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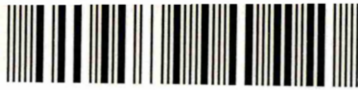

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THE UTILISATION OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE THROUGH CONSULTING

Christopher Neil Hendry

Submitted to the Council for National Academic Awards in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D.

Sheffield City Polytechnic, May 1985

// A B S T R A C T

THE UTILISATION OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE THROUGH CONSULTING

Christopher Neil Hendry

The thesis is concerned with organisational consulting, and the 'theories' which guide social and behavioural consultants in what they do. To preserve the 'integrity of the phenomena' the research has utilised an interviewing methodology to obtain accounts which reveal 'personal theories'. The aim has been to achieve an adequate phenomenology of consultants' ideas, rooted in their personal lives and organisational role situations, and not just to treat consultancy as the disembodied application of skills and knowledge.

Consultants' ideas and practices can thereby be viewed in relation to their role-contexts, and can be seen as adapted to specific operating situations, particularly in the comparison of internal,commercial and academic consultants.

Thus far, the study makes a substantive contribution to the understanding of social consultancy by locating ideas and practices in role circumstances.

But such consultants are also an occupational group, sharing a common role-context. The role is the product of wider organisational and societal processes. Beyond the specific slant given by differences in their immediate work-role, therefore, there appear common features in their working models.

Two paradigms, the negotiative and systems, are identified and analysed as projections of consultants' role experiences which were also functional for clients, insofar as they developed the cohesion of managers as a group and their capacity to cope with problems facing organisations in the period 1960-79. Ideas and practices are thus viewed, ideologically, in relation to an historical period and social formation.

By considering consultants' ideas, as ideology, in relation to their market situation (expressed in role) we confront a central question in social theory - the relation between ideas and the material structures and processes of society. At this point the study therefore attempts to connect the sociology of knowledge directly with the theory of ideology, and to make a substantive contribution to each.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This is a thesis about management consultants and consulting that utilises the social and behavioural science disciplines.

The Institute of Management Consultants defines management consulting as follows:

> 'The service provided by an independent and qualified person or persons in identifying and investigating problems concerned with policy, organisation procedures and methods, recommending appropriate action and helping to implement these recommendations.'[1]

More broadly, 'consultant' is commonly recognised as a help-giving role, whether advisory, catalytic, or giving direct expert assistance. The Institute of Management Consultants' definition is largely directed towards identifying the bona fide credentials of commercial consultants. It only recognised internal, or "in-house", consultants as potentially fulfilling the requirements of independence and expertise as recently as 1976.[2]

As Tisdall notes in her study, though,

> 'The last twenty years have seen considerable fragmentation and diversification in the structure of consulting activities'[3]

Thus, our sample takes 'consultants' from a variety of settings - internal, commercial, and academic consultants: internals located in recognised consultancy units, internals attached to Personnel, Training and Management Services departments, internals in a free-floating role;

commercials working for big consultancy firms, commercials from small consultancy groups, commercials operating solo, commercials even retaining a part-time position as an 'internal' with a previous employer; academics from universities, business schools, and polytechnics, and 'academics/commercials' working from independent Institutes (such as the Tavistock Institute) which depend on earning fees and public research contracts. 'Consulting' is therefore a term of convenience, defined by what our subjects do, and 'consultant' a label which appears to attach to them in the activities they were asked to describe (although in a few cases this turned out to be a small proportion of their total role activities).

The thesis is more specifically concerned, secondly, with those who draw upon the social and behavioural sciences to deal with the problems attendant upon organising and management. Its subjects are therefore to be distinguished from those other specialists, in marketing, finance, engineering, etc. and general business consultants who take a predominantly financial or economic orientation to the tasks and structure of the organisation - although they may include generalists with an engineering background, for example, who have become versed in the social and behavioural sciences. The consultants in question could therefore be labelled 'human resource consultants', as some commercials indeed do label themselves. Thus, McLean defines Organisation Development (O.D.), a major form of

applied behavioural science, in terms of 'human resource' management:

> 'O.D.consultants are human resource managers who specialise in the management of change.'[4]

Others, though, would actively repudiate such labels, as 'human resource manager' or the somewhat outmoded 'human relations consultant'. For this reason, the looser descriptions 'social (or 'behavioural') science consultant' are often preferred, since what we are concerned with is that new breed of 'applied worker', identified by Bennis, who is not bound by old disciplinary boundaries (or necessarily by scruples about scientific detachment), but who may draw eclectically on the social and behavioural science disciplines. The phrase, 'social and behavioural science consulting' therefore serves to indicate a particular kind of activity, rather than distinct and separate subject matters. Rather free use will therefore be made with terms like this, and 'organisational consulting', or alternatively more specific use of terms like 'O.D. consultant' where this seems appropriate. On occasion, even, one may doubt that there is anything particularly 'scientific' about the orientation described.

