contextual demands being made on organisations within this sector. Two interrelated forces can be seen to have created the space for an increased dissemination of OD: organisational transformation in post-apartheid South Africa and the attendant dynamics of reconstruction and development in this country. As the CDRA (1993/94) notes, development organisations are not only under pressure to quickly and drastically transform themselves, but the need for reconstruction and development-related service provision has also increased the need for OD consultancy. After briefly defining NGOs, the following sections will explore these two contiguous sets of forces which form the context and client-system demands of OD (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992) as it is practised in the South African development sector.
2.6.2.1 Defining the NGO sector

Although the capacities of this sector are not clearly understood (Salaman & Anheier, 1992), it is generally accepted that NGOs have an important role to play in social development (Brews, 1994; Harding, T. 1994a; Kaplan, 1994; Narsoo, 1994). In order to explore their developmental role, it is first necessary to clarify the different types of NGOs that exist.

The NGO sector is a heterogenous mix of somewhere between 48 000 (Manley, 1994) and 54 000 (Harding, T. 1994b; Development Resource Centre [DRC], 1994) organisations which range from local soccer clubs to large civic organisations. The sector comprises non-profit social institutions which include welfare, religious, education, sport, development, civic, women, youth and other mass - and community - based organisations (Harding, T. 1994b; Manley, 1994). The CDRA (1993/94) notes that there are probably about 7000 NGOs in the generally accepted sense of the term providing relief and development services. The problematic nature of NGOs makes it difficult to define them (Liebenberg, 1997) and so, "as in other countries, in South Africa, the NGO sector is not clearly defined or understood" (DRC, 1994, p.2). In light of this complexity, the DRC (1994, p.2) suggests the following definition:

NGOs are private, voluntary, non-profit oriented organisations operating, not for commercial purposes, but for the benefit of, and to the account of the public at large, for the promotion of social welfare and development, religion, charity, education and research. Specifically excluded are organisations that promote partisan political interests and the interests of specified individuals.

This definition is consistent with most other conceptualisations of what defines an NGO, such as Kane (1990, in Liebenberg, 1997) and Thaw (1997). As Liebenberg (1997, p.66) more succinctly puts it, "in essence, then, NGOs can be defined as autonomous, privately set up, non-profit institutions that support, manage or facilitate development action".

Within this definition, the literature also identifies three broad 'types' of NGOs. Korten (1990) refers to first, second, third and fourth generation NGOs. Carroll (1992) identifies primary grassroots organisations, membership support organisations, and grassroots support organisations. Macazoma (1993) refers to community based organisations, relief and welfare NGOs, and service NGOs. Thaw (1996) defines NGOs in terms of their differing orientations: provision of professional or technical expertise responsive to need or request; intervening with a particular model or approach; relief or welfare for the poor or marginalised; developmental and change oriented process; representing certain interests. Before exploring the different categories of NGO, it is first necessary to distinguish between NGOs and community based organisations (CBOs).

Definitions of "NGO" and "CBO" are admittedly controversial (see eg., Manley, 1994), but broadly put, "NGOs have traditionally been service or development organisations who were conduits for money and other
resources to CBOs, traditionally more local-level grassroots organisations" (CDRA, 1993/94, p. 16). Community based and primary grassroots organisations are those constituted and run by people elected by a particular community (Carroll, 1992; Macazoma, 1993). These will be broadly referred to as CBOs in this thesis. NGOs on the other hand represent the next level above the CBOs and tend to serve, represent and work with several primary groups. Carroll (1992) refers to grassroots support organisations as ‘intermediaries’ in this regard.

In terms of delineating NGOs, I have used the approach set out by Hartzenberg (1993) of The Independent Study into an Enabling Environment for NGOs, because of its viability and clarity. Hartzenberg (1993) borrows from Korten (1990) to offer the following classification of development-oriented NGOs, according to their strategic orientation:

(i) relief and welfare (first generation NGOs),
(ii) local self-reliance (second generation NGOs) and
(iii) sustainable systems development (third generation NGOs).

First generation NGOs usually develop as a result of emergencies or other special circumstances, such as starving children or flood relief. These organisations operate on an immediate, short term time frame and do not develop the abilities of the individuals concerned on a sustained basis (Hartzenberg, 1993). Within this context the NGOs role is that of ‘doer’ (Korten, 1990).

Second generation NGOs focus on small-scale, self-reliant, local development aimed at satisfying the basic needs of the local community such as the provision of housing (Hartzenberg, 1993; Liebenberg, 1997). These organisations aim to move beyond temporary relief of symptoms to ensure that the benefits are sustained beyond the period of NGO assistance. In this context the NGO role is that of ‘mobiliser’ (Korten, 1990).

Third generation NGOs aim to facilitate sustainable development. This centres around an approach which has come to be known as capacity building, the facilitation and support of viable, self sustaining community based organisations (Kaplan, 1994). In South Africa these organisations are sometimes referred to as ‘service NGOs’ (Harding, D., 1994), who intervene in developmental or change oriented process (Thaw, 1996). In this context, the NGO role is that of ‘catalyst’ (Korten, 1990).

As noted above, Korten (1990) also identifies a fourth generation NGO stage which include public conscientisation organisations, who aim to raise public awareness and change policies through development education. An important insight of Korten’s (1990) four generations is that these could refer to the programmes within any one organisation, and not necessarily the organisational design of a particular NGO. An NGO may thus be implementing a mix of all four categories at any one time (Liebenberg, 1997).
It is those 'third generation', intermediary or service NGOs who provide OD and capacity building services which form the focus of this study. Harding, D. (1994) argues that it is these intermediary NGOs (INGOs) who are at the centre of development debate and practice, and notes that "of all the levels in the NGO world, INGOs face the stiffest challenge in staying true to some of the best features of development work and in holding to a radical sustainable approach to development" (Harding, D., 1994, p.2). He ascribes the origins of this challenge to the nature of development work and the context in which these organisations function. It is to these topics which we turn in the following sections.

2.6.3 NGOs and the post-apartheid development context

Before proceeding to a discussion on the nature of this approach to development, it is necessary to briefly construct an overview of the contextual dynamics involved in this process of INGO-related development. Padron (1987 in Liebenberg, 1997) states that the context in which NGOs function is made up of four interrelated dimensions. These are the socio-historical context, the institutional relationships of the NGO, the internal dynamics of the NGO and the project or intervention itself. Padron (1987, in Liebenberg, 1997, p.71) argues that an NGO exists by establishing a working relationship with the popular sector, which also functions within a historical context. The historical context is of importance as it defines the specific nature of the given social reality within which both the NGO and the popular sector/community function.

This importance of a meaning-giving development context is an idea explored by Kotze and Kotze (1996, p.8), who argue that a "context is not a set of influences or forces. A context is something that confers a meaning upon something else". They consequently define the development context as an ecology of ideas (referring collectively to past experience, metaphors, beliefs, values, perceptions and world views), and patterns of interaction within which every idea (such as capacity building), action (such as the way a consultant responds to a community request) and object (such as housing) obtain meaning (Kotze & Kotze, 1996). As Hagg (1996, p.9) observes, "because development takes place within a wider political, social and economic context, the dynamics of this context have a continuous influence on the implementation of development in local areas". It is consequently instructive to explore the dynamics and rhythms to which service NGOs are required to respond, as South African society redefines itself in political, social and economic terms.

2.6.3.1 Post-apartheid challenges and the NGO 'crisis'

Macazona (1993) ascribes the growth of the NGO sector in South Africa to three key factors: apartheid policy which neglected the provision of services to non-white communities; lack of state legitimacy in these communities which led them to reject those services which were provided; and pressure on foreign governments
to take punitive measures against the apartheid government. In the face of state neglect and with the aid of foreign funding, NGOs grew to fill the service gap in non-white communities (Molobi, 1995; Rosholt, 1991). In short, "the popularity of the South African struggle on the international donor agenda enabled NGOs to flourish" (CDRA, 1993/94, p.18).

The 1990s have, however, brought new priorities to South African society and NGOs now face a different type of struggle, one that is driven by the needs of reconstruction and development. As Molobi (in Financial Mail, 1994) has noted, if NGOs want to survive in this new context, they need to hook on to the flagship of 'development'. With regard to this issue of NGO survival and the attendant demand for change, much has been written in the last few years on the effect of political transformation on NGOs (CDRA, 1992/93, 1995/96; Harding, T. 1994a; Kaplan, 1994; Kelleher, 1992; Marks, 1993; Meinjies, 1993a; Pape, 1993). Consistent themes within this debate include the strengths and weaknesses of NGOs, the problems of attracting funding, and the vital need for NGOs to be able to effectively respond to the political, social and economic transformation in South Africa - to, as T. Harding (1994a) puts it, adopt 'new tools for new rules'. It has been a time of evaluation, reflection and debate with regard to the role of NGOs in development. In reference to this time, Hallowes (1995, p.1) argues that

> these 'crisis' debates have been very valuable. NGOs, their organisational cultures and managerial competence, their delivery (or non-delivery) record, the services they offer and the cost effectiveness of those services, their access to funds ... their sustainability and the politics of funding have all come under scrutiny - as well they should.

The roots of this 'crisis' appear to lie with what Brager and Holloway (1978, p.63) have referred to as "a tension between an organisation’s objective and a contradictory reality". All three of the conditions highlighted by Macazoma (1993) have changed with the collapse of apartheid, demanding a commensurate change from the NGO sector. South Africa now has a legitimate and democratically elected government geared towards the reconstruction and development of previously disadvantaged communities. The African National Congress’s (ANC) election manifesto, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) has become the blueprint for the new Government of National Unity's (GNU) development drive. The advent of democracy has in turn signified a major shift in foreign funding from NGOs directly to the GNU’s RDP related initiatives (CDRA, 1993/94).

The RDP promotes a conception of development as a people-driven process in which communities decide their needs and are empowered to control the process (ANC, 1994). Given the history and experiences of NGOs in interfacing with communities at this grassroots level, and supporting those disempowered by apartheid, NGOs are arguably well positioned to facilitate this process (Manley, 1994). To this end, a National NGO Summit in 1994 agreed that NGOs need to facilitate the process whereby communities are empowered to control their own development (Dangor, 1994). This recommendation is underpinned by the belief that NGOs "have an important
role to play in unleashing the capacity of communities ... to participate in the development process issues which are at the heart of sustained development" (Dangor, 1994, p.17).

In order to play this role, there is however a demand that NGOs need to change from their past modes of operating. As Pape (1993, p.6) observes, "there are many [NGOs] who will have no justification for their continued existence. Their function will simply be taken over by government [and] ... clinging to the 'good old bad days' [of apartheid] ... and continuing along their well worn path ... is suicidal folly". Ironically then, the transition to democracy has brought harder times to many NGOs (Meintjies, 1993b). Post-apartheid NGO forums and conferences have given voice to worried claims that "hardly a week goes by without hearing that another progressive NGO is in trouble" (Reconstruct, 1993, p.1). Many of the CBOs and NGOs operating in contemporary South Africa developed in an era of apartheid repression and formed part of the broad resistance movement to state policy and action (van Vlaanderen & Gilbert, 1993). Capacities of these organisations included a culture of opposition, an emphasis on political correctness rather than service provision, mobilisation of resistance rather than development of capacity, and a loose accountability to vague terms such as 'community' or 'the struggle' (CDRA, 1993/94; Kelleher, 1992; Meintjies, 1993b). While this culture achieved much in terms of prefiguring the development of a more democratic South Africa, this concern for confrontation and resistance is now often seen as inconsistent with implementing strategies for development and reconstruction (van Vlaanderen & Gilbert, 1993). As the CDRA (1993/94, p.19) notes,

The mobilisation culture is no longer entirely congruent with our context; it risks becoming a trap. The demands of our emerging context - including productivity and effective development practice, negotiation and consultation and collaboration, an ambiguous and shifting environment, and changing donor agendas - require new competencies.

The 'culture of struggle' has, in short, not prepared these organisations for the democratic climate of the 'new South Africa' (Kelleher, 1992). Some of the most notable effects of post-apartheid transition are a change in operating environment towards greater emphasis on reconstruction and development, a change in funding sources to reflect this new emphasis, a NGO 'brain drain' to government and development industry positions, and the increased adoption of 'participatory development' practices and terminology (Harding, T. 1994a). Kelleher (1992, p.12) consequently notes that "whereas in the past NGOs concentrated primarily on political objectives with an emphasis on opposition and resistance, they must now move into a developmental role with an emphasis on democratic participation and reconstruction".

A post-apartheid change in funding sources and agendas is frequently referred to as part of this shift to a development focus (CDRA, 1993/94, Hallowes, 1995). Given that funding is a critical issue for NGOs (Karras, 1996), this is a shift which merits further comment. NGOs are, by definition, 'not for profit' and consequently largely dependent on donor funding for survival. As a result of this dependence, donors are regarded as major players in the development arena (Hallowes, 1995). The fact that donors have, post-1994, tended to redirect
their funding into RDP-type initiatives is consequently an added impetus to adopt a developmental role. T. Harding (1994a) observes that NGOs need now to demonstrate how developmental activities meet socio-economic needs as well as contribute to sustainable economic growth and development, in order to get donor funding.

The CDRA (1992/93) defines the relationship between NGOs and donor funding agencies as an interdependent one: NGOs need funding for their establishment and activities, and donors need NGOs for service delivery. Hulme and Edwards (1997) observe that this is often an unequal power relationship which creates pressure for co-option into donor agendas: that is, 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'. Shaeffer (1994, p.49) notes in this regard that while donor agencies are essential participants in development, "their frequent 'guarding of territory', their rigid conditions for funding and their desire for quick results and for quantitative measures of impact can create difficulties for more process oriented approaches". How NGOs might best respond to the difficulties created by this relationship is, at the moment, not clear. Hulme and Edwards (1997) remark that not only does the donor - NGO relationship vary greatly from country to country, but theoretical analysis and study of these relationships has received little attention to date. In response to this neglect, these authors argue that "it is essential for NGO strategists and researchers to explore this complex and messy terrain if our understanding is to move beyond the public cheeriness of donors about the 'marvellous' work of NGOs" (Hulme & Edwards, 1997, p.4).

In sum, it is not difficult to see how OD might mushroom in such a context of realignment, uncertainty and change. Meintjies (1993b, p.16) asks, "Why is there such an exploding demand for OD services among non-governmental and alternative organisations? One reason is that all organisations are experiencing the pains of transition sharper than ever before". Environmental assessment is becoming more difficult for these organisations, internal functioning and management styles are increasingly viewed as inappropriate and NGOs are consequently struggling to redefine themselves (Meintjies, 1993b). OD potentially brings tools, methodologies and approaches to help organisations to identify the nature of these challenges to change, and enact new strategies in response (OD Debate, 1994).

The need for organisational change is however not the only reason behind the proliferation of OD consultancy in this development context. James (1997) puts this reliance on OD down to a combination of donor influence, failure of past training approaches, and increasing rejection of the traditional expert consultancy approach where the consultant diagnoses problems and develops solutions for the organisation. In so doing, he introduces a corollary force behind the increased use of OD in this sector: the fact that it sits so well with contemporary approaches to development, namely the 'people-driven development' paradigm.
2.6.3.2 NGOs and the idea of people-driven development

One of the basic principles of the RDP is that development should be people-driven (ANC, 1994). This concept is reflected in the current emphasis on community participation, empowerment and human development; terms which have been central to community development literature since the 1960s (Hagg, 1996). But while the body of literature on these terms is extensive, definitions remain evasive and subject to much debate, and as such, these concepts are best thought of as ideas rather than models. Smith (1979, in de Beer, 1997, p.23) observes in this regard that these terms reside "in an Alice in Wonderland world where words still mean what you want them to mean". This notwithstanding, the following section aims to introduce the idea of people-driven development so as to discern its overlap with an OD perspective.

Louw and de Kock (1997, p.135) observe that "the role and utilization of consultants will be affected by the approach used to determine development interventions at any specific time". One’s conception of development is thus not simply a theoretical matter - these theories are constantly in use, informing development programmes (Rogers, 1992). Echoing this position, S. Coetzee (1995, p.11) observes that "many of the development mistakes in Africa have been as a result of well-meaning, but ill-informed views on development".

Over the years, the development field has seen many new definitions and theories of what development should entail (Leach, 1994). Theories and strategies of development have historically advocated the delivery of physical and economic resources, with an emphasis on impacts coming from the ‘outside’ to the less developed and ‘peripheral’ world (Coetzee, J., 1989). This so-called ‘modernisation’ approach has been fairly widely recognised as having little success as a strategy of development in the Third World (Kelly & van der Riet, in press; Kotze & Kotze, 1996). Its failure is seen to be a function of a narrow, mechanistic view of development which conceives of it as the injection of capital or skills (Kotze & Kotze, 1996) aimed at linear progression towards a measurable target, such as increased Gross National Product (GNP) (van Vlaenderen, 1998).

Recognition of the failure of the ‘modernisation’ development paradigm\(^6\) has inspired the emergence of alternative approaches to development. It is as such increasingly being replaced by alternative strategies such as the ‘people-centred development’ paradigm (Coetzee, J., 1989; Korten, 1990; Treurnicht, 1997). "People centred development has moved centre stage and has become the most important strategy for the 1990s and beyond" (Coetzee, S., 1994, p.13). The development emphasis has experienced a consequent shift towards people’s participation in development, the expansion of their choices and the strengthening of their capacities (Coetzee, S. 1995). This viewpoint follows Korten’s (1990, p.67) oft quoted formulation of development as

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\(^6\) An in depth examination of the impact and limitations of the ‘modernisation’ paradigm with regard to Southern African development is beyond the scope of this chapter. For those interested, Coetzee (1987, chs. 1 & 3, Sinha (1984) and van Vlaenderen (1998, ch. 2) provide useful summaries in this regard.
a process by which the members of society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to reintroduce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.

Within the above conception, development is seen to be concerned with the development of organisations which are able to articulate these community needs and remain sustainable in the long term (Rosholt, 1991). This formulation furthermore advances an endogeneity to the development process, whereby improvements and organisations must be wanted by and acceptable to the individuals and communities concerned (Beukes, 1994; Coetzee, S., 1995). As Korten (1990, p.157) succinctly states, "the people, by right and by necessity must be both architects and the engines of development".

2.6.3.3 People driven development: implications for ‘developers’

Within the ‘people driven’ paradigm it is held that development should not be imposed from above, driven by models designed by outside ‘experts’. As Rosholt (1991, p.2) has observed, "if there is one over-riding lesson development agencies have learned, it is that if projects are to achieve legitimacy and success, they must have the support and participation of the community involved". This suggests that the people concerned in development should not be peripheral objects, but should rather be pertinently involved in the development process (Coetzee, J. 1989). Kelly and van der Riet (in press, p.9) observe in this respect that "community participation in the determination of priorities, identification and allocation of resources and the selection of problem solving strategies lies at the heart of this approach to development".

As a consequence, it is necessary for ‘developers’ to shift their focus from the provision of development products to the facilitation of community participation and empowerment (Harrison, 1987). Commenting on this requisite shift, Rogers (1992) observes that those who base their development approach on a ‘deprivation and input’ model, whether to achieve growth, modernisation or meet basic needs, tend to stress the role of the expert change agent who will use phrases such as ‘to impart awareness’, ‘to give skills/knowledge’ and so on. In opposition to this approach, and in consonance with the people-driven development paradigm, he argues for a consultation model which refers instead to "helping participants to become more aware, assisting them to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, encouraging them to act, etc." (Rogers, 1992, p.118). It is clear that this latter approach has much in common with Schein’s (1989) process consultation conception (as covered in section 2.5.2.3).

With regard to this need for a more process oriented and facilitative development approach, Rosholt (1991, p.5) observes that "the best form of development embraces the ... offer of advice, guidance and assistance through which people can be helped to realise their own potential". This assistance should, according to Korten (1980 in de Beer, 1997, p.22). "be part of a learning process characterised by a flexible, sustained, action-based, capacity building approach". Rogers (1992) similarly argues that this active, participative orientation means that
development is not about the building of dams or roads for the people; it is rather a process in which the building of the dams or roads becomes part of the experience of change which involves the people and increases their self-reliance. The crux of the people-driven development paradigm is that development cannot be delivered or provided to people: it is rather something that builds the capacity of people to act constructively on their own behalf (ANC, 1994; Beukes, 1994, Coetzee, J., 1989).

Yet, in order to become 'masters of their own development' (de Beer, 1997) communities need co-operation and assistance. They cannot spontaneously start the process of development themselves - outside aid is essential (Rosholt, 1991). Echoing the OD concept of the 'catalytic consultant', Shaeffer (1994, p.49) notes that NGOs are often absolutely necessary to fill the gaps left by government in the provision of services, to serve as 'catalysts' or 'bridging organisations' able to bring people and government together and encourage co-ordination of resources and efforts, and to experiment freely with innovative approaches to development.

This 'catalytic' outside aid should not replace the community effort (Rosholt, 1991) or position communities as 'dependent receivers' (de Beer, 1997, Louw & De Kock, 1997). Rather, in accordance with OD’s aim of increasing an organisation’s capacity for problem solving and renewal, the people driven development orientation holds that those responsible for capacity building should assist the beneficiaries to be more proactive and capable of managing their own future - they need, in OD jargon, to learn how to learn. These suggestions rest on the premise that "people can lead their own change processes. They can be actors, not merely the subjects of change" (Gran, 1984 in de Beer, 1997, p.21).

It is not difficult to see how the emergence of this approach to development infused with issues of participation, ownership, change, organisation and involving a process oriented and ‘catalytic’ change agent becomes fertile terrain for the emergence of OD practice (Kelly, van der Riet & Eagar, 1996). OD principles very neatly and effectively dovetail with the wider people-driven development paradigm. Kaplan (1994, p.9) cogently summarises OD’s attunement to this context as follows:

If organisation is such a vital component of civil society, if the ability of people to organise themselves is seen as important, if the proliferation of peoples’ organisations is seen as an integral part of people-centred development, then the discipline of OD forms an important potential strand of NGO development work.

In summary, two contiguous streams which now flow strongly in post apartheid South Africa - namely, the need for organisational change in the NGO sector and the increased popularity of the people-driven development paradigm - create a context highly congenial to the development of OD consultancy. Recall that Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) have argued that attention needs to be paid to the way in which the environmental context of the country in which OD is being practised will keep the field alive and responsive to client demands. Weick
(1990) has similarly argued for the need to 'perform reconnaissance' on OD as it is practised in different contexts. Now, in the South African NGO context explored above, it appears that OD is being aligned with a conception of development which is increasingly framed in terms of capacity building. In this respect Meintjies (1994, p.16) observes that "OD has quickly moved to the forefront of capacity building and adapting to the new phase in the struggle for social change". He then continues, "... - so quickly that many people are unclear about what it means, and how best to use OD" (Meintjies, 1994, p.16). It is to the implications of the latter observation that I turn in the following sub-section. In particular, I intend to propose that it is this lack of clarity about what OD and capacity building mean in this context which makes this setting especially suitable for 'mapping'.

2.6.3.4 The rise of capacity building

The South African development arena is fraught with use of the term, capacity building. The CDRA (1992/3) observes that over the past few years the development discourse, both internationally and in South Africa, has come to focus on the capacity building of NGOs and CBOs. This term is now part of the vocabulary of the RDP, the Development Bank of South Africa, the Independent Development Trust, and many other organisations who are making budgetary provisions for its implementation. Even recent Society for Industrial Psychology newsletters have couched their calls for a more 'relevant' practice (Nel, 1990; Pietersen, 1989; Retief, 1989) in terms of community capacity building (van Breda, 1994) and involvement in the RDP (Smit, 1995).

But while capacity building is common currency in South Africa's development arena, the content of this role is seen by many to require greater clarity. Kotze and Kotze (1996) argue that development practitioners tend to latch on to on-going debates and 'buzzwords', often without understanding the essence of these latest 'approaches' to development practice - "the consequent misuse of these concepts gradually empties them of content and the debate blurs" (Kotze & Kotze, 1996, p.5). Echoing Meintjies's (1994) contention that it is the rapidity with which OD and capacity building have moved to the forefront of the development agenda which has created the confusion as to what they mean, Gillespie (1994, p.1) argues that "because development has been thrust into prominence as a national priority in the wake of political transformation, the development process itself demands considered thought". This period of reflection is important because in the rush to develop it appears that there has been inadequate consideration of what development, and capacity building in particular, actually mean. These are important considerations given that conceptions of development powerfully inform the nature of interventions and the role and utilisation of consultants in this process (Louw & de Kock, 1997; Rogers, 1992).

That the development of organisational and institutional capacity is at the heart of development practice is generally agreed upon (Kaplan, 1994). To this end, donors, international and local NGOs, and governments in
developing countries all acknowledge the importance of capacity building for development (van Vlaenderen & Gilbert, 1993). Yet while they all share a common rhetoric, there appears to be a lack of common understanding of the conceptual underpinnings and practical applications of this ill-defined and indiscriminately used term (Brews, 1994). Booth (1993, p.11) notes that "for many people capacity building is yet another bit of jargon to emerge from the transition process". In a similar vein, Ewing (1996, p.1) somewhat lugubriously observes,

It seems you can't do anything in development these days without first capacity building. Yet, as one of the more popular phrases in development today, capacity building brings with it a surprising amount of confusion and interesting expectations from various stakeholders.

This inability to clearly define one's practice has potentially problematic consequences for those involved in development work. The rough, unarticulated, taken for granted assumptions about development form important sense-making frameworks which powerfully influence the strategies that these development organisations undertake (Rogers, 1992), and within which development initiatives obtain meaning (Kotze & Kotze, 1996). This is therefore not some academic or theoretical debate - the problem is not one of 'mere semantics' (Sandelands & Drazin, 1989) - the implications of the confusion surrounding capacity building are likely to extend to practice. Depending on which perspective is taken, the practitioner will turn to a particular set of solutions to effect change (Wilson, 1992). As Marshak (1993, p.394) observes "differences in how change is conceptualised are likely to lead to different intervention approaches". In recognition of this dynamic, the CDRA (1994/95, p.2-3) observes that

our lack of an adequate theory of capacity building reduces our own capacity to engage in the practice. We lack the theory because we are not thinking through what we see before us. And we are avoiding thinking things through because to face the obvious will be to radically transform our practice.

When viewed together with arguments calling for a need to perform reconnaissance on OD as it is practised in different contexts (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Weick, 1990), this increased recognition of the lack of clarity which surrounds capacity building can be seen to constitute a powerful rationale for mapping OD and capacity building in this context. It follows to ask, "What does OD, in its present manifestation as capacity building, mean in the South African development context?". Why one might wish to ask such a question should be clear from the literature reviewed above. How one might go about asking this question has been briefly introduced above in a review of the 'enacted', constructionist perspective (Weick, 1979). It has been argued, in this respect, that in order to discern the shape which OD takes in different socio-historical contexts (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992) it is necessary to transcend the dualism between an external, 'objective' environment and an internal, separate world of OD. Instead, OD's environment can be seen to refer to the ecological context of thought, action and patterns of interaction, which is not independent of the observer-actor's theories, frameworks and experiences (Kotze & Kotze, 1996; Smircich & Stubbart, 1985). This perspective consequently directs attention to OD consultants' accounts of their role and context. As Smircich and Stubbart (1985, p.733)
argue, "interpretive research work ... aims to make explicit the knowledge (often taken for granted, but untested) by which organisation members construe their situation". How one would go about generating a narrative account of capacity building through a grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) is explored in depth in Chapter 3. But before exploring this methodology, it is necessary to return to a point made at the start of this chapter so as to further set the stage for the adoption of a constructionist account of meaning. It was noted - following, amongst others, Clegg and Hardy (1996), Hassard and Pym (1990), and Reed and Hughes (1992) - that in organisation studies, both theory and practice, both modes of knowing and modes of organising, have experienced increasing change over the past three decades. The following section aims to briefly explore the implications of this contention.

2.7 Theory and practice in organisation studies

The thematic debates explored above consistently, if sometimes implicitly, raise the issue of the relationship between theory and practice. Theories, whether they are of 'the environment', OD, development or capacity building, are seen to shape modes of understanding and forms of conduct (CDRA, 1994/95; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996a; Louw & De Kock, 1997; Marshak, 1993; Morgan, 1986; Weick, 1979). As Morgan (1997, p.298) succinctly observes, "how we ... manage change is ultimately a product of how we see and think about ourselves, hence how we enact relationships with the environment".

This observation echoes a point made earlier that what exists 'out there' in the organisational world (practice or ontology) is intimately related to how it can be known (theory or epistemology). Marsden and Townley (1996, p.659) write that "everyone, not just academics, theorises about the causes and consequences of the social world and acts on this basis. Most practices operationalise some theory, however implicit, vague and contradictory it may be". It is instructive to think of theories of organisation as interpretations of reality. They are not read off 'the world as it is', but are rather forms of language or representations (Jeffcut, 1993) which, Turner (1992) argues, insert a classificatory barrier between us and our experience of the world. A concern, in this regard, may pertain to nature of this relationship between descriptive language and the world it is meant to represent. One need not be interested in this relationship (see e.g., Hogan & Sinclair, 1996). I am, for reasons which I have intimated above and which will be explored more fully below, given their centrality to this research project.

Recognising this role played by 'representation' is a central theme uniting the amalgam of diverse ideas coded with the term 'postmodern' (Best & Kellner, 1991). Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996a, p.429) note that "the postmodern turn essentially begins when one grapples with the relationship between modes of representation (language, graphs, statistics, models, etc.) and their subject matter". To clarify some of the key words within the family of concepts emblematic of the 'postmodern turn', it is useful to briefly distinguish modern and postmodern discourses.
It is broadly agreed that the greater part of this century has been governed by an interlocking array of assumptions which we may retrospectively term 'modernist' (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996b). Postmodern thinkers understand modernism as an ideology which proposes an objectively knowable world ‘out there’ which may be mirrored in the mind (Rorty, 1979), understood through reason and observation (Gergen, 1992) and captured in words (Cooperrider et al., 1995). Since the eighteenth century a grand narrative founded on a modernist faith in reason, progress, scientific objectivity and the establishment of universal principles through empirical method has been central to Western culture and has profoundly influenced contemporary enquiry in both psychology and organisation studies (Gergen, 1990, 1992; Kvale, 1990a, 1990b; Reed & Hughes, 1992; Smart, 1993).

Many counter-currents across a wide variety of disciplines have increasingly come to challenge this modernist view of individual rationality, empirical method and language picturing the essentials of reality (Kvale, 1990b). As Gergen (1990) observes, a new set of intellectual dramas has slowly been unfolding. Although this contemporary unfolding of a loss of faith in the modernist programme is reflected in diverse ways in the many arenas of cultural expression - such as in philosophy, politics, architecture, the visual arts, literature, television and film (Polkinghorne, 1990) - my concern in this section is with the epistemology of postmodernism. In particular, the following sections aim to explore the debates concerning the problematics of representation and the implications these hold for a social constructionist account of meaning in organisation studies.

2.7.1 Postmodernism and organisation studies

The literature on postmodernism and organisation studies has incorporated two inter-related arguments. According to Marsden and Townley (1996) we are experiencing fundamental changes both in the way society is organised as well as in the way that we come to know things about this changing social world. To this end Hassard (1993) usefully differentiates between two uses of the term postmodernism. The one, postmodernity - an ontology, denotes an epochal periodization of organisational and social forms. The other, postmodernism - an epistemology, implies a theoretical perspective originating with the French poststructuralist writers Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard and others (Schwartz, 1993).

Those who attempt to explore postmodernity as an epoch, aim to identify features of the organisational world which support the hypothesis that society is moving to a new postmodern era. Concepts emblematic of this stance are post-Fordism, post-capitalism and post-industrialism (Hassard, 1993). An underlying assumption of many of these ‘post’ prefixed concepts is that the social and economic structures reproduced since the industrial revolution are now rapidly changing and transforming (Best & Kellner, 1991), fragmenting into diverse networks characterised by smaller organisations, increased flexibility, multiskilling, decentralisation (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997), increased computerisation and automation (Gephart, 1996) and the decline of bureaucracy and hierarchy (Hassard, 1993; Clegg and Hardy, 1996).
For some these 'new times' (Hall & Jacques, 1987 in Hassard, 1993) are sufficiently different from the bureaucratic features of modern organisations to justify the term 'postmodern' (e.g., Gephart, 1996), while for others there exists a degree of scepticism with regard to postmodernity as an epoch (e.g., Parker, 1993; Thompson, 1993; Kilduff & Mehra, 1997). Parker (1993, p.206), whilst acknowledging that there are new forms of organisation, persuasively contends that there is "little or no evidence that modernism is on the wane". Although organisations are changing, these writers argue that such changes are characteristic of global capitalism, and that bureaucracy's burial is somewhat premature (Thompson, 1993).

Of interest for my purposes however, is 'postmodernism' as an intellectual movement rather than a stage in the historical development of capitalist society. That said, I use this term with a degree of reluctance given some of the controversy and distraction it brings in its wake. Not only would it be imprudent to maintain that modernist discourses of organisation are ailing (Gergen, 1992) or that postmodernism has been embraced with complete affection in contemporary organisation theory (Burrell, 1996), but more importantly, talk of the term raises a welter of questions such as, "What is postmodernism?", "How does it relate to modernity?" and "When did postmodernity begin?" (Stenner & Eccleston, 1994) which I do not have space to properly address now and which are, besides, secondary to the main purpose of this section.

To this end, it is perhaps more useful to follow Curt's (1994, in Stenner & Eccleston, 1994) framing of these issues in terms of a contemporary 'climate of problematisation', or Stainton Rogers and Stainton Rogers's (1997b) talk of a 'climate of perturbation', where existing forms of knowledge and knowledge generation are being increasingly questioned. In this regard, Cooperrider et al. (1995, p.158) write that

challenging virtually every assumption of a modernist science, including foundationalist verities such as an objectivity, value freedom, the picture theory of language, and the possibility of universal, progressive knowledge, the critical turn has resulted in a cacophony of voices and styles which compels everyone to agree that something postmodern has happened.

I will, in the remaining sections, briefly sketch with rather broad strokes some of the central problematics of this 'climate of perturbation' as they relate to organisational analysis and a social constructionist account of meaning.

2.7.1.1 Reality as social construction

Put simply, postmodern epistemology holds that there are no grand narratives, theories, or 'god's eye' perspectives for explaining experience, and that social life can be more usefully understood as a series of discourses where none is privileged (Melia, 1997). Following Lyotard (1984), postmodern critiques have rejected modernist tendencies emphasising grand narrative conceptions of history - "there are histories not
history: one must attend to the local fragmented specificities, the narratives of everyday lives" (Clegg & Hardy, 1996, p.3). As a result, it is held that each linguistic community, and even each individual, can potentially perceive 'the truth' about the world differently (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997).

This concern with multiple viewpoints is one influenced by Nietzsche's 'perspectivism', which eschews facts or objective truths in favour of individual or group constructions (Thompson, 1993). Postmodern theory critiques the modernist belief that theory mirrors reality, taking instead the perspectivist and relativist positions that "theories at best provide partial perspectives of their objects and that all cognitive representations are historically and linguistically mediated" (Best & Kellner, 1991, p.4). Following Kuhn (1962), there can in this sense be no obdurate facts and no unitary truth, because facts and truth depend on 'ways of seeing the world' (Durrheim, 1997).

Organisational theory has not been immune to this stance. A growing number of authors have explored the implications of the intersection between postmodernism and organisation studies (e.g., Boje, Gepphart & Thatchenkery, 1996; Gergen, 1992; Hames, 1994; Hassard & Parker, 1993; Hosking, Dachler & Gergen, 1995; Reed, 1992 to name a few). Seminal organisation studies texts such as Silverman's (1970) The Theory of Organisations, Weick's (1979) The Social Psychology of Organising, Morgan's (1986) Images of Organisation and Senge's (1990) The Fifth Discipline all suggest this perspective, albeit in a manner not always coded with this terminology. All of these authors advocate a conception of the individual as an active participant in a socially constructed organisational reality. To this end, Walter-Busch (1995, p.151) invokes Morgan (1986) when he observes that today, the multiperspectivist principle that organisational realities are many things at one and the same time and that theory's first obligation is therefore to sensitize its students or clients to these multiple realities is well established.

Within this conception, it would be less important to search for iron-clad laws or foundational descriptions of reality (Rorty, 1979) than to attempt to understand human behaviour through an examination of 'ways of seeing'. This is, in other words, a perspective which advances a concern with the perceptions and judgements which shape the world through, for instance, social construction of organisational reality (Silverman, 1970), self-fulfilling prophecies and enactment processes (Weick, 1979) or implicit theories of organisation (Morgan, 1986). Indeed, the extent to which "human actions are vitally linked to the manner in which people and groups understand or construe the world of experience" (Cooperrider et al., 1995, p.162) suggests directing "increased research attention to how individuals make sense of experience and construct and maintain social worlds, and how social constructions take on the appearance of certainty" (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997, p.464). We are thus returned to a position which holds that an appropriate way of exploring the meaning of OD and capacity building in the South African development context would be to examine the rules that OD consultants follow, their reasons they provide for their acts and the meanings they assign to events (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985;
Weick, 1979) rather than attempt to seek a ‘true’ description of the nature of things (Gergen, 1994).

This talk of consultant constructions, descriptions and accounts leads, furthermore, to the engagement with another point mentioned earlier, namely that the social constructionist idiom places language in the vanguard of concern. According to a postmodern epistemology, there is no extralinguistic point of view from which to speak about the nature of reality or OD or capacity building as it ‘really is’. Rather, people’s idea of the world and ‘ways of seeing’ are regarded as created through language (Gergen, 1994; Jeffcut, 1993; Schwartz, 1993). Broadly put, language for the postmodernist is not a reflection of the world, but is world-constituting (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996b). Implications of this position are explored below.

2.7.1.2 A relational understanding of knowledge

From this social constructionist perspective, facts and truths are always perspectival interpretations which originate from socially shared understandings (Durrheim, 1997). It is this socially shared understanding or ‘background’ (Wittgenstein, 1969) which provides the ‘way of seeing’ or meaning giving context - an idea consonant with both Morgan’s (1986) recasting of organisation theory as metaphor, and Kotze and Kotze’s (1996) notion of a development context explored earlier. As Kotze and Kotze (1996, p.8) note, it is this context or "framework within which development initiatives obtain meaning".

Gergen (1992) contends that it is as a consequence of this meaning giving context of shared convention - or ‘joint action’ in Shotter’s (1993) terms or what Wittgenstein (1953) metaphorically terms ‘language games’ - and not as a consequence of a correspondence with an objective reality, that language gains its meaning and significance. Words are thus evaluated according to their felicity within a procedure or social convention (Austin, 1975). As Durrheim (1997, p.180) remarks, "my left hand cannot … give my right hand a present as this action is not meaningful in our society". It is thus this inherited, socio-historical background of cultural practices or ‘forms of life’ which is seen to provide the meaning giving context for our words and actions (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen, 1994). Durrheim (1997) illustrates this point by demonstrating how social convention functions to constitute the meaning of what one is doing when one is, say, shooting a gun. He argues that the meaning of the ‘shooting’ would be different if the action was performed on stage, if you were shooting an injured horse, or an animal in a zoo, or someone who was blackmailing you. The realities that one encounters in observing or performing this act can, in this sense, be seen to derive their meaning within given cultural contexts (Cooperrider et al., 1995) or "intelligibility nuclei" (Gergen, 1994, p.7).

In terms of describing capacity building, the inherited, socio-historical background can be viewed as that ‘language game’ referred to by Kotze and Kotze (1996) as the ‘development context’. This they define as an ecology of ideas (referring collectively to past experience, metaphors, beliefs, values, perceptions and world views), and patterns of interaction within which every idea (such as capacity building), action (such as the way
a consultant responds to a community request) and object (such as housing) obtain meaning (Kotze & Kotze, 1996). As Gergen (1994, p.53) notes, "the act of 'describing the game' is a derivative of the preceding placement of the relevant terms within the game itself" [italics added]. In other words, to talk of capacity building is to invoke a development 'language game', "it is to borrow from the existing idioms, to appropriate forms of talk (and related action) already in place" (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996b, p.362).

Kvale (1990, p.34) consequently observes that instead of the above perspectivist insight ushering in a subjective nihilism, "we may here talk of a contextual relativism where legitimation of action occurs through linguistic practice and communicative action". As Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996b) note, following Wittgenstein (1953), there can be no 'private language', making sense is rather a communal achievement. Stablein (1996, p.512) similarly argues, in his examination of data in organisation studies, that

the empirical world that we represent is what we, as a human scholarly community, understand it to be. It amounts to the ideas and conceptions we use to understand: the constructs and relations of our theories. The 'we' is important. Individuals may claim anything they like about organisations but a claim does not become an organisational reality until it is socially accepted.

This postmodern shift which removes language from the individual mind and places it within the hands of a relational community space is one congenial with social constructionist thought (Gergen, 1985). It is this recognition of the social function of language which forms the focus of the following sub-section.

2.7.1.3 Language as social action

Inherent in the above, and one of the key characteristics of a postmodern epistemology, is a rejection of the notion of a univocal relationship between representational forms (words, images, models, etc.) and an objective external world (Hassard, 1993). In particular, this approach is directed against a modernist picture theory of language, in which science is seen to hold up a mirror to nature (Rorty, 1979), and in which it is contended that through more rigorous research we will continuously improve language through a more accurate conception of nature (Gergen, 1990; Hassard, 1993). Today this modernist presumption that language functions to mirror the world has been brought into question by Wittgenstein (1953), Austin (1975), Rorty (1979) and many others (see Gergen, 1990). Words are no longer seen to mirror the world but are instead used to do things in the world (Stenner & Eccleston, 1994). Language is, in this regard, viewed as performative instead of merely referential (Austin, 1975). To this end, Cooperrider et al. (1995, p.165) propose that

it is no longer useful to think of words as pictures, but instead to think of words as tools that do something, as navigation devices that allow members of a culture to move about and coordinate ongoing relations with one another.
Rather than being a tool for the logical representation of "the real", language thereby gains its significance through its placement within social interchange (Gergen, 1992). This is a focus which implies an abandonment of the rational and unified subject of modernism in favour of a socially and linguistically decentred subject (Best & Kellner, 1991) where the individual self becomes a medium for culture and language - "the self exists through its relations with others as part of the text of the world (Kvale, 1990a, p.14). As Gergen (1992, p.214) puts it: "I do not express myself in relationships through language; relationships express themselves through me".

It follows that once we relinquish the role of scientist as polisher of mirrors (Rorty, 1979), attempts to uncover the genuine order of things is misguided and futile (Hassard, 1993). Within this perspective, no methodology is capable of achieving an unmediated, objective representation of some aboriginal, independent world 'out there'; the relationship between 'what is' and 'what we say what is', cannot be evaluated in terms of its correspondence (Durrheim, 1997; Gergen, 1994). As Durrheim (1997, p.180) notes, by transcending the dualism between the (external) real world and the (internal) world of ideas, social constructionism must reject the notion that language reflects, mirrors or purely describes reality, in favour of an understanding of language as constructive.

Language is, in this sense, seen to constitute or construct specific aspects of reality through its own frame: 'the world seems to change as we talk in it' (Eberle, 1995). Gergen (1994, p.37) writes that "it is through a prior commitment to a particular form of language (genres, conventions, speech codes and so on) that we place boundaries around what we take to be 'the real'". For Kvale (1990b, p.35) and others, it follows that our focus of enquiry should be "on the linguistic and social constructions of reality, on interpretation and meaning of the lived world". As has been raised above, and as will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 3, this is a position which informs the epistemological point of departure of this study.

In summary, it has been explored how, from a postmodern standpoint, one replaces empirical knowledge with social construction, individual rationality with communal rationality, and language as representation with language as action (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996b). Taken together, these interlocking problematics place the contours of organisational enquiry in a different frame, one which constitutes a rough outline for a social constructionist account of meaning. As demonstrated above, the constructionist perspective is one which "does not separate the study of an object from the study of the knowing subject" (Morin, 1977 in Fruggeri, 1992, p.40).

With the stage thus set, it follows to ask one last time about the 'object' of this study. Arguments for a reconnaissance agenda for OD as a discipline and practice more broadly (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Weick, 1990) as well as in the South African context (Mamputa, 1997), and in relation to untheorised concept of capacity building (CDRA, 1994/95) have been explored above. All these strands point to a need to map the terrain of OD consultancy in the South African development sector. Following the social constructionist idiom,
a useful way to explore these issues would be to ask the ‘knowing subject’, that is, the OD consultants themselves. To this end, it has been argued that one needs to direct attention to the way OD consultants construe themselves, their context and their capacity building role (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985).

Insofar as this study embraces a reconnaissance agenda (Weick, 1990) aimed at mapping an untheorised terrain, a grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) has been adopted to explore this research focus. The rationale and procedures of this method are explored in depth in the following chapter. I mention this methodology now, simply to note that it is aimed at theory generation, and it is to this pursuit that it is necessary to direct a few concluding comments.

2.7.2 The construction of new wor(l)ds in organisation studies

A key thread which has run throughout this chapter concerns the impossibility of separating ‘theory’ from ‘practice’ in organisation studies. It was noted at the very outset that "the challenge of management today is the challenge of change. This is as true of ideas, theories and philosophies about management itself as it is about its expression in practice" (Hames, 1994, p.xii). Following Clegg and Hardy (1996), Marsden and Townley (1996), Morgan (1997) and others, it has subsequently been demonstrated how theories, whether they are of 'the environment', OD, development or capacity building can be seen to shape modes of understanding and forms of action (CDRA, 1994/95; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996a; Louw & De Kock, 1997; Marshak, 1993; Morgan, 1986; Weick, 1979). In addition, it has been illustrated how, from a postmodern perspective, words or theories function to constitute, rather than reflect, the organisational world (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996b).

In this sense, theories of organisation can be viewed as conversational practices embedded in the surrounding intelligibilities of the broader cultural fabric (Gergen, 1992), which act to shape the object of organisational enquiry. Drawing on Foucault’s (1977) notion of ‘the panopticon’, Burrell (1996, p.645) argues that "words, especially in the form of conceptualisations, serve to imprison, immobilise and injure that which they seek to address". Insofar as every theory facilitates the pursuit of some, but not all courses of action, these representations of "particular terms [are] always an effect of theoretical privilege afforded by certain ways of seeing, certain terms of discourse and their conversational enactment" (Clegg & Hardy, 1996, p.4). As Cooperrider et al. (1995, p.169) note, "in a way every theory is a discrete obituary or celebration of some social system".

It follows, in light of the above, to ask that if no objective vantage point exists from which to criticise one genre of representation over another (Clegg & Hardy, 1996), and if the value of organisational theory does not lie in its accurate reflection of reality (Morgan, 1986) then what guides the action of organisational theorists? For Gergen (1992) theory gains its importance not from how well it matches 'the way things are', but from the activities it enables: "rather than 'telling it like it is' the challenge for the postmodern scientist is to 'tell it as
it may become’’ (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996b, p.370). This role is emblazoned in the concept of ‘generative theory’ (Gergen, 1994), designed to overturn conventional assumptions, to bring about a reconsideration of that which is taken for granted, and to generate new alternatives for action. Gergen (1994, p.294) writes in this respect that, “new languages will constitute reality in different ways, and with such reconstructions new forms of action become intelligible”. This constructive conception of the theorist’s role reflects Weick’s (1979) observation that “if we can reword the sentences that people utter about themselves, we can alter the conclusions they arrive at concerning who they are and what they’re up to” (1979, p. 241).

The necessity to construct new worlds speaks directly to the current zeitgeist in organisation studies. Of late, the utility of the traditional bodies of organisational discourses and representations has been increasingly questioned (Clegg & Hardy, 1996; Kilduff & Mehra, 1997). In short, the complex and unprecedented nature of change today is seen to have created an environment in which many of the traditional theories of managing organisations are becoming outdated (Hammer & Champy, 1993; Marsden & Townley, 1996; Morgan, 1986; Peters, 1997; Senge, 1990). Consequently, ‘more of the same’ in terms of current modes of thought has arguably become inadequate (Reed, 1992). Hames (1994, p.xiii) argues that “we cannot continue to approach business and organisational development in the ways that have routinely guided us in the past”. In this regard, he echoes Weick’s (1990) call to map OD as it is practised in different contexts, so as to open up fresh discourses of functioning and new vistas of theory and practice for this discipline. With reference to this generative power of language Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross and Smith (1994, p.27) write that

the alternative to seeing language as describing an independent reality is to recognise the power of language that allows us to freshly interpret our experience - and might enable us to bring forth new realities.

This study endeavours to advance this constructive project.
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed overview of the purpose, process and procedures of the grounded theory methodology as followed in this study.

3.1 Grounded Theory

When the term 'grounded theory' was first coined by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) in their text *The discovery of grounded theory*, it introduced a method that provided something rather unique compared with what was customary research praxis of the time. Rennie (1998a, p.114) observes that "it turned method upside down: instead of using data to test theory, they were used to develop it". Through this inversion, Glaser and Strauss's (1967) intention was to enable researchers to gather, study and analyze qualitative data without, what they regarded as, the inhibiting and excessive emphasis placed upon the acquisition of a grand theoretical schema as a precondition for carrying out research (Turner, 1988). In their attempt to free researchers from the 'theoretical straightjackets' of a few 'grand theories' (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992), Glaser and Strauss (1967) are in tune with postmodern and post-empiricist challenges to foundationalism and essentialism, although they have not explicitly allied themselves to these perspectives (Rennie, 1998a).

More recently, Strauss and a colleague, Juliet Corbin, (1994, p.275) have alluded to grounded theory as a "general methodology, a way of thinking about and conceptualising data". Because of its generality and easy adaptation to a diversity of phenomena (Strauss, 1987, p.xii), a number of additional texts advocating and elaborating on this style of analysis have been published subsequent to *The discovery of grounded theory* (see Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1997). The specifics of its use have, as a result, varied according to the area under study, purpose of the research, contingencies faced during the project, interests of the researcher and so on. Strauss and Corbin (1994) note, in addition, that contemporary grounded theory researchers have undoubtedly been much influenced by contemporary intellectual movements and trends, such as ethnomethodology, feminism and the varieties if postmodernism. With its increased dissemination and developments in use, even Glaser and Strauss now disagree about many of grounded theory's procedures and what can be concluded from them\(^1\) (Rennie, 1998a). Without going into the nuances of this dispute, it appears that Glaser's and Strauss's clearly different understandings of the analytic strategy which they co-originated stem from their differing positions on what amounts to a logic of justification of the methodology (Corbin, 1998; Melia, 1997; Rennie, 1998a, 1998b).

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\(^1\) In *Emergence vs forcing: Basics of grounded theory*, Glaser (1992, p.2) wonders whether Strauss ever really "grasped what we did, [or] studied it to try carefully extend it". He consequently writes, "I request you to pull the book [The basics of qualitative research (1990)]. It distorts and misconceives grounded theory, while engaging in a gross neglect of 90% of its important ideas" (Glaser, 1992, p.2). In an ostensible reply, Strauss and Corbin (1994, p.283) argue that "no inventor has permanent possession of the invention - certainly not even of its name ... a child once launched is very much subject to a combination of its origins, and the evolving contingencies of life".
This rift seems to turn on what Hammersley (1989) calls the ‘dilemma of the qualitative method’. Henwood and Pidgeon (1994, p.232) argue that this ‘dilemma’ arises from a simultaneous commitment to, on the one hand, realism (and inductively reflecting participants’ accounts and naturalistic contexts), and on the other, constructivism, which includes, amongst other things, actively encouraging the researcher in the creative and interpretative process of generating new understandings and theory.

Whereas Glaser (1978, 1992) aims to stick to a more purely inductive approach, Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994) advocate both induction and deduction as a mode of verification during grounded theory analysis (Rennie, 1998a). For my purposes, this dispute is useful to the extent that it reveals a methodological aporia in *The discovery of grounded theory* (1967), articulated by Henwood and Pidgeon (1994, p.232) as, "What grounds grounded theory?". Early grounded theory works as well as both Glaser’s and Strauss’s later offerings display a distinct positivistic thread, where the method is seen to take on a life of its own, independent of its proponents or the researcher (Charmaz, 1990). In this sense “they come close to positing an external reality, unaltered by the observer’s presence” (Charmaz, 1990, p.1164) which one can ‘discover’ through use of this standardised procedure. As Pidgeon and Henwood (1997, p.254) write,

[Glaser and Strauss] imply that a set of social or psychological relationships exist objectively in the world, are reflected in qualitative data, and are therefore to be ‘captured’ by any researcher who chances to pass by!

In this chapter I will explore how adherence to this position is not only epistemologically problematic, but also limits the potential of grounded theory, which is more fully realised by merging grounded theory with a social constructionist position (Charmaz, 1990; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992, 1994; Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997). To this integrative end, this study follows the later conceptualisations of this method, particularly the works of Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994), and more specifically their reframing by Charmaz (1990), Henwood and Pidgeon (1992, 1994, 1995), and Pidgeon and Henwood (1997). I follow Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994) instead of Glaser (1978, 1992) for two main reasons. Firstly in displaying the (albeit largely unexplored) tension between being both subjectivist and scientific (Charmaz, 1990), Strauss and Corbin’s (1990, 1994) texts are more amenable to a social constructionist revision. Certainly, Strauss’s recent explications reveal a more actively involved researcher (Charmaz, 1990). Secondly, much of the published grounded theory work is done by students of Strauss, and as Melia (1997) observes, grounded theory seems to be becoming synonymous with the Strauss and Corbin (1990) text, *The basics of qualitative research*. Rennie (1998a, p.115) notes in this respect that "the works of Strauss and Corbin have a resounding edge over Glaser’s monographs according to citations in the literature". He puts the appeal of Strauss and Corbin’s (1990, 1994) versions down to their simplicity, procedural structure and verifiability (Rennie, 1998a).
3.1.1 Grounded theory and psychological theorising

As noted above, grounded theory refers to both a specific enterprise for research as well as explicit analytic strategies for analysing unstructured qualitative data. As such it involves the appreciation not just of a particular method but also of questions of epistemology (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995). In terms of its project, grounded theory advocates the "general principle that original developments in both substantive and formal theorising can be facilitated by the close and detailed inspection of specified problem domains, participants' accounts and their associated local phenomenal and social worlds" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994, p.231). In this way, Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. vii) aimed to "close the embarrassing gap between theory and empirical research" that seemed emblematic of the sociological traditions of their time.

Although much of the original research using grounded theory was undertaken by sociologists, these methods are not considered discipline bound (Ertmer, 1997) and are increasingly being advocated by researchers in psychology (Henwood & Parker, 1994; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992; Rennie, Phillips & Quartaro, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Rennie et al. (1988, p.148) conclude that "the grounded theory approach does hold promise as a useful research strategy that could be broadly applied within the discipline of psychology". Henwood and Pidgeon (1992, p.97) refer, in a similar vein, to grounded theory as a useful approach to "simultaneously liberate and discipline the theoretical imagination" in psychology. The grounded theory method is appropriate to my research concern for a number of reasons. These will be explored below.

As the literature review in Chapter 2 indicates, this is a research context where, because existing theory is inappropriate, partial or entirely absent, theory generation is a potentially useful endeavour. It has been submitted that OD as a discipline needs to consider how social, political and cultural forces will continue to shape the field, in order to expand the range of change theories and methods available for dealing with contemporary organisational issues (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Marshak, 1993). Weick (1990, p.313) has argued in this respect that OD needs to adopt a reconnaissance agenda in order to remedy "a fatigue in the spirit of organisational theory and OD". That said, there exists little documented debate that grounds OD issues in South Africa (Harding, T., 1994; Mamputa, 1997). While the South African development arena now has a burgeoning OD consultancy sector providing capacity building services (James, 1997; Marks, 1996), the increased expectations being made on the non-profit sector are not based on a clear understanding of this sector or its capacities (DRC, 1992; Salaman & Anheier, 1992). Likewise, the issue of capacity building is for some yet another piece of post-apartheid jargon (Booth, 1993), which generates a surprising amount of confusion (Ewing, 1996). In short, "our lack of an adequate theory of capacity building reduces our own capacity to engage in the practice. We lack the theory because we are not thinking through what we see before us" (CDRA, 1994/5, pp. 2-3).

In light of the above, it seems clear that grounded theory's underlying assumption - namely, that "all of the
concepts pertaining to a given phenomenon have not yet been identified, at least not in this population or place; or if so then the relationships between the concepts are poorly understood or conceptually underdeveloped” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.37) - dovetails appropriately with this context. As Wilson and Hutchinson (1991, p. 269) note, the rationale for selecting this particular research approach derives in part from whether a literature review reveals "the general focus and nature of prior inquiry, methodological problems, contradictory and unclear findings, and gaps in knowledge". It is my position that the previous literature review suggests such a context.

3.1.2 The ‘discovery’ of theory

This practice of reviewing relevant literature introduces an important site of debate with regards to grounded theory research and therefore merits comment. On the face of it, this practice seems to imply a hypothetico-deductive mode of empirical inquiry; that is, a priori theory directing the processes of collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). This method is naturally at odds with a more inductive grounded theory notion of moving from data towards theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As a result certain authors recommend waiting until data collection and analysis are under way before reading and integrating the literature (Charmaz, 1990). This delay is to avoid being blinkered or unduly influenced by past theoretical considerations which may have little relevance to the particular instances under investigation. An important point in the grounded theory discovery process is, after all, the likelihood of it leading to unanticipated outcomes (Gilgun, 1992).

In accordance with Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) suggestions, my initial research focus started out broadly and then became progressively narrowed during my time in the research field (this process is explored in section 3.2). It was only once this more focused exploration was under way that I read and integrated the literature which appeared relevant to my research focus. In this sense, the literature review served as a lens for evaluating existing research (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991) and for specifying variables which might serve as sensitising concepts in the generation of grounded theory (Charmaz, 1990). It was through this synchronous literature review that I began to (i) identify the gaps in existing knowledge which served to confirm the relevance and usefulness of my research focus, as well as (ii) develop a perspective from which to make sense of the data.

In this respect, while it is important when using a grounded theory approach not to enter a research field already locked into preconceived conceptual blinders (Charmaz, 1990), without the orientation of a theoretical framework no sense at all can be made of the data; in fact “legitimate data are necessarily defined through theory” (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997, p.255). Plainly put, a researcher can never approach an enquiry as a tabula rasa: prior knowledge about the phenomenon to be studied will always exist (Pidgeon, Turner & Blockley, 1991). In terms of this research, I had, for example, both a theoretical and practical background in organisation development and change issues. Pointing to the necessity of this prior knowledge, Gergen (1985,.
p.266) asks, "How can theoretical categories be induced or derived from observation ... if the process of identifying observational attributes itself relies on one's possessing categories?". Charmaz (1990) contends that Glaser and Strauss (1967) do assume that researchers have a professional training and background which allows them a position from which to observe from and build analyses. In this sense, a literature review sensitises the researcher to possible gaps in knowledge and "might help the researcher develop fruitful lines of inquiry which could lead to new insights into unexplored territory" (Gilgun, 1992, p.116).

For the purposes of this study, this debate concerning the uses of existing theory is an important one for reasons other than simply the pragmatic concerns of avoiding conceptual blinkers by delaying the literature review. Instead, implicit in this discussion is the problematisation of the researcher's position in relation to the research data and existing theoretical discourses. It seems in this regard, that "in their polemical attempt to warn against the dangers of the blinkering effects of pre-existing theory, Glaser and Strauss misleadingly allowed the precise role of researcher interpretations in theory generation to remain largely unexplicated" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995, p.117). This neglect ignores the fact that theory cannot simply emerge from data: "observation is always set within pre-existing concepts, and this then raises the question of what grounds grounded theory?" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994, p.232).

In response to this question, Henwood and Pidgeon (1992, 1994, 1995) and Pidgeon and Henwood (1997) rely on a 'constructivist revision' of grounded theory, which stresses, amongst other things, the active role of "the researcher in the creative and interpretive process of generating new understandings and theory" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994, p.233). This notion of theory generation as opposed to 'discovery' avoids the "model of the individual researcher dispassionately uncovering pre-existing objectively defined facts" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992, p.102) which the latter term tends to suggest. It highlights instead the notion that "objects cannot be apprehended directly, they are rather constructed through the act of coming to know about the world" (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997, p.249).

Charmaz's (1990) response relies on 'a social constructionist grounded theory' which assumes an active, not neutral, observer whose decisions shape both the process and product of the research. "The interaction between the researcher and the data result in 'discovering', i.e., creating categories ... Which questions [the analyst] brings to the data shape the results" (Charmaz, 1990, p.1165). This constructionist grounded theory views the research process as dialectical, active and creative rather than as passive observation of a given reality by any trained observer (Charmaz, 1990).

Although it appears in Charmaz's (1990) and Henwood and Pidgeon's (1992, 1994, 1995) refinements, that the constructivist approach tends to be elided with that of constructionism, Gergen (1994) notes that there are important differences in the epistemological and practical implications of these terms. Gergen and Gergen (1991, p.83) highlight the following distinction in their argument for the latter position:
We may agree with ... the constructivists that observation does not produce our categories of understanding, and that we bring to the world forms of intelligibility by which the world is made meaningful. However, we differ from the constructivists in that what is imported into the situation is not a 'state of mind' but an array of linguistic capacities.

More specifically, Gergen and Gergen (1991) are repudiating the constructivist view of researchers bringing internal cognitive predispositions to their research sites, in favour of a constructionist concern with the existing language which is applied to the situation at hand. As has been explored in Chapter 2, the inherently 'inter-individual' (Bahktin, 1981 in Gergen, 1994, p.49) functions of language are a central concern of the social constructionist idiom. From this perspective, accounts of the world take place within shared systems of intelligibility or 'language games' (Wittgenstein, 1953). As such, these accounts are not viewed as the external expression of internal cognitive processes but rather as expressions of relationships among people (Gergen & Gergen, 1991). To this end, the analysis of discursive practices rather than internal states of mind forms the cornerstone of the constructionist methodology (Osbeke, 1993).

While it is not always completely clear in what sense Charmaz (1990) and Henwood and Pidgeon (1992, 1994, 1995) are using the terms 'constructivist' and 'constructionist', it does seem that in their concern with language and social interchange they are both allied more strongly to the constructionist perspective. In fact, in light of Pidgeon and Henwood's (1997, p.248) more recent contribution which talks of "constructivism (or social constructionism)", it appears that they do not intentionally ally themselves to what Gergen and Gergen (1991) see as the constructivist position; instead they simply do not seem to be aware of the possible distinction. For purposes of coherence and clarity, my own approach, while closely following both Charmaz's (1990) and Henwood and Pidgeon's (1992, 1994, 1995) useful reframings of the grounded theory methodology, adopts a constructionist orientation to knowledge.

With regard to answering the question of "what grounds grounded theory?" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994, p.232), and thereby clarifying the researcher's position in relation to the research data and existing theoretical discourses, the constructionist position conceives of the research process as active and creative in character and never 'observer free' (Charmaz, 1990). As Gergen and Gergen (1991) have observed above, we bring to the world forms of intelligibility by which the world is made meaningful; as such, research is a process in which we can never separate 'subject' from 'object', 'knower' from 'known'. From this perspective, research provides no direct access to unadulterated provinces of 'pure meanings' but involves the social production of meaning through researcher - participant interaction (Kvale, 1996). Henwood and Pidgeon (1995) note, with regard to this interaction, that although researchers need at least some theoretical sources or perspectives from which to begin building their analyses, they also need to avoid merely applying these to the data, problems and contexts.

For Glaser (1992, p.123) however, any move away from pure, inductive analysis, as in the above process, amounts to 'forcing' preconceptions onto the data which "is not allowed to speak for itself". In this way a
dichotomous relationship between 'emergence' and 'forcing' is set up. As Melia (1997, p.33) laconically puts it, "the point at issue seems to be whether the data jumped or were pushed". A social constructionist research stance resolves this dilemma between observation and theory by recognising that in research, deduction and induction are not mutually exclusive processes. To this end, Pidgeon and Henwood (1997, p.255) note that

With grounded theory in particular, what appears to be 'discovery' or 'emergence' of theory is really the result of a constant interplay between data and the researcher's developing conceptualisations, a 'flip flop' between ideas and research experience.

It is this interplay or interaction, inherent to a social constructionist approach, which is seen to 'ground' grounded theory. Along these lines, Charmaz (1990) argues that for a constructionist grounded theory one requires a balance between possessing a grounding in a field and pushing it further. This is achieved by having conceptual knowledge without being wedded to it.

3.1.3 Theory as process

Grounded theory assumes that any group, to the extent that it is defined as a group, shares an unarticulated basic social problem (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). A common concern in grounded theory research is the identification of the perspectives of various people involved in a setting, the documentation of the problems they face in their lives, and a description of the strategies they have developed in order to deal with these problems (Bolton & Hammersly, 1993). The aim of this methodology is to generate a theory which explains the issue under study. Although researchers can attempt to construct various levels of theory using this method, most grounded theory studies, this one included, have been concerned with developing 'middle-range' substantive theory, that which "fall[s] between the 'minor working hypotheses' of everyday life and the 'all-inclusive' grand theories" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.33). Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.174) define substantive theory as that which "evolves from the study of a phenomenon situated in one particular situational context".

To reiterate, this 'theory' is not the expression of some discovered aspect of objectified truth 'out there'. As Rennie (1998a) notes, the objectivity of grounded theory analysis resides in its groundedness, not in its 'god’s eye perspective’ of the phenomenon under study. To this end, 'theory' consists of plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theories are thus 'forever provisional', they are ever-developing entities (Glaser & Strauss, 1967): their very nature allows for endless elaboration and partial negation. In addition they are temporally limited, they have the potential to become outdated as social reality changes (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

The fact that the grounded theory method stresses that theory should be processual rather than static or fixed, and recognises the importance of context and social structure in terms of contributing to social situations (Addison, 1989) were other important reasons for adopting the grounded theory approach for this research.
Strauss (1987, p. 6) observes that the philosophical and sociological traditions of grounded theory assume that "change is a constant feature of social life", and that its implications for social interactions and processes need to be accounted for. As has been noted, ideas about development do not arise in a social, historical or cultural vacuum (Kotze & Kotze, 1996). The changing South African context figured largely in the experiences of the participants in this particular research setting. In this case the group of participants were OD consultants in intermediary NGOs (INGOs), and the focus of the study was concerned with how they understand their capacity building role in their present context. How I came to this particular research focus will now be discussed.

3.2 Developing the research question

As Charmaz (1990) notes, grounded theorists usually start with broad research questions that provide flexibility to explore phenomena, rather than tightly framed pre-conceived hypotheses. A consequence is that the research question tends to change as the hypotheses develop (Gilgun, 1992). Initially the aim of this research was, rather broadly, to examine processes of adaptation and change in the NGO sector occasioned by South Africa's process of socio-political transformation. This aim was born firstly out of a personal interest in the theory and practice of organisation development and change, and its application in, and transferability to the South African context. Secondly, I saw research in the development context as a potentially useful way of exploring the issues of disciplinary relevance for I/O psychology and looking at how it might respond to the post-apartheid development context in a meaningful way.

In the initial stages of data collection I interviewed consultants from INGOs who were assisting other NGOs and CBOs with OD and change processes, I attended training workshops that were being run by these consultants, and spoke informally with both trainers and participants about their organisational experiences. This was intended to provide an orienting thematic framework for the next stage of the study, which was concerned with exploring the processes of adaptation and change in the NGO sector. In the process of conducting these preliminary observations and interviews, I was however struck by the particular dynamics and rhythms that these intermediary organisations themselves were attempting to negotiate in this socio-political transition, particularly with regard to the recurring yet enigmatic concept of capacity building that was raised in all these initial forays. This issue of 'building capacity' was a frequently touted approach to change management and development processes in this sector. Given my interests in OD consulting, it began to seem more relevant to study the process of transformation through the perspectives of these consulting agencies that were helping others manage change.

Ermer (1997, p. 163) has observed that "grounded theorists ... try to find answers to questions that are important but not yet answered". Capacity building, despite being one of the more popular phrases in the South African development lexicon, appeared to be a concept mired in ambiguity and confusion for these development consultants. When in response to my question "What is 'capacity building'?" one of these participants laughingly
replied, "That's like asking 'is there a god?'", I began to suspect that the data from this initial stage had provided me with an 'important, yet unanswered' question: What does capacity building mean to these OD consultants? Later I would discover that this question is consonant with a wider argument within the discipline of OD to perform reconnaissance on the theory and practice of OD in different contexts (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Weick, 1990). Following Smircich and Stubbart (1985), an appropriate way to ask this question is to examine the rules these OD consultants follow, their reasons for their acts and the meanings they assign to events. To this end, I directed my attention to OD consultants' accounts of their role and context. How I collected this data is explored in the following section.

3.3 Data Collection

Strauss and Corbin (1990) highlight the following sampling matters that need to be attended to in beginning a grounded theory study: the site or group to study, and the kinds of data to be used. These two issues are determined by the research question and the kinds of information sought. In this case the site was naturally INGOs providing capacity building services, and given that understandings and accounts were required, interviews were seen to be the most appropriate form of data collection.

3.3.1 What counts as data?

As has been explored in Chapter 2, the aim of a social constructionist grounded theory is not to search for foundational descriptions of what capacity building 'really is', but rather to discern the OD consultants' 'ways of seeing' capacity building. As Kilduff and Mehra (1997, p.464) note, this is a perspective which suggests directing "increased research attention to how individuals make sense of experience, and construct and maintain social worlds". To this end, a social constructionist orientation is "principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live" (Gergen, 1985, p.266).

In this way, the constructionist conception shares aspects with the symbolic interactionist perspective which Wilson and Hutchinson (1991) and Kearney, Murphy and Rosenbaum (1994) view as the foundation of the grounded theory approach. In short, this perspective holds that meaning is a function of the ways in which a person construes the environment as a result of interaction with it (Blumer, 1969). Research deriving from a symbolic interactionist perspective is thus principally concerned with how people view their circumstances (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). This orientation mirrors Smircich and Stubbart's (1985, p.733) position that "interpretive research work .. aims to make explicit the knowledge (often taken for granted, but untested) by which organisation members construe their situation".

All this mention of constructions, descriptions, explanations and accounts exemplifies a further social
construtionist theme; that is, a concern with language. According to this perspective, there is no extralinguistic vantage point from which to speak about the nature of reality or OD or capacity building as it really is. Rather, people's ideas of the world and 'ways of seeing' are regarded as created through language (Gergen, 1994; Jeffcutt, 1993; Schwartz, 1993). As Osbek (1993) consequently notes, an analysis of discursive practices is thus a cornerstone of the constructionist approach.

To this end, Addison (1989) and Pidgeon et al. (1991) observe that grounded theorists do not believe that it is important to observe individual's practices; interviewing alone is acceptable. Kvale (1996, p.105) notes in this regard that "interviews are particularly suited for studying people's understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world". In light of the above, interview data which provided a comprehensive account of the major issues and processes of the research participants' understanding of capacity building was therefore what "counted" in this study.

With reference to these interview accounts, Osborn (1994) remarks that it is uncertain whether the grounded theory researcher relies upon the validity of personal descriptions of experience. My own approach followed Charmaz's (1990, p. 1167) notion that "whose rendering of reality comes closer to the 'truth' has less importance than the analytic issues raised within each view, as well as the conflicting definitions of each participant" [italics added]. This position is explored in greater detail in section 3.4.2.

3.3.2 Sampling

In terms of sampling the group under study, Rennie et al. (1988) observe that participants who seem likely to represent the phenomenon and who are relatively similar are those that should be selected. For this purpose I interviewed OD consultants working in a range of INGOs providing what they termed 'capacity building' services. This group was in other words identified by virtue of their being a conjoint community of functional users of the terminology of my focal area: capacity building. These practitioners were purposefully sampled (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.183) through the Directory of Organisation Development Services and Related Training Provision in South Africa (1993/94) published annually as part of the Olive Information Service, and thereafter contacted through snowball sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The directory focuses on organisations in the non-governmental, non-profit sector which provide OD services and related training. Organisations are indexed by region and focus of work, and the directory provides a detailed description of the type of courses that these organisations have on offer. I contacted those organisations which purported to provide capacity building or OD services, and after briefly explaining my research, requested interviews with personnel experienced in providing these services. After each interview I asked the participants if they could direct me to any other organisations with a similar focus of work. Miles and
Huberman (1994, p.28) note that this strategy of snowball sampling "benefits inductive, theory building analysis". This process only yielded two interviews because most of the organisations which the participants referred me to, I had already approached. Of the nine organisations I eventually contacted through the directory (which were all the ones that fitted the bill in terms of stated service provision in the Durban area, where the research was conducted) one declined to be interviewed, with the gatekeeper citing work load and time constraints as reasons. In the end, ten individuals were interviewed. Rennie et al. (1989) observe that saturation (when the analysis of additional protocols reveals no new categories or properties of relationships among them) often occurs after the analysis of five to ten protocols.

In grounded theory research it is important that informants are able to provide rich descriptions of their experiences under study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Participants must therefore be able to articulate their experiences and give complete and sensitive accounts (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). All interviewees were English first language speakers, save one participant who was nevertheless fluent. The interviews lasted between an hour and an hour and a half. They were tape-recorded with consent and on condition of anonymity, and were transcribed verbatim.

In the initial data collection for my original research question (concerning processes of adaptation and change in the NGO sector), sampling and recording procedures were somewhat different. I heard about an organisation that provided OD and training services simply by word of mouth, contacted it, interviewed one of the employees, and attended and participated in two of their day long workshops that they provide as part of a capacity building service for other NGOs. Here I got to talk to different practitioners in the area. This was more preliminary and informal. The interviews and conversations were not recorded and then transcribed, I simply made notes. This is in line with the types of grounded theory sampling that one might engage in at the start of a study. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) contend, the necessary openness to possibilities generally requires sampling that is rather indiscriminate and fortuitous. This organisation was however part of my later more narrowed focus.

It should be noted that in terms of sampling issues, grounded theory is concerned with the representativeness of concepts, rather than representativeness of the sample in terms of how much it resembles the population in terms of specified characteristics (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In grounded theory, sampling and analysis occur simultaneously, with the evolving analysis guiding future data collection. This is embodied in the process of theoretical sampling or "sampling on the basis of the evolving theoretical relevance of concepts" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.179). The phenomenon is in other words first investigated in a particular setting from which categories and theories are developed. These categories and theories are then tested on other samples from the same population in order to ensure representativeness (Osborne, 1994), and to explore further categories.

In practice, I found this process occasionally quite difficult to carry out properly. Although the required
Immediate data analysis has the benefits of the interview still being fresh in one's mind, categories and relationships were not created immediately and fully formed, they required a fair degree of work and constant modification. By the time I felt I had all my categories and plausible relationships generated, I was already removed from the field, temporally and geographically. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) process on the other hand, presumes an ability to continually go back and validate.

3.3.3 Developing interview questions

Effective grounded theorising depends on rich and detailed data. "In order to develop a durable, useful grounded theory, the data must provide a variety of complete accounts of major issues and processes" (Charmaz, 1990, p.1167). To achieve this a grounded theorist also needs to be a skilful interviewer (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Kvale (1996) and Charmaz (1990) provided some useful guidelines in terms of interview technique for this study. Kvale (1996) highlights the role of both thematic and dynamic interview questions in the interview guide. Whereas the former relate "to the topic of the interview, to the theoretical conceptions at the root of an investigation, and to the subsequent analysis" (Kvale, 1996, p.129), the latter aim to promote constructive interaction. To this end I attempted to ensure that the questions were comprehensible, short and to the point, and devoid of academic jargon.

In the initial stages of interviewing, a concern for openness, rather than specificity guided the interview structure so that potentially relevant concepts had the space to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To this end, I asked the participants open ended questions concerning their capacity building role. They were asked to describe their organisations, the type of work they focus on, why they adopt that particular focus, what that focus means in practice, who the other important actors in their field are, what type of pressures they are under as individuals and in terms of their organisation, if they had noticed any changes in their sector over the past few years, and how these had affected their organisation, and how they saw their organisation's future role and focus.

These initial questions or areas for observation were based on concepts derived from literature or experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). They provided a provisional, preliminary focus from which to start. Once the data collection was under way these initial interview guides were modified in line with theoretical sampling techniques. Questions were added to the interview schedule to validate and explore those concepts and relationships that I was in the process of developing as the study progressed. For example the notion of a 'development marketplace' and the pressure to professionalise their service was a category I explored more as the interviewing progressed, specifically in terms of the pressures it placed on the participants. This was not a question that I asked the first few interviewees, although interestingly as I returned to the earlier interviews I saw this issue being expressed. NGO characteristics from the apartheid struggle era were generally cast in a pejorative light, and the need to be more business-like and focused was an issue which constantly appeared in the accounts. As Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.181) note, one can theoretically sample from previously, as well
as yet to be collected data. Given the inextricability of sampling and analysis in grounded theory, the nature of this sampling process in terms of the emerging theory will likely become clearer when the data analysis procedures are discussed.

3.4 Data Analysis: Coding Procedures

Strauss and Corbin (1994) observe that grounded theory assumes that the actors we study have perspectives on, and interpretations of their own and other actors' actions. The aim of grounded theory is to learn what we can of these, to, as Charmaz (1990, p.1161) puts it, "tap their experiences and how they cast them". But further than that, Strauss and Corbin (1994) argue, a constructionist grounded theory requires that those interpretations, those multiple voices and perspectives, become incorporated into the researcher's own conceptual interpretations. To this end, the following coding procedures "help to protect the researcher from accepting any of these voices on their own terms, and to some extent forces the researcher's own voice to be questioning, questioned and provisional" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.280).

Coding is the central process by which theories are developed from data. It represents the steps whereby data are broken down, conceptualised and reassembled in new ways. Analysis in grounded theory is composed of three major types of coding: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 58). All of these foreground the analytic framework for grounded theory, referred to by Strauss (1987) as the coding paradigm and Strauss and Corbin (1990) as the conditional matrix. This conditional matrix functions as a reminder to code data for relevance to any given category in terms of the following paradigm model: conditions, context, action / interaction strategies, consequences, and ultimately its relationship to other conceptual categories (Strauss, 1987, p.27; Charmaz, 1990, p.1168; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.99).

Each of these procedures will be explained in light of the analytic process followed in this study. To aid clarification, instances from the coding stages and visualisations of actual codes will be used for illustration. A more detailed description of the mechanics of this interpretive process can be found in Strauss and Corbin (1990, pp. 56-142), and a simpler variation in Charmaz (1990, pp. 1167-1169).

3.4.1 Open Coding

The paragraph that follows is a fragment of interview data that will be used to illustrate the coding process used. It is part of a response to the question, "Can you tell me about your organisation and the work it does?" There is nothing particularly unique or special about this passage. It was chosen because it quite neatly and succinctly introduces what are to become important tensions in my conceptual interpretation of the participants' accounts.

"We put capacity building in the title because we had some idea that it would be capacity building, but also it is a funders' word, it is a buzzword of the time. I remember a time when
AIDS projects were something that you were going to get money for. So we knew more or less what we wanted to do, and we decided to go into capacity building. Since then working with other organisations who do a similar kind of work, we've found it justified that we called it capacity building. Our approach to the work is that we develop an organisation's ability and capacity to achieve something that would help them immediately. It is not to teach them how to do fund raising or how to run committees, but specifically what they need; if it is to build a vegetable garden outside a pre-school, or if it is to engage Telkom to get public telephones or whatever, then we help them with that specific task. We wouldn't presume to know what other needs they have, or demands they have. They come to us with a request, we design a programme tailored to their needs and we deliver it, and that's our approach to capacity building.

Open coding is the analytic process that is concerned with the naming and categorisation of phenomena through close examination of the data. During open coding, data was broken down into distinct parts, carefully examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions were asked about the phenomena reflected in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.62). Two analytic procedures, common to all forms of coding, were at play here: constant comparison and continued questioning (Charmaz, 1990, p.1168).

By 'breaking down' data what Strauss and Corbin (1990) are referring to is the process of taking apart a phrase, a line, a sentence, a paragraph, and giving each discrete idea, explanation, or event a name, something that represents or stands for a phenomenon. This is done by asking questions such as ‘What is this?’, ‘What does this represent?’ ‘What is the major idea brought out in this sentence or paragraph?’. Incidents were compared with each other as the analysis progressed, so that similar phenomena could be given similar names.

The major idea in the paragraph above is clearly concerned with this participant’s account of his organisation’s approach to capacity building. To begin exploring the data analytically however, Strauss (1987) and Charmaz (1990) recommend scrutinising the document more closely: line by line or even word by word. The aim is to produce concepts that appear to fit the data. At this early stage the concepts and their dimensions are entirely provisional, but thinking about and naming the data in this way opens up potentially useful avenues of enquiry. Strauss (1987, p.28) cautions researchers not to "get hung up ... about the ‘true’ meaning of a line - or about the real motives of the interviewee lying behind the scrutinised line". This is irrelevant to the real concern of ‘opening up’ enquiry - ‘erroneous’ or unproductive interpretations can be screened out in the later steps of analysis.

These initial names for concepts were written in the margins of the transcribed interviews. The later categories and the concepts that they refer to, were then written as memos or code notes. The following is a revised version of what I wrote in the margins:

Capacity building is a distinctive appellation, a name, an act of placement and classification, which is useful for this participant as a means of representing his organisation to others, specifically funders. Although the classification was voluntarily adopted, there is a sense that the source of the name is external: it is 'a funders
word’. Perhaps because of its externality, there is a sense of cynicism expressed towards having to play by certain interactional rules in order to get money: evoke the ‘buzzword’. This act of classification is also seen as very closely linked to a temporal context: ‘buzzword of the time’, ‘I remember a time when...’. There appears a degree of vagueness or uncertainty about what this term would entail in practice: ‘some idea’, ‘we knew more or less what we wanted to do’. This speaks of a possible slippage between saying as opposed to doing. There is a sense of announcing a position and then having to live up to it. This is raised in the next sentence where the participant remarks that subsequent to calling what they do capacity building, he feels justified in their terminology because it appears that their conception is supported by other similarly classified organisations who they have networked with. It would thus seem that implicit in the classification is a sense of evaluation, a feeling of being judged. Their approach to doing capacity building is to develop an organisation’s capacity, to achieve a particular goal. This goal is an immediate one. It seems that a marker of progression is needed to bring home the extent of the development: ‘a milestone’. Capacity building therefore is not about teaching process skills, but rather seems to be about delivering a clear-cut, specific product. This conception is also externally controlled. It appears important that the milestone is community/need driven. There seems a reluctance to impose ideas of capacity building on to the community; ‘presuming to know’ is seen as politically incorrect or inappropriate. Capacity building must, for this participant, quite clearly be a bottom-up process, which is reactive to community requests, and based on delivery related to needs.