The loose characterisation of the sample has to be understood in terms of the aim of the study - which, at the outset, was simply to discover the ideas which guide those operating under the umbrella of 'O.D.' and in related fields. Or, as I put it in the letter with which I initially approached subjects,

> 'My research is concerned with organisational consulting, and I am interested in the ideas, or 'theories', to do with organisation, people, and change which consultants hold, and how these relate to their methods.'

The aim being to understand a social world from the actors' point of view,[5] a 'priori' observer definitions of what they do, or are, have to be relaxed.

Relying, therefore, on the Directory of the O.D. Network, recommendations, and the staff list of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, 45 consultants were recruited and participated in interviews lasting on average two hours. It became apparent in the course of interviewing that one or two of these were on the fringe of the field in terms of a more rigorous definition of 'O.D. or 'behavioural science' or even of 'consultant'. Nevertheless, these served, in the course of analysis, to define the boundaries of the field in terms of the emergent categories used by the consultants themselves.

What, then, has the research revealed? When I set out naively to ask the question, 'What ideas guide consultants in what they do?', I did not anticipate the wealth of anecdote, the displays of intellect, the insights into a phase of recent social history, which simply letting people talk would provide me with. Reducing this to size has meant a painful sacrifice of much fascinating material. This is the penalty for failing to formulate a precise hypothesis, and a frequent difficulty in conducting 'qualitative' research, to reduce data to reportable form. But where

the immediate aim is to explore a field of phenomena - where research is motivated by the 'context' or the logic of discovery' rather than by the 'logic of verification'[6] - the result is often, in qualitative research, a richness of data which is productive of a number of hypotheses through the act of trying to organise the material in a meaningful way. Thus the effort to understand consultants' theories has stimulated analysis, and in a sense provided evidence for hypotheses, of two kinds.

The first arises from taking the standpoint that consultants are ordinary people doing a job. They may have special skills and special knowledge, but the way they apprehend situations professionally cannot be divorced from their situations and their personalities. Their ideas about themselves, their ideas about organisation and people, and their consultancy style in consequence appear mutually consistent. The first intention and the first part of the thesis is to report this, to characterise distinctive configurations around a 'role-orientation' and to try to account for these.

Although the aim at this stage was to develop an adequate phenomenology of consultants' ideas, rooted in their lives and situations, there is no illusion that this can come from a pure 'phenomenological method', such as phenomenological sociologists aspire towards:

> 'All knowledge of cultural reality ... is always knowledge from particular points of view ... without the investigator's evaluative ideas, there would be no principle of selection of subject-matter and no meaningful knowledge of the cultural reality.'[7]

The method is, rather, that of 'verstehen' or 'hermeneusis', in which it is necessary to appreciate that one is apprehending the world of experience, or object in question from one's own perspective and frame of reference, and liable to be influenced by it, and therefore be open to the interchange of perspectives.[8] Thus, what consultants had to say was apprehended within a developing framework which saw them in relation to the 'totality' of an historical period and social formation.

The second line taken in the thesis consequently derives from critical sociology. Consultants are significant, practically and symbolically, in the management world. As Tisdall notes:

> 'The development of management consultancy parallels that of professional management'[9]

Similarly, Kubr in his study of management consulting as a profession:

> 'The development of management consulting towards professionalism is part of a wider movement - that which aims at developing management into a profession. As advisors to managers on the application of the science and art of managing, consultants follow the major trends that affect management practice and theory ... It is even necessary to recognise that in most countries management consultants are aiming at professionalism with more vigour than the practising managers and that they play a pioneering role in professionalising management at large.'[10]

The goal of a critical sociology being in some sense to unmask the nature of power, influence, and control in society, management consultants offer a prime example of an elite group, the direct study of whose ethos and action may reveal something of the way power and influence is exercised.