Once these particular phenomena were identified in the data, the conceptual labels that appeared to pertain to similar phenomena were grouped together in a process called categorising (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.65). Names of categories may be made up by the researcher or they may come from the theoretical literature. Strauss and Corbin (1990) warn against uncritical use of the latter source as this may introduce a limiting bias into the analytic work. To counter this they suggest the use of in vivo codes: words and phrases used by the informants themselves which appropriately summarise the concepts grouped under the category.

In order to effectively theorise about data in this manner, Strauss and Corbin (1990) stress the need to open up one’s thinking about the phenomena under study. To this end, it is important to understand that these initial coding sessions have a ‘springboard’ function. Strauss (1987, p.64) notes that intent "to crack the shell of this specific set of data so as to get at its analytic kernel ... [provides] analyses too limited in scope". A generative technique in this regard is the use of questioning to aid thinking about potential categories, their properties and dimensions. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest the use of initially general questions likely to stimulate a series of more specific and related questions. These basic questions are ‘Who?’, ‘When?’, ‘Where?’, ‘What?’, ‘How?’ ‘How much?’ and ‘Why?’ which aid the identification of particular phenomena.

Kvale (1996) suggests interpretation focused either on the content of the statement (i.e., "what does this statement express about the phenomenon of capacity building?") or on the person making it (i.e., "what does
this statement express about the consultant’s own relation to capacity building?). In this way the interviewee is either treated as "an informant, a subject, a witness; or as a representative, as an object of analysis" (Kvale, 1996, p. 218).

For some, this recognition that interpretation could focus on either person or content presents a critical methodological challenge to interview analysis. Melia (1997, p.30) asks, "are the data to be regarded as straight accounts of the interviewee’s experiences or stories about that experience told as an exercise in self-presentation by the interviewee?". One might even be tempted to abandon the research enterprise given the impossibility of determining the status of the data in this regard (Melia, 1997). I started with the less epistemologically squeamish premise that interpretation and generative questioning should focus on both content and person issues. With regard to the former, Pidgeon and Henwood (1997, p.260) note that "grounded theory is most typically well suited to the analysis of the broad ‘themes’ and content of participants’ accounts".

With regard to the latter, there are reasons for not taking these accounts at face value: "accounts may be offered to perform a variety of non-obvious and context-specific functions (e.g., allocating blame to others or warranting particular claims to truth) which go beyond the mere provision of information" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992, p.107). This recognition shares Gergen's (1994) view that linguistic discourse is essentially a part of a social process. Or, to follow Austin (1975), language has a performative function - that is, to ‘tell the truth’ in an account of capacity building is not to mirror or map ‘what really happens’ but rather to "participate in a set of social conventions, a way of putting things sanctioned within a given ‘form of life’" (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996b, p.364).

In line with Channaz’s (1990) constructionist conception, other questions for my particular purpose at this stage were, ‘Of what larger context is this perception a part?’, ‘What does this data state or assume about the participant’s conception of his/her own role, and his/her relationships with other actors in this context?’. All the answers to the questions may not be in the actual data before the researcher, but this allows one to take these questions to the next interview or simply to look for the answers in other interviews.

A second useful technique for identifying and categorising concepts is the use of comparisons for enhancing theoretical sensitivity. Charmaz (1990) notes that this could include (i) comparing different participant’s accounts of the same event or issue, (ii) comparing data from the same people at different times and (iii) comparing properties found in the data with other properties. This ‘flip-flop’ technique encourages one to think analytically rather than descriptively about the data, and provides new insights into the phenomena. This process draws on personal knowledge, professional knowledge and technical literature (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). In this way, these initial concepts become grouped together under higher order, more abstract categories.

Asking the question, ‘What does this data state or assume about capacity building?’, for instance, facilitated
grouping under more inclusive abstract categories. To this end, the following provisional categories can be identified in the above excerpt:

Capacity building is 'a funder's word'. This *in vivo* category captures two important sub-categories in the participant's account of capacity building, namely, the issue of it being funder driven, and secondly of it being a 'word' concerned with rhetoric. Capacity building is a way of selling the organisation to get funding money. It is a language, a currency of exchange which is defined outside the organisation, which they need to speak within this particular context and at this particular time in order to get money.

Another important category which emblematises the latter part of the participant's account is that the conception of capacity building as community driven product delivery. Here capacity building is once again defined outside the intermediary organisation, it is about developing community organisation's ability to get what they want. It is something that is concrete, observable and concerned with action and delivery of a requested product.

There is also another conception of capacity building in the data. This is not as explicit in the above data, although there is a sense of it throughout: "we knew more or less what we wanted to do", "we had some idea" and so on. It can probably be most aptly described as developing an organisation's ability and capacity for a particular end. In other words capacity building is described a means to achieve particular ends. It involves the transfer of particular skills from the consultant to the community organisation so that they can achieve something of their own choice.

Note that these categories are quite crude and become modified and elaborated as the research process progresses. Furthermore they are not exhaustive. There are other important categories here, such as the organisation - environment relationship concerning the temporal context. There are also notions of evaluation and justification which are not accounted for in the above categories. In utilising the constant comparative method and comparing different sections of the data, I could begin to identify provisional tensions between categories, such as a distinction between rhetoric and practice, between saying and doing capacity building. A further tension could be between capacity building being driven from the top-down in terms of funder agendas and being driven from the bottom-up in terms of community demands. This eventually became a wider category, the need to manage diverse constituencies, which I saw as an important element in these consultants' accounts.

These are all possible provisional interpretations which could be checked out by further observation and interviews. The above is simply an example of how one might begin to identify provisional concepts and discern linkages among these 'discovered' / created (Strauss, 1987) concepts. In this process of open-coding many different categories are identified. Axial coding then aims to discern relationships between categories and subcategories through the paradigm model (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
3.4.2 Axial Coding

Where open coding breaks the data down into categories and their properties, axial coding reassembles the data by making connections between categories and subcategories. To this end a more in-depth analysis is done around the 'axis' of one category at a time (Strauss, 1987). This is done in terms of the paradigm model which focuses on specifying a category (phenomenon) in terms of the conditions that give rise to it; the context in which it is embedded; the action/interaction strategies by which it is handled, managed; and the consequences of these strategies (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Although this is a distinct analytic procedure, it usually occurs simultaneously with open coding: "as soon as we break data apart in open coding we just as naturally start to put them back together in relational form" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). Strauss and Corbin (1990) note that the actual conceptual labels given to categories will not necessarily point to whether the category denotes a condition, strategy or consequence. They have to be identified as such by the researcher.

For my own purposes the paradigm model was used more to facilitate an understanding of relationships among categories rather than a prescriptive model into which I had to fit all the data. Rellie (1998a, p.106) notes in this regard that Glaser (1978) "lists Strauss and Corbin's coding paradigm as one of eighteen possible theoretical schemata and advises the reader that this list in turn is merely suggestive". The linking and development of categories by means of the paradigm model occurs through the same analytic procedures introduced earlier, the asking of questions and the making of comparisons, albeit in a more focused manner.

Consider the provisional category of 'funders' word' for example. In thinking systematically about this category whilst examining the rest of the interview data, a grounded theorist attempts to spell out the paradigm features. Later in the same interview quoted above the participant comments,

"There was a time when it was easier to get money but now it's been difficult because funders, on the one hand they have their criteria, they have changed their parameters, they have their own priorities, and they want those things satisfied. They also are wanting to fund specific programmes in my experience. They wouldn't give you a big sum of money and say 'do with it what you want, go buy yourself four jeeps or whatever'. They want to fund specific programmes that fit in with their priorities. And you have got to shape what you want to do to fit in with what they would fund. [Such as?] I think programmes to empower women, whatever that means. To empower youth, whatever that means. Also to develop new and innovative programmes in OD and capacity building. I think those are the kinds of things they still fund. I suppose if you are good enough you can sell your idea, you can get money for most things. We don't like fundraising though. We don't like phrasing what we do in such a way that it satisfies a funder. So the consequence is that we don't always have money".

Although conditions, strategies and consequences are not necessarily spelt out in the interview data, they are frequently implicitly suggested in the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that in trying to determine conditions, for instance, one should examine the data for terms such as 'when', 'while', 'due to', 'because', 'since', and the like. They note that "even when such cues are missing, you can locate causal conditions by
focusing on a phenomenon, and systematically looking back through your data for those events, happenings or incidents that seem to precede it” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.101). In the above example, a consequence happens to be explicitly raised in the final sentence.

Simplified, the model in terms of this category could therefore look something like this: Where there is financial dependence on funding grants (condition), changes in funding criteria and priorities in favour of specific programmes (context), leads to the consultant’s organisation having to adopt a work role (phenomenon) which requires them to sell and phrase what they do in terms of this funders’ word (action/interaction strategy) in order to get money (consequence).

Once the hypothetical relationships between subcategories and categories have been established, the researcher then returns to the data to look for evidence in the accounts that supports or refutes these models. I would return to each of my interviews for example, to see if the participants conceptualised their capacity building role in terms of it being a useful classification, and then systematically looking back through the data to see what explanations seem to precede this stance. The following is an example from a different interview, where this conceptualisation of the role is apparent:

"Now we don’t fight apartheid any more, but people have developed the most extraordinary habits in service organisations that you just carry on doing it because you can. Now you say it is for development, and it is ‘developmentally sound’, whatever that means, so that we can carry on doing it. And we are now linking literacy to development so we can carry on providing our services as long as we say 'development' instead of 'anti-apartheid', we can just carry on doing it. And the penny has not dropped that it [capacity building] is a co-operative process”.

This excerpt appears to support the idea that there is a language of development which is useful for these intermediary organisations to speak in order to carry on doing what they want to do. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in this excerpt this language is seen by the participant to be adopted for funders.

More than simply supporting possible relationships however, this process of searching for evidence also leads to further development of categories and subcategories in terms of their properties and relationships. The above excerpt has for example introduced some dimensions of what the changed funding criteria and priorities involve to (a shift from anti-apartheid to development). This account also appears to interact with an earlier provisional tension developed in open coding concerning the relationship between saying as opposed to doing, between rhetoric and practice. In addition it raises some possible consequences of this practice: the procurement of financial resources according to how one sells oneself, and independent of service delivery, allows intermediary organisations to practice development in an ‘unco-operative’ manner.

All these possible statements of relationships and properties can then be checked out against other data. One
incident is naturally insufficient to confirm a set of relationships or dimensions. Rather, proposed relationships have to be checked and repeatedly supported in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Henwood and Pidgeon (1992, 1994) characterise this essentially creative and dynamic nature of the qualitative research process as a ‘flip-flop’ between data and conceptualisation. What does tend to occur in this back and forth ‘flip-flop’ between proposing and checking is that links between categories and sub-categories become increasingly apparent (Charmaz, 1990), as was evident in the above example. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.110) note in this regard that "as you work with data, you will notice how clusters of specific properties of conditions, strategies and outcomes pertaining to phenomena interact with each other". Noting these patterns provides the foundation for the final stage, selective coding.

3.4.3 Selective Coding

In the process of axial coding, categories were worked out in terms of their properties, dimensions, and paradigmatic relationships. Possible relationships between major categories were noted, and as Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.117) observe "[the researcher] has probably begun to formulate some conception of what [the] research is all about … What is it that you are studying, and what are your findings?". Selective coding involves the process of taking this rough conclusion and systematically developing it into a picture of the participants’ accounts that is conceptual, comprehensible and grounded.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 117-8) identify the following steps through which this is accomplished: (i) identifying the story line; (ii) relating the subsidiary categories to the core category by means of the paradigm model; (iii) relating categories at a dimensional level; (iv) validating those relationships against the data; and (v) filling in the categories. In this respect selective coding is not much different from axial coding, it is just done at a more abstract level of analysis, around the axis on the one most central category.

The story line is the conceptualisation of a descriptive story about the central phenomenon or core category of the study. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest asking questions such as, ‘What is it about this area that seems most striking?’ ‘What do I think is the main problem?’ in order to write a general descriptive overview of the story. Once the story has been described it is necessary to tell the story analytically. This involves, just as with open and axial coding, giving the central phenomenon or core category a name and relating it to the other categories by means of the paradigm model - in terms of conditions, context, strategies, consequences. In this way the core category is akin to the sun, standing in orderly, systematic relationships to the planets (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Before defining this story line, and then exploring it in the results, it is instructive to draw attention to a few points regarding this descriptive narrative about the central phenomenon of the study. Strauss and Corbin (1990) observe that this final integration is not like the solution to a puzzle or math problem - it has to be created, not
cracked. Furthermore they note that one cannot always pack everything in to a single version, any one project can yield several ways of bringing it together. In this regard Pidgeon and Henwood (1997, p.255) write that this process is not an easy one and is therefore helpful to think of grounded theory strategies as ways into the maze of fractured and multi-seamed reality, which is infused with multiple and often conflicting interpretations and meanings.

This story line is not then a theory or account of ‘the way things really are out there’, it is an interpretation made from my particular perspective as a researcher. The participants seldom explicitly used the term which was to become the core category; that is, managing the tensions, yet this constructed concept richly captured much of the meaning expressed in the participants’ accounts. In light of this constructive researcher role, Strauss and Corbin (1994, p.279) note "to say that a given theory is an interpretation - and therefore fallible - is not to deny the judgements that can be made about the soundness or probable usefulness of it". Criteria for evaluating the ‘soundness’ of constructionist research will be discussed in section 3.5.

3.4.3.1 Developing the story line

Grounded theory is an action/interaction method of theory building. As Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.104) note, "whether one is studying individuals, groups, or collectives, there is action/interaction, which is directed at managing, handling, carrying out, responding to a phenomenon as it exists in a context or under a specific set of perceived conditions". In this case the phenomenon under study is the role and practice of capacity building. The perceived conditions and context are concerned with how these participants understand the post-apartheid development context and their role therein. The main story line is concerned with how they manage or respond to the demands of their work within this world.

While developing the main categories through open and axial coding, and theorising the relationship between these in selective coding, I was continually confronted by what grounded theory calls a ‘core concept’, a phenomenon repeatedly reflected in the data. It seemed to be the pivotal phenomenon that organised the role and practice of the participants: How to manage the tensions of capacity building in this context.

In order to tell this story the other categories are related to this core category by means of the paradigm model - in terms of conditions, context, strategies, consequences. The story line provides an interpretation of how these tensions evolved and are maintained, it describes the forms in which these tensions are emblematised, the context in which they arise, the action/interaction strategies designed to manage or respond to the phenomenon, and the consequences of the process for these consultants. Given its processual form, the account is one that can grow and be modified as time, social conditions and individuals change.

Grouping the categories, and validating one’s theory against the data completes the grounding. It follows then
to lay out the theory in a narrative form, which should convey the main analytic message in sufficient conceptual
detail to readers. Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) use of the terms ‘story’ and ‘story line’ are not coincidental;
grounded theory writing looks in fact like an analytic story (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The results will thus be
presented in this vein in the following chapter, as an attempt to organise my interpretations of the participants’
descriptions of their world into a cohesive narrative account. Before exploring the results however, a brief
examination of criteria for evaluating the grounded theory method is necessary.

3.5 Evaluating grounded theory research

As may be clear from the foregoing chapter there are no simple criteria for evaluating constructionist grounded
theory research. Traditional discussions of criteria for judging psychological research are invariably limited to
methodological aspects such as reliability, validity and generality - "leftovers from a modernist correspondence
theory of truth" (Kvale, 1996, p.231). Within this hypothetico-deductive conception, researcher influence or
subjectivity is regarded as a source of bias, potentially undermining the validity and reliability of the results,
and causing deviation from some empirical truth, or ‘the way things really are’ (Packer & Addison, 1989).
These "classical criteria rest on the norm of objectivity which assumes the independence of the knower and the
known" (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997, p. 268), and are as such at odds with a constructionist view which
challenges this distinction and which rejects possibilities of achieving an ‘observer free’ picture of the social
world (Gergen & Gergen, 1991).

With this in mind Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) argue that a broader based discussion around these issues is
required - one in which the criteria for judging the quality of research is not reduced to tactics for eradicating
observer bias. Suggested practices include issues followed in this research: keeping close to the data when
labelling phenomena; integrating theory and establishing connection between data at diverse levels of abstraction;
highlighting and documenting the role of the researcher in the research process; keeping a reflexive journal
which accounts for what is done and why it is done at all phases of the research process, such as initial concerns
and how these may change; following up on hunches and surprises; ruling out spurious relationships; and
seeking disconfirming cases through negative case and constant comparative analysis (Henwood & Pidgeon,
1992; Kvale, 1996; Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997).

It is apparent, in light of the above, that relinquishing the correspondence theory of truth as the basis for
understanding validity, shifts attention from verification to falsification: "the quest for absolute, certain
knowledge is replaced by a conception of defensible knowledge claims" (Kvale, 1996, p.240). By extending the
frames of reference for asking validity questions, Kvale (1996) identifies three possible lines of defence upon
which validation may rest.

In the first sense, validation is seen to depend on the quality of craftsmanship during investigation. This refers
to the process of continually checking and questioning the plausibility of the findings, "an investigative concept ... inherent in the grounded theory approach" (Kvale, 1996, p. 242) as exemplified in Henwood and Pidgeon's (1992) suggested practices listed above. Validation is in this sense not a final verification or product control; it is rather built into the research process through continual checks on the credibility, plausibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Kvale, 1996).

Secondly, claims could depend on communicative validity, which involves testing the validity of knowledge claims in a dialogue with either the research participants, the general public, or the scientific community of scholars possessing the requisite theoretical and methodological competence (Kvale, 1996). This is a conception shared by Pidgeon and Henwood (1997, p.271), who observe that "if we are no longer able to rely upon correspondence with the empirical world as the ultimate arbiter of truth, a more pragmatic argument can be made that the outcome of research will tend to be evaluated in terms of [its] persuasiveness and ability to inspire an audience". It is instructive to note how this emphasis on communicative processes and dialogue echoes Clegg and Hardy's (1996) characterisation of organisation studies as a series of conversations. They write,

How aspects of organisations are represented, the means of representation, the features deemed salient, those features glossed and those features ignored, are not attributes of the organisation. They are an effect of the reciprocal interaction of multiple conversations: those that are professionally organised, through journals, research agendas, citations and networks; those that take place in the empirical world of organisations. The dynamics of reciprocity in this mutual interaction can vary: some conversations of practice inform those of the profession; some professional talk dominates practice; some practical and professional conversations sustain each other; others talk past, miss and ignore each other (Clegg & Hardy, 1996, p.4).

In this light, communicative validation approximates an endeavour where 'truth' is developed in a constantly evolving, intersubjective, communicative process exemplified by reciprocity and dialogue between say, researchers and participants, teachers and students, authors and readers, theorists and practitioners and so on. However, as Clegg and Hardy (1996) are correct to observe, these conversations need not always be aimed at consensus. Kvale (1996, p.247) similarly warns against an over-reliance on intersubjective validation and the consequent "abdication to the ideology of a consumer society: 'the customer is always right'". From a postmodern perspective, ambiguity, contradiction and difference are emphasised rather than consensus, conformity and closure (Lytotad, 1984). It is in this respect, probably best to view representational practices in organisation studies as conversations oriented not to agreement, but to differing possibilities of understanding and action within this 'contested terrain' (Reed, 1996). It is to these possibilities that we turn in the final criteria of justification.

Finally, validation could be argued based on a consideration of pragmatic proof through action. This approach to evaluation is concerned with the relationship between an interpretive account and future events. Rather than striving to predict future events, interpretive research may open up useful understandings and new alternatives
for action (Packer & Addison, 1989). In this sense, "truth is whatever assists us to take actions that produce the desired results" (Kvale, 1996, p.250). This is an approach to validation in accordance with Gergen's (1994) 'generative theory', which is geared towards bringing about a reconsideration of what is taken for granted and generating new alternatives for thought and action. Rather than 'telling it like it is' (the 'knowledge as mirror of reality' belief), the challenge is to 'tell it as it may become' (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996b). Reflecting on this inextricable link between research and practice, Packer and Addison (1989, p.287) note that interpretive research is, itself, a kind of praxis or practical activity: "the aim is not to describe the world in a detached manner but to act in the world in an engaged manner".

This emphasis on application is echoed by Strauss and Corbin (1994, p.281), who argue that grounded theorists, despite their emphasis on the theoretical aspects of social research, have "responsibilities to develop or use theory that will at least have some practical applications, that can be of service to wider audiences". In addition, Charmaz (1990, p.1165) mirrors Gergen's (1994) talk of bringing about a reconsideration of that which is taken for granted, when she notes that "using the grounded theory method ... necessitates developing, refining, revising and transcending concepts within the discipline. Often a social constructionist stance elicits a fresh look at existing concepts. This alone contributes to revising and refining them".

In this light, the aim of the discussion in Chapter 5 is to construct such a 'generative' space in which conversation between the research results and the existing theoretical accounts can occur. Pidgeon and Henwood (1997) note that questions that might be posed as part of this process would be: do the key concepts of the existing theory fit the current data; do the supposed existing relationships hold up; and what is present in the current set of concepts but missing in existing theory? They comment that "resolving such questions would provide satisfactory outcomes to many focused (e.g., postgraduate) projects" (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997, p.268).
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

4.1 The summary statement

The following is a summary statement of the analytic narrative:

The OD consultants’ accounts were characterised by expressions of conflict and tension which can be seen to affect almost every aspect of their functioning. Their attempts, within their current context and set of perceived conditions, to establish a role and focus, to effectively negotiate relationships, and to engage in capacity building can all be regarded as part of a larger narrative whole of managing tensions.

A primary tension was one identified to exist between these intermediary NGOs and their wider environment. All consultants articulated a pressure to adapt, which they saw to be occasioned by tensions between past modes of organisational functioning and the demands of the new context of post-apartheid South Africa. The changed socio-political environment was a condition which was said to have brought new development issues to the fore. These were broadly reflected in the perceived need to shift focus from resistance to reconstruction, of which the participants’ current emphasis on capacity building was stated as a consequence.

This role of capacity building was in turn constructed in terms of the often conflicting discourses of the main stakeholders within this development terrain; namely, the service organisations themselves, their funders, the communities they serve, and the government. Insofar as all of these perceived discourses were articulated as pressure towards capacity building they formed further conditions of the consultants’ roles. Insofar as these discourses constructed particular versions of capacity building they formed the phenomena of the story line. To the extent that these discourses were contradictory they created tensions for the consultants. What these conditions were seen to have in common was the idea of capacity building as a desirable focus.

The process of responding to the capacity building demand is played out within the post-apartheid development terrain, with its attendant pressures and dynamics. These were articulated by the participants as the reconstitution of the development arena as an industrial marketplace and people-driven development and the politics of race. These dynamics represented the perceived context within which the consultants defined their role.

Effectively responding to the demand for capacity building within this context and under this set of perceived conditions, was construed as a complex process for the OD consultants, embodied in the constant need to manage tensions (the action/interaction strategies). This involved the articulated need to manage tensions between diverse constituencies, between ‘value driven-ness’ and ‘professionalism’, between ‘participation’ and ‘delivery’, between ‘product’ and ‘process’, between ‘supportive’ and ‘critical’ perspectives, and between...
As a consequence of the above demands, the consultants advanced a construction of development as a mediatory process of the negotiation and management of tensions. This construction engendered two inter-related outcomes for the participants: the need for space and flexibility, and the need to mediate negotiation between key development stakeholders.

The narrative account

The following is a narrative account of these tensions and how they were seen to be managed, grounded in, and interwoven with, the responses of the consultants who participated in this study. I have laid out the structure and sequence of the results in terms of the paradigm model (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as in the summary statement above (i.e., in terms of conditions, context, phenomenon, action/interaction strategies and consequences). Although this paradigm model will, where appropriate, be used to explicate the categories below, its terms will not be explicitly signposted. This is in accordance with the kind of analytic story as presented by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994). The categories and their related sub-categories form the headings below, and each of the main categories will be introduced with a brief summary in terms of the paradigm model.

4.2. The shifting dynamics 'from resistance to reconstruction'

The perceived need to "shift from resistance to reconstruction" is a useful category with which to begin the results because it reflects the participants' view of their organisational history as well as their envisaged future role and focus as service NGOs in the post-apartheid context. This in vivo code, repeated mantra-like by all the consultants, is in many ways a tension that foregrounds other issues raised in the accounts, and is thus repeated in different forms throughout these results. In terms of developing this category, I noted its properties, the conditions under which it arises, its consequences and ultimately how it relates to the other conceptual categories.

The consultants' accounts sketch the following picture: Service organisations were mandated to develop a specific service in the apartheid context. This mandate was moulded through their own agenda, funder priorities, community demands and how this constellation of forces assumed positions in the apartheid context. This broad anti-apartheid stance was labelled as a 'common vision' which afforded a degree of space and security in terms of their anti-apartheid role. After the collapse of apartheid the terrain upon which they had established their role and focus was drastically transformed. (How the dynamics of these constituencies changed after the collapse of apartheid is explored in greater depth in sections 4.3 - 4.6). To the extent that the service organisations stayed the same they were seen to have experienced an organisation-environment tension. This occurred in
a context of uncertainty and change. The consultants' response to this tension was encapsulated in the frequently vocalised sub-category, to 'adapt or die'. This imperative was manifested in two areas: what they did and how they did it. These sub-categories I termed strategic location and organisational culture. The focus of their future role in this period emblematised by a tension with their context, a perception that their old ways of operating are inappropriate, and a pressure to adapt, was seen to be capacity building. This was understood as a secure marker in the period of uncertainty and change.

To understand how they position themselves relative to this capacity building marker, this role is explored further through the pressures exerted on them by the different players in this new arena - in terms of the discourses of the service organisations themselves, their funders, the communities they serve, and to a lesser extent, the government. These conditions will be explored in sections 4.3 - 4.6, in terms of the extent to which they qualify the capacity building role. At this point, the framework of the move 'from resistance to reconstruction' and the conditions of capacity building role will be laid out.

4.2.1 The 'common vision' of the anti-apartheid role

All service organisations in the sample had operated during the apartheid era. Although most had provided broadly the same type of service during this era (organisation development and training-type initiatives for NGOs and CBOs) their role within the apartheid context was, for the participants, to subvert or overthrow the existing government so as to achieve a more democratic society. Their organisational focus was consistently conceptualised in terms of three related codes: (i) their focus was anti-, alternative, or opposed to the apartheid government, (ii) it was a focus commonly held by their constituencies (namely, funders and communities), and (iii) it was morally and ideologically the 'right' thing to be doing.

"By virtue of being an NGO we always advocated an alternative to the government, based on a common vision of the majority of the people in South Africa".

"You see, if you were ideologically correct that allowed you to do whatever you wanted. You didn’t have to ask the target group because you shared this common political jol, we were all fighting against apartheid".

"We have had the vision and the mission that we were always obstructed by the previous government, because ours was not in line with the government’s own agenda".

"It is not to say we wouldn’t have tried a similar thing [capacity building] pre-1990 but I think that we probably were pre-occupied with trying to overthrow the government and that was the main thing".

These three codes (the common and ideologically correct resistance orientation) coalesced in the accounts to create a picture of a secure organisational past where allegiances and foci were straightforward and clear-cut. "By virtue of being an NGO" in South Africa the consultants were seen to have a particular focus. In this way,
the inherent reactivity of the anti-apartheid stance provided a clarity of purpose for these organisations. In terms of organisational identity these non-governmental organisations (the name itself is somewhat evocative) were defined in terms of their opposition to something else: apartheid government. For the consultants it was sufficient merely to oppose or resist the status quo, rather than propose alternatives; hence the statement that "we have had the vision and the mission that we were always obstructed by the previous government" [italics added]. Furthermore, not only was this raison d'être understood to be clear, it was also described as universally supported, ideologically sound and a common goal shared by both their funders and the communities they served. As a result "you didn't have to ask" during the apartheid era. On the contrary, being 'anti-apartheid' and 'ideologically correct' was said to have afforded these organisations a degree of freedom and space to "do whatever you wanted".

4.2.2 The impact of South Africa's socio-political change

The socio-political transformation was regarded by the consultants as having changed and fractured this broad and common vision described above. What these organisations had previously defined themselves in opposition to (the apartheid government), had begun to collapse by 1990 and was non-existent by 1994. As a consequence, in terms of articulating their capacity building role, the terms "pre-1990" and "post-1990" were familiar prefixes utilised by the participants to explain the temporal genesis of their current position. There was throughout their accounts a definite sense of a 'watershed' time occasioned by the start of the political transformation process in 1990. Often the consultants spoke of "a time" when conditions were different.

"It [capacity building] is a buzzword of the time. I remember a time when AIDS projects were something that you were going to get money for".

"This 'before and after' thing in terms of relation to the state is quite interesting".

This "before and after thing" was for the consultants not only interesting but also somewhat contradictory. On the one hand this socio-political change was positively cast to the extent that it was an outcome that these organisations said they were working towards. In this regard the following was a common sentiment expressed:

"The current [ANC-led] government is advocating what we have always stood for. Without seeming self-righteous we feel vindicated".

But on the other hand, the demise of apartheid removed the focal point of their organisational mission and vision. In this new post-apartheid context being anti-apartheid was recognised as a redundant role. The socio-political transformation was also understood to have engendered a degree of uncertainty over their organisational purpose and reportedly raised a question mark over their organisational survival.

"Now comes 1990 there's a whole change in the political scene and for organisations to
survive, for the programmes to survive in terms of funding, what would basically activists be doing now?"

"What would basically activists be doing now?" was a question which was continually repeated in different forms throughout the accounts, and a problem that confronted all the consultants and their organisations in terms of defining their role. The forces bearing upon the process of coming to answer this question will be explored in greater detail below. For the moment, the reasons behind the enquiry were understood by the participants as having been created by the disjuncture between what they saw as the role and capacities of their organisations, and the environmental demands that they perceived were being made upon their organisations in a post-apartheid context. It is this perceived disjuncture which is reflected in the following category.

4.2.3 The organisation-environment tension

The participants' accounts constructed a scenario of organisations powerfully influenced by their environment. Socio-political transformation and its attendant dynamics were seen to have translated immediately and directly into an impact on their organisations. Whereas before they viewed themselves as congruent with their environment, post-transformation they regarded themselves as "suddenly" out of step.

"I mean we were in the position: What service to provide? How to evaluate, how to measure? Then suddenly the imperative out there changed. 'Thou shalt resist no more, thou shalt develop. Thou shalt reconstruct forthwith'."

The changing 'imperative out there' from resistance to reconstruction can be more comprehensively understood in terms of the shifting agendas of these service organisations' constituencies as occasioned by the socio-political realignment. This will be explored in greater depth in 4.3 - 4.6 in terms of examining the 'voices' behind the above command or, in other words, the discourses mediating their conception of capacity building. For now "the imperative out there" can be broadly understood as 'the environment' within which these organisations operate.

Properties of the consultants' construction of this environment were that it was a force with which they were not congruent, which had caught them somewhat off guard, which was largely beyond their control, and to which they had to submit in order to survive. According to the accounts the contextual change necessitated a shift that these respondents said they were not ready for, or one that they were readily equipped for. As a result, the changing environment was more consistently negatively cast as a threat rather than an opportunity.

In the words of one participant, "post-1990 we hit a wall".

"The ground is moving under our feet and so we just have to sit tight and weather the storm".

"At every level a shift is now required in the way NGOs operate ... and I think the changes
demanded of NGOs have been so fundamental that most NGOs have just floundered. Too many, to some extent or the other were trapped in the old way of doing things”.

"There is this tension between the external environment and what is created, and then you hit this internal environment, and people just weren’t ready for it”.

In this new environment the ‘old way’ was no longer seen to be appropriate. In the changed context it became labelled as a ‘trap’, in which these organisations were seen to ‘flounder’ as they were ‘hit’ by their ‘stormy’ and hostile context. Within this conception, the organisation-environment tension was described as an issue that threatened the survival of these service organisations in particular and the NGO sector as a whole. As a result, it is a tension that was seen to paradoxically both create the strong demand and space for organisation development and capacity building services, as well as place the provision of these services under threat.

In the first sense, it was this need of the development sector as a whole to change in this new context which was regarded as having thrust capacity building into the limelight. The consultants noted that in this context OD was being valued as providing the kind of long range planning and sustainability required by NGOs in their current period of crisis occasioned by South Africa’s socio-political transformation. The environmental change was said to have created the need and demand for the OD and capacity building type services that these service organisations provide.

"Those organisations that will succeed [in making the transition] are those going through very clear, careful and structured OD processes”.

The organisation-environment tension paradoxically created a threat for the consultants because these service organisations themselves were not regarded as immune to the need for change:

"I mean we are in the same trap … The changes happening in the country meant a whole process of OD for our organisation itself”.

For these consultants the tension with their external environment constantly sought resolution: "if the sector doesn’t change it will die”. This perceived pressure to re-orient themselves in terms of a new context, and thereby resolve the tension, resulted in turn in expressions of insecurity, uncertainty and reflection which appeared throughout the consultants’ accounts.

4.2.4 A period of insecurity, uncertainty and reflection

In line with their understanding of the close relationship between the wider environment and their organisations, socio-political transformation meant a period of rethinking, realignment and attendant insecurity for these consultants. Without an apartheid government to resist, these service organisations were seen to be without a
focal point at which to direct their actions. This absence was reflected in uncertainty and self-examination with regards to their talk of their future role and focus.

"From our point of view there is a fair amount of uncertainty ... for the last say three or four months it has never been quieter. And I'm trying to work out why, and I think it is because people are trying to work out where they are and where they are going. There's a lot of introspective stuff going on in terms of planning sessions".

As part of this "introspection", realignment was invariably cast in terms of pursuing a reconstruction and development focus, but even this was regarded as ambiguous and uncertain. In this way, while the consultants perceived a need to change their strategy, they were not altogether clear as to the exact form that this should take.

"We are in kind of a limbo at the moment and I don't really know what is going to kick start us out of it. It is difficult to strategise, but I think the cleverest thing to do is to strategise in terms of the RDP and development".

"We had to make a strategic decision on what type of work we wanted to be involved in. We were quite convinced that even for the next twenty years that is safe enough. But the uncertainty still lies in say something like the RDP ... Things have changed, not radically, but the uncertainty begins to unravel with even more uncertainty as to how to carry on. So that's a disadvantage. The advantage is that you can look at the uncertainty as an opportunity and go ahead and do what you want to do within certain parameters and hope for the best [what is the best?] I don't think there is a best way or I hope there is a solution although I think it is a bit early to tell".

"Now we are all trying to align in terms of development, but there is no comprehensive plan, we are all trying to work out how to relate to each other and that is not going to be clear for quite a while".

If anything is a given in development work it seems to be uncertainty and instability, expressions of which appeared throughout the participants' accounts. As one consultant remarked at the outset of our interview,

"I have been involved in this process long enough to know that I don't know very much at all. You find that when you start out doing it you think you know a lot, but the longer you work in it [the development sector] the less you find you know".

Amid this uncertainty, one thing was nevertheless clear for the participants: the need to change their old "pre-1990" ways. Every consultant interviewed regarded the old ways of operating as counter-intuitive in light of the changed socio-political landscape. Their organisational sector was said to be very powerfully influenced by an environment with which it was now out of alignment - it was described as an 'adapt or die' situation for these organisations. The change in the post-apartheid context was seen to require a change on every level of NGO functioning, embodied in a move from the 'old' to the 'new'.
4.2.5 The compulsion to ‘adapt or die’

The strategy identified by the consultants to deal with the organisation - environment tension was to change their past modes of operation or face the threat of organisational extinction. As if to underscore the inextricability of the two issues, wider contextual change was in this sense often spoken of in tandem with organisational change. In many cases, every aspect of their past functioning was viewed as inappropriate with regards the new context.

"The whole country needs to change. If the [NGO] sector doesn’t change it will die ... The question is not ‘should we change?’, but ‘how? [should we change]’.

"A complete shift is required from the old way to the new way. This involves a move from resistance to reconstruction, from community mobilisation to community capacity building, from an ideological to a strategic perspective, from doing what is right to doing what works, from being politically correct to making a difference*.

"Many NGOs are busy making that transition. Many with great difficulty because it is particularly hard to change the culture of organisations, particularly those that have had longer life spans. And the kind of people who have worked in the NGO environment have wholly inappropriate skills and mind sets to the new NGO environment*.

The "complete shift" was reported to be required in two general areas: the focus of their work - "the tension between the external environment and what is created", a category I termed strategic location, and their internal modes of organisational operation -"the internal environment" of "wholly inappropriate skills and mind sets", which I termed organisational culture. In terms of both strategic location and organisational culture, the consultants’ articulations were characterised by the unavoidable need for change due to the inappropriateness of the old way: ‘a complete shift is required’ in the new NGO environment.

The anti-apartheid strategic location was seen as being more concerned with political correctness than organisational action or actually ‘making a difference’ - it was identified as "doing what is right" rather than "doing what works". It was, according to these accounts, a strategic location more invested in resistance rhetoric than in actually providing a concrete service.

"In the past the organisational form that counted was that of resistance. So a lot of energy was taken out of service organisations and put into that kind of mass resistance work, rather than providing a legal service, or providing education for youth, or providing whatever*.

Their organisational positioning of the past was labelled as "a trap", ineffectual, inconsequential, "woolly", loose, "laissez faire", unfocused, "going off on a tangent", "doing something because it just seems nice", being "all over the place", "getting quite mixed up with their target group", "not being strategic enough, and not being aware of what is happening". Although it was noted that there was more space available for the consultants to "do whatever they wanted” during the apartheid era, they tended to regard this freedom as having engendered
an unfocused, disorganised and ultimately ineffectual confusion with regards to their role and focus. The "common political jol of fighting against apartheid" was said to have simply required an ideological correctness for these organisations to do what they wanted. The post-apartheid context was on the other hand reported to require a more "business-like" approach to their work and greater clarity of focus in terms of strategic location.

"NGOs are required to be a lot more businesslike in what they are doing, a whole lot more focused. Gone are the days when a NGO can just go off and do something because it just seems nice".

"A lot of our work now is about getting a focus. And I think that is a critical one because service organisations have been all over the place. Getting a key focus so we can say that's what we do - we don't do all of this like we used to".

Whereas before "you didn't have to ask", establishing a focus in the post-apartheid context was reported to be littered with new demands and questions. In this way, the descriptions of their pre- and post-1990 contexts were markedly different. The consultants' claim to a unanimity of focus pre-1990 meant, "you didn't have to ask the target group because you shared this common political jol". Descriptions of the post-1990 context were on the other hand wholly devoid of this talk of consensus and certainty.

"It forces an organisation to be quite clear whether there is a need or whether they have fabricated it in their own ideological minds. Is there genuinely a problem out there that needs to be solved? And do the people who are the target also experience it as a problem? Because too often we set up a beautiful programme, and there isn't anyone who really wants it".

"I think that NGOs used the words transparency and accountability somewhat loosely and it meant some woolly democratic connotations. Whereas today it much more tightly means that what you do is much more tightly consulted and planned, the way you used your funds is properly accounted for".

Whereas in the past, determining strategic location was a case of 'If NGO then anti-apartheid focus', after the demise of apartheid it was reported to be 'If NGO then is there anyone who really wants what we are doing?'.

The extent to which their constituencies were perceived to want what they do, and how these demands were reported to have changed in a post-apartheid context are examined in sections 4.3 - 4.6. For now, the picture furnished by the accounts was as follows: In the past the strategic location and attendant organisational culture of an anti-apartheid mission and role was "what was wanted". Now reconstruction is what is wanted: "Thou shalt reconstruct forthwith". It is however demanded in terms which afford far less space for these service organisations to "do whatever they want": "today it much more tightly means...".

The "syndrome of being anti-apartheid" was furthermore said to have "brought to the fore" a particular organisational culture which is likely to be debilitating in the current context. The past organisational culture of NGOs was seen to be sloppy, inappropriate, unprofessional, reactive and disorganised. There was a reported
lack of 'organisational stuff', like professionalism and an adequate theoretical base, an absence of reflection and considered planning, and a lack of capacity to engage and actually 'do development'. Like their strategic location, the old culture was perceived as being more preoccupied with talk, rhetoric and political correctness, than with action and making a difference.

"So by the time a level of change was required they suddenly looked at themselves and realised they didn’t know how to offer the services they had set themselves up to. They had hired activists and activists didn’t know how to hire and manage and type and so on. They hadn’t hired professionals who had the theoretical background and practical experience to do a hell of a lot of the things that they were supposed to do. So they suddenly took a look and realised that they had helluva internal problems. There were organisations started in the '80s that ten years later they were in ruins because they had no management systems. And I mean we were in the same trap. What service do we provide? How do we evaluate and measure?".

"We need to move away from organisational sloppiness, syndrome of being anti-apartheid liberation organisations has brought to the fore some people who are very good at rhetoric but not very good at organisational stuff".

The anti-apartheid need for political correctness was described as having engendered a culture of accountability to vague concepts such as 'the struggle' or 'the community' instead of to what the consultants perceived to be their current more exacting demands of service provision and effective management.

"I think that NGOs used the words transparency and accountability somewhat loosely and it meant some woolly democratic connotations. Whereas today it much more tightly means what you do is properly consulted and planned".

There was thus an overwhelming perception that the role and practice which forms their history as service organisations has little place in the new context of post-apartheid South Africa. The new agenda was rather said to require greater organisational focus and professionalism; the "organisational sloppiness" of the past was reported to be "a trap". A consequence of this perception was a declared shift in organisational alignment towards the idea of capacity building as a desirable focus. In the face of their uncertainty, reflection and recognition of a need to change strategic location and management styles, these participants described how their organisations consequently anchored their direction on a capacity building role: they now "align in terms of development". A tension for the consultants was however that the definition of this role is complex, unclear and contested, whereas before, in the anti-apartheid era, it was reported to be "common". It is to these conflicting constructions of their role advanced by the consultants’ accounts that we now turn.

4.2.6 The contested terrain of capacity building

At first the consistent denigration of past strategic location and organisational culture as explicated above appeared ironic or contradictory. When engaging in 'constant comparison' of the emerging codes it seemed odd to find 'activist' used pejoratively when the demise of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic
government was something that these value-driven organisations (a category still to be examined in section 4.3.1) were said to be founded upon.

A possible understanding of this inconsistency was however achieved through more focused and continued coding around the axes of the above categories. The threat of the organisation-environment tension for instance, was, for the consultants, not simply about these service organisations needing to change their role to meet what they saw as the new developmental needs. Rather, the problem identified by the participants was that in the post-apartheid context this vision not only needed to change to remain congruent with the new context, but importantly it was no longer regarded as ‘common’. In terms of the story furnished by the participants’ accounts, their role was now being defined by a range of different and often competing stakeholders. For these service NGOs, establishing a role and focus was seen to be simpler in the anti-apartheid context. It was reportedly based on a ‘common vision’.

"It wasn’t a vision from nowhere, it was a vision developed from the ground”.

[But in the post apartheid context] "the ground is moving under our feet”.

Not only did this moving ground make it difficult for NGOs to find their feet post-1990, it was also seen to cast past service NGO behaviours in a different light. In the shifting terrain of changed stakeholder (namely, funders and communities) agendas and discourses, ‘anti-apartheid activism’ was now seen to bear negative connotations by the consultants. It was a label which they were all keen to shed. To this end, the accounts demonstrated that the new demands and pressures articulated by the consultants have meant a consonant shift in their conceptual terrain. The excerpts from the consultants’ accounts above reflect this pressure to move away from a struggle language to a language of provision, professionalism and management.

"NGOs are required to be a lot more businesslike in what they are doing, a whole lot more focused”.

The development of this pressure towards a language of provision and professional delivery can be understood in terms of the competing discourses of capacity building evident in the participants’ accounts. It is, in this regard, not so much that the context has changed but the shifting priorities of funders and communities that have accompanied this shift which were seen to have placed the participants in a precarious and threatened position. Their denigration of past strategic location and organisational culture took place in this context of shifting agendas. The rejection of the past can be understood as a consequence of an attempt to justify their position in a new context which regards past behaviours and modes of operation as inappropriate.

This is a terrain which, according to the participants’ accounts, is influenced by the agendas/discourses of the major players in this arena: the service organisations themselves, their funders, the communities they serve, and
the government. All four discourses were evident, in varying degrees, in the consultants' explanations of their role, and all advanced particular conceptions of capacity building. It is perhaps important to note that while these discourses were contained in the participants' accounts, they were not clearly delineated as such by the participants. In this regard, Pidgeon and Henwood (1997) have observed that grounded theory strategies sometimes provide ways into a maze of fractured and multi-seamed realities, often infused with multiple and sometimes conflicting interpretations and meanings. Smircich and Stubbart (1985) have similarly noted that interpretive research work aims to make explicit the often taken for granted, but untested, knowledge by which organisation members construe their situation. Through the processes of open, axial and selective coding, I came to separate and classify the participants' multi-seamed account into four different constructions or discourses of capacity building. It should be remembered that while, for purposes of coherence and clarity, these constructions will be examined separately below, they appeared concurrently and often implicitly in the participants' accounts.

4.3 The discourse of service organisations: a value driven organisation - development role

There were two important categories which influenced the service organisation discourse: the consultants' professed maintenance of a value-driven perspective and their conception of the role of 'organisation' in the post-apartheid development context. These particular conceptions formed the conditions of the participants' understanding of their capacity building role in development. These conditions occurred in the context of the post-apartheid development terrain ('the situation in the country') which presented certain challenges and possible foci for the participants. A consequence of these conceptions was that their capacity building work was said to be approached from a particular perspective and with particular goals. It was a perspective which saw values not profits as the primary driving force in their organisations and which constructed capacity building as a long term and often intangible developmental process. The consultants stressed that their contribution to capacity building occurs through the practice of OD which was regarded (i) as an important part of (and not consonant with) capacity building, and (ii) as a means to the end of social transformation, itself regarded as a long term process.

4.3.1 Service NGOs as value-driven organisations: a social change mission

"Broadly we see our role as agents of change".

"We aim to help develop the capacity of democratic and representative organisational forms to initiate development in their own areas, to engage development agencies, to formulate and plan concepts for development. And that's the kind of contribution I think we are making".

In line with their stated 'change agent' aim of developing democratic and representative organisational forms, the respondents' accounts displayed a strong sense of right and wrong or what 'ought' to be in society as a driving force behind their work. These INGOs were seen to be driven by a specific constellation of values.
which guided their role and practice and which functioned as a badge for organisational identity. To this end, the participants accounted for their role as being the 'right thing to do' in this particular context.

"We aren't settled enough to carry on doing this indefinitely. There are so many variables and uncertainties that you have to rethink fairly regularly. Not only asking yourself is this the right thing to do, also need to ask what other things you need to learn to improve or expand your service".

The post-apartheid contextual shift was said to have created particular challenges and opportunities for these organisations. In the face of uncertainty one of the things that the consultants claimed they turned to for direction were their values as reflected in their social change mission: "where we think we can fit in and make a change". The participants all maintained that they have somewhere they "want to go" with their development role. Their actions in the development arena were consequently regarded as being underpinned by a strong sense of ideology, guiding what they do, as well as why and how they do it.

"Where do we get our direction from? It is not just from the funders, it's not just from the communities out there on the ground. It is the situation in the country, our ideologies and where we think we can fit in and make a change. And I think that's one of the strong points of [the organisation], as much as you need to make a distinction between pure politics and development, and development politics, your political dominates. And if you don't understand it, you won't know where you want to go with your development ... It is vital to recognise where you are coming from and what it is that you ultimately want".

These espoused values or principles, although linked to their political stance, are broader than simply being antipartheid. They are values which acknowledge the political (with a small 'p') component to development. In a generic sense these stated beliefs embodied the aim of furthering the ability of people to act in a responsible, equitable and humane fashion. Their social change mission emphasised the creation of better (i.e., fairer, more democratic, representative, equitable and free) organisations, communities and societies: "what it is you ultimately want".

"You have a particular conception of reality that they [the community] are marginalised and why they are marginalised and you try and address that, and you are actually trying to get social change".

"It depends what my agenda is. If a particular organisation comes and they are all men and they are all young and funky, and they carry a particular ideology and they are going to be part of the capacity building programme, I raise questions. Because I am not only a member of a service organisation, I am a member of society".

Their "particular conception of reality" was seen to be reflected in "certain principles of development" such as placing community needs first, practising participatory development and encouraging democratic practices in the community organisations they work with.
"Within the organisation, we encourage democratic ways of operating. A structured democracy. We try and ensure that there are ways and mechanisms built into the organisation ensuring participation in decision making."

"Organisations that I am comfortable working with are built on certain principles of development: serving the community, sensitivity, good listening skills, a certain kind of humbleness about the way they operate. I think if I was ever in a position to interview staff for field workers, I think that is one quality I would look for, a lack of arrogance, because once you get arrogance you get people who think they know what the community needs and that blocks out their ability to listen, and I think that is quite problematic."

In talking of these values, the consultants stressed the need to take account of the social system and wider political structures in exploring why people are marginalised and disadvantaged. They emphasized a commitment to empowering people on the periphery of society. They also underscored the importance of respecting the primacy of a community's articulated needs, and argued for the principles of democracy and participation that they are striving towards in society being reflected in the way that they approach their work. These aims were regarded as process-oriented (such as working towards democracy and participation in CBO functioning) and, as such, not always immediately apparent.

"I don't think our contribution is immediately visible. But on a different level, on a higher level I think our contribution is to develop the ability of community based groups. To help develop the capacity of democratic and representative organisational forms to initiate development in their own areas."

In line with these "higher level" aims, a value-driven rather than economic motive was set up as guiding their operation. Commitment to principles of equity, justice and democracy were in this regard advanced as more important for the participants than market-related issues of economic gain or profit and loss. Their organisations were rather seen to operate outside of the market economy, and reflected a declared commitment to people rather than "bottom-line" profits.

"We operate in areas of market failure: we supplement, complement, develop alternatives, fill gaps."

"There is a different ethos that is operating in this sector. The training is happening for a different reason. The measurables are just so foreign to the NGO world ... I mean you are not looking for people who are going to make a difference to the bottom line of the business."

**4.3.2 The role of ‘organisation’ in the post-apartheid development context**

Within this context of a social change mission guided by particular values, the concept and practice of ‘organisation’ (designating both process and product, verb and noun) was said to assume a central role for the consultants. Their accounts articulated the assumption that communities need ‘organisation’ in order to access development and facilitate social change. ‘Organisation’ was hereby expounded as a providing a useful structure
through which to articulate community demands and empower communities to begin to engage with their
development options. The consultants posited a strong 'organisation'-'development' link: social reconstruction
and development meant for them that organisations needed to be developed.

"Post-1990 has allowed people to express their expectations and to think that 'There are things
that we can get', but need to organise themselves to try and get it".

"People come to us who aren't really organised in the formal sense. They have an idea to
bring some development to an area which is in the spirit of the RDP and they want to
establish an organisation".

"A perennial request is, 'Help us to establish an organisation that can manage a project and
raise funds for it'".

The consultants' conception of the role of ‘organisation’ saw it as a means to the end of community
development, and ultimately social change. They claimed that if organisational infrastructure was weak, service
delivery would be less effective. Both the process and product of organisation were described as tools for further
development, and not the end products or destinations. Furthermore, the consultants noted that ‘organisation’
was not a given or starting point from which they approached their work; it was frequently something that
needed to be built or justified from a situation of disorganisation.

"Half the people that come to us aren’t really organised in the formal sense, they are a group
of people with an idea ... especially youth who have an idea to bring some development in
the area which is in the spirit of the RDP, and they want to establish an organisation".

"You don't organise yourself and then decide what to do".

"You need to decide what you want, and then look at, okay how do we organise ourselves to
achieve that. And what too often has happened is that we have been obsessed by structure.
What is x’s role? Where do they get representation? What if they’re national and they’re
regional? How do we know? etc. I'm saying, ‘Why are you bothered with this? Let’s see what
you are trying to achieve’".

In other words organisation was seen as useful only to the extent that it facilitated the achievement of specific
development goals. An over-reliance on concepts and principles of organisation and representation (the
"obsession with structure") was viewed as having the potential to get in the way of what they are in fact trying
to achieve. This conception was mirrored in how the consultants viewed their own organisational structure. The
participants frequently spoke of a need for flexibility and looseness in their organisations so as to effectively
and innovatively respond to the complex demands of their environment. This professed need for looseness is
explored further in section 4.10.

"We can’t be too bureaucratic, we need to be innovative: to see a problem and find a creative
solution".
"The strength of service NGOs lies in their ability to bounce around and respond creatively to opportunities".

"That looser thing that you need space and flexibility to take gaps and opportunities - for service organisations that is critical to not get cramped into a tight objective".

On the other hand, the structure of organisation was seen as a useful way to form relationships in order to access development and fulfil their social change values. Here the structure was regarded as providing a useful vehicle for the articulation of community demands and the fostering of an organisation's ability to change. Because of this declared centrality of organisation for development, the discipline and practice of OD was purported to form an important part of their capacity building and development work. The consultants stressed the vital role which they saw OD having to play in developing strong, stable and representative organisational forms. OD was identified as playing an important role in process issues. It was seen as that which is necessary in order to "go do it" or "make change happen".

"Organisation development is holding the environment at bay so that you have the space to make the change happen. It's like keeping all the shit at bay while the structure gets set up and gets going and making sure it can negotiate its way".

"In 1991 we began exploring the concept of capacity building with greater emphasis on development. Our aim was to make community based projects independent and sustainable and we achieve this through developing basic generic organisational skills through OD".

"An outcome of OD and what we are working towards in these communities is an effective structure that can articulate community demands and needs".

All participants were able to provide a generic definition of what OD involves, encapsulated in statements such as "the management of planned change". In terms of their conception the aim of OD was to build effective, efficient and sustainable organisational bases so as to manage client community demands. Their work was viewed as helping community based organisations become self-sufficient so as to articulate their own demands in the future.

"OD is creating the space for change to occur in, and I see education and training as the tools for making that change happen".

"Our approach to the work is to develop an organisation's skills and ability to achieve something".

"The exciting thing about OD is that you don't do anything until you have got this affair [community with needs] ... you build your capacity to meet the demands of your project.

"Capacity building is about training at community level to get people to an organisational state where they can actually engage with whoever they have to engage with about their development options".
The consultants saw organisation development and building as being geared towards a specific end: "to achieve something", "you build your capacity to meet the demands of the project". In their attempts to articulate and work for visions of a better world, they stressed the importance of change continuing beyond the completion of the development projects. The consultants claimed that development does not end with OD. On the contrary, the OD intervention was regarded as the starting point for the community to begin to access development.

"OD is necessary in order for CBOs to go do it out there".

"OD is developing skills so that they can go on and do something else".

"OD concerns started through NGOs trying to deliver a service and it didn't take because there was no organisation on the ground".

Long term development needs were seen to be met by the development of an effective organisational base to manage such development projects; it is this which was regarded as allowing the service to "take". A further assumption on which the role of OD was based was the view that communities do not presently have the skills or resources to run their own organisations effectively. Given that OD was seen to be a way to build this capacity, it followed for the participants that OD consultants, such as themselves, were integral to the development process.

"The idea [for OD] came from experience working in communities and finding that they don't have the skills and resources necessary to run their own organisations".

"Most CBOs, in the first few months of their existence, they are extremely vulnerable, and if they don't get assistance, if they don't know where to go, then many of them either collapse or they abandon their ideas for development. That's why they need our help".

"Well they don't have efficient management systems here in Natal. And that is something that organisations such as ours can help communities with".

In sum, the "situation in the country" was seen to have created a need for the skills of these service NGOs. Not only are those organisations already operating in the development sector said to be under pressure to quickly and effectively transform themselves, but the new government's programme of reconstruction and development was also seen to have created the demand for communities to organise themselves in order to access this development. In response to these needs the consultants observed an increased demand for OD consultancy: "and so there is a role there for NGOs and it is a capacity building role".

"Well the whole of the RDP is based on people driven development which means that decisions about how development happens must come from the beneficiaries. And that whole process is built on the assumption that the people on the grassroots are informed, and know what their choices are, and have the structures in order to take decisions so that they have some kind of legitimacy. And that is one heck of an assumption, 'cos that's not the case".

"Now suddenly everybody is saying that CBOs must be strengthened, so all efforts must go
there in terms of money and training for development. Who helps? People won’t strengthen themselves on their own. The bottom line is that you need loads and loads of service NGOs to continue to support CBOs”.

"I think there has been a growing awareness over the last couple of years of the importance of the OD consultant. Certainly if you look at the number of requests we get for assistance with evaluations and the implementation of strategic planning".

4.3.3 Consequences for the construction of capacity building

In terms of the above categories, a particular understanding of capacity building was constructed by the consultants. The participants’ conception of their capacity building role was value driven, directed at the process of social change, and aimed at the process of building strong organisational forms that are accountable, democratic and able to articulate and meet community needs. As these categories have already been explored above, the following sub-sections aim to briefly make explicit the consequences of these conceptions for the construction of capacity building.

This understanding of capacity building can be seen to have five inter-related dimensions: (i) it is a holistic process of which OD is a part, (ii) it is a long term process, (iii) it is predicated on the achievement of community demands and needs but it is not synonymous with those needs - it is the group of skills necessary to achieve these demands, (iv) it develops the community’s skills and ability to develop themselves in the future, and (v) it is in this sense not something tangible or immediately visible. Each of these dimensions will be examined below.

4.3.3.1 Capacity building is a holistic process of which OD is a part

For the consultants, building capacity meant building organisations - hence their articulation of the increased importance of, and reliance on, OD. OD alone was however regarded as insufficient to ensure built capacity. The consultants stressed that there existed a variety of other means whereby communities are empowered to access development. They frequently articulated the notion that OD and training are not synonymous with capacity building, which was seen as a more holistic and integrated process of which OD was said to be one form or part. Other forms of necessary capacity were reported to include access to information, money and the ability to network with other organisations.

"Building organisational forms is one form of capacity building. But there are a lot of others. I mean people need information, knowledge. So there is an educational role and an information dissemination role. They need money, they need resources, so there’s a whole ‘How do you access finances?’. There is a whole relational capacity. We look at one piece of this. X for example would look at informational capacity. Funders look at economic capacity. Networks would look at network capacity. So there are different organisations that need to come in to build that. And the OD that we do is just one bit. It’s not equal to capacity building".
"Not much attention has been paid to defining capacity building - most people understand it very reductionistically as training. But it is really an exceptionally complex process of which training is only one aspect. Whatever service organisation is involved in capacity building, it is only engaging in one part of it. You need an integrated approach. You need an awareness of other organisations activities and a preparedness to pull each other in where the expertise runs out. Not everyone is good at organisation building and development”.

"Capacity building is a mixture of training leading to hard skills (how to write a budget, how to write up a proposal, etc.), education (knowledge of the latest housing subsidy policies and information), linked to organisation development. The outcome is an effective structure that can articulate community demands and needs … it is developing skills so they can go on and do something else”.

A function of this identification of capacity building as a holistic process, was that it was, for the consultants, "exceptionally complex" and difficult to pin down. As a consequence, "not much attention has been paid to defining it". While it was noted that it was easier to simply equate capacity building with training, this was a definition rejected by the participants: "the problem of training is that training is seen to be the palliative to all problems. And that all you have to do is go on a training course and your capacity is built. And that is absolute shit”.

This professed need for "an integrated approach” so as to build capacity was also seen to exist in tension with other issues articulated by the consultants. It was a recognition hampered by a reported territoriality and protectiveness amongst service NGOs which was seen to be a function of protecting their turf and demonstrating their unique utility.

"There are very few organisations with sufficient expertise to do all of these [capacity building roles] so it is a matter of getting to know each other and moving towards integration, but a la old era there is still a fierce protectionism around what is ours. Instead of settling down to a recognition that we all need each other”.

**4.3.3.2 Capacity building is a long term process**

Capacity building was constructed, in light of the above, as an extended, long term process without any definite or clear end point. Approaches to capacity building mediated by a social change mission were necessarily regarded as more long-term processes for the consultants, given that social change is not something that occurs overnight.

"Capacity building is about transformation, it’s about change, it’s about that slow, often incremental, much more evolutionary than revolutionary process”.

"Capacity building should be seen as a process. It doesn’t stop with the leadership being empowered”.
Capacity building, in the sense of facilitating democracy and social change, is not something that can be 'delivered' - 'democracy', 'empowerment', 'participation' and the like were regarded as goals inhering in processes, structures and arenas that continually evolve and change. The consultants characterised their role as 'facilitators' in this evolving process, "because communities can't develop themselves on their own", and not 'deliverers' of short term development products: "and if you go into a community and say, 'What we are doing now is the RDP, talking to you, working out options, that's development, then they get quite upset". The dynamics and implications of this community dissatisfaction with the long term conception of development are explored in section 4.5. The perception that capacity building involved a never ending process of continual change, meant - as in the above category 4.3.3.1 - that the consultants were unable to clearly specify exactly when capacity has been built: "it doesn't stop...".

4.3.3.3 Capacity building is the group of skills required to service community needs

"The most important part of capacity building is that it has to be project linked. You can't go in to a community and say we are going to prepare you for development when a community hasn't even decided that these are our needs ... there must be some material output from the project that people can see - it is not just people with certificates, that is absolutely ridiculous, nobody needs that".

As is illustrated by the above statement, capacity building was described as being predicated on what a community needs or wants; it was continually stressed that it needed to be project linked. In this regard it was not only seen to be about developing process skills but also working towards the attainment of some kind of end product which was determined by the community that the consultants worked with: "a material output from the project that people can see". In this regard - and in line with the consultants' perceived role of OD described in section 4.3.2 - capacity building was consistently seen to be "for something"; it was said to be a means not an end in itself.

"Capacity building is a group of skills necessary to achieve some milestone".

"It is up to them to actually use the capacity building to increase their own agricultural production. We can't go and be farmers on their behalf. And that's the critical difference, when a community organisation says, 'We need capacity building'. I say 'what for? what for? what do you have to do? what is your work?'".

"You use a need to build capacity. That's the only way to do capacity building. You don't just teach people things. You don't just give people access to resources. It's for something. It's for development programmes. So you have to say 'What is it that you want?'".

Capacity building was thus usually tied to a specific issue - "development is meaningless outside of a specific context" - which was said to be used as a 'lever' through which to build capacity: "you use a need to build capacity". The consultants noted that once a need has been identified by a community, it is their capacity building role to work with them in a manner which enables the community to actively achieve their stated need,
rather than simply wait passively for it to be provided to them: "we can’t go and be farmers on their behalf ... that’s the critical difference".

"Say, they say they want a vegetable garden because they want better health, they want better nutrition for their kids. So we say, ‘Okay, let’s develop the project. We agree to put this in and you agree to use that to build a vegetable garden. But you have got to do it. Here are our responsibilities and here are your responsibilities … you’ve got a role and we have got a role. But we haven’t got a role in the vegetable garden. We’ve got a role with you. You’ve got a role in the vegetable garden’".

The reasons given by the consultants for this collaborative process of facilitating the development of capacity through a community’s articulated needs ("we’ve got a role with you") are explored in the following sub-category.

4.3.3.4 Capacity building should foster a community’s ability to develop themselves in the future

"Our approach is that we see a substantive issue. Okay, generally it is a material thing: access to land, roads, water, a house, electricity. So people want those things. Our approach is to use, on the back of that need or want, okay lets say electricity; through their need we help them get electricity but that is not the end point for us. The end for us is their ability to then go on and get, say, a creche. So it’s developing skills that they can then go on and do something else”.

Capacity building was defined as a co-operative process of enabling communities to develop the skills needed to access and implement development programmes: "our goal is one step more". The "critical difference" stressed by the consultants was said to be concerned with making community organisations independent and sustainable in the future so that they could continue accessing development without the OD consultants’ involvement: "their ability to then go on and get, say, a creche". To this end, the consultants spoke of the necessity of working themselves out of their capacity building role.

"And I think that we must negotiate a process with communities or the client that helps to change their mind set. You phase out the process whereby your involvement steadily decreases and they take over the role that you used to play”.

"So both sides are working towards a common goal. It is just that [our organisation’s] goal is one step more. It’s more implicit though, we don’t say that we are training you to go and get something else”.

The consultants reiterated the importance of not doing the communities’ work for them - "we can’t be farmers on their behalf" - so that the communities learn how to do things for themselves. They expressed the position that capacity needs therefore to be delivered and built in a manner which facilitates the introjection of this function. They described this appropriate capacity building manner or posture in terms of needing to continually engage with the community grouping throughout the development encounter, to "continually pull them into the
process" through suggesting, challenging, asking questions of them and so on.

"The way to empower these groupings is to pull them into the planning process to understand what the hell you are trying to do. So if you've got twelve men, make sure you've got an older person, some women. Draw them from the community. That's capacity building. And all we can do is suggest it, challenge ...".

The collaborative involvement of both consultant and community was thus seen as central to the capacity building agenda. Participation and joint negotiation of the development encounter were regarded as essential for the introjection of the consultants' functions - "here are our responsibilities, here are your responsibilities ... you've got a role, we've got a role" - rather than a case of one party doing all the work.

4.3.3.5 Capacity building is not something immediately tangible or visible

Inherent in all the above descriptions of what capacity building is about, was the understanding that this is a process which is not easily visible. As one consultant remarked, "development is not something you see". Within this conception the participants repeatedly described both capacity building and OD as something intangible or not easily quantifiable. Its ambiguous nature was seen to be a function of its processual quality (i.e., its concern with changing mind sets, shifting perceptions, altering relationships and so on) and its long term focus, neither of which make it easy to observe or measure.

"OD is often less tangible than specific things. It is often the perception of people within an organisation and how that changes".

"It's about transforming the relationship to the environment and various stakeholders in the environment, the way people relate to each other at work etc.".

"But it is still very hard to measure. Its still one of the problems that NGOs have is the cost of measuring the capacity building. And I don't think funders are anywhere near ready or organisations themselves to pay for what it actually costs to evaluate those processes and work out if they are making a difference".

4.4 The new conditionality of the changed funding discourses: "Thou shalt reconstruct forthwith"

An important condition of the accounted for shift "from resistance to reconstruction" and the move towards a capacity building role were the changed funding pressures. The participants repeatedly articulated a dependence on funders which resulted in a pressure to provide a particular kind of work. They stressed how the changed funding criteria and conditionality after South Africa's socio-political change pushed them towards a particular capacity building role. In response, the consultants emphasised a need to adapt to these new criteria or face extinction. This pressure to adapt was seen to be exacerbated by a diminished availability of funds and greater
competition in this sector. It was under these perceived conditions that the consultants constructed a picture of capacity building different from the one described above in section 4.3. This construction of capacity building I have termed 'the funder discourse' in light of the stakeholder relationship which appeared to have influenced its formation. A consequence of this stakeholder pressure was the construction of a capacity building role emblematised by professionalism, accountability, measurable service provision and 'lip service' to funders' demands.

4.4.1 The influence of funders

Throughout the accounts a recurring theme was the extent to which funders call the shots in terms of what the OD consultants do and how they do it. Many of the reasons given for the need to shift focus to reconstruction and specifically capacity building were centred around the change in funding agendas. Although the consultants professed to a reliance on values in terms of how they embodied their changed role, the reason for the required change in focus were more consistently portrayed as being set by external forces, of which funders formed a dominant part.

"Now comes 1990, there's a whole change in the political scene, and for the organisation to survive, for the programmes to survive in terms of funding, what would basically activists be doing now? Turn to a more development focus".

"They want to fund specific programmes that fit in with their priorities and you have got to shape what you do to fit in with what they would fund".

It was generally agreed that there is a strong degree of top-down (i.e., from funder to NGO) influence that comes from the financial dependence on funders. Most consultants recognised that in terms of their organisations finding a new direction, "funders have a role to play because of the pressure they exert on organisations". That said, there was also an alternative, less frequently articulated perception that one could decide what to do first and then approach those funders whose agenda matched yours.

"I don't fully buy this whole funder-driven thing. I think there is a case where funders have particular policies and programmes, so you don't go to them unless you want to do that kind of work".

This perception notwithstanding, all the participants noted that funding criteria and parameters had changed in the post-apartheid context, and that this change had implications for how they approached their capacity building role. There was little mention of the possibility of approaching funders whose agendas matched the old anti-apartheid style of loose accountability. That type of funding relationship was seen to have irrevocably changed.
4.4.2 The changed funding criteria

Changed funding criteria and requirements "post-1990" were seen to be the chief agenda setters with regard to their need to change after the watershed time of socio-political transformation. The consultants consistently spoke of, post-1990, "having to shape what you want to do to fit in with what they want to fund".

"There was a time when it was easier to get money but now it has been difficult because the funders, on the one hand they have their criteria, they have changed their parameters, they have their own priorities, and they want those things satisfied".

"Suddenly the imperative out there changed: Thou shalt resist no more, thou shalt develop, thou shalt reconstruct forthwith ... So internally these service organisations are wobbly, and they are trying to turn around and they hit a wall, the most obvious of all is the imperative for bi-lateral funding. The changed funding system is one of the key factors".

This statement echoed a predominant feeling among the interviewees of having little choice in their response to the demand for reconstruction: change is an imperative, a command. The chief agenda setter and "key factor" was seen to be the changed funding system: "they have their own priorities". The changed funding discourses were experienced as an issue for the consultants for three main reasons: (i) because they were seen to be dependant on funders' money for survival, (ii) because there was a perceived conditionality attached to funding, that is, their organisations would only get funded if they fitted in with the funders' discourse (the new 'criteria, parameters and priorities') which had now changed and (iii) because funders were now said to be stricter in terms accountability of the consultants' organisations "doing what they are told" and demonstrating their service provision in clear and concrete terms.

It was noted that, whereas in the past, foreign governments and donors refused to fund the apartheid government and instead funded anti-apartheid NGOs on the basis of their political stance ("major funders acted as a gatekeeper to ensure that organisations that were not politically correct were not funded"), post-1990, these donors began dealing directly with the new democratically elected government in a bi-lateral arrangement. The key issues for the participants were therefore twofold. Firstly they recognised that they now faced a significant funding threat: "We are just not going to get the same amount of money". And secondly, they noted that the funders had redefined their priorities to fit in with what they perceived to be the new needs of South Africa's previously disadvantaged population. The participants observed that these changes had had a profound effect on the service organisations, given their reliance on funders for their organisational survival.

In the past, funding criteria were regarded as less rigid and accountable and loose rhetoric, and an anti-apartheid stance was said to be sufficient to secure funding and hence organisational survival.

"This whole before and after thing is interesting, the way that NGOs got away with a lot of sloppy stuff. You know if you went out and raised money to print a youth newspaper and you
In the new context it was noted that the bottom line for funders is now 'does it make a difference?', 'does it deliver what it promised to?'. These new demands were seen to require a consonant shift in NGO behaviour towards the provision of more accountable and visible service delivery.

"The other fundamental shift is that they have had to change from being quite laissez faire about management to having to plan and be a whole lot more accountable and transparent than they have been in the past. I think that NGOs used the words transparency and accountability somewhat loosely and it meant some woolly democratic connotations. Whereas today it much more tightly means what you do is properly consulted and planned, the way you used your funds is properly accounted for, the way you go back to your funders is clear".

"Funders are being more careful about people doing what they are told".

"There are a lot of funders who are demanding a more professional accountable service".

"Funders want to give money to formations that they can hold accountable, to formations that they can influence to a large extent".

"All funders are now asking for funding proposals to be done in the same way, which I think is a way of keeping service NGOs accountable. You promise to do something, you get money for it, if you don't deliver, don't expect to get money next time".

As is apparent from the above, the new key words in the funding discourse were accountability, results, outcomes, measurables, cost effectiveness, specificity, and professionalism. The consultants spoke of a pressure for their interventions to be tightly managed and for funding money to be properly accounted for. The way that they perceived that this was to be achieved was to deliver a visible and concrete development service. In addition to these changed funding criteria, the consultants also noted that there were now a range of other actors "on the development bandwagon" competing for funds, thereby increasing the pressure for these respondents' organisations to jump on and play by these new rules or get left behind.

"All the stuff which is kind of the philosophy that's informed the RDP is what we've been trying to implement, and what we are finding is that all of a sudden everyone else is climbing on the bandwagon: the private sector, big business, the state, community organisations and they are all trying to lay claim to that territory. And so now you get private consultants who say 'We do capacity building'".

4.4.3 Consequences for the construction of capacity building

The funder discourse as evident in the consultants' accounts constructed a picture of capacity building that was, as a result of the influence of the changed funder conditionality, emblematised by (i) accountability to funders, (ii) professional service delivery and (iii) lip service to the "funders' word". These sub-categories are briefly
explored below.

4.4.3.1 Capacity building is accountable to funders

The funder discourse - powerful by virtue of the respondents' acknowledged financial dependence on funders - constructed capacity building in terms of this developmental role having to be accountable to funders. In order to survive in terms of funding, the consultants spoke of the need to "shape what you do to fit in with what they would fund". While funders were seen to be keen to fund "new and innovative programmes in OD and capacity building", they were now, post-1990, described as demanding far more accountability and transparency with regards to the content of this capacity building role.

"It may be one of the post-1990 things. Where instead of providing a service that the government is not providing, you now have to actually spell out the service that you are providing, who you are providing it for and how many people will benefit and so on".

"All funders are now asking for funding proposals to be done in the same way, which I think is a way of keeping service NGOs accountable. You promise to do something, you get money for it, if you don't deliver, don't expect to get money next time".

The importance of the capacity building process having to be accountable and satisfactory to funders was stressed: "if you don't deliver, don't expect to get money next time". The implications of this bottom-up accountability are explored in the following sub-section.

4.4.3.2 Capacity building is professional and measurable service delivery

Within this funder discourse capacity building is construed as a deliverable product. The pressure to be accountable to funders was seen to create a need for a capacity building encounter that is certain, unambiguous, clearly delivered and easily monitored. So as to satisfy funders, built capacity was seen to be demonstrated by tangible results, and the delivery of something specific.

"You need to be specific in order to get funds ... What you need to do is identify the community or communities that you will service, to explain what the problems are that you will address, how you will do it, what the expected outcomes or results are, and then what it will cost you - all worked out in a fair amount of detail".

"NGOs have been pulled in by the delivery discourse. We have to start delivering concrete things rather than say what we deliver is not always tangible".

Capacity building was construed as something that is possible to clearly spell out and deliver in specific and concrete terms. The way to deliver capacity in this accountable fashion was, in terms of the funder discourse, for the consultants to become more "professional" in their outlook and approach. They noted that capacity
needed to be built in such a way that demonstrated a move away from the 'amateuristic' organisational culture of their resistance past. It has already been explored how the consultants accounted for this need to move away from what they regarded as the "organisational sloppiness" of their past in section 4.2.5. The behaviours, practices and norms of the resistance orientation of service NGOs were viewed by these consultants as not only irrelevant, but as weaknesses, out of sorts with their new demands. The extent to which this explanation of a need to change was mediated by perceived funder demands is now clearer. The impact of the "development marketplace" in terms of further pushing the consultants towards this professional and accountable role, as well as the tensions which these pressures create with the consultants' espoused value driven approach are both explored later, in sections 4.7 and 4.9, respectively.

4.4.3.3 Capacity building is a "funders' word" - paying lip-service

A related implication of the accountability to funders for the participants' conception of capacity building was the use of this concept as a "buzzword" in order to sell what they do to funders. Capacity building was seen to become an act of placement or classification, a means of representing their organisations to others: "we put capacity building in the title".

"We put capacity building in the title because we had some idea that it would be capacity building, but also it is a funders' word, it is a buzzword of the time. I remember a time when AIDS projects were something that you were going to get money for. So we knew more or less what we wanted to do, and we decided to go into capacity building".

"Now we don't fight apartheid any more, but people have developed the most extraordinary habits in service organisations that you just carry on doing it because you can. Now you say 'it is for development', 'it is developmentally sound', whatever that means, so that we can carry on doing it. And now we are linking literacy to development so we can carry on providing our services as long as we say 'development' instead of 'anti-apartheid', we can just carry on doing it. And the penny has not dropped that it [capacity building] is a co-operative process".

Capacity building was regarded by the consultants as less something that they did and more something that they said. This slippage between saying as opposed to doing raises certain tensions for the consultants - "the penny has not dropped..." - which will be examined in 4.9.1. It seems here that the lack of clarity as to the actual definition of capacity building functions to enable the indiscriminate use of the word so as to "sell your ideas to funders". If no one really knows what these terms mean, it becomes easier for the consultants to use them as a way of avoiding strict accountability: 'now you say 'it is developmentally sound', whatever that means".

Briefly, the strategies adopted by the consultants' organisations were therefore twofold. In terms of their accounts, they either accepted these new criteria and attempted to change their service to fit in with them or alternatively, they expressed the possibility of playing with the discrepancy of being paid before they deliver the service. In other words, 'paying lip service' or phrasing what they do to please the funders and then doing
what they like in terms of community service provision.

"I suppose if you are good enough you can sell your idea, you can get money for most things"

Both of these strategies (becoming more professional, or using capacity building as the new rhetoric) give rise to tensions in the consultants' capacity building role. These will be explored later in sections 4.9.1 and 4.9.2.

4.4.4 Consultant criticism of funders

In an ostensible reaction to these funder demands, the consultants raised the problem of funder driven development being out of touch with 'real' development concerns. The criticisms of funders were that, while they were seen to powerfully influence the targets and processes of development through their disbursement of money, they were regarded as removed from the process as it happened "on the ground" and confused about development. Funders were regarded as influencing development without properly engaging with its dynamics, by "sitting in the corporate sector and handing out a cheque".

"The power relationship between funder and fundee could be used more positively if funders were more educated and involved in what they are dealing with. But many funders are silent partners. We would love our funders to be more involved, we'd love them to come to the workshop and say this is wrong, etc., and engage with the development sector, instead of sitting in the corporate sector and handing out a cheque".

"It's helluva easy to sit and talk in Pretoria or Amsterdam and decide all that. In reality it is bloody difficult".

The participants expressed the perception that funders invariably do not properly understand the development environment and what is required in terms of capacity building. They consistently spoke of funders being "up there" in a rarefied and removed environment whereas development happened "down here".

"We also need capacity building in the donor sector. Often these people have very little understanding of how best that money can make an impact on development".

"The only people more confused than the NGOs about development at the moment are the funders".

The tensions created by the consultants' need to work with the differing demands coming from "up there" and "down here" is examined in section 4.9.1. A consequence of the perceptions evident in this category was the expressed desire to use 'development forums' to bring these polarised development stakeholders together, and get funders "more involved" in the development process. This position is explored in section 4.10.
4.5 Changed community expectations: "Development means we are going to get a house"

How the participants articulated their capacity building role was further affected by what they saw as the changed expectations of those whose capacity is being built, the communities they work with. The expressed conditions of increased competition and criticism from CBOs, combined with what they perceived to be more vigorous political expectations from communities conspired to create particular pressures for the consultants in terms of how they articulated their capacity building role. Under these perceived conditions, the consultants articulated yet another picture of capacity building, which I have termed the 'community discourse'. A consequence of these pressures was the construction of capacity building in terms of community driven product delivery.

4.5.1 A context of increased competition and criticism of service NGOs

The consultants' accounts demonstrated that as service NGOs, they find themselves in a politically weakened position, competing with CBOs for funders' money. They explained that they were furthermore being accused by CBOs of being unaccountable and undemocratic by virtue of their intermediary status and 'distance from communities'. They also noted a further criticism that they were perpetuating their position through encouraging CBO dependence on their services, and taking funders' money at the expense of more 'representative' CBOs.

"NGOs are in a structurally weak position in terms of the state and civil society due to funding, CBO hostility, state hostility, distrust of NGOs, private sector competition".

"CBOs didn’t get money in the past, now they say ‘all the money comes to us’ - and on the one hand there is a level of fairness to it but on the other hand it is jolly unfair. To say that the NGO sector did nothing is simply ridiculous".

"I know CBOs criticise the fact that NGOs get money from funders in the name of servicing a CBO, and they have reason to do that. But it would be interesting to ask, ‘Why do funders give their money to NGOs and not CBOs?’ And it is because funders want to give their money to formations that can be held accountable”.

"And of course there are dangers of getting money before you deliver a service, and then the people who receive your service may feel that you’re not actually delivering the best service, but you’ve already got the money so there is very little they can do about it. And I am sure there are strong grounds for that criticism".

The roots of this criticism can be seen to reside in the "post-1990" pressure towards 'people-driven development' and the vulnerable political position this has engendered in intermediary service organisations. This is a category which will be explored in greater detail in 4.8. For the moment this context of increased criticism is a useful category to note due to the extent that it strengthens a community driven conception of what capacity building entails. As is clear from the quotes above, the consultants' responses to this hostility and criticism which they perceived was being directed at them were exemplified by, on the one hand, an
acknowledgement of the right of CBOs to feel this way, and on other hand, a defensiveness and consequent need to justify their unique role and contribution in the face of claims that they "do nothing". The consultants were, eager to deny any accusation of being "middle-men", unfairly taking a cut of funder money meant for community development. It was this kind of context and insinuation that forced the participants to demonstrate their accountability and commitment both to funders - "it is because funders want to give their money to formations that can be held accountable" - and to communities.

"We would go out and approach people on behalf of the communities we serve. But we don’t want to be rep-men, middle-men who take a cut".

Within this context of "hostility and distrust of NGOs" the consultants were anxious to stress that their capacity building approach provided the type of development that is accountable to "people at the grassroots".

"It’s a case of ‘what do the people at the grassroots need?’ and how can we implement programmes to answer that, and in ways that we are structurally accountable to them on an ongoing basis. Instead of just being accountable to ourselves and to our funders".