(We thus proceed with a consciousness of complementing statistical studies of elite group mobility and recruitment,[11] and of extending, also, the range of those studies concerned with 'social imagery' and 'class consciousness'. As Bulmer proposes,

> 'studies of imagery should not be confined to the working class, but should be extended to middle-class and elite populations. Little attention is given here to the image creators and sustainers.'[12])

In this tradition, two earlier studies of management - John Child's 'British Management Thought', and Tony Watson's 'The Personnel Managers' - exposed the ideology resting in the general profession of management and in the particular profession of personnel management. As a cognate activity, that serves general management, it seems reasonable to expect to find ideological elements in social and behavioural consultancy.

A number of sociologists alleged as much against the behavioural science synthesis of 'Human Relations ideas in the 1970's. They saw these being used manipulatively by management and management consultants against white and blue-collar workers. Such a view of ideology, however, is a very partial and inadequate one. Manipulation is often more a question of 'techniques' than of 'ideology', and it is doubtful what impact human relations (or 'Human resource') nostrums had on the thinking and behaviour of its supposed victims. Ideology, rather, has to consist of ideas which are fully convincing, which one cannot easily escape from,

least of all can its protagonists. It involves a measure of ignorance and maintains its hold over a person thereby. It is something which is thoroughly internal to his view of the world. The ideology of personnel management, as described by Watson, for example, appears far too external to exercise this kind of power. The view of Althusser is to be preferred, therefore, which sees people living as conscious human subjects in and through ideology. To see ideology, different ideologies perhaps, as sustaining every group is also to reject the automatic association of ideology with a 'dominant ideology' expressing the interests of dominant groups or classes.

If a more internal view of the ideology of social and behavioural science consultants is required, it means a different approach based not on evaluation of written materials, but on talking to them, by someone who is relatively sympathetic. Research of this kind, based on close observation and description, may in the end reveal features which otherwise are lost to view. Thus, the animating ideology of consultants is found to be, not human relations, but what we come to term the 'negotiative paradigm'.

The result of talking to consultants, of discovering they could be characterised (in terms of roles), and thence of believing an explanation could be found to relate ideas to particular role-contexts, led to the ideology issue being given prominence since it indicated that ideas are adapted and developed in the first place for the way they sustain a

group in its particular circumstances. Hence, the thesis is framed within that problematic, although it was a late-comer to the scene.

The concluding section, which considerably extends the work, is an attempt to put consultants' ideas in their recent economic and social context and in the wider context of ideas and values underpinning this:

> 'any social formation is only to be understood fully when it is related to the social,economic, and political structures of a particular time in history.'[13]

Much of the material here is available in published accounts, and will appear as a familar reworking of the analysis of 'pluralism'. What it contributes is the discovery of these assumptions in the experience and practice of a group, management consultants, who were in a position to propagate this philosophy. Appreciation of this wider context is missing from most accounts of 'O.D.', for example, and its significance goes unrecognised, not least by consultants themselves. Recovering this, and relating the 'particular' ideology of social and behavioural science consultants to a 'general' or dominant' ideology, is the second major task.

The contributions and achievements claimed for the research are therefore:

(1) a theoretical contribution, to the understanding of the practice of O.D. and social consultancy generally, by locating consultants' ideas in role circumstances

(2) a methodological contribution to social analysis, to the extent that it succeeds in relating consultants' ideas to their role circumstances

(3) a theoretical contribution to reinforcing the theory of the 'sociology of knowledge' and the theory of ideology, insofar as it establishes the "dialectical relation "[14] of action to structure (the 'action' being represented by consultants' ideas and practices and the 'structure' being the proximate and wider social forms in which they are located. Neither of these are 'theories' in the sense that they can be proven, or disproven, but are, rather, 'perspectives' which require reinforcement from studies which trace the links posited through careful hermeneutic-type analysis. In the process realizing the ideological character of ideas in good currency reveals something about the way ideology actually operates.

The following is a resume of the chapters into which the thesis is organised:

Chapter 1 reviews the line taken by Child and by Watson in their cognate studies of British Management Thought and Personnel Managers, particularly their conceptualisation of ideology. It argues that 'group ideology' is not the most useful construct for elucidating actual behaviour, and that the first stage in considering ideas as ideology should be to produce an adequate phenomenology of the adoption and use, by individuals, of ideas and concomitant practices. The assumption of ideology should be suspended until patterns are revealed through the analysis of consultants' 'life-worlds'. Unlike the studies by Watson and Child, the concern is not simply with the 'particular' ideology of an occupational group but with the connection such patterns of

ideas and behaviour, as can be discerned, have with a wider set of ideas permeating societal and organisational life. The position is therefore adopted that ideas and practices may more effectively act as a 'general' ideology, serving the interests of others, if at the same time they are functional for the practitioner himself and enable him to cope with the requirements of his own role.

<u>Chapter 2</u> reviews the critiques that have been directed at applied social and behavioural science, specifically at 'Organisation Development'. The radical critique from outside the profession takes the view that behavioural science is ideological insofar as it deceives subordinate groups and sustains the dominant managerial group, by facilitating integration around the status quo through a more sophisticated 'welfarism'. Critics from within the profession, on the other hand, fasten upon the 'social movement' character of O.D. and see it as ideological to the extent that it deceives practitioners themselves by inhibiting a realistic diagnosis of organisational problems and appropriate personal adaptations in their professional work. These two perspectives may be reconciled, however, by viewing a deception practised on one's self as a deception practised all the more effectively on others. Thus, humanistically-minded consultants may be drawn to a theory for its liberating aspects and propogate it in good faith, whilst in its practical effect it may merely serve as an ideological prop to an existing system of hierarchical control and unequally distributed benefits. A theory may have implicit features

which mimic and reinforce a general ideology whose effects are quite different. Maslow's theory of the 'hierarchy of needs' is analysed as an illustration.

Chapter 3 is a review of the literature on organisational change and consultancy. It considers the purposes that have animated research, the focus of studies undertaken, and the methodologies used. It concludes that the biases and omissions of existing research require redress by studies which

(1) have an actor - and action-oriented focus; and therefore
(2) involve study of actual practice and practice theories;
(3) recognise the importance of formal theories to practice:
(4) adopt a more sociological approach;
(5) combine an ethnographic analysis of the particular instance, with comparative analysis which seeks to establish systematic relationships.

The over-riding requirement is to capture more of the context of consultancy - that means, the organisational context in which it is carried out, and the consultant's own personal context. Organisational consultancy should be seen as an activity which engages the consultant as a person, not merely as the disembodied application of skills and knowledge. The notion of 'personal theories' is more satisfactory from this point of view, as encompassing personal and professional aspects. The animating principle is "to preserve the integrity of the phenomenon."[15] At the same time, social and behavioural science consultancy is an occupational activity, and it therefore offers the opportunity to note systematic features in the roles adopted and practice theories developed.

'Role' is the site for the intersection of personal career and organisational purpose, and provides a reference point for comparative analysis.

Chapter 4 clarifies the research question and the decisions to adopt the methodology employed. The 'interest' motivating the study is to understand the meanings consultants attach to their situations and to the theories and practices they employ, rather than to determine what makes for 'effective consulting'. The consequence of this is a rejection of a positivist, or 'logical empiricist', method, and the adoption of an 'interpretive' methodology. The method used - the generation of accounts by means of semi-structured interviews - satisfies the requirement "to preserve the integrity of the phenomenon". 'Personal theories' (as revealed through accounts) thus present themselves as ways in which the consultant integrates the meaning of his experience, in terms of his role, values, tasks and aims, career and organisational experience.

Chapter 5 describes the management of interviews in order to obtain 'valid' accounts. It considers the problem of what an interview can tell us, since accounts so generated are seemingly remote from the "actual conditions of social inter-action"[16] in which the consultant acts professionally. Among other justifications for believing that this problem is overstated is that semi-structured interviews, or 'conversations', are not dissimilar to what the consultant engages in in his professional work. It is expected he will

make use of the same habits of construction which are intrinsic to his normal way of coping with novel organisational settings and by which he accounts for his behaviour to himself in those settings. This supposition is supported by evidence of consultants using, in the interview, skills which are central to the personal and professional theories they attribute to themselves.