4.5.2 The imperative that development must be community driven

The participants continually articulated the importance of development needing to be community driven for ideological as well as practical reasons. In terms of their own value-driven agenda it was seen as vital that development projects involve community participation and ownership of the process. It was held that development should not be imposed on communities or delivered in a pre-determined manner: "their focus" was seen as primary and the participants were said to be keen to avoid "presuming to know what other needs or demands they have". Furthermore, the consultants stressed that for pragmatic reasons, communities needed to be interested and invested in the process in order for it to be successful: "people don’t want their capacity built if they think you are wasting their time". An implication of these pressures was a tendency for their capacity building focus to, at times, be articulated as "whatever the community wants".

"If the community is concerned with water and sanitation and electricity, and we want them to talk about capacity building we are actually making them lose their own focus. So we can’t be concerned with losing our own focus if we make other people lose their focus".

"It forces an organisation to be quite clear whether there is a need or whether they have fabricated it in their own ideological minds ... Do people who are the target also experience it as a problem?".

"What is essential is that people should want the process. People don’t want their capacity built if they think you are wasting their time. They just won’t come or they won’t pay attention. I can tell people for the whole of next year that they need to learn how to write a project proposal, and they won’t listen until they feel it is necessary. Therefore it very much should be community driven".

"It’s a case of ‘what do the people at the grassroots need?’ and how can we implement programmes to answer that, and in ways that we are structurally accountable to them on an ongoing basis. Instead of just being accountable to ourselves and to our funders".
"We wouldn’t presume to know what other needs they have or demands they have".

This perception that development should be community driven was however tempered by other concerns raised throughout the accounts. One of these concerns was that, on their own the communities were not seen to have the necessary skills or knowledge to make these kind of informed developmental decisions. The consultants claimed that the communities did not always know what was best for them in terms of driving development. There existed the perception that there needed to be some form of interaction between community and service organisation foci in order for informed choices to be made.

"People won’t strengthen themselves on their own".

"Communities must drive development, but if they are going to do that you need to make decisions and how do you make decisions? You need options, information".

The participants mentioned the issue of providing funding directly to CBOs and letting them negotiate with consultants for what they feel they needed in terms of development, but argued that the CBOs did not have the requisite management systems or knowledge of available options to handle this responsibility.

"It is a complex issue because you need to make the organisation strong enough to take the money. The fastest way to destroy a weak organisation is to put money into it. You need systems to maintain it. They don’t have sufficient organisational capacity, never had a bank balance, poor conceptions of accounting interest, need to learn those skills. Catch 22, don’t have the skills to access money and control so how do they access it?".

"But what they do now is that they see they have got R20 000 for capacity building, they hire you for 2 days so they spend R1600 of it or whatever and they spend the rest on something else".

A further tension for the consultants was that the communities did not always perceive the capacity building and OD work as essential. They were seen to have more pressing needs that the would like to be met. As the consultants observed, these demands were centred around the delivery of concrete products: "the promise of physical goodies". When combined with the perceived pressure for community driven development, and 'capacity building' being "whatever the community wants", the fact that communities were seen to sometimes not to want their OD services ("we don’t want to pay, go away") placed the consultants in a precarious position which they noted sometimes results in their OD work being "blocked" and "bombing".

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1 This notion is in reference to the Kagiso Trust (KT) CBO support programme which had just come in to operation and was as such a source of debate within this NGO sector. This programme sought to change the funding mechanism such that KT financed CBOs directly, who in turn hired the services of intermediary NGOs and other service providers. The rationale for this was to attempt to make NGOs more accountable to their clients.
"What we have found in working in communities is that people haven't picked up on the RDP as a philosophy, as a framework, they've picked it up as a promise of physical goodies. And if you go into a community and say 'What we are doing now is the RDP, talking to you working out options, that's development', then they get quite upset. They say 'No development means we are going to get a house'. An Inanda contractor was blocked from coming on to a site because the people felt that they didn't want to carry on with this project. 'The RDP is going to come build us houses'. And there was huge negotiation. 'We don't have to pay, go away'. Partly because politicians are making promises and not being up front, they're creating unrealistic expectations".

"We tried an approach in Cato Manor where we started with an OD programme, and it bombed, largely because people have expectations that they are going to get things. And they don't see the connection between building strong organisations and getting what they need. They want the house, they want the roads now, and anything that doesn't seem directly linked to that, it's 'Forget it, we want this'".

"But what they do now is that they see they have got R20 000 for capacity building, they hire you for 2 days so they spend R1600 of it or whatever and they spend the rest on something else. And the consciousness of capacity building in relation to doing their work is still not clear".

In light of these dynamics, the consultants spoke of a pressure to provide something immediate, concrete and visible in terms of building community capacity: "NGOs have been pulled in by the delivery discourse. We have to start delivering concrete things rather than say what we deliver is not always tangible". These community expectations of 'delivery' were regarded as being linked to the political expectations occasioned by the 'post-1990' transformation process.

"Expectations are high understandably. But people don't know how to get these things. In the past they could never get it and they knew it. But now they believe it ought to be easier to get it because the people they elected into government are in authority".

Given its intangibility and long term focus, the consultants' own "consciousness of capacity building" was seen to be at odds with this prevailing culture of entitlement and "getting things" in communities. Instead, as a result of the community driven conception, capacity building was consequently constructed in terms of short term, community driven product delivery. These characteristics will be explored below.

4.5.3 Consequences for the construction of capacity building

The above community expectations and pressure towards bottom-up development produced a conception of capacity building that consisted of short term, tangible community-driven product delivery.

4.5.3.1 Capacity building is community driven

In terms of the explanations provided in the consultants' accounts, the above pressures can be seen to have
contributed to a conception of capacity building that regards it primarily as a bottom-up process. Capacity building was seen as a process that must be relevant and responsive to grass-roots concerns: it becomes "whatever the community wants", "their focus" is set up as primary.

"If the community is concerned with water and sanitation and electricity, and we want them to talk about capacity building we are actually making them lose their own focus. So we can’t be concerned with losing our own focus if we make other people lose their focus".

Although the participants felt that communities were presently not able to drive development by themselves, the community driven discourse was nonetheless very influential because of the perceived political precariousness of the consultants’ intermediary role and their consequent obligation to grass-roots driven development. The consultants spoke of a reluctance to "talk about capacity building" with communities who distrust NGOs and feel "that you are wasting their time". For the consultants, "our focus" became secondary.

"We wouldn’t presume to know what other needs they have or demands they have. They come to us with a request, we design a programme tailored to their needs and we deliver it. And that’s our approach to capacity building".

4.5.3.2 Capacity building is product delivery

As has been noted above, the perceived community expectations post-1990 functioned to influence the consultants’ construction of capacity building and development in terms of its advancement of concrete product delivery: "development means we are going to get a house". This conception was seen to pressurise the consultants to ‘deliver’ capacity whether in the form of houses, roads, creches, water or whatever other product the community feels that they are in need of.

"Everybody wants a physical thing. Even communities now are shifting, whereas before they were keen to pick up on organisational ability - how to mobilise, how to run meetings, now they want to get physical things".

"You will not persuade people that they need management skills if they perceive their need to be water".

In this sense, ‘development’ and ‘capacity’ were regarded as the products (houses, roads and so on) rather than the processes by which these are achieved. While this was seen to be predominantly the communities’ conception of capacity building, the consultants’ accounts demonstrated that they were increasingly being "pulled in to this delivery discourse" and pressurised to frame their capacity building role in terms of product delivery. The tensions that these perceived demands raise in relation to the consultants’ stated OD role, and how they attempted to manage this tension is explored in section 4.9.3.
4.6 The uncertainty of NGO-governmental relations

As explored in section 4.2, a further important condition of the accounted for shift "from resistance to reconstruction" and the consequent adoption of a capacity building role was the demise of apartheid and the advent of a democratically elected government. But whereas in "pre-1990" times, the consultants' relationship with the government was seen to be pivotal in terms of determining their role - "we has a vision and mission that we were always obstructed by the previous government" - "post-1990" this relationship appeared to be marked by ambivalence and ambiguity. The consultants' relationship with the new government and how they align with it was seen to be mediated by (i) their political and ideological allegiance with the ANC led government, (ii) the vagueness of the government development rhetoric, as well as (iii) the perceived need to form part of civil society, and in this way be separate from government. These perceived conditions led to the construction of a capacity building role characterised by vagueness and uncertainty: "we are all trying to align in terms of development, but there is no comprehensive plan".

As was raised in section 4.2.5, the 'compulsion to adapt or die' resulted in a shift in organisational focus towards capacity building, the consultants now purported to "align in terms of development". Their capacity building role was seen to be consonant with the ANC led government's broader reconstruction and development framework. These both were seen to share the aims of community empowerment, development and social change: "the current government is advocating what we have always stood for. Without seeming self-righteous we feel vindicated".

This commonality of focus notwithstanding, the participants described the government's development framework as lacking in substance and direction in terms of aiding the definition of their capacity building role. They expressed a lack of clarity as to how exactly to structure their relationship with the new government.

"But the uncertainty still lies in say for example something like the RDP. It is still unfolding. There's a document, this is no good in itself. You need mechanisms in place, you need a clear process and all that isn't in place yet".

"But now the relationship with the state is interesting, 'cos all of us are aligning ourselves in terms of the RDP, but the RDP hasn't worked out what they want of us, there is no comprehensive plan".

The broad common focus of capacity building and possibility of alignment under the ambit of government's reconstruction and development framework was further tempered by a need articulated by a few of the consultants to retain an autonomy and independence from the government so as to fulfil their civil society, counter-hegemonic role and "hold the government to account".

"There is the move towards working together in terms of the RDP but ala the old era there is still a fierce protectionism around what is ours. I am not sure that NGOs are ever going to
organise in that way though. The independent sector is by definition independent”.

“NGOs need to take account of the system. They have a fundamental lobbying role”.

“There is no assumption that the new government is going to be full of nice guys. We still need a layer of civil society that is going to hold government to account”.

4.6.1 Consequences for the construction of capacity building

Whereas in the past the relationship between these NGOs and the apartheid government was pivotal in terms of constructing their role, the relationship between capacity building and the ANC-led government was for the consultants ambivalent and uncertain. These conditions were seen to construct a capacity building role that was largely without content.

4.6.1.1 Capacity building is a vague and uncertain role

Given the perceived vagueness of the government’s development programmes the consultants’ capacity building role was at this stage without substance in terms of direction from this sector: "the RDP hasn’t worked out what they want of us", and relations with the government were regarded as ambivalent. The consultants spoke of a capacity building role without content or course; it presented a hollow marker.

"We had to make a strategic decision on what type of work we wanted to be involved in … but the uncertainty still lies in something like the RDP".

A review of the narrative account

As part of the wider environmental shift ‘from resistance to reconstruction’ in the South African NGO sector ‘post-1990’, and in light of the uncertainty, insecurity and pressure to ‘adapt or die’ that this shift generated, the consultants in this study described how they aligned in terms of the concept and practice of capacity building. How they articulated this capacity building role was in turn mediated by the discourses of capacity building constructed through their relationships with the different players in the development arena: service organisations, funders, communities, and to a lesser extent the government. To the extent that these discourses were conflicting, contradictory or incomplete, they constructed different conceptions of capacity building in the consultants’ accounts. This process was furthermore, seen to be played out in the post-apartheid development terrain, ‘the situation in the country’, which further mediated their capacity building role. The participants identified two important elements in their wider context: the move towards a ‘development marketplace’, and the dynamics surrounding people driven development and the politics of race. These two categories will be explored below.

"Where do we get our direction from? It is not just from the funders, it’s not just from the
communities out there on the ground. It is the situation in the country, our ideologies and where we think we can fit in and make a change” [italics added].

4.7 The development arena as an industrial marketplace

A common observation throughout the accounts concerned the extent to which the service NGO operating environment was changing in the post-apartheid development context. The change toward a “development marketplace” was one such shift which was seen to have a serious impact on how these organisations functioned in this sector.

"The way it is moving, not only in South Africa but elsewhere is in the direction of a development marketplace. I don’t think it would be difficult for [our organisation] to market itself. It didn’t happen in the past because we were pre-occupied with other aspects. And I think there is a conscious effort now. There has been a big push from funders, but from within the organisation we recognised that some time back. Because it’s no use going against the tide either. Selling ourselves in the development marketplace has its merits, it has its disadvantages as well”.

"I don’t think NGOs can avoid any longer issues like market research and public relations”.

The consultants repeatedly characterised the development arena as having been transformed post-1990 into an ‘industrial marketplace’ where development products and services were bought and sold. In this context competent service provision was seen to have become the new commodity in terms of which these participants expressed a pressure to "market themselves". The participants spoke of their “conscious effort” to embrace the use of market mechanisms (with its corollary "issues like market research and public relations") as a way of measuring the efficiency and utility of their capacity building work. They described the process of selling a product to communities or to funders and then letting the market decide which was the best and most effective service. Those organisations whose products were popular and seen to work were said to be those that would survive, while the others would simply go out of business.

This move towards a development marketplace overlaps with the funder discourse of capacity building - as was recognised by the participants: “there has been a big push from funders” - and as such, the consultants’ talk of the need to adopt more professional and management oriented behaviours which were seen to be consonant with this development marketplace has already been explored in section 4.4.3.2. While it was identified as having originated in part from their funders’ push for a new conditionality to funding, the development marketplace was also something which the consultants appeared willing, or at least resigned, to buy into: “selling ourselves in the development marketplace has its merits”. They described having little option but to play by these ‘new rules’: it was seen as something they could “no longer avoid”, “it’s no use going against the tide”. In fact, to the extent that this development marketplace was seen to “clear up doubt as to whether NGOs actually deliver” a service, this change was positively regarded as creating a useful yardstick for measuring NGO value.
"I am far from being a radical capitalist but there is a sense in which the development market will decide who has value and who doesn’t have value ... whether service organisations can deliver tangible results then the market will decide".

"The market is one way to overcome abuse of the role. If your users get the money and you are paid by them as any other business would be - the lean efficient ones will survive and the fat ones won’t. There has been an artificial kind of market where you get paid before you deliver the service".

The process of being paid (by funders) before they deliver a service (to communities) was seen to have engendered a lack of accountability, where organisations were not held responsible for the service they provide. The use of market mechanisms through which communities pay for a service was said in turn to promote greater accountability and cut down on an ‘abuse of their role’: "who pays changes things".

"The only way you are going to get more accountability is when the CBO does become the client. [Can you explain why CBOs aren’t the client?] Because the haven’t got any money. [But they still come to you looking for a service?] But they are not the client in the sense that I am talking about a paid service. They are still the client in a sense. That then raises the question of who pays? Who pays is the big question. Because that changes things".

These perceived positive outcomes notwithstanding, the participants also expressed reservations about the appropriateness of NGO work being measured according to "development industry" criteria. There was a sentiment expressed that what they provided as NGOs was different to the contributions of other actors in the development marketplace, and that this unique contribution would be lost were they to enter the marketplace, and adopt its competitive and entrepreneurial valorisation of product delivery.

"I think it becomes very competitive out there. You are not competing with other NGOs that provide a similar kind of work. You are now competing with private sector organisations and firms who are actually providing a different type of service and a different quality of service".

"I think the problem is that NGOs have been pulled in by the delivery discourse. We have to start delivering concrete things rather than saying that what we deliver is not always tangible - it could be something like confidence building".

"As soon as we say we are going to deliver stuff we are going to be compared to people who do delivery by private development, who are super slick, who just go in and do it. Whereas we go in and set up committees and we give them skills to run meetings and de da da da, de da da da, and it goes on like that. Those extra benefits aren’t calculated. But when you compare it in terms of physical benefits - everybody wants a physical thing".

The consultants’ accounts expressed a sense that the non-material side of their development work was not recognised in the professional development marketplace with its emphasis on a deliverable products, "tangible results" and "super slick" cost effectiveness: "these extra benefits aren’t calculated". They observed that there "is a different ethos operating in this sector … you are not looking … to make a difference to the bottom line of the business". This pressure to professionalise and "sell themselves" consequently created a tension which
is explored in section 4.9.2.

Furthermore, as raised in 4.3.1, the participants articulated that their role as service NGOs was one which fell outside of the market arena: "we operate in areas of market failure: we supplement, complement, develop alternatives, fill gaps". It was regarded as impossible to operate on a completely market driven basis.

"We are beginning to move in the direction of cost recovery, but if you are doing a lot of facilitation work like we do where there is a lot of uncertainty and there is no way you can work on a 100% cost recovery basis. And this whole notion of money being channelled to communities and them paying for the service - these communities have no financial management skills ... funders don't ensure that CBOs can effectively manage their money".

The reference to communities lacking financial management skills exemplified the consultants' concerns that communities were at present not seen to be ready to play the role of the client as required by this development marketplace (these are more fully explored in 4.5.2).

4.8 People-driven development and the politics of race

The consultants frequently articulated the importance of ensuring that a bottom-up, people driven development focus guided their work. As a condition that constructed particular versions of capacity building this focus has been referred to in section 4.5.2. This people driven development rhetoric can however also be understood against the relief of the post-apartheid transformation setting, and in this way form part of the context of capacity building - "the situation in the country". In short, the people driven development drive was seen to direct attention to the right of the previously disadvantaged populace to drive development.

"Well the whole of the RDP is based on people driven development which means that decisions about how development happens must come from the beneficiaries".

How intermediary NGOs were facing a perceived lack of trust and criticism from CBOs, in light of this move, has been explored in section 4.5.1. This reported criticism and lack of trust was seen to have been amplified by a post-apartheid transformation context which engendered a greater sensitivity to the politics of race. This sensitivity was reflected in various forms throughout the participants' accounts. In one sense, it found expression in a recognition of a need for affirmative action in intermediary NGOs who were seen to be regarded as predominantly white and elitist: their critics are "saying you know, 'You're too white and too middle-class'".

The consultants expressed a perceived pressure to "pave the way for black leadership".

"I mean there is an organisation in Johannesburg, who had strong leadership moved aside for black leadership who two years later went for a better option. And you know who has come in now? A white person. And you'll get criticised for that. And somebody has just got to say 'Well that is what we have found'. 'Yes, but its not paving the way for black leadership'. We
couldn't find any and there is this massive demand for particularly black women at the moment”.

"There's another kind of attack on service organisations now, saying you know, 'You're too white and too middle class'. And I think that's just political noise which simply isn't fair when you think of the hundreds of people who have been in this sector, material they've developed, courses they've trained, the people they've brought up, the organisations they've helped. I mean, they did all that work - it's a very unfair state of affairs”.

Nine of the ten consultants interviewed for the research were white and one was Indian. All had some form of tertiary education, one had in fact just completed a Phd. Being "too white" in a context that, as they continually observed, valorised the development of previously disadvantaged (that is to say, 'black') communities and the importance of "paving the way for black leadership", was seen to create a predicament of political weakness and vulnerability to criticism - "and you'll get criticised for that" - for these OD consultants. As a result, the consultants, while they admittedly viewed this criticism as "very unfair", nonetheless displayed a finely tuned sensitivity to the recurring theme of how this 'white, middle-classness' accorded an 'interfering outsider' status in light of the people-driven development context.

"I guess there are only so many difficulties that a service organisation can resolve, and you have got to limit the amount of interference. I mean you can't interfere in community processes otherwise you get back to being patronising white liberals”.

"There are also far too many people charging around the NGO sector with an idea in their heads that this is a need out there and this is what we must do to meet that need. And they aren't listening to what is coming from the ground and that's where they are starting to build up a lot of tension with CBOs that has come to the fore quite remarkably in the last few months”.

"I think the rights and responsibilities issue is a critical one for service organisations to get to grips with. As outsiders they go into this terrain and they interfere and they start saying what should be happening with the target group. You know, I had to say to someone in this organisation that, it's with regret that I must inform you that it's not your right to do that. And we have to be clear on that stuff. These CBOs have lives of their own. And there are cultural, and I don't just mean black and white, cultural, historical differences between people”.

The 'outsider' position in relation to the people-driven development rhetoric and the extent to which this may prevent them "listening to what is coming from the ground", was seen to be a status that the participants felt important to acknowledge so as to avoid the possibility of inappropriately interfering in development processes. However, despite this sensitivity and expressed care not to go "charging around the NGO sector with an idea in their heads”, there was still an often vocalised perception that their outsider status inevitably attracted criticism and blame in their current context.

"The SANCO conference whacked us NGOs left, right and centre. NGOs who are with one foot here and one foot there, they're the only outsiders and besides the government who else can they blame”.
Part of what the consultants perceived that they were being blamed for, was for being undemocratic and unrepresentative of the community and in this way, part of a ‘skilled white elite’ trying to entrench their position at the expense of more representative CBOs. The participants noted that the entrenchment of this position was regarded as being secured through encouraging relationships of a “neo-colonial type of dependency” with communities.

"It’s true I guess, for many intermediary organisations it’s seen to be a bit of an elite club of skilled people who use those resources relatively selfishly, who do not necessarily transfer the skills and capacities that they have to those who need them much more than they need them and in a sense keep the environment dependent on them".

"It strikes me that a lot of people are earning a very comfortable living, thankyou very much out of NGO activity. There are for instance people starting up their own NGOs ‘cos it’s a way of getting R8000 salary plus another R2000 car allowance and trips to Jo’burg into the budget".

"With the communities you must aim to work yourself out of a job. You must get to the point where what you have is left behind wherever you go otherwise you end up creating this neo-colonial type of dependency".

The tensions that this sensitivity to the problems of encouraging community dependence on consultants engenders, are explored in section 4.9.6.

4.9 Managing the tensions of capacity building

"It [capacity building] is an incredibly complex process. You are negotiating your way through conflicts all the time".

Effectively responding to the demand for capacity building within this context and under this set of perceived conditions was understood to be a complex process for the OD consultants and was, as such, repeatedly articulated as a site of tension and contradiction. The sub-categories below aim to explore these tensions inherent in the consultants’ accounts and how these were seen to be negotiated by the participants.

This is rather a complex category to relate given this core category’s ubiquity throughout this analytic narrative. The organisation-environment tension was seen to lead to the consultants’ capacity building role. The different discourses of capacity building created tensions for how they approached that role. Attempting to fulfil that role in the post-apartheid development context was understood to create further tensions through the pressures it imposed on these service organisations. Interpreting the consultants’ accounts with a focus on these tensions was, for me, the central question that organised the participants’ understandings of their capacity building role into a cohesive and coherent narrative whole. With this in mind, it can be seen how the entire narrative as organised in this chapter is in fact an account of how the OD consultants managed the tensions of their capacity building role. The following sub-categories relate the principal manifestations of these tensions which were
inherent to the participants' accounts and how these were seen to be negotiated or responded to by the consultants. While these tensions quite obviously all inter-relate, they have, for purposes of clarity, been divided into six key tensions below.

4.9.1 Constituency-based conflict

Given their close relationships to both funders and communities, these consultants expressed a need to negotiate between constituencies with opposing interests. In many ways they saw their organisations as acting as a bridge between these two different worlds, whilst belonging in fact to neither.

"NGOs who are with one foot here and one foot there, they are the only outsiders".

"The communities need to know what they have to do in order to get this development, and it helps the funders as well to get their criteria out there so that people know it. They'll then get requests and applications that more or less conform to their requirements. It ought to smooth out the getting and giving process a bit more. And in that way we do act as something of a bridge".

In terms of the consultants fulfilling this role as a bridge "with one foot here and one foot there" there was, throughout the accounts, a characterisation of funders who are "up there in the boardrooms / sitting in the corporate sector handing out a cheque", which was in opposition to a view of communities who exist "on the ground / in the field". This characterisation positioned the consultants as being caught in the middle of an accountability to two different constituencies. The tension between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to development was exacerbated by the divergent demands that these constituencies made on those 'caught in the middle': the funder discourse was seen to advance professional and accountable service delivery (see section 4.4) whilst the community discourse was seen to valorise community driven product delivery (see section 4.5). As a consequence of the need to bridge these two discourses as well as incorporate the value-driven, OD process facilitation discourse (see section 4.2) the consultants' accounts contained implicit yet consistent references to the need to 'wear different masks' for different constituencies. It is apparent that a strategy adopted by consultants in response to being 'caught in the middle' of different relationships of accountability was that of dissemblance.

With regard to their relationship with funders, using the capacity building rhetoric - the "buzzword" - was seen as a way of selling themselves in order to access funds. It became cast as a mode of presentation, or sometimes more negatively as outright lying, as in the image of the "slick-talking consultants", behind which the consultants articulated having a space to do what they wanted, and to "carry on providing our services".

"We can carry on providing our services as long as we say 'development' instead of 'anti-apartheid"."
"We put capacity building in the title because we had some idea that it would be capacity building, but also it’s a funders’ word, it is a buzzword of the time".

"Very often you can convince funders that this is entirely necessary, that you are meeting an identified need in the community, etc. What I am talking about is the slick talking ambitious person who is looking to line their own pocket and there is a lot of that in the NGO sector at the moment".

Similarly with regards to community organisation development, meeting a community's articulated basic needs was said to be used as a guise for the transference or building of more enduring capacity, which was seen as a more implicit and unarticulated goal. Capacity building was regarded as an ‘unspoken’ process: "if we want them to talk about capacity building we are actually making them lose their own focus". This expressed tendency to avoid being up-front about capacity building, was seen to be because "the consciousness of capacity building in relation to doing their work is still not clear" for communities.

"You will not persuade people what they need and there is no way of out of working in that process and bringing in the long-term stuff. Dealing to some extent with those needs but to some extent using those needs as a lever through which to enable them to write their own project proposals, develop management skills etc.".

"So both sides are working towards a common goal. It is just that our organisation’s goal is one step more. It’s more implicit though, we don’t say we are training you to go and get something else".

4.9.2 The tension between ‘value driven’ vs. ‘professional’ approaches

The participants were said to have a clearly influential set of values and ideologies which guided their work (see section 4.3.1). They articulated their OD work in terms of visions of more equitable and democratic communities and societies. The pressure to become more professional and business-like (which has been shown to be generated by the funders’ discourse and the context of a development marketplace in sections 4.4 and 4.7 respectively) consequently created a tension that was ambiguously received by these consultants. The general acceptance that a more professional and focused approach was required, was tempered by a preference to differentiate from a professional, management culture ("and I don’t like this word") and maintain a sense of NGO values.

"There is a need to try and move towards - and I don’t like this word - more professional NGOs in a sense".

"I am not suggesting that management structures and styles used in the business sector are completely appropriate for NGOs, but I think there is certainly something that can be learnt".

That said, there was nonetheless a recognition that management practices from their organisational past were now inappropriate and counterproductive. There was a general acknowledgement that NGOs suffer from
problematic gaps in organisational and management capacity, and this "organisational sloppiness" was viewed as a serious obstacle in their ability to demonstrate their utility in the new "post-1990" context (this is explained more fully in section 4.2.5).

"They had hired activists who couldn't manage, who didn't have the theoretical background or practical experience to do what they were supposed to do".

Despite this recognition of a need to change, it appeared that this concern to be more professional was a difficult issue to accept for these consultants, who seemed to prefer to emphasise the difference between themselves and traditional management sector; there was seen to be "a different ethos operating in this sector. The training is happening for a different reason, the measurables are just so foreign to the NGO world". A value driven activism was said to be an integral part of NGO make-up, and the participants expressed a fear that this unique contribution would be lost in the perceived move towards a professional development marketplace, as was explored in section 4.7. Professionals were labelled as not having the requisite dedication to, and willingness to engage with, the development arena.

"They (NGO workers) are a strange bunch of human beings, they aren't the people who just clock in and clock out".

"We don't want professionals to go off and sit in their office and come up with a fantastic plan".

A strategy identified by the consultants in order to manage this tension actuated by the competing demands to be both 'value-driven' and 'more professional' was to attempt to balance the two demands and in this way be both at the same time: "you have to live your contradiction".

"You have got to live your contradiction. On the one hand you need proper management systems, good working conditions, clear job descriptions etc. On the other hand you need the will of the people to work out the problems, not the sort who say, 'Oh, 5 o'clock, time to go home'".

4.9.3 The tension between demands for 'product' vs. 'process'

A further tension raised in the consultants' accounts turned on the consideration of whether capacity building was a process that they facilitate or a product that they deliver. The pressure to deliver a physical product, as exemplified by both the funder and community discourses, was frequently seen to stand in contraposition to the participants' alternative conception of capacity building which saw it in terms of OD process facilitation. In terms of the latter conception, capacity was seen to be developed through a longer term, often intangible process aimed at empowering communities to access their own development. This tension was said to be exacerbated by the demand on the part of both funders and communities for product implementation rather than process
consultation: "everybody wants a physical thing".

"We go in and set up committees and we give them skills to run meetings and de da da da, de da da da, and it goes on like that. Those extra benefits aren’t calculated. But when you compare it in terms of physical benefits - everybody wants a physical thing".

"It is a tension. There is a sense in which you will not persuade people that what they need is management skills if they perceive their need to be water".

In the face of this perceived tension, of which there was said to be "no way out", the consultants articulated a need to find a balance between being process oriented and results driven. They spoke of the need to deliver the product requested by a community in such a way that process issues are attended to; to use the product needs as a ‘lever’ to facilitate development of process skills (as explored in section 4.3.3.3).

"There’s no way out of working with community demands and bringing in long term stuff, dealing to some extent with those needs, but somehow using those needs as a lever through which to enable them to write their own project proposals, develop management skills, etc.".

"The product we deliver is a process. Instead of giving one product that people come and receive here, we design a process and then go to them and deliver it there, and take them through the process. By doing that they would learn certain skills and they would get certain experiences that are necessary for them to carry on their work. And that is our product. We are also concerned with that process. It is how we balance the two I think".

As in the previous sub-category, the articulated strategy adopted by the consultants to negotiate this tension between product and process was, in effect, to do both: "the product we deliver is a process", and thereby attempt to "balance the two" contrary demands.

4.9.4 The tension between ‘supportive’ vs. ‘critical’ perspectives

A further recurring tension articulated by the participants concerned when, and to what extent, OD consultants should intervene in community organisation processes. The ‘supportive versus critical tension’ emblematised the dilemma of whether to be supportive or questioning when dealing with organisational processes, specifically those with which they as consultants did not agree or which were seen to run counter to their espoused values of participation and democracy. It was a tension which was seen to centre on their limited rights, as ‘outsiders’, to criticise community processes vis a vis their responsibilities, as OD consultants, to challenge and question these organisations.

"Well I mean there is a tension. It’s a case of do you have the right to say to a CBO we are not going to work with you because there are fifteen men sitting on the committee of a womens’ project?".

"All we can do is suggest it and challenge. But I mean it’s not our right to say we won’t run
a workshop unless we've got ... It's a critical issue for service organisations to get to grips with. And what they do is they try too hard. They get into this terrain and they interfere and they start saying what should be happening with the target group. And I don't think it is their right and therefore I don't think it is their responsibility".

The participants noted that an appropriate strategy in this scenario would be to challenge the community organisation to observe its own processes and to encourage them in this process of critical self-discovery without being too prescriptive and "intervening too much". This prescriptiveness was eschewed (i) because it was not regarded as their right as outsiders who "don't live in the area" and (ii) because it was seen to prevent the community working through these issues themselves.

"We've got to balance between encouraging community participation and involvement in organisations with not intervening too much and prescribing to an organisation saying 'We will only work with you if you have x etc.'.

"Y'know I had to say to someone in this organisation that it is with regret that I must inform you that it's not your right to do that. And we have got to be clear on that stuff. These CBOs have lives of their own ... and people have got to go through that stuff themselves. They must get challenged. They must get questions asked of them".

"If it is the responsibility of the community structure to choose the right people you can't be held accountable for the wrong people that they choose. Because we don't know the people. We don't live in the area".

The consultants' articulated response to this tension was therefore reflected in the expressed need to hold a space or balance between challenging in a respectful and supportive manner and "intervening too much".

4.9.5 The tension between the demands for 'delivery' vs. 'participation'

In their capacity building work the consultants articulated a need to balance the pressure for short term delivery of a development intervention with the corollary assurance of a democratic, inclusive and participative intervention process. This perceived tension is an off-shoot of the tension explored earlier that was seen to exist between the contradictory demands for 'product' and 'process'.

Although, in line with their value-driven agenda, principles of democracy and participation were stressed to be an important feature of the participants' consultancy work, there existed in the consultants' accounts the countervailing perception that an over-reliance on participation was not only impractical but could get in the way of ever delivering anything: "the crux of the matter is that work has to be done". There was consequently the stated need to realise a "trade-off" between democracy and delivery.

"There is that tension and sometimes there's a trade-off. Do you actually want to get the project done and get them going or is skills transfer your priority. But you have to be aware of that tension and we try as far as possible to avoid increasing dependency".
"I think it is a distortion of democracy because you find that communities or other service organisations who sometimes perceive themselves to be more accountable than others they would demand that they be informed, get consulted but then the crux of the matter is that work has to be done".

"You cannot train 35000 people to understand what development is about. And 35000 people don’t necessarily want to know that when that road is built you need a pipe underneath it and you need to negotiate with a construction company for labour etc.".

While they described the necessity of balancing these conflicting pressures, the consultants also stressed that it was important to have an awareness of this issue so as to "as far as possible avoid increasing dependency". An over-reliance on 'delivery' at the expense of involving the community in the process was seen to increase the likelihood of community dependence on the OD consultant. This inter-related tension is explored in the following category.

4.9.6 The tensions between 'helping' vs. 'encouraging dependency'

In light of the above sub-category, the participants noted that their desire to help community organisations needed to be balanced by an awareness of the dependence that this help may engender. There was a recognition that doing an organisation’s work for them, although tempting, did not allow the organisation members to learn the necessary skills for themselves. It was seen to create a likely dependence on the OD consultant.

"The psychological dependency is frightening. We even find that working with the most experienced communities, the minute we come in and start doing this work it becomes ‘Oh won’t you write the project proposal?’ and you know just a feeling that, here’s somebody else that could do it for us, and someone else that is running around championing our cause. And that I find very difficult because you really want to help".

"What the service organisation does is to a certain point where it engages the target group, but then the target group has got to do something too. It’s not a welfarist approach ... Traditionally service organisations have sat there and people have come and said, ‘We need, we want’ and they just try and respond and it goes all over the place plus they get quite mixed up with their target group, and they do quite a bit that they shouldn’t - raises the whole issue of dependency".

"With the communities you must aim to work yourself out of a job. You must get to the point where what you have is left behind wherever you go otherwise you end up creating this neo-colonial type of dependency".

In a manner echoing the supportive vs. critical tension explored earlier, the effective negotiation of this tension was seen to pivot on the necessity of clearly delineating the rights and responsibilities of the OD consultant. Capacity building work was seen to be about tempering the desire to help communities with an acknowledgement of the need to avoid "getting mixed up with their target group". Helping community organisations in a more informed, balanced and restrained way, with a clearer delineation of expectations and responsibilities was seen as a way to manage this tension and avoid the potential dependency on the helper.
"In the past it has just kind of been a slide, you come in help them defend whatever, slide into a project packaging role, slide into a project managing role. But we are now in the process of trying to adopt a more systematic approach to contracting."

4.10 Development as a mediatory process of negotiation and management of tensions

As is apparent from all the sub-categories explored in the above section 4.9, the participants repeatedly stressed the need to 'balance', 'negotiate', 'trade off' and 'mediate' the tensions which were seen as inherent to their capacity building role. In this sense, they eschewed choosing one or other of the poles in these tensions. Rather, their development role was seen as an essentially mediatory one, aimed at continually balancing countervailing forces: "you have to live your contradiction". This final category aims, in conclusion, to demonstrate the implications of this perceived role for the consultants. This perception that development occurs through the effective management and negotiation of the above tensions can be seen to engender two inter-related outcomes for the consultants: (i) a need for space and flexibility and (ii) a need to mediate a process of negotiation between the key development stakeholders.

"At the end of the day service organisations are nothing but consultants to a process in which there are three power players: government, funders and communities. Service organisations are not sure where they fit. We all like to think that we are civil society, but we're not actually. We are actually a floating thing that serves the whole process" [italics added].

4.10.1 The need for space and flexibility

As is evident in the above characterisation of service organisations as "a floating thing", the participants' accounts were underscored by an expressed need for space and flexibility so as to be able to fulfil their development roles and appropriately "serve the whole process".

"It's that looser thing, that you need space and flexibility to take gaps and opportunities. For service organisations that's critical, to not get cramped into a tight objective and a whole lot of things are happening and they just ignore them".

"My bottom line is that you need NGOs to continue to support CBOs, to build quality into the system, to be innovative as they always have been, to see a problem and find a creative solution. I think they're going to be put into a straightjacket by the new funding procedures and requirements. They can't bounce around and respond creatively to opportunities".

The consultants emphasised the importance of being able to "bounce around" and "not get cramped into a tight objective" so as to fulfil what they saw as their creative, innovative, quality building role. While they failed to explicitly link this professed need for space with their need to balance the tensions of capacity building, this articulation of the importance of looseness and flexibility can be understood as an outcome of their mediatory development role. In short, a consequence of their perceived need to balance countervailing forces without
choosing one side or the other, was in this regard reflected in an espoused need to maintain their flexibility and not get 'cramped into a straightjacket' of, say, funder demands.

4.10.2 Mediating negotiation between stakeholders

The above depiction of service organisations as consultants to a wider process of negotiation about development appeared emblematic of a recurring advancement of the idea of 'development forums' in the consultants' accounts. These espoused forums were said to need to include local government, the private sector, community representatives and service organisations and were seen to have the potential to create the space for the negotiation of the contrary development demands and needs that this disparate grouping would bring to this arena.

"I think this is where the whole idea of development forums is really creative. I'm sold on development forums. They provide a unique environment in which local government, the private sector, civil society, including service organisations and community representatives can find a way of negotiating the development process that will best serve the district, region, whatever. And then be able to employ the services of service organisations - and very often they need a service organisation to facilitate a development forum into being in the first place. Because it is within those forums that people influence each other".

"I'm not sure how they are going to be funded, that's a critical question. But I think there's very little alternative to creating real visible alternative structures that provide the forum within which negotiations about development can happen between the various power players in development. If they remain separate as has happened in the past then there's just going to be ongoing contestation about development".

The consultants tended to observe that it was their role to set this process up as a way of facilitating relationships between "the various power players in development": "they need a service organisation to facilitate a development forum into being in the first place". Through this mediatory role of bringing people together they were seen to be able to creatively engage with development issues. The consultants noted that "if they remain separate ... then there's just going to be ongoing contestation about development".
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the ways in which OD consultants based in the South African development sector define and understand their work. More specifically, the primary concern was with how these INGO consultants account for 'capacity building'\(^1\). Arguments suggesting a need to map both OD and 'capacity building' in the South African development context were laid out in Chapter 2. A social constructionist approach to mapping this terrain by asking the 'knowing subject' (Morin, 1977 in Fruggeri, 1992), that is, OD practitioners, was furthermore advanced in Chapters 2 and 3. In accordance with this social constructionist idiom, the research attended to how the consultants make sense of experience and construct their social worlds. To this end, the results in Chapter 4 have provided a 'grounded theory' or narrative account (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) of how the OD practitioners in this study conceive of 'capacity building'. This narrative account presents a range of issues, concepts and implications for OD and 'capacity building'. In particular it leads to critical engagement with questions of how development is 'knowledged' or how development discourse may act to construct the object of development. This chapter aims to explore the implications of this discursive formation and is, as such, guided by the following questions: "What have I contributed here? How has my study helped to resolve the original problem? What conclusions and theoretical implications can I draw from my study?" (American Psychological Association, 1994, p.19). Taken together, these questions beget a host of epistemological, theoretical and practical issues to which I shall attempt to respond in the following chapter.

5.1.1 What is 'capacity building'?

The research participants were all OD consultants in third generation (Korten, 1990), intermediary (Carrol, 1992) or service NGOs (Harding, D., 1994) providing what they identified as 'capacity building' services to other NGOs and CBOs. Despite their adoption of this appellation as a signifier of their chosen focus, the consultants were invariably unable to provide a simple and coherent answer to the question, "What is capacity building?". Pointing to the futility of this enquiry, one participant laughingly replied, "That's like asking, 'Is there a god?'". In examining the results, the answer to the 'capacity building' question appears to be an equivocal, "It depends".

What is instead clear from the preceding narrative account is that simple definitions and generalisations about 'capacity building' are neither feasible nor appropriate. For the participants in this study, 'capacity building' does not refer to any clearly discernable set of processes. Rather, the results indicate that 'capacity building' is an inchoate and elusive concept which has entered the development lexicon without careful or mutually agreed

\(^1\) The results indicate that 'capacity building' is polysemic, i.e., it is a term with more than one meaning. As such, it is also a term which invites quotation marks to signify its contested definition.
upon definition. In this sense, the results echo Smith's (1979 in de Beer, 1997) observation that development terminology resides in an 'Alice in Wonderland world' where words simply mean what you want them to mean. To this end, the foregoing narrative variously constructs 'capacity building' as (i) value driven OD process facilitation, (ii) funder and market regulated service provision and (iii) 'people driven' product delivery. From this vantage point, it becomes apparent why Ewing (1996, p.1) has observed that "as one of the more popular phrases in development today, 'capacity building' brings with it a surprising amount of confusion".

The finding that 'capacity building' is, for the participants, 'many things at once' is an important result in light of Louw and de Kock's (1997) contention that the approach used to determine development interventions impacts on the role and utilisation of consultants. This multi-vocal construction of 'capacity building' begs the question, what are the implications for OD consultancy? Before exploring the ramifications of these multiple discourses of 'capacity building' for the OD encounter, it is first necessary to sketch out four broad observations about this narrative.

5.1.2 The social construction of 'capacity building'

Firstly, the narrative account is in no sense an objective report of 'what happens' in the development encounter. As explored in Chapter 2, it is difficult in our postmodern world to sustain the illusion that any one perspective enjoys the status of a 'god's eye view' of the way things are. The results therefore embody one particular structuring of a set of events. They are not a mirror of the development world, but are rather a social construction communicated in the form of a narrative. As such, they reflect ways in which a portion of OD consultants tried to tell themselves and others (myself in particular) what the development world is like. This is of course just one side of a complex story. There are likely to exist a variety of conceptions of 'capacity building' depending on who, why and what one asks.

That I asked OD consultants instead of their clients, their funders or government representatives is not to propose the relative importance of this group over others in the development sector. It was rather seen as a useful way to perform reconnaissance on OD in this context (Weick, 1990), to attend to the socio-cultural and organisational context in which OD is being practised so as to discern future trends for the discipline (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992) and to take up the challenge for local practitioners to develop a body of knowledge to inform OD in South Africa (Mamputa, 1997). As individuals at one corner of the development relationship, the consultants' explanations and narratives could be expected to constitute, at least in part, their development practice. As Morgan (1997, p.298) has observed, "how we manage change is ultimately a product of how we see and think about ourselves, hence how we enact relationships with the environment". In this way, the participants' 'capacity building' narratives are seen to define appropriate ways of practising development as well as speaking and thinking about it.
A second observation is that these narratives are co-constructed. The consultants interviewed are not the sole authors of the accounts. Their constructions did not simply spring, fully formed, from their heads, but were rather performed in the context of relationships (von Cronach, 1995). One of these is the research relationship. The role of the researcher in the co-construction of both the interview data and its interpretation has been explored in Chapter 3.

A third observation, which flows from the above, is that these narratives are not just a lens through which reality is perceived or just a framework for action for these OD consultants. The narrative also represents "a situated action, a performance" (Gergen, 1996, p.217). In order to understand this narrative one needs consequently also to take account of the performative function (Austin, 1975) of the consultants' constructions. When they spoke to me about their 'capacity building' role, they were not only recounting a set of events, they were also constructing a social identity. Their words could thus usefully be viewed not only as pictures but also as tools used to justify their role or warrant their position within the development arena (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Stenner & Eccleston, 1994). Certainly INGOs are now being faced with increased pressure to justify their existence in the post-apartheid development context (Harding, T., 1994a).

Finally, it is important to note that this process of social construction does not only happen within the 'micro-social' parameters of the research encounter, but also occurs within societal and cultural practices which are historically and linguistically mediated (Best & Kellner, 1991). The consultants' accounts draw from the stock of pre-existing OD and development narratives, potential plot lines and cultural intelligibilities available within their 'background' (Wittgenstein, 1969) or 'development context' (Kotze & Kotze, 1996). As Gergen (1994, p.72) writes, "once we begin to articulate 'what there is' ... the process of construction commences, and this effort is inextricably woven into processes of social interchange and into history and culture". By telling their 'capacity building' stories in a particular way, the participants are not just making a personal statement, but are also identifying with broader issues of power, ideology and relationships as they are reproduced within South Africa's particular historical, political and economic context.

5.1.3 The structure of this discussion

The intention in this chapter is to bring the many threads of this thesis together in order to address the research question and the implications of its 'answer'. These threads include the existing literature pertaining to this study, the epistemological framework followed, and the narrative account which this research produced. To this integrative end, this chapter will be divided into six sections. Firstly, the core category and its relation to OD literature will be examined (section 5.2). Secondly, the consultants' conceptions of their environment and the degree to which these mediate the way they approach their 'capacity building' role will be introduced (section 5.3). This environment will be further explored in the third section which, through the use of Stoner et al.'s (1995) stakeholder framework, will explore the different discourses of 'capacity building', the manner in which
these construct different roles for the consultants, and how these discourses compare with each other and with OD literature (sections 5.4 - 5.7). Fourthly, we will return to the core category and explore the possible consultant responses to the tensions produced by the narrative account (section 5.8). Fifthly, how these discourses are further mediated by the participants' perceptions of their indirect action environment will be examined (section 5.9). The discussion will conclude with an examination of the challenges which these OD consultants appear to face in coming to adopt their 'capacity building' role (section 5.10), as well as an exploration of what this study may in fact tell us about the nature of OD consultancy (section 5.11).

Finally, it is important to note that whilst this chapter will examine the results in light of the existing theoretical literature, simple comparison of the results generated and the literature reviewed is not my main aim. Rather, one of the motivations for this study was, in fact, to respond to gaps in the literature: the existing theoretical accounts of this problem domain were shown in Chapter 2 to be poorly developed. It has been advanced that OD needs to consider how social, political and cultural forces will continue to shape the field (Marshak, 1994; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992) yet there is seen to exist little documented debate which grounds OD issues in South Africa (Harding, T. 1994a; Mamputa, 1997). 'Capacity building' is similarly regarded as yet another confusing piece of post-apartheid jargon (Booth, 1993; Ewing, 1996) of which there exists no adequate theory (CDRA, 1994/5). In this respect, Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.37) note that an underlying assumption of a grounded theory approach is that "all of the concepts pertaining to a given phenomenon have not yet been identified, at least not in this population or place; or if so then the relationships between the concepts are poorly understood or conceptually developed".

It is instructive, in this light, to recall that the rationale for a grounded theory approach is to develop theory, rather than to verify it. Use of this method involves a fresh look at existing theory, which invariably necessitates developing, refining, revising and transcending concepts within a discipline (Charmaz, 1990). This discussion does not therefore aim to approach the preceding narrative account as something to be 'tested' or validated against extant theory. Rather, by situating the theory generated by the consultant accounts of 'capacity building' within the disciplinary, theoretical and contextual frameworks and debates reviewed in Chapter 2, my aim is to use the narrative account as a stimulation to a new understanding of the nature of 'capacity building' and of OD consultancy. As Latour (1987 in Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992, p.102) argues, this notion of theory generation "highlights the process of inserting new discourses within old systems of meaning - the active, constitutive process of representation and re-presentation in science". To this generative end, this discussion takes the following questions as its points of departure, "Do the key concepts of the existing theory fit the current data? Do the supposed existing relationships hold up? What is present in the current set of concepts but missing in existing theory?" (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997, p.268).
As is apparent from the results, OD consultancy in the development context is primarily concerned with managing tensions. In terms of the analytic narrative, a great deal of effective consultant behaviour seems to be about balancing, mediating or managing any one of a variety of countervailing forces in their environment. For the consultants in this study, this appeared to be an almost intuitive or implicit role. Few of the participants explicitly articulated their ‘capacity building’ role in this vein or clearly described their work in terms of the complex mediatory role which I regard them as being required to play in managing these tensions. Instead, this mediatory function appeared to be an implicit, ‘taken for granted’ construction, which was frequently manifested in their accounts in a more tacit manner. For example, when the consultants spoke about ‘capacity building’ they often made ambivalent and/or contradictory statements. Consider the extract analysed in section 3.4.1 where three different discourses of ‘capacity building’ were undeclaredly contained in a single paragraph. Here, the participant was not categorically explaining three different ways of understanding ‘capacity building’, he was simply explaining "our approach to capacity building". Yet, while the consultants did not explicitly acknowledge these different conceptions of ‘capacity building’, their accounts often made reference to the implications of these competing discourses: "it [‘capacity building’] is an incredibly complex process. You are negotiating your way through conflicts all the time". Therefore, while the origins of the tensions were not clearly stated, the ramifications were consistently seen to be experienced: "you have to live your contradiction". To manage the tension and conflict created by these different discourses, the consultants implied, for instance, that different ‘masks’ had to be worn in presenting themselves to funders and to communities respectively (as explained in section 4.9.1).

In sum, coming to adopt a ‘capacity building’ role was seen by the consultants to engender the following dilemmas: (i) constituency based conflict, (ii) tension between ‘value-driven’ vs. ‘professional’ approaches, (iii) tension between demands for ‘product’ vs. ‘process’, (iv) tension between ‘supportive’ and ‘critical’ perspectives, (v) tension between demands for ‘delivery’ vs. ‘participation’, and (vi) tension between ‘helping’ vs. ‘encouraging dependency’. I shall return to these issues later when I consider more fully the implications of ‘capacity building’s’ discursive construction. First, it is necessary to ask, from whence these tensions?

5.2.1 Understanding the contextual basis of the consultants’ tensions

As is apparent from the above, while the consultants’ accounts consistently reflected and raised tensions and dilemmas, the origins of these dilemmas were, for them, ill-defined. The attempt to locate the bases of these tensions consequently brings the ‘dilemma of qualitative method’ (Hammersley, 1989) to the fore. This dilemma is seen to spring from a simultaneous commitment to both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives, to both inductively reflecting participants’ accounts as well as generating new understanding and theory through active and creative researcher interpretation (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994). Put another way, it has been argued that
to understand the OD consultants' participation in their social world, one needs to engage with how the world is perceived through the eyes of the participants themselves - sometimes referred to as tacit, contextual or 'insider' knowledge (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997). A corollary argument, however, is that researchers need simultaneously to maintain a degree of 'strangeness' from their participants, for "without this they would live entirely within their participants' 'natural attitude' and the tacit (that is, taken for granted) cultural assumptions and ways of life would not be revealed" (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997, p.251).

It is submitted, in this light, that by combining 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives and thereby locating the core category of 'managing tensions' within the multi-vocal construction of 'capacity building', the horizon of understanding the tensions raised by the consultants deepens and broadens. The results suggest in this respect that these tensions are in fact actuated by the context in which these OD consultants find themselves. The participants are already inside the context, and so appear to realise these contextual processes from a personal perspective: "you have to live your contradiction", seemingly without a full understanding, and certainly without an explicit articulation, of their origins. As I, as an outsider, began to interpret their accounts in terms of the different 'capacity building' discourses which they produced, the extent to which these tensions could be seen to be a function of the different constructions of 'capacity building' became more apparent. In this way, my 'differing account' (Addison, 1989) opened a door to the exploration of the possible causes of these tensions.

By showing, in the sections that follow, how these different constructions of 'capacity building' are intimately connected with the perceived context of these OD consultants, this chapter seeks to demonstrate how the tensions that these consultants experience are a function of their relationship to the environment within which they operate. This is a position which builds on Sanzgiri and Gottlieb's (1992) assertion that the character of OD is shaped by the contextual circumstances within which OD consultants find themselves. In addition, by taking this notion of OD's socio-historical contingency further, this chapter seeks to explore the idea, raised by the consultants' accounts, that the management and negotiation of these inherent tensions may in fact be the OD consultant's raison d'etre. In this sense, it aims to consider whether OD consultants could perhaps usefully be regarded as agents of a mediating process of negotiation and management of tensions which is given life by the changing contexts of society. But first, before examining this contention, and before turning to an exploration of the participants' understanding of their environment, it is necessary to explore the relationship between the key concepts of existing theory and the core category of the narrative account. To this end, a brief examination on the status of 'tensions' in OD literature follows.

5.2.2 OD literature and 'tensions'

To date, little has been written on understanding the apparent tensions and dilemmas which may be inherent to the discipline of OD. As a result, it is not possible simply to compare this core category with existing OD literature in an uncomplicated manner. Certainly, once one is sensitised to some of these tensions (such as those
between humanistic values and profit-making, process and product, individual and organisation, to name a few) they are easier to uncover in OD discourse. That said, one would be hard pressed to find any thorough engagement with the tensions of OD in any standard organisational behaviour or OD text. French and Bell (1995), French et al. (1994), Hanson and Lubin (1995) and Smither et al. (1996) are, for instance, all contemporary, popular and otherwise rather useful OD texts which do not make any explicit reference to 'tensions', 'dilemmas' or the like.

In the more liminal conceptual space of academic journals this issue is however increasingly being raised. Wooten and White (1989) provide a cogent, if brief, summary of the issues of role conflict and ambiguity which may occur in the OD encounter. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) suggest that OD practitioners need to adopt an integrative 'Janusian perspective' to reconcile the tension between individual and organisation. This suggestion, while rather vaguely and broadly stated, appears to join a growing intellectual 'call to arms' to construct new ways of approaching the project of OD (see also Burke, 1997; Hames, 1994; Weick, 1990). Reflecting on this growing shift in sensibility, Sashkin and Burke (1994, p.56) have observed that "although we in OD have always been confronted with the conflict of the individual versus the organisation, what is unprecedented is how deep this issue has become. Never before have we had to face so squarely our own beliefs, values and ethical standards".

In this regard, it appears that whilst certain conflicts inherent to the field of OD have long been ignored, there currently exists a subtle yet pervasive sea change occurring within this discipline. OD literature seems increasingly to be adopting a posture of self-reflection, of "lowering one's defences, seeing fully [and] looking again at things one considers already understood" which Weick (1990, p.313) has suggested needs to be part of OD's 'reconnaissance agenda'. Burke (1997, p.18) has, for instance, recently written that "it is time - indeed, past time - for OD practitioners ... to wake up in the middle of the night and question ourselves".

To my mind, the recent self-reflexive turn within the OD field concerning values, principles of theory and practice, and contextual influences (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992) can, to a degree, be traced to OD's neglect of the tensions inherent to the OD encounter. As Wooten and White (1989) have observed, the literature concerning the OD consultant's role has been limited. Beer (1980, p.77) has suggested that it has been "purposefully vague". It now seems that this untheorised conceptual blind-spot is coming increasingly to the fore and demanding attention. In this respect, while Alderfer's (1977, p.218) caveat that "to be effective in increasingly turbulent systems, OD must deal with the conflicts inherent in those systems" has not, to date, been taken up with any cogency in OD literature, it does seem that with its increased use in different settings, OD practitioners and theorists are being forced to become clearer about some of the tensions and contradictions that this discipline's dissemination is actuating. With this in mind, it appears that the core category of this research is in tune with the current intellectual posture of self-reflection in OD literature, if not existing OD theory.
Another reason why the core category might be missing from existing OD theory is of course, following Alderfer’s (1978) observation above, that a number of the tensions raised by the participants in this study can be seen to be a function of this particular context within which OD is being practised. Hulme and Edwards (1997, p.4) have noted that the development context is "a complex and messy terrain" - the South African development arena seems to be no exception. It was in reference to this sector that one participant noted, "the longer you work in it, the less you find you know". Most OD texts are, on the other hand, situated within an American corporate change context. As T. Harding (1994a), Marks (1996), Mamputa (1997) and others have observed, there is little documented debate which grounds OD issues in African countries. This said, there is also little to suggest that the broader areas of tension mentioned by the consultants are wholly unique to this environment. More importantly, the issue with regards to the lacuna in OD literature seems not so much to be that these tensions do not exist, as that they simply are not explicitly acknowledged (Sashkin & Burke, 1994). As will be explored in this chapter, both the tensions produced by the narrative account and the tensions which Burke (1997), Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992), Weick (1990) and others are raising in the American commercial organisation context, can in fact usefully be understood as ‘stakeholder tensions’.

In understanding this neglect of the ‘core category’ in OD literature, it may be that for OD practitioners and theorists, an acknowledgement of these tensions or dilemmas is negatively constructed as a weakness or a problem to be avoided. Dictionaries, for instance, certainly tend to define these terms pejoratively. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1966) refers to "a straining or strained condition" and "a choice of alternatives, both equally unfavourable, a position of doubt or perplexity" respectively. The ‘horns of a dilemma’ are, after all, something one would like to avoid. For the OD consultants in this study however, these tensions were seen as an unavoidable and inherent part of their ‘capacity building’ work. The narrative account advances a conception of development as being about a mediatory process of managing tensions and contradictions. The participants suggested that if these tensions are not acknowledged, ‘lived’ and ‘balanced’, then the utility of OD decreases. As I have noted above, a position I consequently intend to explore in this chapter is the consultants’ articulation that these tensions are not necessarily negative, but rather that the constructive management of these unavoidable tensions creates the conditions for an effective OD encounter.

The specific nature and contour of these tensions will be explored more fully later. For now it is argued that they can all most usefully be understood in light of the different stakeholder discourses of ‘capacity building’ contained in the participants’ accounts. It is submitted that it is not possible to understand either the meaning or the influence of these discourses without considering the contexts within which they have developed. These tensions can be more fully appreciated by drawing on both systems theory and the stakeholder perspective to explore the consultants’ conception of their environment, given the extent to which this wider context serves to qualify and mediate their ‘capacity building’ role.
5.3 The OD consultants' environment

Of late, a growing number of authors (Burke, 1997; Hames, 1995; Hanson & Lubin, 1995; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Smither et al., 1996; Marshak, 1993; Weick, 1990) have argued that attention needs to be given to the socio-cultural and organisational context in which OD is being practised, so as to discern future trends for this discipline. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) in particular, have demonstrated how the theory and practice of OD is historically contingent, how it acquires its character within particular historical circumstances and in response to particular client system problems. They consequently suggest that attention needs to be paid to the way in which the climate of the country in which OD is being practised will keep the field alive and responsive to environmental demands.

Following Weick (1979), Morgan (1986) and others it has been argued that a useful way to pay attention to the socio-cultural context of this country and how it mediates the practice of OD is in terms of the 'enacted environment' of these OD consultants. This perspective eschews the search for one monolithic or foundational context for OD in South Africa, taking instead the constructionist position that organisational contexts are enacted domains (Weick, 1979). As Morgan (1990, p.21) notes, the main thrust of this approach is that "the world which we inhabit is much more of our own making than we are usually prepared to recognise". From this vantage point, it follows to ask, how did the participants construct their organisational context?

With a view to answering this question, both the literature and the results suggest that the consultants' constructed environment is most productively explored in terms of the comprehensive contextual framework provided by Stoner et al. (1995) which combines systems theory with the stakeholder concept. According to Stoner et al. (1995) the OD consultants' environment can be seen to consist of direct and indirect action elements.

The direct action environment is made up of stakeholders, those groups or individuals that can affect or are affected by the accomplishment of these INGOs' organisational purpose. This environment is further divided into internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are, in this case, the OD consultants. External stakeholders are those groups which effect INGO activities from outside the organisation. In terms of the consultants' accounts, these include their funders, the communities they serve and the ANC-led government. Stoner et al. (1995) note that to ensure survival, organisations need to keep these relationships in balance over short and long term.

The indirect action elements of the consultants' environment includes social variables and values, economic conditions and trends, political climate and technological developments (Stoner et al., 1995). In terms of the preceding narrative account this would include trends such as South Africa's socio-political transformation, the resulting reconstitution of the development arena as an industrial marketplace, and the pressure towards people-
driven development and the debates around the 'politics of race' that this move has engendered. As Stoner et al. (1995) observe, the indirect-action environment creates a climate which influences stakeholder behaviour and to which organisations have to respond.

Figure 5.1 is a representation of the OD consultants’ context under which the particular discursive formation of 'capacity building' came about. In order to understand 'capacity building' and its tensions, we need to examine how consultants came to account for this context. Each element of this environment will thus be examined in turn, both with respect to the particular construction of 'capacity building' it advances, and in light of the literature set out in Chapter 2.

"from resistance to reconstruction"  "the development marketplace"

the government  the funder

the OD consultant

the community

"people-driven development and the politics of race"

Figure 5.1

As their name suggests, INGOs exist as intermediaries, working in the middle of the development encounter. D. Harding (1994) notes, for example, that INGOs are at the centre of development debate and practice. This particular diagrammatic representation does not imply that other organisations or environmental forces not included in figure 5.1 have no influence over the role and practice of INGOs, but rather provides a focus for an exploration of the relationships which were seen to hold particular significance in terms of the narrative account. A useful aspect of viewing their accounts in light of this representation is that this opens the door to an understanding that OD consultants are not autonomous entities, but are rather situated within webs of relationships. As such, it makes it easier to see how, in accordance with the consultants' accounts, their 'capacity building' work is concerned with negotiating multiple constituencies.
The results indicate that there exist, for the participants, at least four discourses of 'capacity building'. These were broadly grouped as the service organisation, funder, community and government discourses. Of these, this discussion will focus predominantly on the first three, given the influential manner in which these have mediated the different constructions of capacity building inherent in the consultants' accounts. Recall that the government discourse was a construction largely without content in terms of the participants' 'capacity building' role. At a basic, common level these three discourses construct 'capacity building' in terms of a deliberate, purposive intervention in social change at a community level. Beyond that, however, they generate mixed messages for these OD consultants. Louw and de Kock (1997, p.135) note that "the role and utilisation of consultants will be affected by the approach used to determine development interventions at any specific time". With this in mind, it can be seen how each discourse of capacity building frames the aims, objectives and processes of the OD encounter in a particular manner. Each construction sets the consultant down a particular development path or trajectory, each of which invites different courses of action. For example, to view 'capacity building' as facilitating processes of sustainable community organisation development has different implications to defining it as professional and accountable product delivery. Let us consider, then, the implications of these discursive constructions.

5.4 "Agents of change" - Values, OD process and the creation of independent and sustainable community organisations

Kaplan's (1994) observation that this INGO or service organisation sector works toward facilitating and supporting viable and self-sustaining community based organisations is one consistent with the 'service organisation discourse' evident in the narrative account. In this sense, all consultants interviewed emphasised that the purpose of 'capacity building' is to develop the capacity of community organisations so as to replace them (i.e., the OD consultants) in their functions and independently pursue development on a self-sustaining basis. The consultants were clear that their role is not one of relief, welfare or providing small-scale, local development such as housing. Rather they saw their organisations as third generation NGOs (Korten, 1990) which act as 'catalysts' for a sustainable development process.

This approach to 'capacity building' consequently constructs it as a holistic, long term, value-driven and empowering process aimed at developing sustainable CBOs through OD interventions. Insofar as this narrative is one which can be seen to originate from the service organisations themselves this is the discourse of the internal stakeholders (Stoner et al., 1995). It is furthermore, the 'capacity building' discourse which resonates most with an OD perspective. This section aims to examine those aspects which belong to this 'change agent' usage of the 'capacity building' signifier, and the ideas and practices which accompany it.
In this construction of ‘capacity building’ the consultants related their development approach to a clear, purposeful and above all, value-driven agenda. As OD practitioners they did not regard themselves to be value-free. Their work was rather seen to adopt a particular ideological position which strongly informed their ‘capacity building’ approach. Unlike in commercial enterprises where profit maximisation is invariably regarded as an organisation’s driving force, the fundamental purpose of INGOs was not seen to be as clearly definable or measurable. Instead it was contained in stated political objectives such as “empowering the marginalised”, “ensuring democracy”, “serving the community” and so on. This forceful articulation of values which were seen to underpin development work is of interest coming as it does at a time when OD’s closely blended fabric of values and practice is said to be beginning to unravel.

Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) have suggested that the field of OD needs to pay increased attention to the core values and shared understandings which continue to shape the ethical boundaries of the field. Burke (1997) and others (Boccialletti, 1989; Sashkin & Burke, 1994; Weick, 1990) have recently questioned whether contemporary OD practitioners are behaving in ways congruent with OD’s espoused humanistic values. These values - which include a concern for principles of human development, growth, fairness, democracy and equity - are regarded as a touchstone which is being increasingly ignored by OD practitioners in their overwhelming emphasis on economic results (Burke, 1997). Liebowitz and Mendelow (1988) have observed that in an increasingly competitive marketplace, managers tend to demand tangible results and are therefore wont to measure OD in terms of cost-cutting, increasing revenues, profits or market share. Burke (1997, p.7) contends in response, that “if OD practitioners want to sleep better at night, they need to live the basic values of their profession, challenge actions they know are immoral, and play a more expansive role in improving organisational life”.

In light of this debate, which is being played out in an American, commercial organisation context, it is in striking contraposition that the OD consultants in this study were forthright with regard to a value-driven approach guiding their ‘capacity building’ work. Echoing Burke’s (1997) call for a more expansive role, they spoke of ‘capacity building’ being closely linked to concepts of an enlightened humanitarian approach aimed at making a progressive change to society. As one participant explained, “You have a particular conception of reality that they [the community] are marginalised, and why they are marginalised and you try and address that, and you are actually trying to get social change”.

Values were, in this sense, set up as an essential quality of this sector, providing a constant compass for their ‘capacity building’ function. In articulating a focus for his OD work, one consultant observed, “Where do we get our direction from? It’s not just from the funders. It’s not just from the communities out there on the ground. It’s the situation in the country, our ideologies and where we think we can fit in and make a change”.
When participants spoke of making a change, they framed their contribution in terms of ‘progressive’, ‘virtuous’ terminology aimed at furthering the abilities of communities to act in a democratic, humane and equitable fashion. In this sense, the espoused values of these OD practitioners appear to answer the call within the wider OD discipline to recover the ‘messianic spirit’ and ‘forces of light’ which guided the founding practitioners of the OD field (Boccialetti, 1989; Margulies & Raia, 1990 in Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992).

Within this discourse, commitment to principles of equity, justice and democracy were, for the participants, more important than market-related issues of profit and loss. Consultants spoke of a declared commitment to people rather than bottom-line profits. As Church et al. (1994, p.6) have observed, “today’s emphasis is overwhelmingly on results, whereas OD’s focus is on process, thus how one achieves the bottom line is as important as the bottom line itself”. In a manner congruent with this assertion, talk of ‘bottom lines’ was seen as incompatible with the consultants’ value driven ethos: “there is a different ethos that is operating in this sector. The training is happening for a different reason. The measurables are just so foreign to the NGO world ... I mean you are not looking for people who are going to make a difference to the bottom line of the business”.

Given that their value-driven approach was said to aim to make a difference to wider society, the participants also articulated a distinct political component to their OD work. As actors in the South African development arena, the consultants were not only familiar with politics, but tended to interpret the development process politically. This formed part of their "particular conception of reality". This is however an issue not addressed in American corporate change literature in any fundamental way (Flederman, 1997). OD literature seems rather more concerned with the pragmatics and technicalities of organisational change and tends not to locate organisations within a wider socio-political context. This study indicates however that social organisation was, for the consultants, intimately bound up with issues of politics, ideology and power. This issue raised in the accounts is furthermore ignored in most of the debates around the applicability of OD in Africa which tend to centre around ‘cultural fit’ (Blunt & Jones, 1992; Srinivas, 1995) without acknowledging the apparent political component to organisational change in this context. The results demonstrate that the past experience of these consultants has led to an OD perspective which regards political questions as critical to any change management endeavour. This key theme of OD’s use in the development sector points, in turn, to useful areas of exploration in terms of informing Mamputa’s (1997) call to develop a body of local values which inform OD in South Africa.

5.4.2 ‘Capacity building’, sustainable organisations and OD process work

In terms of making a progressive difference to society and facilitating processes of social change, the concept and practice of ‘organisation’ figured strongly in the participants’ accounts. In short, the results indicate that, in terms of this ‘capacity building’ discourse, building capacity means that organisations have to be developed.
Independent and sustainable organisational structures were regarded as a pre-requisite for community development. As one participant explained, "Post-1990 has allowed people to express their opinions and to think that, 'There are things that we can get', but need to organise themselves to try and get it". ‘Capacity building’ becomes, in this regard, closely linked to notions of a self-sustained organisation development process.

The consultants were therefore all committed to the aim of developing the capacity of CBOs so as to provide a foundation for further development. Strong, democratic and sustainable organisational structures were seen to be the prerequisite for communities connecting with the development world. This was said to allow communities to articulate their demands and access development funds. As a result ‘capacity building’ was seen to have an instrumental value - it is that which is necessary "for CBOs to go and do it out there" - rather than be an end in itself.

This conception of ‘capacity building’ is one consonant with wider post-apartheid development discourses. The RDP for instance, aimed to promote people-driven development, whereby communities decide their needs and are empowered to control the process (ANC, 1994). This conception of development positions NGOs as important role players in "unleashing the capacities of communities … to participate in the development process issues which are at the heart of a sustained development" (Dangor, 1994, p.17). These notions of sustainability, empowerment and participation were consistently articulated by the consultants as being central to this ‘capacity building’ discourse. This is also a construction of ‘capacity building’ which warrants the need for their services within the development context. Communities were regarded as lacking in the skills necessary for organisational effectiveness: "they don’t have the skills and resources necessary to run their own organisations". Within this narrative, OD consultants become integral role players in the development process.

As such, OD was advanced as an important aspect of ‘capacity building’. Other aspects of ‘capacity building’ were seen to include access to information, money and the ability to network with other organisations. Within this conception, ‘capacity building’ is something which is best achieved by adopting an integrative, holistic approach which includes the participation of other organisations. As one participant noted, "the OD that we do is just one bit. It is not equal to capacity building". That said, when the consultants spoke about their OD work they tended to conflate it with ‘capacity building’, and despite the above disclaimer used the two interchangeably throughout their interviews. It seems that while the consultants advanced a holistic conception of ‘capacity building’, they regarded OD as their approach to ‘capacity building’, which should ideally be supplemented by other approaches.

Whilst acknowledging that there exists no single theory of OD (Beckhard & Schein, 1992), this conception of building the capacity of democratic and representative CBOs to access development in a self-sustaining basis, is one which dovetails well with the general OD perspective synthesised in literature review. The key aspects of this consonance will be briefly explored below.
In accordance with OD literature, 'capacity building' was, in terms of this service organisation discourse, seen as a long-range, planned and sustained effort and not a once-off intervention (French et al., 1994; Liebowitz & Mendelow, 1988). As French and Bell (1995) have observed, OD should aim to engender a never-ending journey of continuous change moving over time to goals of organisational improvement and individual development. To the extent that it constructs 'capacity building' as an extended long term process without any clear end point, the service organisation discourse identifies strongly with this perspective. In this vein, one participant noted that "capacity building should be seen as a process. It doesn't stop with the leadership being empowered".

Insofar as it denoted a process, the participants repeatedly described OD and 'capacity building' as being concerned with issues which were frequently intangible, unquantifiable or "very hard to measure". As one participant remarked, "OD is often less tangible than specific things. It is often the perception of people within an organisation and how that changes". This constitution of 'capacity building' correlates with OD's emphasis on the often intangible 'human dimension' in any planned change process (French et al., 1994). OD's systems theory underpinnings were furthermore succinctly re-told by one consultant who observed, "It's about transforming the relationship to the environment and various stakeholders in the environment, the way people relate to each other at work etc.". Due to its concern with these relational processes, the results of 'capacity building' were said to be seldom visible or easily measurable: "I don't think our contribution is always visible ... to help develop the capacity of democratic and representative organisational forms to initiate development in their own areas".

The consultants also acknowledged the importance of the collaborative nature of the OD encounter. French et al. (1994) and Kubr (1996) refer to the collaborative relationship of relative equality between consultant and client as a fundamental aspect of OD. By becoming a 'consulting pair' (Hanson & Lubin, 1995), each partner provides a different perspective, with the consultant acting as a facilitator and not imposing judgements on community aims. It was noted, in this respect, that, "It's up to them to actually use the 'capacity building' to increase their own agricultural production. We can't go and be farmers on their behalf. And that is the critical difference. When a community says we need capacity, I say, 'What for? What for? What do you want to do? What is your work?'". This construction invokes the image of the OD consultant as facilitator and question-asker (French et al., 1994), helping clients uncover and mobilise their own resources through non-directive collaboration (Kubr, 1996).

This 'collaborative and participative process' narrative interrelates with the participants' talk of communities having to be empowered to develop themselves in the future. OD literature tells us that once-off interventions are unlikely to teach the client how to solve problems themselves in the future (French et al., 1994). Kubr (1996) notes that organisations are likely to resist changes which are imposed from the outside. To this end, the consultants recognised that when development initiatives are undertaken in collaboration with the community
there exists a greater likelihood that CBOs will own and accept the change. Importantly, they noted that it has to be done in a manner which empowers the organisation to internalise the OD skills and develop themselves in the future. Development was understood as having to be provided in such a way that a foundation is built for further community initiated development. As one consultant remarked, "they take over the role that you used to play". This conception neatly emulates OD discourse as explained by Beer (1980, p.9) as follows: "the consultant trains members to do their own OD so that the organisation can carry on without him".

OD aims to facilitate a process whereby organisations 'learn how to learn' (Hanson & Lubin, 1995). This is a process Schermerhorn et al. (1994) refer to as 'planned change plus', the plus referring to the creation of a capacity for self-renewal in an organisation. This service organisation construction of 'capacity building' similarly defines it as a co-operative process enabling communities to develop the skills needed to access and implement development programmes. Echoing this OD 'learning discourse', one consultant remarked, "So both sides are working towards a common goal, it is just that our organisation's goal is one step more. It's more implicit though, we don't say that we are training you to go and get something else". In this vein, consultants reiterated the importance of capacity being built in a manner which facilitates the introjection of their function. According to this narrative, simply providing the community with a product or doing the community's work for them would fail to develop capacity: "we can't be farmers on their behalf". It appears that the consultants understood the importance of collaboration and division of labour and responsibility among the members of the 'consulting pair', without which OD's effectiveness would be undermined (French et al., 1994).

In sum, the OD consultants are positioned by this service organisation 'capacity building' discourse in terms of the roles of 'catalytic outsider' and 'process specialist' (Schein, 1987), playing an essentially facilitative OD process role. If this was all that the consultants had said when describing 'capacity building' then I could perhaps have stopped here, cheerily noted that the way OD is said to be practised in the South African development context is in accordance with the principal tenets of OD as espoused in the literature, that this discipline is playing a fundamental role in answering a considerable need for OD facilitation processes in this context, and that, above all, it seems to be achieving this whilst simultaneously 'recovering the forces of light' (Bocchialetti, 1989) through the consultants' clear articulation of OD's fundamental values. D. Harding (1994, p.2) observes however that "of all levels in the NGO world, INGOs face the stiffest challenge in staying true to some of the best features of development work and in holding to a radical, sustainable approach to development". One reason for this difficulty appears to be that theirs is not the only interpretation of the 'capacity building' concept. Rather, the results indicate that other, powerful stakeholders within the development context attach different meanings to this term. As the results indicate, INGOs seem to be increasingly judged according to these other criteria.
"A professional, accountable service" - Funder conditionality and the demand for material service delivery

In terms of Stoner et al.'s (1995) framework, funders were regarded as powerful external stakeholders in the participants' accounts. As Hallowes (1995) has noted, they are major players in the development arena. NGOs are by definition 'not for profit' organisations and so are largely dependent on funder money for organisational survival. This position of control over resources affords donors a powerful position from which to set the development agenda (Karras, 1996). In this study, the consultants' frequent articulation of vulnerability to donor pressures confirmed this pervasiveness of donor influence. The results indicate that funders do not only have a great interest in NGO work, but are also seen to be making greater efforts to influence its nature in the post-apartheid context. As an apparent consequence of this influence, the 'funder discourse' of 'capacity building' defines this concept in terms of upwardly accountable, measurable and professional service delivery.

5.5.1 Upwards accountability to funders

The consultants consistently spoke of funder pressure to provide a particular kind of work. Not only was there seen to be an economic dependence on funder money for organisational survival, but also a conditionality attached to this funding: "they want to fund specific programmes that fit in with their priorities and you have got to shape what you do to fit in with what they would fund". The most obvious pressure for co-option into donor "parameters, priorities and criteria" was seen to come from the conditionality of finance: the acceptance of aid fosters emphasis on certain forms of activity, on upward accountability and on donor definitions of 'development'. This articulation is in accordance with Hulme and Edwards's (1997) observation that the unequal power relationship between NGOs and funders frequently creates pressure for co-option into donor agendas. As they note, 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'. For the participants, part and parcel of this funder conditionality was the adoption of a particular approach to their 'capacity building' work which was often in conflict with the more value-driven OD process approach. Aspects of this donor definition of 'capacity building' and how it is at odds with an approach couched in an OD orientation will be explored below.

Pre-1990 funding criteria were regarded as less rigid and for the consultants a broad 'anti-apartheid' stance was said to be sufficient to secure funds. After socio-political transformation however, the participants noted that they not only faced a funding threat when funders re-directed money to the new democratically elected government, but funders were also seen to change their criteria, parameters and priorities: "funders are now more careful about people doing what they are told". T. Harding (1994b) notes, in accordance with what the results evidenced, that NGOs now need to demonstrate how their activities meet socio-economic needs as well as contribute to sustainable economic growth and development in order to secure donor funding. The participants' perception that it was now more difficult to get money, resulted in even greater pressure "to shape what you do to fit in with what they want to fund".
This ‘funder discourse’ is one amplified by elements of the indirect action environment, in particular the move toward a development marketplace. The corollary forces of funder accountability and the use of market mechanisms as a dominant tool to measure the value of OD interventions, coalesce in the participants’ accounts to create a number of consequences for the construction of what ‘capacity building’ is about. In this section the implications of the funder discourse of ‘capacity building’ will be explored. How this is further mediated by issues arising within the wider indirect action environment, such as the move towards a development marketplace, will be examined in section 5.9.2.

5.5.2 ‘Capacity building’ as measurable service provision

The funder ‘capacity building’ narrative evident in the consultants’ accounts is one which results in the OD encounter being drawn in the image of some form of professional product delivery. The key words in the ‘funder discourse’ are "accountability", "measurable results", "cost effectiveness", "detailed specifications" and "professionalism". The following quote provides a fitting illustration of this understanding of ‘capacity building’:

"You need to be specific in order to get funds ... What you need to do is identify the community or communities you will service, to explain what the problems are that you will address, how you will do it, what the expected outcomes or results are, and then what it will cost you - all worked out in a fair amount of detail".

The ‘funder discourse’ constructs ‘capacity building’ as having to be concerned with the delivery of a demonstrable product to a community: "NGOs have been pulled in by the delivery discourse. They have to start delivering concrete things rather than say what we deliver is not always tangible". This narrative stresses delivery of specific, cost-effective outcomes - a demand which flies in the face of the more process oriented OD approaches to development examined in 5.4. Within the OD approach encapsulated in the ‘service organisation’ discourse, ‘capacity building’ was framed in terms of a long term, holistic, frequently intangible process aimed at empowerment and sustainability rather than immediate delivery. In this sense, ‘capacity building’ was seen to have an instrumental value - it was understood as a means to other ends of "social change", "sustainable development", "democratisation" and so on. It is clear that this is, however, not an approach congenial with the funder construction of building capacity. Here ‘capacity building’ is couched in terms of an intrinsic value. Judgement on whether capacity has been built or not is based on short term costing and delivery outcomes, not the resultant, less tangible, longer term changes reflective of sustainable development.

The emphasis on the delivery of tangible outcomes is in many ways accordant with a ‘deprivation and input’ development model (Rogers, 1992), emblematic of the widely criticised ‘modernisation’ approach to development (Coetzee, 1989a; Kotze & Kotze, 1996; Kelly & van der Riet, in press). As Rogers (1992) observes, this model aims to achieve growth, modernisation or meet basic needs by emphasising the role of an ‘expert’ who ‘imparts awareness’, ‘gives skills or knowledge’ or ‘delivers products’. This emphasis on expert
delivery stands in stark contraposition to a more facilitative, OD process consultation orientation (Schein, 1989). As such, to the extent that the OD consultants adopt this development approach, this is a discourse which is likely to limit the manoeuvrability of these OD consultants to engage in more value-driven, intangible and longer term change processes. It is likely to confine them instead to a role of service agents, within a modernisation model which emphasises the provision of measurable and accountable input-output indicators (Coetzee, 1989a).

This articulation sets up an understanding of ‘capacity’ as being tangible and measurable and advances the position that development occurs through the injection of certain clearly defined inputs into communities to push the change process forward. In this way, the ‘funder conception’ can be seen to form part of a ‘top-down’, ‘supply side’ discourse, which emphasises the delivery of development projects and services. It exists in tension with ‘bottom-up’, ‘demand side’ discourses which accent the importance of development being community driven. The move towards a people-driven development approach has become an important development strategy for the 1990s and beyond (Beukes, 1994; Coetzee, S, 1994) and is the conception of development promoted by the ANC’s (1994) RDP. Emphasising the importance of a bottom-up, endogeneity to the development process, Korren (1990, p.157) writes that “the people, by right and by necessity must be both architects and the engines of development”. The OD process facilitation explored in 5.4 was, for the consultants, directed at helping communities articulate their preferences and concerns to become active participants in development. Within the participants’ construction of the ‘funder discourse’ of ‘capacity building’ however, community engagement with the process is replaced by a cost driven contract framed from the outside.

The adoption of this ‘funder discourse’ is likely to lead these OD consultants into the role of service provider and away from the more OD-oriented ‘process specialist’ (Schein, 1987). This is an emphasis which, according to French and Bell (1995), will tend to negate the OD consultant’s effectiveness. As Smither et al. (1996) contend, to the extent that the consultant simply solves the client’s problem, he prevents the client from solving future problems independently.