Chapter 6 introduces the framework which is used in Chapters 7 - 9 to set out consultants' role typifications. The role-attributions they make to themselves are of three kinds:-

(1) that which indicates the nature of the employment relationship within which they operate;

(2) that which defines the social relationship ensuing (and hence characterises the problems they face in going to work on an assignment, with the methods they use to overcome these); and

(3) that which defines the part played by personal needs, values, and goals in structuring consultant-client relationships.

These provide a basis for discriminating internals, commercials, and academic consultants, in that each emphasises a different element by the role attributions they make greatest use of - internals emphasising the employment relationship, commercials the social relationship, and academics the part played by personal values and goals. The images consultants use suggest how theories and practices are affected by the requirements of role. Chapters 7 - 9 deal more particularly with 'practices', whilst Chapter 10 goes on to consider more fully the theories implicit in these.

Chapter 7 establishes the primacy of the employment relationship for the internal through the self-designation "resource" which internals apply to themselves. The activities they engage in, the practices they make use of, the ends they seek, are related to this basic fact of life for internal consultancy. In addition the secondary influence of departmental (or "social") location, on style and strategy, is outlined, since departmental location (or more properly 'origin') involves specific problems of credibility as a "resource", specific ways of gaining acceptance, and typical styles.

Chapter 8 presents the data on commercial consultants. Firstly, the commercial understates the employment side of the relationship in favour of emphasising the advantages which flow from being external to client organisations because this is his selling point. Secondly, he uses images which characterise the social relationship because it is his success in establishing social relations which determines whether he gets employment. Thirdly, building and managing social relations, signified through the notion of 'contracting', is central to the process of doing work, since on it depends his success in getting information, developing diagnosis, getting acceptance for his views, and influencing change. The favoured role images are "mirror" and "bridge", which signify the social separation between the consultant, the client organisation and members of the organisation. The way in which the "bridge" is traversed - either by communicating expert knowledge to the organisation (in the manner of an "engineer")

or by acting as a personal confidant (or "counsellor") to individuals - is influenced by values about change and probably personal needs.

Chapter 9 For academics, consultancy is largely a voluntary activity, free of economic need. It therefore permits the pursuit of personal goals and interests, and the freer exercise of consulting styles. Academics therefore tend to exhibit in clearer focus differences in theory, practice, and aspirations, and since they have often been taken as exemplars of social and behavioural consultancy and are responsible for much of its theory, they show the latent tendencies to which internal and commercial consultants are susceptible within the constraints of their own roles. Hence, academics incline to one of two distinct positions:

(1) the "research/engineer/policy advisor" who takes a role as expert diagnostician, seeing change as resulting from policy-makers having better information, oriented towards the solution of particular problems, and measuring success in terms of organisational outputs; and

(2) the "developmental" consultant who sees change in terms of transforming awareness, a process of mutual learning involving organisational members and consultant, and resting on personal development.

The one may be said to be oriented towards persons, the other to the requirements of the situation. Each carries over from his academic work a particular intellectual stance and commitment to a style of research (showing in

attitudes to data-collection). But in addition the "developmental" consultant's approach includes an avowed intent not to put his life into separate compartments but to effect some carry-over between personal and professional life.

Chapter 10. In order to go beyond consultants' own perspectives, as set out in Chapters 7 - 9, and to draw together common features of their working models, Chapter 10 begins by setting out the theoretical framework operating within the thesis. The first of these, arising from the desire to place consultants in context, derives from the sociology of knowledge, and is concerned with the relationship of ideas to social situation. The second concerns the ideological character and impact of ideas and practices. Thus, the institutional context in which consultants operate is seen as having a specific and general character. Specific work-role has an homogenising influence, exhibited in common role-imagery and practice theories adapted to specific operating situations, notwithstanding personal agency and freedom in role. Thus institutional setting creates perceptual-sets which influence the choice and construction of theories. But the role of consultant is the product also of wider organisational and societal processes and consultants share, on a larger scale, a general occupational role-context. By concentrating, in this chapter, on common features of consultants' working models, two paradigms are identified - the 'negotiative' and 'systems' paradigms. These are analysed as projections

of consultants' own role experience and consciousness in role which are at one and the same time, functional for him (by enabling him to manage his own role), and functional for clients (and thus, have an ideological quality).