In opposition to this OD perspective, the consultants’ construction of ‘capacity building’ as framed in terms of an expert-client, ‘doctor-patient’ model (Schein, 1987) is one which is likely to set up patterns of dependence on, and deference to, the ‘consultant as expert’. According to the results, the consultants try, within this framework, to sell their approach to donors in order to secure funding: “you now have to actually spell out the service that you are providing, who you are providing it for, how many people will benefit and so on”. To achieve this, the intervention has to fit donor parameters and criteria. It is the donors and the OD consultants who come to define the development problems and propose the solutions. The client community is, on the other hand, positioned as a passive and dependant recipient. It becomes apparent in this regard, how the emphasis on service delivery functions to delimit joint, negotiated control of the development process because it bypasses complementary community knowledge. Engagement with this knowledge would require a greater process orientation, and active client collaboration and involvement throughout the process (Kubr, 1996).
Instead, the 'service delivery narrative' tends to position the donors and the OD practitioners as holding the monopoly of knowledge and authority in the OD encounter. The very nature of this regulatory discourse - setting conditions and holding the consultants to account - limits scope for 'participation' by the client. Here, immaterial and opaque notions of "participation" are seen as less important than clear, material and accountable 'capacity' delivery. A discourse which constructs 'capacity' as a visible and deliverable product is rather more concerned with the material elements of development, delivered within a set time, and consistent with predetermined frameworks and costs. It functions to valorise reportable results rather than the iterative processes more emblematic of an OD approach. What is important to note is what is excluded from this discourse: the value-driven agenda, the collaborative and equal relationship with the community, and the aim of sustainable development rather than short term gain.

This specificity about costs, outcomes and product delivery is furthermore based on the assumption that the development stakeholders know what is meant by 'capacity building' and what interventions are required to achieve it. It presumes both a clarity and an agreement on what community issues and needs are. These might however not become apparent until well into a development intervention. It seems in this respect that a further problem with expert service provision is that it does little to confront the extended origins of a 'development problem' or the complex ways in which it is sustained. An OD perspective on the other hand, assumes that organisational problems are likely to be complex and multi-faceted - they are seen as symptoms of underlying issues which are not always immediately apparent (Kaplan, 1992). The 'funder discourse' however, makes little attempt to probe the contours or roots of communities' lack of capacity.

In light of the manner in which the 'donor discourse' functions at cross purposes with the more process oriented OD approach furnished by the 'service organisation' discourse, the 'scape-goating' of funders and their demands for increased INGO accountability throughout the participants' accounts should perhaps come as no surprise. In this respect, the consultants maintained that funders do not properly understand the 'real' development environment and what is required in terms of 'capacity building'. They noted that "the only people more confused about development at the moment are the funders" and "that it's helluva easy to sit and talk in Pretoria or Amsterdam and decide all that. In reality it is bloody difficult".

There are a few ways to understand this position taken by the participants. Rather than entering into a discussion on the possible veracity of this understanding, it seems more instructive to ask what the category implies about this stakeholder relationship. What it seems to speak of is a degree of irritation with, and resistance to, funder conditionality and the attendant pressures for increased accountability. This is interesting given the fact that, this criticism notwithstanding, the consultants' accounts implicitly and consistently parroted the 'funder discourse' of 'capacity building' despite the tensions it generates vis a vis the OD perspective. In this sense, the results seem, once again, to indicate that funders are an external stakeholder who powerfully influence the definition and nature of the consultants' work.
"Development means we are going to get a house" - Community expectations and the people-driven development imperative

The second external stakeholder referred to in the consultants' accounts is 'the community' or target group towards whom 'capacity building' is geared. This broad grouping constitutes the client whose perceived expectations and demands of the OD encounter further serve to mediate the consultants' construction of 'capacity building'. These perceived expectations are important because this grouping is a powerful stakeholder to which the consultants repeatedly acknowledged an accountability: "It's a case of 'What do people at the grassroots need?' And how can we implement programmes to answer that, and in ways that we are structurally accountable to them on an ongoing basis".

In terms of understanding the roots of this accountability, Rosholt (1991, p.2) contends that "if development projects are to achieve legitimacy and success, they must have the support and participation of the community involved". As testament to the pervasiveness of this discourse, the consultants' accounts displayed a definite recognition of the importance that the capacity building process be community driven: "we wouldn't presume to know what other needs they have or demands they have". Besides this belief that it was the community's political 'right' to drive the process, the imperative that 'capacity building' be community driven was also seen as essential for pragmatic reasons. People needed to be interested in what was happening in order to take ownership of the process: "people don't want their capacity built if they think you are wasting their time".

In light of this accountability to the client community, and the perceived 'right' of communities to drive the development process, this is a further stakeholder discourse which strongly influences the consultants' construction of their 'capacity building' role. High delivery expectations in previously disadvantaged communities combined with wider environmental pressure toward people-driven development, engenders a construction of 'capacity building' concerned with an emphasis on bottom-up, community driven development, and a corollary concern with the delivery of a visible product.

5.6.1 'Capacity building' and bottom-up development

The results indicate an increased pressure to provide the type of development which is accountable to "people at the grassroots". This discourse was, in fact, viewed by the consultants as more influential than their own OD agenda: "If the community is concerned with water and sanitation and electricity, and we want them to talk about 'capacity building' we are actually making them lose their own focus. So we can't be concerned with losing our own focus if we make people lose their focus". There exists a powerful message throughout this particular construction of 'capacity building': the client-community demands are primary. As explained by another consultant, "They come to us with a request, we design a programme tailored to their needs and we deliver it, and that's our approach to 'capacity building'".
This understanding of ‘capacity building’ is, in one way or another, at odds with both the previous ‘capacity building’ discourses. The funder discourse constructs the OD encounter in terms of a top-down emphasis, accountable to funders, whereas this approach frames the issue in terms of a people-driven ‘bottom-up’ process accountable to the client community. The service organisation discourse on the other hand frames the encounter in terms of a more equal collaborative process whereby the consultant and client become a ‘consulting pair’ (Hanson & Lubin, 1995).

What is of particular interest, however, in terms of mapping OD in this context (Weick, 1990) is the antonymous relationship this construction has with the conception of the OD consultant-client relationship advanced in OD literature. In this respect, it is a collaborative relationship of relative equality between the consultant and the client system which is regarded as fundamental to OD (French et al., 1994), and the ‘golden rule’ of consulting (Kubr, 1996). The consultants’ bottom-up, people driven construction has certain resonances with aspects of OD discourse. OD clearly emphasises the importance of responsibility and involvement of the client system in the collaborative process of data collection, diagnosis and implementation (French et al., 1994; Kubr, 1996). However, although client-centred, the relationship between consultant and client is seen to focus more around collaboration and equality, and is based on a recognition of the skills and knowledge that each possess.

People driven development discourse, on the other hand, tends to valorise the CBO focus over that of the INGO, and thereby demonstrate little concern for collaboration or emphasis on the ‘consulting pair’, learning from each other’s perspective (Hanson & Lubin, 1995). French and Bell (1995) note that the necessary relationship of mutual trust between consultant and client may be hampered by fears of an outsider interfering in the system. In a similar vein, consultants spoke of the importance of avoiding this interfering "patronising white liberals" tag and thereby maintaining the community’s trust. While outsider status is an inherent and necessary part of OD, it did not seem, in this context, to bring with it the perceived objectivity, neutrality and expertise to which French and Bell (1995) refer. Instead, it is constructed as interfering, illegitimate and patronising. The distance from the community of these service or intermediary NGOs was seen to place these consultants in a "structurally weak position". "NGOs, who are with one foot here [funders] and one foot there [communities], they’re the only outsiders and besides the government who else can they [communities] blame?". These issues are explored in greater detail in section 5.9.3.

According to an OD perspective, an ‘outsider’ stance is an essential catalytic element in any organisational change process (Beer, 1980; Blake & Mouton, 1976; Mosse, 1994). It is the dialogic relationship between a change agent’s and an organisation’s perspectives which is seen to create the impetus for change. As Beer (1980, p.76) clarifies, "while the differences in knowledge, values and belief between the change agent and the organisation creates difficult problems for the person in this role ... it is an essential feature of all OD interventions". The community driven ‘capacity building’ discourse, on the other hand, serves to undermine this
dialogic encounter. Rather than seeing the outsider perspective as 'essential', it is a position which was constructed as 'problematic' by the consultants: "I mean you can't interfere in community processes otherwise you get back to being patronising white liberals". To the extent that these consultants construct their 'capacity building' role in this form, they abandon the 'critical outsider' position regarded as essential to the OD process, and in doing so, create a tension with the OD consultant role of 'question-asker' and facilitator advanced in the 'service organisation' discourse as illustrated in section 5.4.

As a consequence, in an effort to avoid 'interfering' and in service of people driven development, 'capacity building' becomes, in terms of this construction, "whatever the community wants". This is a situation which mirrors Schein's (1987) 'purchase of expertise' consulting model where the client has defined the problem, the objectives of the intervention, and simply needs a pair of hands to deliver what they require. As a result, the consultants find themselves in a different role to that of OD process facilitator. They are rather engaged by the CBO to implement demands which the community have already developed. To this end, they become aligned to a process which runs counter to the ideas of sustainable development. Instead their role becomes a disguised form of relief and welfare work (Korten, 1990), the nature of which will become clearer in section 5.6.2. Whilst there is a recognition, in terms of the service organisation discourse, that the development intervention should be appropriate to meet a community's current needs, it is also seen as pivotal that development is provided in such a way that a foundation is built for further development. In other words, an important OD aim is that capacity of the CBOs to replace consultants in their functioning on a self-sustaining basis needs to be developed by the intervention. Simply doing "what the community wants" runs counter to these integral OD principles. Most importantly, this process is unlikely to teach the CBO to 'learn how to learn', one of the basic purposes of OD consulting (Beer, 1980).

In a manner akin to the fashion in which the consultants "lived their contradiction" by criticising the 'funder discourse' whilst simultaneously buying into it, the accounts also contained a rejoinder to this particular construction of 'capacity building'. In this way, the participants re-emphasised the need to maintain a 'catalytic outsider' position in the face of the above demands. The reasons for this, the participants noted, were that communities were not presently capable of making informed development decisions. Instead, it was argued that there needed to be some form of OD process work to get communities to that point. The participants articulated that while "communities must drive development", "people won't strengthen themselves on their own".

In a sense, this category could be understood as a performative attempt to warrant their own position within the development arena. In other words, the consultants could be seen to be telling their 'capacity building' story in such a way that they are positioned as indispensable protagonists in the unfolding narrative. What this category also, perhaps more importantly, seems to demonstrate is how the different discourses interweave to construct the contrariety which marks the participants' 'capacity building' role. In this way, the results indicate that the consultants' relationships to these 'capacity building' discourses are never absolute, but are rather
characterised by ambiguity and contradiction. How this equivocality tends to beget a degree of dissemblance as well as a need for 'balance' on the part of the consultants is explored in sections 5.8.2 and 5.8.3.

Related to the above observation that communities would not be able to 'drive development' by themselves, was a further concern regarding the specific form of 'capacity' which the client communities were seen to demand. In short, the consultants noted that communities do not perceive OD work as essential, and were more concerned with product delivery: "the consciousness of 'capacity building' in relation to doing their work is still not clear". As illustrated by another participant, "they don't see the connection between building strong organisations and getting what they need". When located within the wider demand for people driven development, how the range of possible options for action may be circumscribed by this community definition, will be explored below.

5.6.2 'Capacity building' and product delivery

Within this discourse, it is essential that there exists community participation and ownership of the 'capacity building' process; "it's a case of 'what do people at the grassroots need?'". In this regard, what they need is seen to be what they ask for: "we wouldn't presume to know what other needs or demands they have". This has important implications for the construction of 'capacity building' because communities were seen to expect concrete product delivery: "development means we are going to get a house". As one consultant recounted, "What we have found in working in communities is that people haven't picked up on the RDP as a philosophy, as a framework, they've picked it up as a promise of physical goodies". As a result of these expectations and the simultaneous pressure to provide development which is bottom-up and community driven, 'capacity building' is constructed as short-term and tangible product delivery. Simply put, "They come to us with a request, we design a programme tailored to their needs and we deliver it. And that is our approach to 'capacity building'".

To this deliverable end, the 'community construction' echoes the funder emphasis on short-term product delivery. As such, how this emphasis on product delivery undermines a more facilitative OD process has already been explored in 5.5.2 and so will only be briefly reiterated at this point. In short, given its intangibility and long term focus, the service organisation or OD construction of 'capacity building' is at odds with this prevailing culture of delivery and "getting things" in communities. In terms of the well developed body of literature in this area, OD is best viewed as 'a process for improving processes' (Vaill, 1989). OD aims to facilitate a process whereby organisations are empowered to problem solve from within, and thereby "become more conscious and more proactive with regard to forward planning and to controlling their own environment and circumstances" (Kaplan, 1992, p.22). If this aim is achieved, the consultant's skills are left behind or internalised by the organisation (Hanson & Lubin, 1995).

An emphasis on short term product delivery, on the other hand, is not likely to allow communities to develop
their own resources. Instead, they become passive recipients of development: "the RDP is going to come build us a house". In their criticism of this perspective, Coetzee (1989b) and Beukes (1994) argue that development should not be about delivery or provision, but should rather build the capacity of people to act constructively on their own behalf. It seems that a problem with this form of short term product delivery is that it does not allow the community to learn for itself, and instead fosters a likely dependency on the service provider. This was a potential problem recognised by the consultants who noted that the desire to help needed to be balanced by an awareness of the dependency that this help may engender. How this tension produced by the confluence of 'service organisation' and 'community' discourses was seen to be managed or responded to by the consultants will be explored in section 5.8.3.

5.7 Government discourse: 'capacity building' without content

The government are the final external stakeholder in the consultants' accounts. While the broad RDP drive is seen to have created the impetus for their 'capacity building' role - the consultants now "align in terms of development" - this is a discourse which was experienced as vague and contradictory for the participants. The RDP framework was seen as something lacking in substance and direction in terms of aiding the definition of their 'capacity building' role: "the RDP hasn't worked out what they want of us". Furthermore, exactly how they are to relate to the new ANC government was said to be ambiguous and contradictory. As will be further examined in section 5.9.1, South Africa's socio-political transformation has left these INGOs with an identity crisis. In one sense, there is a strong allegiance with the ANC government and what they stand for. As one participant remarked, "The current government is advocating what we have always stood for. Without seeming self-righteous we feel vindicated". On the other hand, this allegiance is tempered by a need to stand apart - "the independent sector is by definition independent" - so as to fulfil a counter-hegemonic civil society role and "hold government to account". Hulme and Edwards (1997) note in this respect, that these NGOs were born of opposition to the state and so are naturally wary of co-option. As a function of this ambiguous relationship to the new government and the perceived vagueness of the new government's development framework, the consultants spoke of a perceived lack of direction in terms of their 'capacity building' role. The attendant insecurity which the consultants expressed as a result of this lack of direction, is a category which turns on the confusion over NGOs position and function in post-apartheid South Africa and, as such, will be explored when elements of the consultants' indirect action environment are examined in section 5.9.1.

5.8 'Capacity building' and stakeholder tensions

The different constructions of 'capacity building', as well as their relationship to each other and to an OD perspective, have thus far been explored. Through this examination, it has been shown how, in terms of the
narrative account, 'capacity building' is 'many things at once'. The aim of the following section is to explore the implications of this equivocality for the consultants' articulation of their role. This exploration is all the more important given French and Bell's (1995) observation that the fundamental difference between OD and other organisation improvement programmes is found in the OD consultant's role and relationship to clients.

In their examination of this role and relationship, Wooten and White (1989, p.653) have found that the manner in which these roles are adopted are a function of contingencies in the change environment, and "greatly determine the change relationship and effectiveness of the change effort". Taking a more expansive view of the OD environment, Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) similarly argue that the theory and practice of OD is historically contingent: its character is forged within particular historical circumstances and in response to particular client system problems. Lending credence to this position, it appears that the conditions under which the OD consultants in this study do 'capacity building' are central to understanding the way they account for this issue. To understand the significance of this position, it necessary to briefly retrace the steps taken in this chapter thus far.

This chapter began with an introduction to the notion of 'the tensions of OD consultation', an issue which was a central, organising narrative in the research participants' accounts. Despite the lack of OD literature on this issue, it was demonstrated how the OD discipline seems, slowly but securely, to be making its way into a new intellectual space characterised by a more self-reflexive posture. As a function of this period of reflection, the issue of tensions inherent to the discipline is starting to be raised, albeit somewhat opaquely, by authors such as Weick (1990), Sanzgiri & Gottlieb (1992), Marshak (1993) and Burke (1997), to name a few. To understand how these tensions arise - and taking Alderfer's (1977, p.218) contention that "to be effective in increasingly turbulent systems, OD must deal with the conflicts inherent in those systems" as a point of departure - Stoner et al.'s (1995) stakeholder framework has been used as a lens for exploring the research participants' conceptions of their context. Despite the fact that this is a framework which has not appear to have ever before been used to explore the relational dynamics of OD consultancy, it seems to open the door to useful engagement with the question, 'from whence the tensions?'.

In an attempt to answer this question, it has been demonstrated how the three different understandings of 'capacity building' represented in the participants' accounts can be understood in terms of their relationship to particular stakeholder agendas. Insofar as these perceived stakeholder agendas have influenced the articulation of clearly different constructions of 'capacity building', they can, in turn, be seen as the cause of the tensions described by the consultants. It is thus proposed that these tensions are set up by 'stakeholder paradox' (Calton & Kurland, 1996), which is arguably an inherent feature of any OD encounter.

The conflicts recently being raised in OD literature between OD's value-driven approach and the increasing emphasis on the 'bottom-line' (Burke, 1997; Church et al., 1994), and between exercising a duty of care
towards the individual or the organisation (Sashkin & Burke, 1994), can, in this regard, be organised around the conflict between internal and external stakeholders (i.e., OD consultants, management/the organisation and employees/the individual). Reframing Beer’s (1980, p.76) assertion that “differences in knowledge, values and beliefs between the change agent and the organisation ... is an essential feature of all OD interventions”, it seems that stakeholder discrepancy may also be an inherent and essential feature of all OD interventions. The acceptance of this position affords a new lens through which to view Sanzgiri and Gottlieb’s (1992, p.60) observation that the time of OD’s origins in post-World War II America was “a period in which values, practices, assumptions and beliefs within the field were congruent with each other”. They note that, given post-war stability, affluence and the sobering effects of the authoritarianism of the war time, economically secure organisations were willing to experiment with the potentials for democracy, teamwork, participation and collaboration which OD offered. In this context, one could say that stakeholder agendas were aligned. Whether this is simply an exalted expression of nostalgia for OD’s halcyon days on the part of Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992), or whether there ever really was this congruence is not certain. What does seem certain is that this congruence is absent from OD’s contemporary contexts. Now, as Alderfer (1977, p.218) has noted, “to be defective in increasingly turbulent systems, OD must deal with the conflicts inherent in those systems”.

In terms of this study, a consequence of this accountability to multiple and conflicting stakeholder claims is the polysemic construction of ‘capacity building’ in the participants’ narrative accounts. In this regard, ‘capacity building’ is variously represented as value-driven OD process work; funder-driven, measurable and professional service delivery; and community-driven, tangible product delivery. How each of these constructions fosters an emphasis on certain forms of development activity as opposed to others, has been explored. This section aims to explore the implications of this multi-vocal and oppositional construction of ‘capacity building’ for OD consultancy. Before exploring how the consultants attempt to ‘manage’ these tensions, the implications for the consultant’s role will be examined.

5.8.1 Tensions in the OD consultant’s role: A stakeholder perspective

For the consultants in this study, the tension and conflict engendered by the co-existent discourses was an inherent part of their ‘capacity building’ work. The narrative account is, in this sense, characterised by the simultaneous and implicit occurrence of three different constructions of their ‘capacity building’ role, such that the compliance with one makes compliance with the others more difficult. Whereas the ‘service organisation’ discourse construes ‘capacity building’ as value-driven, long term, OD process work aimed at developing sustainable organisations, the ‘donor discourse’ has been shown to favour efficient delivery and reportable, professional results, and the ‘community discourse’ has been shown to stress short term, tangible product delivery. It has, furthermore, been demonstrated how the adoption of the community and donor constructions is difficult to square with many aspects of an OD perspective.
In support of this finding, Wooten and White (1989) note that the very nature of OD processes frequently give rise to role conflict and ambiguity. They classify the potential role conflict and ambiguity which may occur in the OD encounter in terms of five different forms. These include intra-sender conflict, inter-sender conflict, inter-role conflict, person-role conflict and role ambiguity (see section 2.5.2.6). In this section these forms will be collapsed into the broad issues of role conflict and role ambiguity.

The differentiation into the four different forms of conflict was neither necessary nor useful for my purposes. This was mainly due to Wooten and White's (1989) tendency, in a manner emblematic of other OD authors such as Burke (1997), to locate these conflicts either within the OD consultant or within the change environment, rather than seeing them as a constitutive feature, not of individual consultants or of the external environment, but of relationship between the two. In this study, the results indicated that it is impossible to separate consultants' incompatible expectations of themselves ('intra-sender conflict') with conflicting client expectations of them ('inter-sender conflict'). Rather, as the stakeholder discourses interweave in the narrative accounts, perceived community and donor expectations become inherent to the way the consultants construct their 'capacity building' approach. Although the tensions are realised on the site of the individual consultant, the accounts appear to demonstrate that OD consultants are never wholly autonomous of the other stakeholders in their context. There exists no sharp distinction between the 'inside' of the consultants' organisations and the 'outside' of their context. As Senge (1990, p.67) argues, in support of this position, "there is no outside ... you and the cause of your problems are part of a single system. The cure lies in your relationship with your enemy". Certain of Wooten and White's (1989) role considerations tend, however, to invite an 'illusion of separateness' (Morgan, 1997). The vocabulary of the stakeholder perspective, on the other hand, redirects attention to the need to study tensions in light of the ongoing relationships enacted between the OD consultants and their change context. In this regard, it eschews talk of 'intra-sender' or 'intra-role' conflict which assumes that the consultants could be cut away from their context and examined in isolation.

Given that the points of conflict between the three different 'capacity building' discourses have been explored above (see sections 5.4 - 5.6), the following will provide a brief recapitulation in relation to the issues of role conflict and ambiguity, so as to form the backdrop for an exploration of how the tensions are managed.

Norton (1997) observes that role conflict occurs when consultants are exposed to incompatible behavioural expectations. In addition, role ambiguity occurs when consultants are uncertain as to what role they are required to play (Wooten & White, 1989). In this study, different stakeholder expectations have been shown to have advanced inconsistent constructions of the consultants' 'capacity building' role. Not only is there a consequent ambiguity and equivocality surrounding this role, but the narrative can also be seen to engender the occurrence of role conflict for the consultants.

In terms of the 'service organisation' discourse, the consultant is cast in the image of a 'process specialist'
(Schein, 1987) who plays an essentially facilitative and catalytic OD role, best classified in terms of Korten’s (1990) ‘third generation NGO’. This construction commits the consultants to developing the capacity of indigenous CBOs to become self-sustaining organisations able to articulate and access community needs and demands. This role is seen to be infused with values, such as furthering the abilities of communities to act in a democratic, humane and equitable fashion, which are understood to be more important than market related issues of profit or loss. To the extent that this role is concerned with developing capacity in such a way that it provides a foundation for further community development, OD processes and issues become central. As such, ‘capacity building’ becomes a long term, frequently intangible, facilitative and collaborative process aimed at empowering CBOs to become more proactive development actors, rather than aid recipients. Consequently, ‘capacity building’ is seen to have an instrumental value; it designates a never-ending process, a means to the end of sustainable development, and not the finished product.

In terms of the ‘funder discourse’ on the other hand, the consultant is cast in the image of a professional development expert who efficiently and accountably produces tangible development results for funders. This is a role more emblematic of first or second generation NGOs (Korten, 1990) given its valorisation of immediate, short term and measurable delivery. This construction commits the consultants to building capacity within the framework of an expert-client model (Schein, 1987) which delimits joint, negotiated and collaborative relationships with communities. Instead, donor parameters and criteria for success are seen to frame the development encounter. Within this construction, a concern with ‘the bottom line’ and immediate, measurable impact is favoured over a concern for less tangible, longer term, value-driven notions. Consequently, ‘capacity building’ is constructed as a deliverable product and is in this way infused with an intrinsic value; it becomes an end in itself.

Finally, the ‘community discourse’ constructs the consultant in the image of someone who delivers immediate, tangible community-driven ‘products’. This positions the consultants in a role of ‘second generation NGOs’ (Korten, 1990) who exist to satisfy the basic needs of the community, rather than work towards a self-sustained development process. This construction commits the consultants to building capacity within a ‘purchase of expertise’ consulting model (Schein, 1987) where the community has defined the problem, the objectives of the intervention and simply needs a willing pair of hands to deliver what they require. This is a role which delimits the consultants’ adoption of a ‘critical outsider’ stance, central to OD’s effectiveness. Instead ‘capacity building’ becomes in terms of this conception, “whatever the community wants”. The resultant emphasis on short term, tangible resource delivery means that ‘capacity building’ is once again understood as an end in itself, rather than a process aimed at facilitating organisational sustainability.

As is evident from the above variation in the ‘capacity building’ discourses, the consultants in this study faced incompatible expectations in coming to adopt their role; conflict and ambiguity form an inherent part of their work. In this respect, compliance with the ‘funder’ or ‘community’ constructions is likely to detract from a
'purer' OD process role and undermine the 'process specialist' perspective. On the other hand, given the fact that these OD consultants are not wholly autonomous actors but rather exist within relationships of accountability to both of these stakeholders, both funder and community discourses are very influential. It is thus not possible for the consultants to simply adhere to the 'service organisation' construction of 'capacity building'. In terms of their accountability to funders, they noted that "NGOs have been pulled in by the delivery discourse. We have to start delivering concrete things rather than say what we deliver is not always tangible". In terms of their accountability to communities, they observed that "you will not persuade people that they need management skills if they perceive their need to be water". As a consequence, simultaneous adherence to all three discourses was regarded as a necessary part of their 'capacity building' understanding: "you have to live your contradiction", rather than try to resolve it.

For the consultants in this study, it was therefore clear that the tensions need to be 'held' or 'negotiated'. As OD is seen to work through dialogic relationships of discrepancy and conflict between stakeholders (Beer, 1980), so too did the consultants' accounts demonstrate that these tensions need to be managed, rather than resolved as Wooten and White (1989) have intimated. While the accounts of 'capacity building' are marked by contrariety, it seems that it is not appropriate, or possible, to select one side or the other of these contrary 'capacity building' options, and thereby avoid the tensions. It follows to ask, how are these tensions to be held?

For Stoner et al. (1995), this 'stakeholder paradox' is managed by weighing up the relative importance of different stakeholders. This suggestion does, however, not seem very helpful for OD consultants, firstly, because these authors do not say very much about how this is to be achieved, and secondly, because Stoner et al. (1995) suggest that this paradox is something that one should try to resolve, rather than 'live'. Other authors do suggest a more integrative approach, although these are also equally vague. Wooten and White (1989, p.561) note that, given the neglect of this issue in OD literature, "highly integrative and contingency-based models [of change role efficacy] are needed for the theoretical development of OD as a science, and for the practical guidance of change parties". Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992, p.67) suggest that "OD practitioners would benefit from adopting a 'Janusian' perspective, by which these practitioners could recognise the seemingly opposing values of corporate efficiency with a more humanistic OD perspective". Beyond this suggestion however, OD literature says very little on how this integration is to be effected. For the consultants in this study, there were seen to exist two main strategies for managing or integrating the tensions inherent to their role: dissemblance and balance.

### 5.8.2 'Capacity building' and dissemblance

The participants' accounts indicate that the equivocal nature of 'capacity building' tends to beget an evasive 'double-speak' on the part of the OD consultant. What Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) have rather euphemistically termed 'Janusian' could, in this sense, be more accurately reframed as 'double-headed' or, more pejoratively,
"two-faced". With regards to their relationships with both of their major external stakeholders, the consultants spoke of 'wearing masks', or 'saying one thing and then doing another' as a way of managing the tensions inherent in the contrary stakeholder discourses.

In relation to their funders, use of the term 'capacity building' was said to be a way of selling one's organisation in order to access funder money: "It's a funders' word. It's a buzzword of the time". It was seen, in this sense, as a mode of presentation, behind which the consultants articulated having the space to do what they wanted, and "to carry on providing our services". Here 'capacity building' becomes less something that they do and more something that they say. "Now you say that 'it is for development' or 'it is developmentally sound' so that we can just carry on doing it ... And the penny has not dropped that it is a co-operative process". Working with the discrepancy of being paid before they deliver a service, the consultants spoke of paying lip service to the funder discourse and then doing what they liked in terms of service provision.

In this regard, 'capacity building' was seen to have a performative as well as a descriptive function (Austin, 1975). The participants noted that, rather than referring to what they do in the development encounter, 'capacity building' gains its significance through placement in social interchange (Gergen, 1992). The adoption of the 'capacity building' 'buzzword' as a means of self-presentation was regarded as a currency of exchange which allows these consultants to enter beneficial relationships with their funders. What is of interest in this regard is not the 'gap' between what they say and what they do. It has already been shown how, from a social constructionist perspective, the relationship between 'what is' and 'what we say what is' cannot be evaluated in terms of its correspondence (Durrheim, 1997; Eberle, 1995; Gergen, 1994). As such, the 'capacity building' story that the consultants told me is not any more accurate in terms of picturing reality or 'what is' than the 'capacity building' story that they tell their funders. Of concern is rather how, in their acknowledgement of this performative function, the consultants construct themselves as 'playing a role'.

As their accounts demonstrate, this is a role which is given form by the demands of their socio-historical context: "It's a buzzword of the time. I remember a time when AIDS projects were something that you were going to get money for. So we knew more or less what we wanted to do, and we decided to go into 'capacity building'". In "going in to 'capacity building'" the consultants can be seen to be changing shape to suit the demands of a new context. Through 'playing' this 'capacity building' role, the consultants are able to continue doing "what we wanted to do", that is, incorporating the 'service organisation' OD process role into their work and acting as agents of mediation between funders and communities. In this sense, the presentation and dissemblance can be viewed as a necessary part of the shifting forms of the OD consultant. In order to 'manage the tensions' actuated by the three contrary stakeholder constructions of 'capacity building' without compromising their OD process facilitation role, it becomes necessary for the consultants to play different roles in different contexts, to say one thing and do another, to sell themselves and be simultaneously 'not there'. Only then, are they able to become "the floating thing that serves the whole process". When viewed in this light, this
mode of presentation need not be negatively seen as dissemblance, but more as an inherent part of shifting 
Protean2 forms of the OD consultant, as required by the conflictual context within which they operate.

Yet while this dissemblance, or ‘playing a role’, seems an inevitable consequence of their mediatory function 
within this context of differing stakeholder expectations, it was not a characterisation which the consultants 
appeared willing to adopt. In a similar sense, while ‘Janusian’ might seem an acceptable way forward for 
Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992), it is doubtful whether they, or any other OD authors, would advocate ‘the two-
faced’ OD consultant as a way of working with the tensions inherent to the role. Such a characterisation 
naturally runs counter to OD’s espoused values of openness, honesty and integrity (Burke, 1997; Hanson & 
Lubin, 1995).

In this regard, the dissemblance and duplicity inherent in this self-presentation was seen to have two problematic 
consequences for the consultants. Both of these considerations appear to stem from a concern for the misuse 
which these ‘shifting forms’ might engender. In the first sense, ‘playing a role’ was seen to become a way of 
avoiding the necessary accountability to their stakeholders. It is a response to tensions which invariably requires 
the consultant to sell their particular approach instead of following a more collaborative, interactive engagement 
with the stakeholders in a development encounter: “the penny has not dropped that it [‘capacity building’] is a 
co-operative process”. The dissemblance inherent in their use of the buzzword, is thus negatively seen as 
avoiding accountability to, and co-operation with, funders and communities on part of consultants. It seems 
apparent that ‘dissemblance’ and the ‘transparency’ increasingly being demanded of these INGOs, are uneasy 
bedfellows.

Secondly, this dissemblance, to the extent that it was likely to result in self-aggrandising, "super-slick" OD 
consultants, was regarded as unethical by the participants. As one consultant illustrated, “You can often 
convince funders that this is entirely necessary, that you are meeting an identified need in the community etc. 
What I am talking about is the slick-talking ambitious person who is looking to line their own pocket”. In this 
way, the concept of the opportunistic, self-aggrandising OD consultant enters the participants’ language as a 
corollary of the ‘capacity building’ as lip service response. These are said to be consultants who follow profits 
and not values as their primary driving force; they are seen to work for money with little inherent commitment 
to grassroots community development.

While not as pronounced as with their funder relationship, aspects of the consultants’ relationships with 
communities also reflected a ‘double speak’ as a way of managing the two different discourses of community

2 Proteus was an ancient Greek sea god who had the power of assuming any form he pleased. When seized 
by a person wishing to consult him for his highly valued prophetic powers, he would, in order to escape, 
assume several different shapes in succession. Hence the adjective ‘Protean’, meaning readily assuming different 
shapes, variable, inconstant.
driven product delivery and value-driven OD process work. In this regard, meeting the community’s articulated basic needs was said to be used by the consultants as a guise or "lever" for the transference of more sustainable capacity. As one consultant explained, "Our organisation’s goal is one step more. It is more implicit though, we don’t say we are training you to go and get something else". In this way, their ‘capacity building’ role is not something which the consultants are up-front or explicit about. Given that, for their client communities, "the consciousness of ‘capacity building’ in relation to doing their work is still not clear", the consultants explained that they use product delivery as a vehicle through which to build more enduring capacity.

Of the dissemblance present in the consultants’ two stakeholder relationships, this mode of integrating the tensions inherent in their ‘capacity building’ role appears more useful in terms of giving content to Sanzgiri and Gottlieb’s (1992) call for a ‘Janusian’ perspective. As Church et al. (1994) observe, "today’s focus is overwhelmingly on results, whereas OD’s focus is on process". The participants’ emphasis on meeting beneficiaries current needs, but in such a manner that provides a foundation for further development, affords a possible mechanism for reconciling this dilemma. For the consultants, the OD process was regarded as pointless if approached in isolation: ‘you don’t organise yourself and then decide what to do’. OD was rather regarded as inextricably woven with "what you are trying to achieve".

That said, not being explicit to clients about their dual focus could also be problematic. Liebowitz and Mendelow (1988) argue that a lack of clarity amongst the members of an organisation on the nature of OD is a central obstacle to its effective implementation. If the skills which the OD consultant is trying to inculcate in the community organisation are not unequivocally stated up front, if the consultants "don’t say we are training you to go and get something else", then it is likely to be more difficult for community members, for whom "the consciousness of ‘capacity building’ in relation to doing their work is still not clear", to internalise these opaque skills. As Kaplan (1992) notes, the aim of OD is to empower community organisations to become more conscious and proactive. Dissemblance on the part of the OD consultant as to the true nature of their intervention is likely to have a tendency to delimit the development of this consciousness. Rather, the second strategy adopted by the consultants to manage tension, that of ‘balance’, is arguably more useful in this regard.

5.8.3 ‘Capacity building’ and ‘balance’

A further implication of ‘capacity building’s’ polysemic construction is that OD is, for these consultants, a balancing act. As intermediary NGOs the consultants’ organisations were seen to act as mediators between the different stakeholder discourses: they were said to have "one foot here and one foot there". As a strategy for responding to different stakeholder demands and the tensions inherent to being ‘caught in the middle’, the consultants spoke of the need for ‘balance’ and the necessity to "live your contradiction". To this end, the consultants advanced the importance of working with the tensions, conflicts and ambiguities engendered by the multi-vocal construction of ‘capacity building’ by attempting to ‘balance’ them. Tensions raised by the
consultants included the following: (i) constituency based conflict, (ii) tension between ‘value-driven’ vs. ‘professional’ approaches, (iii) tension between demands for ‘product’ vs. ‘process’, (iv) tension between ‘supportive’ and ‘critical’ perspectives, (v) tension between demands for ‘delivery’ vs. ‘participation’, and (vi) tension between ‘helping’ vs. ‘encouraging dependency’. As tensions (i) and (ii) are explored in sections 5.8.1 and 5.9.2 respectively, I will at this point explore the latter four tensions and the strategies by which these are said to be managed. All of these strategies coalesce to advance an account of the OD encounter as a hermeneutic of balancing tensions. Given the extent to which these articulated tensions interweave, they will all be examined under what seems to be the primary tension, the conflict between OD’s facilitative, longer term, process orientation and the demand for immediate product delivery. The tensions engendered by stakeholder demands which conflict with an OD perspective seem, in this sense, to mirror the kinds of issues currently being raised within the OD literature. Managers are said to be increasingly demanding tangible results and measurable successes (Church et al., 1994; Liebowitz & Mendelow, 1988), a demand which conflicts with, rather than complements, an OD perspective (Sashkin & Burke, 1994).

The tension between the immediate delivery of a tangible product and the facilitation of a long term, "less visible" OD process is one of the more prominent conflicts set up by the different stakeholder discourses of ‘capacity building’ explored in sections 5.4 - 5.7. The implicit facilitation of an OD process whilst delivering a product to a community has been examined as one mechanism of dealing with this tension. In a related manner, the consultants also spoke of the need to integrate product and process in a way that aims to balance the two and take the community organisation more consciously "through the process". As one participant explained, "The product we deliver is a process. Instead of giving one product that people come and receive … we take them through the process. By doing that they would learn certain skills and get certain experiences that are necessary for them to carry on their work. And that is our product. We are also concerned with that process. It is how we balance the two I think". In this vein, the product is seen to be provided in such a manner that helps the community organisation develop the skills and ability to solve future problems themselves, without the consultant’s facilitation - itself a central OD tenet (Blunt & Jones, 1992; Hanson & Lubin, 1995).

This strategy of balancing contradictory stakeholder requests and attempting to work simultaneously with both demands was regarded by the consultants as a more constructive response than simply adopting one or other of the available options. On the one hand, there was said to be a need to work within the ‘community discourse’ of ‘capacity building’. A consultant noted in this regard that "you will not persuade people that what they need is management skills if they perceive their need to be water". On the other hand, the consultants observed that if they simply do "whatever the community want" then they commit themselves to Schein’s (1987) ‘purchase of expertise’ model where they meet community’s articulated needs, but do not build the capacity of CBOs to replace them in their functions in a self-sustaining basis. In other words, there is also a need to work within an OD ‘process facilitation’ perspective (French & Bell, 1995; Schein, 1987) and not simply acquiesce to the demand for results. As one respondent explained, "With the communities you must aim to work yourself out
of a job. You must get to the point where what you have is left behind wherever you go otherwise you end up creating this neo-colonial type of dependency". In this way, the consultants articulated a way of working constructively with the product-process conflict so that two seemingly contradictory demands co-exist. As a consequence, the desire to help communities with short term product delivery is therefore balanced by the concern for longer term sustainability and the avoidance of client dependency.

This need to deliver a community driven product in such a way that avoids dependency and builds a foundation for further development, is once again played out in the tension the consultants experienced between delivery and participation. As one participant noted, "there is that tension and sometimes there's a trade-off. Do you actually want to get the project done and get them going or is skills transfer your priority? But you have to be aware of that tension and we try as far as possible to avoid increasing dependency". In this way, "a trade-off" is made between the service organisation construction of 'capacity building' as long term, sustainable organisation development with a concern for values such as democracy, community participation and inclusiveness, and 'capacity building' as short term product delivery advanced by the 'community' and 'funder' discourses. While demonstrating an awareness that "the crux of the matter is that work has to be done", the consultants noted that an over-reliance on product delivery, at the expense of community participation and inclusiveness, was also inappropriate and likely to set up patterns of dependency with the client community.

In a similar vein, the participants stressed the importance of finding the right balance between being supportive or questioning when dealing with community processes, particularly those which ran counter to their espoused values of participation and involvement. This conflict is a playing out of the tension set up by the image of the OD consultant as a 'catalytic and questioning' outsider and the community-driven 'capacity building' discourse which constructs this role as interfering and illegitimate. This tension was 'held' by the consultants through their articulated need to affect a balance between challenging community organisations in a respectful manner and intervening in community processes in too directive a fashion. This is illustrated by one of the participants as follows, "We've got to balance between encouraging community participation and involvement in organisations with not intervening too much and prescribing". This prescriptiveness was regarded as neither the consultants' right nor responsibility given that they were outsiders who "don't live in the area", and because it prevented the community from "going through that stuff themselves". In this way, the consultants' accounts correspond with the OD emphasis on non-directive collaboration between consultant and client where the "consultants help clients uncover and mobilise their own resources" (Kubr, 1996, p.55). Beer (1980) observes that maintaining this perspective engenders a greater likelihood that clients will own the change process.

5.8.4 The ‘art’ of the OD consultant’s mediatory role

It has thus been explored how the consultants in this study articulated their need to ‘manage the tensions’ which are understood to inhere in their context by ‘playing a role’ and ‘striking a balance’ in the face of contradictory
stakeholder demands. Exactly how this "trade-off" is to be made in the case of each tension is not altogether clear from the participants' accounts. What is clear is that the consultants did not view the different demands which they faced as a dichotomy from which they had to choose one side or the other. Rather, the narrative account indicated that the tensions needed to be held, that the contradictions needed to be "lived".

In one sense, this explanation of these consultants' 'shifting and inconstant balancing act' simply gives rise to more questions, especially to those wanting more explicit guidelines on how this balance is to be achieved. One may ask, at which point, for instance, does concern for the delivery of a specified product take precedence over the emphasis on more participative processes? Or, when should a consultant stop being supportive and begin to adopt a more critical stance towards a community structure? The research results did not, however, present any clear guidelines in this regard. Rather, the participants' accounts demonstrate the following: one has to firstly be aware of the possible tensions inherent in this consulting role - one must "be clear on that stuff"; "you have to be aware of that tension"; and secondly, one has to attempt as far as possible to balance these contradictory demands, and thereby incorporate the essential elements of an OD process into funder and community constructions of their 'capacity building' role. In this way, cognisance of the tensions was seen to help the consultants work with them in a more informed manner and prevent them from "getting mixed up with the target group and doing quite a bit that they shouldn't". Exactly how one moves from awareness to achieving this proposed balance is however not as clear.

In this light, it seems that Kaplan (1992) is perhaps closest to the mark in his evocation of OD facilitation as an 'art'. He writes that "the art of [OD] facilitation .... means, in essence, finding the correct balance". In this sense, affecting a balance between a variety of tensions and in different situations becomes part of the craft of the OD consultant. Effective consulting becomes the ability to appropriately hold and balance the tensions inherent in this discipline. Kaplan (1992, p.26) continues, "the art of facilitation means knowing when to intervene in group and organisational processes and when not. It means knowing how to be assertive without being directive ... how to help without imposing". From this vantage point, there exist no explicit guidelines for balancing these demands - it depends on the particular situational dynamics - the art of OD facilitation means knowing how to balance them.

In their articulation of this position, the results of this study begin to give content to the call within OD literature to respond to the conflictual issues and tensions which OD's increased dissemination is bringing forth. Alderfer (1977, p.218) gave prescient voice to these contemporary concerns when he wrote that OD professionals "can no longer assume that there are no trade-offs between productivity and quality of life in organisations or that the interests of all groups in a system can be readily brought into alignment with each other". Now, in a manner suggested by Wooten and White's (1989) call for more highly integrative and contingency based models of change role efficacy, and emblematic of Sanzgiri and Gottlieb's (1992, p.68) somewhat indistinct suggestion of "integrating both perspectives to create synergy", the results seem to indicate that conflict and 'trade-off' may
in fact be what OD is all about; the OD consultant’s craft becomes viewed as the effective mediation of these conflicts and tensions. In this way, conflict is not something to avoid or ignore or to try bring into alignment, but is simply the inevitable result of ‘stakeholder paradox’ which needs to be acknowledged and worked with, as part of the art of OD facilitation.

For the consultants, their development role is, as a result, an essentially mediatory one, aimed at continually balancing countervailing forces. In order to achieve this, they were seen to require space and flexibility so as to mediate this process of negotiation between different stakeholders and balance OD facilitation issues with funder and community demands. So as to allow them to practise this art, the consultants spoke of needing to be "a floating thing that serves the whole process". The effective management of their development role was thus seen to rely on the freedom or space not to get "locked into a tight objective and a whole lot of things are happening and they just ignore them". Instead, the art of consultation is predicated on being able to "bounce around and respond creatively to opportunities".

In terms of "serving the process" and catalysing this mediatory function, the consultants consistently referred to the idea of ‘development forums’ where communities, funders, local and provincial government, and themselves get together to engage with ‘capacity building’ and development issues. These forums were seen to serve an essentially collaborative and mediatory function by facilitating a process through which the interdependent yet different stakeholder constructions of ‘capacity building’ are heard and negotiated. It does not take much to see how these espoused forums are in fact an externalisation of the mediatory role that these service organisations can be seen to play.

When viewed from this perspective, it appears that the consultants’ ‘real’ ‘capacity building’ role is none of the three articulated in the different discourses, but is in fact this taken for granted ‘meta-function’, this elaborate mediatory role to deal with, and engage in, the full dynamics of all three constructions of ‘capacity building’ in different situational contexts from the perspective of being a creative facilitator. In this sense, the consultants’ ‘capacity building’ role could be seen to be concerned with catalysing development by bringing different people together - "they need a service organisation to facilitate a development forum into being in the first place" - and balancing and negotiating these stakeholder demands with the incorporation of an OD perspective. They appear, in this regard, to work out of this relationship, this hiatus or aporia or liminal space between different stakeholders. As their ‘intermediary’ designation suggests, they "act or exist between others" (SOED, 1966). This would explain why "service organisations are not sure where they fit". Because this aporia is in fact the "floating thing", this is what they do. This is how they manage and hold the tensions which are inherent to their context.

With the stage thus set, we turn now to a brief examination of the key elements of the consultants’ indirect action environment. This is a context which further qualifies the consultants’ ‘capacity building’ role and the
way that the stakeholder paradox is managed.

5.9 The indirect action environment

Having explored the different constructions of 'capacity building' which were evident in the narrative account in terms of the stakeholder perspective and OD literature, it follows, in line with the framework provided in figure 5.1, to turn our attention to the consultants' constructions of their indirect action environment, so as to further examine the historical contingency (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992) of 'capacity building's' characterisation. As Stoner et al. (1995) observe, this indirect action environment creates a climate which influences stakeholder behaviour and to which these consultants have to respond.

Before proceeding with this exploration, it is instructive to consider briefly the conceptual schema of systems theory, as a further framework in which to locate consultants' accounts. A basic assumption of systems theory is that organisations are in continuous interaction with their environments. Following the systems approach and contingency theory, organisations need to maintain a congruent relationship with their environment in order to survive (Human & Horwitz, 1992; Smither, 1994). Alderfer (1977) observes that OD consultancy can similarly be viewed as an interrelated professional system in interaction with an increasingly complex and turbulent environment.

While it is commonplace to talk of the 'age of discontinuity' (Drucker, 1992) and the turbulent environment facing modern organisations (Chamky & Nohria, 1996), this characterisation seems particularly apposite with regards to the participants' conceptions of the development environment. Environmental change and its effects figure prominently in the participants' accounts. Throughout their interviews, echoing the systems perspective, all the consultants spoke of South Africa's changed socio-political environment in terms of the requisite change it demanded from their organisations. In the first sense this need for change was encapsulated in the oft-repeated 'imperative' to shift "from resistance to reconstruction". A second change in their operating environment was the reconstitution of the development arena as an 'industrial marketplace'. A final important contextual move articulated by the consultants was the increasing pressure towards a people-driven development approach and questions around the politics of race that this move has engendered. The following section aims to explore each of these environmental elements with a view to determining the extent to which they further qualify the consultants' 'capacity building' role.

5.9.1 The shift 'from resistance to reconstruction'

For the consultants, the environment pre-1990's socio-political transformation was one characterised by congruence or correspondence. They expressed this perceived congruence in terms of a freedom to do what they wanted and a certainty that they were "doing the right thing". According to Tosi et al.'s (1995) conception, the
pressures of their environment were regarded as relatively simple (in that the internal and external stakeholders were relatively homogenous in their aims) and stable (in that changes were incremental and had little impact on the structure, processes or output of these NGOs). There was seen to exist a shared vision or "common political jol" between these NGOs and their stakeholders (their funders and the communities they served), broadly reflected in a shared anti-apartheid stance. This conception of a clear, unanimity of purpose was closely linked by the participants, to concepts of freedom and loose accountability - you could "do whatever you wanted. You didn't have to ask...".

Kelleher's (1992) and Meintjies's (1993) characterisation of the 'good old bad days of apartheid' (Pape, 1993) as a time of political correctness and loose accountability to vague concepts such as 'the community' or 'the struggle', is one consonant with the participants' reconstruction of their sector's organisational history. As one consultant observed, "I think that NGOs used the words 'transparency' and 'accountability' somewhat loosely and it meant some woolly democratic notions".

T. Harding (1994a) has observed that this 'culture of struggle' has not prepared these organisations for the democratic climate of 'the new South Africa'. Certainly, the accounts portray a sense of being caught off-guard and unprepared for socio-political transformation, even though the demise of apartheid was something that these organisations were all working towards. The accounts furnish a consequent picture of being left behind or out of step with the times: "the ground is moving under our feet", whereas before "vision was developed from the ground". Consultants' talk of their pre-1990 context is one characterised by a sure-footedness and certainty that they were "doing the right thing". The accounts depict a sense of legitimacy derived from being in tune with "the ground", that is, the structurally disadvantaged communities, from which they secured "a common vision of the majority of the people in South Africa". Post-1990, this "ground is moving" for the consultants, resulting in a consequent difficulty for these NGOs to find their feet in the new terrain. As is evident in the narrative account, in a manner consistent with what Kelleher (1992), Pape (1993) and others have noted, this time of socio-political change is also a time of insecurity and uncertainty for the NGO sector.

This uncertainty notwithstanding, all participants were clear about one thing: the need to change their work role and focus so as to emulate this broader contextual shift. The consultants all clearly understood that post-1990, the anti-apartheid stance was no longer congruent with their context. As one consultant observed, "post-1990 we hit a wall". This evocation of being hit by a "stormy" and hostile environment could be seen to be a function of the radical, transformational or second order change (Marshak, 1993; Norton, 1997) which this sector was required to undergo, once their fight against apartheid became redundant. As Schermerhorn et al. (1994) note, this is a type of change which occurs infrequently in the life-cycle of most organisations. It is one generally associated with traumatic disruption and deepening insecurity. Goodstein and Burke (1994) write that this 'framebending' large-scale change usually means a change in an organisation's strategy and culture.
Participants' accounts of what needed to change were consistent with Goodstein and Burke's (1994) characterisation. As the narrative account indicates, the pre-1990s context is seen to have engendered a particular strategic location and organisational culture for these service NGOs, which the participants now regarded as completely inappropriate to their current context: "there is this tension between the external environment and what is created". The change in the post-apartheid context is seen to require a change on every level of NGO functioning, embodied in a "complete shift" from the ‘old way’ to the ‘new way’ in terms of culture (‘the way we do things’) and strategy (‘what we do’).

It is instructive to focus more fully on two dimensions of the way consultants accounted for this shift from the ‘old way to the new’. The first is the negative manner in which organisational history is depicted. The second is the way the shift is constructed in a reactive and dependent fashion. These I take to be important story lines which lead these consultants to their ‘capacity building’ role.

5.9.1.1 The denigration of past NGO behaviour

Viewed through the exhortation, "Thou shalt resist no more, thou shalt reconstruct forthwith", the participants all derogated past NGO behaviour, which was regarded as "a trap". In this way, the results indicate that in the post-apartheid context ‘activism’ and ‘resistance’ have become anathemic concepts. Now, as one participant bluntly stated, "The kind of people who have worked in the NGO environment have wholly inappropriate skills and mind sets to the new NGO environment". In their consistent construction of their past in this pejorative fashion, talk of the need to change to fit a new context was invariably infused with a tendency for the participants to come to the conclusion that there was little good about their past organisational culture and strategic location.

As explored above, while the consultants noted that they had "more space" in the "pre-1990" context in order to "do what they wanted", this was not always regarded in a positive light. It is, in this sense, instructive to look at the manner in which past is described: "woolly", "loose", "laissez faire", "lacking focus", "going off on a tangent", "getting mixed up", "doing something because it just seems nice". It follows to ask, what yardstick creates these criticisms? Lending further support to Karras’s (1996) observation that funders are in a powerful position from which to set the development agenda, it appears that these criticisms are actuated by the adoption of the ‘funder discourse’ of ‘capacity building’, with its consonant emphasis on material, specific and professional service delivery.

In terms of past behaviour, an ideological and political correctness in terms of a resistance orientation was what was seen to be required. Thus "doing what is right" was throughout the accounts set up in opposition to "doing what works". In this sense, the old way was consistently negatively cast as ineffectual, inconsequential and confused. In their move towards reconstruction it appeared that, for the participants, there came an increased
adoption of a language of exactness, provision and delivery. Their more value-driven resistance orientation was regarded as an 'energy sapping trap' which stopped these organisations from providing or delivering services.

In sum, the accounts reflect a perceived need to adopt a new, more professional stance as part of declared shift away from the 'amateurism' of their past. The participants articulated a need for 'organisational stuff', effective management systems, accountability and a more businesslike approach to their work, all of which is, for them, equated with 'focus'. It has been noted that the consultants' rejection of their past modes of operating can be understood as an attempt to construct a more appropriate social identity for their new times, which regards their past behaviours as inappropriate. This negative construction of their own unique contribution and position can, however, also have implications for the consultants' role as mediatory agents, as will be explored in section 5.10.

5.9.1.2 Reacting to the environment 'out there'

Clarke (1994) and Kubr (1996) argue that it is a sign of poor management if an organisation is continually reactive in its change response. Senge (1990) similarly stresses the importance of shifting organisational focus from being a helpless reactor to the present, to more active engagement with shaping and creating the future.

In light of these observations, the 'biblical command'-like construction of the 'thou shalt reconstruct' is interesting in the way it evokes Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978, p.226) sarcastic observation that when organisation-environment relations are viewed in terms of a cause-effect perspective, "it is as if a Mr. Environment came into the organisation giving orders to change organisational structures and activities". Morgan (1986) has observed that this perspective tends to reify environments and underestimate the power of organisations and their members to create their own futures. In this sense, an organisational attitude which constructs the environment as something 'out there' that happens to one's organisation is an inherently disempowering perspective - organisations simply have to fall in line because as one consultant put it, "it's no use going against the tide".

This dependent and reactive stance is consistent with how the consultants interpreted their context. They regarded themselves as being in an "adapt or die" situation. For them, the question was not "should we change? But how [should we change]?". In coming to answer this question, the consultants tended to adopt a reactive position. They spoke of being in a time of uncertainty and hiatus. "We're in a kind of limbo at the moment", one consultant noted, in explaining this time of trying to determine a future focus. In this waiting there appeared to be an implicit question, what are we going to be told to do? "The RDP hasn't worked out what they want of us, there is no comprehensive plan". Whereas before it was "a common political jol" now "it has never been quieter ... because people are trying to work out where they are and where they are going". In explaining the process of working this new direction out, all consultants articulated a situation of being told what to do, a reactive and passive rather than proactive position of which the following explanation is representative: "NGOs
are required to be a whole lot more business-like in what they are doing, a whole lot more focused" [emphasis added]. They were, in this way, always trying to respond to changing expectations of them - made worse by their own position of uncertainty and insecurity - rather than articulating their own particular contributions and ways of being. Implications of this construction for the consultants' 'capacity building' will be explored in conjunction with their constructions of the other elements of the indirect action environment in section 5.10.

5.9.2 The move towards a 'development marketplace'

It has already been explored how the 'funder' construction of 'capacity building' emphasises the efficient delivery of material products as a means of assessing the contribution of these OD consultants. In this sense, 'capacity building' was shown to be concerned with reportable and professional results. The consultants' accounts indicate that this is a trend which is further consolidated by wider contextual changes in the development arena; in particular, the increased use of market mechanisms as a means of regulating service. To this end, the consultants repeatedly characterised the development arena as having been transformed, post 1990, into an industrial marketplace where development products and services are bought and sold.

This wider contextual shift has a number of implications for the 'capacity building' role of these consultants. Once again, the participants articulated a need to change their mode of operation so as to remain congruent with this wider environmental sea change. In the words of one consultant, "there is a conscious effort now. There has been a big push from funders but from within the organisation we recognised that some time back. Because it is no use going against the tide". What, then, are the implications of swimming with this tide for these service organisations?

A key characteristic of this environmental shift is the use of market mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of development work. For the consultants, there were two main implications of this shift. Firstly, with a view to increased cost recovery, funders were demanding more accountable, economically sustainable and tightly managed interventions. Secondly, it was noted that funders were increasingly looking to channel money directly to communities who would then, in being the 'client who pays', be in a stronger position to select the services they want and demand an accountability for delivery.

An important consequence of the move towards the development marketplace is the resultant emphasis on service provision in mainly economic terms. Tangible results, cost effectiveness and management competence become the new development commodities. Judgement on performance thus becomes based on short term delivery and costing outcomes, rather than the resultant long term changes in sustainable community development. Echoing this conception, one of the consultants observed that "I am far from being a radical capitalist but there is a sense in which the development market will decide who has value and who doesn't have value ... whether service organisations can deliver tangible results then the market will decide". How this
market-driven emphasis on short term, tangible results fails to square with a more value-driven, long term OD process has been explored in 5.5. A consequence of this wider contextual shift is that the worth of INGOs is increasingly being measured against forces of competition in an open market. In this market driven discourse, the consultants become wedded to a principle of efficiency through competition - INGOs are to rise and fall by community/donor judgement on their performance: "the market is one way to overcome abuse of the role ... the lean, efficient ones will survive and the fat ones won't".

While they saw little option but to 'go along with this tide', the consultants expressed a concern with being judged purely on market related criteria. In the first sense, it limits the possibility of working with more value-driven, non-material areas of development: "these extra benefits aren't calculated". As a result, the consultants' acceptance that a more professional and focused approach was required was tempered by a need to differentiate from a 'commercial culture' and maintain a sense of NGO values: "you are now competing with private sector organisations and firms who are actually providing a different type of service and a different quality of service". Despite these concerns, the consultants saw little opportunity but to go along with these wider contextual moves. To this end, one participant commented, "There is a need to try and move towards - and I don't like this word - more professional NGOs in a sense". For the consultants, the response to the conflict created by engaging in the development marketplace and following a more process oriented, value driven agenda was to "live your contradiction" and combine proper management systems and a concern for a more professional approach with a value-driven activism where "people don't just clock in and clock out".

Besides the perception that this move tends to deny their unique contribution as NGOs - "the training is happening for a different reason, the measurables are just so foreign to the NGO world" - it was also seen to introduce a competitive entrepreneurial culture into INGO operation. Increased competition and entrepreneurship of the commercialised development marketplace encourages a lurking competitiveness exemplified in a defensive, protective approach, rather than an open climate where people acknowledge and learn from mistakes and work together with other NGOs so as to avoid duplication of work. How the participants regard 'capacity building' as being best achieved by an integrated holistic approach which includes the participation of other organisations has already been explored. The move towards a development marketplace, on the other hand, tends to encourage a defensive and territorial approach with regard to their relationships with other NGOs.

Furthermore, these INGOs can be seen to have, at best, an ambiguous relationship to the market. It has been explored how the consultants advanced a conception of their role as value-driven rather than market-driven. They regarded their particular contribution as falling outside of the market arena: "we operate in areas of market failure: we supplement, complement, develop alternatives, fill gaps". They regarded this work as having an inherent "uncertainty [which means that] there is no way that you can work on a 100% cost-recovery basis".

A final criticism levelled at the move towards a more market-oriented regulation of their role, was that
communities were seen to not, at present, have the requisite management skills to be 'the client'. They argued that "the fastest way to destroy a weak organisation is to put money into it" and noted that "what they do now is they see they have got R20 000 for 'capacity building', they hire you for two days, so they spend R16 000 of it or whatever and they spend the rest on something else. And the consciousness of 'capacity building' in relation to doing their work is still not clear". It seems that while a market orientation is driven by demand, 'capacity building' is generally driven by supply. In this way, it becomes a case of inducing clients to consume what is considered to be beneficial for them, because "they don't see the connection between building strong organisations and getting what they need". The introduction of demand driven market mechanisms, on the other hand, confines the consultants to a role of delivery agents of "whatever the community wants".

On the whole, despite its disadvantages and the fact that it runs counter to their 'service organisation' 'capacity building' contribution, the consultants saw no option but to play by these 'new rules'. As the participants noted, "I don't think NGOs can avoid any longer issues like market research and public relations", "NGOs have been pulled in by the delivery discourse", and "it's no use going against the tide". Despite the concerns that many of their unique characteristics and contributions were being undermined by this move, the participants saw little alternative but to fall in line so as to remain congruent with this wider environment.

5.9.3 People-driven development and the 'politics of race'

One of the basic principles of the ANC's development drive, as contained in the RDP, is that development should be 'people driven' (ANC, 1994). This move rests on the premise that "people can lead their own change processes. They can be actors, not merely the subjects of change" (Gran, 1984 in de Beer, 1997, p.21). Echoing this drive within the wider development environment, the consultants frequently articulated the importance of letting a bottom-up, 'people driven development' focus guide their work. For the consultants, when situated within the wider post-apartheid context, this people driven development focus also became inextricably linked with the politics of race and class.

The move towards people driven development places an emphasis on 'the community' assuming their active and rightful place within the development context, "becoming masters of their own development" (de Beer, 1997, p.22). In their claim to 'speak for the community', CBOs consequently acquire much legitimacy and status within the people driven development context. INGOs, on the other hand, are seen as too far removed from 'the community' to claim the same legitimacy; they are seen, in the words of one participant, as "too white and too middle-class". According to the consultants' accounts, this perception that INGOs were 'white' and 'elitist' generated a vulnerability to criticism for these organisations. As a result, the consultants spoke of a context emblematised by an increased backlash from CBOs who feel exploited by 'white dominated' INGOs. The participants observed that "the SANCO conference whacked us NGOs left, right and centre ... we're the only outsiders and besides the government who else can they [the CBOs] blame?" and that "there is a lot of tension
with CBOs which has come to the fore quite remarkable in the last few months".

Part of what these INGOs noted that they were being blamed for, was for taking funder money and entrenching their position in the development arena at the expense of more representative and ‘deserving’ CBOs. They described needing to avoid being seen as part of a ‘skilled white elite’ who secure their position by encouraging “neo-colonial” relationships of dependency with the communities they purport to serve. When taken together with the people driven development discourse, this context of increased criticism and perceived illegitimacy relegates these consultants to an ‘interfering outsider’ status. They are under pressure not to maintain the ‘critical outsider’ position (Schein, 1987) due to its political and economic precariousness.

In this context, support based on a critical understanding is likely to be met with suspicion, if not outright rejection. In terms of the interpretive politics of ‘being critical’, not ‘supporting’ communities is likely to mean, ‘being on the other side’. In the way that this position invokes simplistic racial discourses of ‘us ’ and ‘them’, it seems that the INGO consultants are now falling foul of the same ‘political correctness’ rhetoric on which they based their role in the anti-apartheid context. In their anti-apartheid resistance orientation, organisations were either on one side or the other, either comrade or enemy (CDRA, 1992/93; Kelleher, 1992). As CDRA (1992/93, p.17) note, in this anti-apartheid context “no ambiguity, no subtlety was permitted; there were no grey areas. ‘Purity’ and ‘political correctness’ were demanded, anything less might be regarded as collaboration with the enemy”. In a similar fashion, the OD imperative to maintain a critical outsider stance is undermined in this post-apartheid transformation context because being ‘critical’ is being positioned as being ‘not on our side’ and hence ‘one of the enemy’.

It has, however, been demonstrated that for these service organisations, the ambiguity and the uncertainty of their position is what they require to manage and hold the tensions inherent to their context. It is precisely in those ‘grey areas’ that these service organisations have been shown to exist. The following section aims to explore the implications, for the consultants’ mediatory function, of this indirect action environment which is increasingly demanding a clear-cut role in ‘black and white’.

5.10 Consequences for intermediary NGOs' mediatory function

It is apparent from the consultants’ construction of the above key elements in their indirect action environment that these wider contextual forces are operating to ‘cramp them into a tight objective’ which is in line with funder and community constructions of ‘capacity building’, and which denies their OD process facilitation role. The participants’ perception that their value-driven organisational past is unacceptable and inappropriate; their attendant reactive and dependent posture in terms of determining an organisational direction; their being forced to ‘swim with the tide’ and compete in a development marketplace which ignores their unique contribution; combined with the political precariousness of their ‘critical outsider’ position vis a vis the people-driven
development ethos, all seem to coalesce to throw the service organisations 'off balance' and into a fixed service provision role.

The space and flexibility that the consultants were seen to require so as to mediate the process of negotiation between different stakeholders and balance OD facilitation issues with funder and community demands, appears to be circumscribed by these wider environmental forces. The consultants' accounts reveal an increased pressure to derogate their own space and identity, to stop having contradictions, to stop being ambiguous - in sum, to stop "floating" and to "start delivering concrete things rather than say what we deliver is not always tangible". As one participant summarised, "NGOs are in a structurally weak position in terms of the state and civil society due to funding, CBO hostility, state hostility, distrust of NGOs, private sector competition". As a result of this 'structurally weak position' and the consonant pressures towards a development marketplace and people driven development, the consultants appear to be increasingly impelled to legitimise themselves in terms put forward by funders and communities. Instead of being able to "bounce around and respond creatively to opportunities", they are consequently being "cramped into a tight objective" and identity which is not particularly congenial to an OD role.

In this light, it becomes apparent why D. Harding (1994, p.2) says that "of all the levels of the NGO world, INGOs face the stiffest challenge in staying true to some of the best features of development work and in holding to a radical, sustainable approach to development". This challenge appears to arise from the fact that the INGO consultants operate in a context, not only of conflicting stakeholder agendas, but also of wider social, political and economic forces which are seen to place an emphasis on the material, rather than non-material and process side of their work. It has been explored above how this is a context which is likely to serve to undermine their adherence to an OD process facilitation role. This is an important consideration in light of the stated need to ground or document OD issues in South Africa (Harding, T. 1994a; Mamputa, 1997). While at first glance the South African development arena may seem to be a context amenable to the development of OD consultancy (James, 1997; Marks, 1996; Norton, 1997), the results indicate that the contextual pressures towards short term service provision present those organisations attempting to work within the OD framework with real challenges.

In their own ways, both 'struggle' (anti-apartheid resistance orientation) and 'post-struggle' (professional / people driven service delivery) discourses appear to have provided these INGOs with 'worked out' solutions to the role of the OD consultant. As such, it seems that both of these 'received' roles have served to obscure and delimit the 'real' role and function of these organisations. This has been shown here to be that of "a floating thing that serves the whole process", that elaborate mediatory role to creatively facilitate and manage different stakeholder demands, while holding to a radical, sustainable approach to development. Perhaps in this time of realignment, hiatus and rethinking, these consultancy organisations are provided with the opportunity to realise this, before the next reification of function takes hold. An obstacle to such a realisation appears to be that an
acknowledgement of the different roles that the consultants play in different contexts would involve an acceptance that OD consultancy has Protean forms. Yet in their current context, they are being forced to justify themselves - in directing and strategising their work, consultants are being forced to think of themselves as having particular functions, determined largely by their external stakeholders. A context which requires them to "do what they're told", "to start delivering concrete things", to "stop interfering" and "to be more professional" is not one amenable to such a realisation or acknowledgement.

Perhaps this is why these service organisations have such difficulty defining what is meant by 'capacity building'. One such consultancy organisation, the CDRA (1994/95, p.2-3), notes that

our lack of an adequate theory of 'capacity building' reduces our own capacity to engage in the practice. We lack the theory because we are not thinking through what we see before us. And we avoid thinking things through because to face the obvious will be to radically transform our practice.

Despite this recognition, the CDRA have been unable to pin 'capacity building' down. They have attempted to define it in terms of the elements of a 'capacitated organisation' such as organisational attitude, vision and strategy, organisational structure, material issues and so on (CDRA, 1994/95), yet the concept still appears to elude their definition. In reference to this attempt, Kaplan (1997, p.l) asks, "are we pushing the answer we seek even deeper into obscurity through the frantic complexity of our search?". The consultants in this study had similar difficulties answering the 'capacity building' question. They observed that "not much attention has been paid to defining 'capacity building'" and that "that's like asking 'Is there a god?'". For these participants, 'capacity building' was "an incredibly complex process", variously constructed as value driven process facilitation; funder and market regulated service provision; and people driven product delivery.

What this study has indicated is that perhaps the very attempt to clearly define 'capacity building' is a misguided one. It may be that the very nature of this polysemic term is its ambiguity, its 'greyness' and its contradiction. It could be that in their attempts to define a 'capacitated organisation' rather than their own role, service organisations fail to recognise the 'taken for granted', implicit mediatory function that they fulfil. In this sense, the ambiguity and the uncertainty of their situation is what they are, and is not something which they should attempt to define, clarify or straighten out. This is the contradiction which they have to live.

When viewed in this light, it may be that these OD consultants need a 'dose of their own medicine'. They may need the perspective of a 'critical outsider' (Schein, 1987) who lacks the unknowing commitment to consistency with the past and blindness to new possibilities (Blake & Mouton, 1976; Mosse, 1994). To this end, this research has shown how the tensions which these consultants face can usefully be understood in terms of the different stakeholder constructions of 'capacity building' present in their accounts. Through an exploration of this understanding, it has been argued that the effective management and negotiation of these tensions - a
process achieved by the consultants' 'shifting and inconstant balancing act' - may well be the taken for granted, mediatary meta-function which is the consultants' raison d'être. Perhaps this differing account (Addison, 1989) can open up new ways of approaching the 'capacity building' question, and in this way invite new possibilities of action for these OD consultants. It is to the possibilities of this constructive project that I turn in the final section.

5.11 Concluding comments: Opening up possibilities

It is appropriate in conclusion to revisit the aims of the study and explore the extent to which they have been met. The main aim of this research was to explore how OD consultants in the South African development sector account for their 'capacity building' work. It was clear from two inter-related vantage points that there existed a need for theory development in this area. In the first sense, the issue of 'capacity building' appeared to be a concept of both ubiquity and confusion in the development sector (Booth, 1993; Ewing, 1996), of which there was said to exist no adequate theory (CDRA, 1994/95). The apparent need to examine this concept was furthermore seen to converge with a wider debate within the discipline of OD, which proposed that in order for OD to develop it needs to consider how social, political and cultural forces will continue to shape the field (Marshak, 1993; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). Weick (1990, p.313) had argued that OD needs to adopt a 'reconnaissance agenda' to "remedy a fatigue in the spirit of organisational theory and OD". Taken together with other calls for self-examination and reflection (Burke, 1997; Hames, 1995; Sashkin & Burke, 1994) and the increased need to deal with the conflicts which OD's increased dissemination is bringing forth (Alderfer, 1977; Church et al., 1994), this reconnaissance agenda was framed in terms of a necessity to 'map' OD as it is practised in different contexts. As I have argued in this chapter, I take this increased posture of self-reflection in the discipline of OD to exemplify an attempt to respond to the 'fatigue' and conceptual impasse with which this discipline appears to be confronted. The aim of this 'mapping' is therefore to facilitate the advancement of the discipline of OD through the opening of fresh discourses of functioning and new vistas of theory and practice. Given the lack of documented debate which grounds OD issues in South Africa (Harding, T., 1994a; Mamputa, 1997), 'capacity building' in the development sector provided suitably unchartered terrain for this study.

The extent to which this research has clarified the nature of 'capacity building' has already been explored in section 5.10. At the risk of repetition, it has been suggested that, given the inherently ambiguous and contradictory nature of this role, new ways of approaching the 'capacity building' question are needed. Through making explicit the different discourses of 'capacity building' inherent in the participants' accounts, it has been demonstrated how much of the confusion and conflict attached to this concept can be traced to different stakeholder expectations of 'capacity building'. This chapter has shown how these stakeholder discourses conflict with each other, as well as how the 'funder' and 'community' constructions fail to square with an OD perspective. Furthermore, through the explication of the core category of 'managing tensions', this study has
advanced an image of the OD consultant as a mediator of different stakeholder constructions. It has been submitted that the ability to embrace ambiguity, contradiction and inconstancy that this balancing, mediatory function requires, may well be what the art of OD consulting is all about. Finally, it has been shown how there also appear to exist wider contextual forces operating in the South African development sector which serve to throw these consultants ‘off balance’ and into delimited and ‘received’ service provision roles which run counter to the need for flexibility that their OD process role demands.

In the mapping of the above position, the study also begins to engage with a conceptual aporia in OD literature, namely, how are OD theorists and practitioners to respond to the apparent tensions and conflicts which OD’s increased dissemination is bringing to the fore? It has been argued that the failure to respond to Alderfer’s (1978, p.218) caveat that "to be effective in increasingly turbulent systems OD must deal with the conflicts inherent to those systems", has resulted in a theoretical and practical impasse and consequent posture of self-reflection within the OD discipline. As Sashkin and Burke (1994, p.56) comment, "although we in OD have always been confronted with the conflict of individual versus the organisation, what is unprecedented is how deep this issue has become. Never before have we had to face so squarely our own beliefs, values and ethical standards". It follows for others such as Hames (1994, p.xiii) that "we cannot continue to approach ... organisation development in ways which have routinely guided us in the past". In its mapping of the tensions which the OD consultants in this study faced and its exploration of how they were seen to manage these tensions, this research ‘converses’ (Clegg & Hardy, 1996) with this contemporary debate within the OD discipline. It can be seen to raise two important issues in this regard.

Firstly, by exploring how the differing constructions of ‘capacity building’ were a function of the consultants’ relationships of accountability to different stakeholders, this study introduced the idea that OD’s tensions can usefully be viewed as a function of ‘stakeholder paradox’ (Calton & Kurland, 1996). While this is a framework which has not been used before to explore the relational dynamics of OD consultancy, it has been shown here to open a door to the exploration of the roots of OD’s conflicts and tensions.

Secondly, and more importantly, by examining the ways in which the participants in this study were seen to respond to these tensions, this study began to give content to that under-researched conceptual lacuna in OD literature: the OD consultant’s role in the face of these tensions (Beer, 1980; Wooten & White, 1989). As intimated by Wooten and White’s call for integrative and contingency based models of change role efficacy, and Sanzgiri and Gottlieb’s (1992) recommendation that OD consultants need to adopt a ‘Janusian’ perspective so as to reconcile inherent tensions - points stated yet not explored in OD literature - this study has suggested that OD consultants need to affect a ‘shifting and inconstant balancing act’ so as to mediate the tensions inherent to their role. In this regard, this research breaks new ground by beginning to engage with the idea that the management of conflict, uncertainty, ambiguity and contradiction may in fact be what effective OD consultation is all about. This conflict can be understood as the inevitable result of stakeholder paradox, which needs
consequently to be managed as part of the art of OD facilitation. The OD consultant can thus be seen to play a mediatory, catalytic role given shape by the changing stakeholder demands and contexts of society.

This insight challenges us to create new models and frameworks which can be used to describe this complex, frequently contradictory, mediatory role which these OD consultants seem required to play. Weick (1990) notes that the reason for ‘mapping’ OD as it is being practised in different contexts is, after all, to facilitate the advancement of this discipline through the opening up of fresh discourses of functioning and new vistas of theory and practice. In terms of Gergen’s (1994) generative theory and the ‘pragmatic criterion’ of evaluation, Lather (1986 in Packer & Addison, 1989, p.287) writes that "emancipatory knowledge increases awareness of the contradictions hidden or distorted by everyday understandings, and in doing so it directs attention to the possibilities for social transformation inherent in the present configuration of social processes”.

It has been argued that the necessity for social transformation of OD’s present configuration is urgent. Sashkin and Burke (1994, p.56) note that "understanding ourselves [i.e., OD consultants] more thoroughly, and determining what stances we wish to take and under what circumstances are more important than ever”. It seems, however, that current OD literature, when faced with the increasingly evident tensions of the discipline, aims to ‘understand the OD consultant’ by retreating to the ‘core values’, and ‘recovering the messianic spirit’ and ‘forces of light’ which guided the founders of this field (see eg., Boccialetti, 1989; Burke, 1997; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). OD’s most common response to the tensions is thus, in the apparent absence of any other available options, to fall back on to received roles. In this way, it seems that OD consultants risk becoming little more than purveyors of particular kinds of social practices and ideologies reflected in glib beliefs like ‘if people feel better, performance will be better’. On the other hand, this study has suggested that when OD consultants want to start defining themselves and stop having contradictions they, in fact, become estranged from their raison d’etre. It has been argued that it may be more appropriate to embrace the contradictions inherent to the field as an inevitable function of differing stakeholder demands and wider contextual forces. Whereas Burke (1997, p.18), in locating these tensions within the individual consultant, has suggested that OD practitioners need to wake up in the middle of the night and question ourselves, it may in fact be more suitable for OD consultants to slumber peacefully in the acceptance of the inevitable contradiction of their work.

In this light, Sanzgiri and Gottlieb’s (1992) metaphorical recasting of ‘the OD consultant as Janus’ seems, in certain respects, rather appropriate in terms of ‘telling it as it may become’ (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996b). Janus’s two faces at the front and at the back of his statue are meant to signify his dominance over past and future, over both beginning and end (Hamilton, 1969). This could be seen to mirror the OD consultant’s need to reconcile the founding ‘core values’ of the discipline with the contemporary pressure towards tangible results and the organisational ‘bottom line’. The use of this metaphor demonstrates an acceptance of the inevitable conflict and tension actuated by OD consultancy. In the end, however, ‘Janus-faced’ is still a dichotomous conceptualisation and does not really seem to capture the floating, negotiatory, liminal space between different
stakeholders which appeared emblematic of the consultants' accounts of their roles.

In keeping with the mythological theme of Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992), I have already mentioned the possibility of 'Protean' as a way of depicting the multiple guises which OD consultants seem required to adopt. But perhaps with a view to developing a body of 'local values' to inform OD in South Africa (Mamputa, 1997), it would be more appropriate to explore the emancipatory potential of an African mythological metaphor. One such possibility is a trickster figure which recurs with frequency in black mythology in Africa, the Caribbean and South America (Bascom, 1992). This figure appears in a variety of guises which Gates (1988) unifies under the name Esu, or Esu-Elegbara. Drawing on black oral narrative traditions of music, myths and forms of performance, Gates (1988) outlines the characteristics of this complex mythological figure as follows: Esu-Elegbara acts as a mediator interpreting the will of the gods to man, and carrying the desires of man to the gods (it seems in this respect that Esu’s most similar Western kinsman is the Greek god Hermes). In this sense, he is viewed as 'a guardian of the crossroads', who is said to limp as he walks, precisely because of this mediatory function: his legs are different lengths because he keeps one anchored in the realm of the gods whilst the other rests in the human world. This also explains why he is sometimes represented as having two mouths: Esu’s discourse is 'double-voiced’. True to the nature of a trickster, Esu-Elegbara is a mutable figure who is seen to possess a range of different characteristics. A partial list of these qualities include individuality, satire, parody, irony, magic, indeterminacy, open-endedness, ambiguity, chance, uncertainty, disruption and reconciliation. Taken together, these are said to "only begin to present an idea of the complexity of this classic figure of mediation and of the unity of opposed forces" (Gates, 1988, p.6).

This brief summary of the African mythological figure, Esu-Elegbara, seems to have many resonances with the consultants' characterisation of their complex mediatory development roles. The participants also spoke of having "one foot here and one foot there" in terms of their accountability to multiple stakeholders. In 'interpreting the will of gods to man and vice versa' the consultants understood their function to be that of an interpretive "bridge" between their stakeholders, the funders and communities, so as "to smooth out the getting and giving process a bit more". This mediatory role was seen furthermore to have engendered a degree of dissemblance and double-speak on the part of the consultants. Like Esu’s ‘double voiced’ discourse, the narrative account presented a ‘multi-vocal’ construction of ‘capacity building’ as a consequence of this stakeholder paradox. In terms of articulating their role as "a floating thing that serves the whole process", the consultants evoked both the open-ended ambiguity and indeterminacy of this mythological figure as well as their need to work from the liminal space between different stakeholders, their 'intermediary', negotiatory role as 'guardians of the crossroads'. In this elaborate, mediatory 'meta-function' of managing tensions that the consultants have been shown to play, they too present an idea of the complex role of mediation and of the unity of opposed forces which their context requires them to play in "living their contradiction". When viewed in this light, maybe what Weick (1990) refers to as the ‘fatigue’ in the spirit of OD is simply a function of OD theorists’ inability to date to accurately diagnose the cause of their ‘limp’.
In conclusion, I would like to note that in performing ‘reconnaissance’ on some of the problems and dynamics of OD consultancy in the development context, and, in this way, working ahead of others in order to facilitate their advancement into unchartered realms and landscapes (Weick, 1990), what I have offered is less a map than a set of signposts and images for possible future lines of enquiry. By re-examining issues that the discipline of OD considers already understood, and by telling ‘new stories’ about the OD consultant, I have indicated possible directions for re-orienting and re-focusing the way that we approach both the question of ‘capacity building’ as well as the nature of OD consultancy. Following Gergen (1994), it is submitted that by beginning to constitute these realities in different ways, this study has hopefully begun to make new forms of action intelligible and hereby opened up new vistas of theory and practice for OD.

In accordance with the grounded interpretive paradigm, this research provides neither a ‘true account’ nor an end of a process. As Addison (1989) observes, any theory, model or narrative account of human activity is always open to modification and refinement, as times, conditions and contexts change, so too will accounts change. Theories are thus ‘forever provisional’, their very nature allows for endless elaboration and partial negation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This thesis should thus be seen as part of an ongoing and unfolding series of conversations (Clegg & Hardy, 1996) where each interpretation encourages the continuation of self-reflection, and opens up differing possibilities of understanding and action within the ‘contested terrain’ (Reed, 1996) of organisation studies.
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