Chapter 11 takes up the broader question of 'ideology'. In the belief that the development of consultancy in new functional areas will be largely determined by specific conditions existing at the time, this chapter relates the models favoured by consultants to the particular problems faced by organisations in the period 1960-1979. Social and behavioural science consultancy is argued as having received a major boost from the productivity bargaining movement in the 1960's, and having made direct inputs into it. However, contrary to the usual view of 'ideology', as having the function of securing greater compliance of a subordinate group to a dominant one, social and behavioural science consulting is seen as being directed, in the first instance, more at management, to improve management's organisational and ideological coherence, in the light of the growth and increased complexity of management itself. 'Ideology' is thus treated as a 'social cement' indispensable to all groups as a source of social cohesion. Ideology enables each group "to respond to the exigencies of its existence"[17]. Systems and negotiative paradigms did this for consultants, and they did it for management as a client group.

Chapter 12 considers the specific value of negotiative and systems ideas and practices to management. But systems and negotiative paradigms may also be considered in relation to a wider set of ideas and values. To the extent that there is "mutual articulation"[18] through these across the fields of industrial relations, politics, economics, and social psychology, a 'dominant ideology' becomes apparent. The form of this ideology - that is, the sort of social order it underpins - is explored, the negotiative paradigm, for example, being seen as reproducing many of the features associated with 'economic individualism'.

Chapter 13, reviews a number of central themes and attempts a final synthesis of these. The negotiative paradigm, identified as having become the dominant paradigm in O.D. (as of 1979/80), is seen as representing a particular market relationship and market experience. It works ideologically by providing imagery which reinforces practices and relations, although also by distracting attention from aspects of the economic system. It offers involvement in constructing consensual arrangements within a structure which these modes of action do not touch. It expresses a conception of personal powers which accords with the experience of consultants, but which is not realistic for a great many others. By considering consultants' ideas, as ideology, in relation to their own market situation, as this is expressed in their role, the final chapter thus confronts a central question in social theory - that of the relationship

between ideas and the material structures and processes of society. It thus attempts to connect the sociology of knowledge directly with the theory of ideology.

References and Notes to INTRODUCTION

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2. ibid, p.4.

3. ibid, p.61.

4. A.J.McLean, D.B.Sims, I.L.Mangham, D.Tuffield, Organisation Development in Transition: Evidence of an Evolving Profession, John Wiley, 1982, p.14.

5. As Burrell and Morgan put it:

   > "The central task of social science, according to Schutz, was to understand the social world from the point of view of those living within it, using constructs and explanations which are intelligible in terms of the common-sense interpretations of everyday life."

   G.Burrell and G.Morgan, Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis, London, Heinemann, 1979,p.246.

6. A.Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry. Chandler Publishing Company, 1964, p.13.

7. M.Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, Free Press, 1949, p.81-2

8. See, for example, G.Burrell and G.Morgan, op.cit, p.236 ff, and also A.Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method, London, Hutchinson, 1976, p.54ff.

9. P.Tisdall, op.cit., p.3.

10. M.Kubr(ed), Management Consulting: A Guide to the Profession, Geneva International Labour Office,1976,p.45

11. For example, Giddens comments:

    > "as Pahl and Winkler in particular advocate, elite studies must move away from concern with processes of mobility and recruitment, towards the direct study of the ethos and action of elite groups."

    P.Stanworth and A.Giddens (eds), Elites and Power in British Society, Cambridge University Press,1974, p.11

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13. T.Lane and K.Roberts, Strike at Pilkingtons, London, Fontana, 1971, p.20.

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15. J.Douglas, Understanding Everyday Life: Toward the reconstruction of sociological knowledge, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.

16. See A.Cicourel, Cognitive Sociology: Language and Meaning in Social Interaction, New York, Free Press, 1974, pp 150-154

17. L. Althusser, For Marx, London, Allen Lane, 1969,p.235.

18. For this phrase, see the discussion of Bowdieu by S. Hall, The Hinterland of Science: Ideology and the "Sociology of Knowledge", in W.Schwarz (ed), On Ideology, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p.29.

CHAPTER 1

MANAGEMENT AND CONSULTANTS AS OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

1.1 Introduction

In a market oriented industrial economy, in which there is a high premium placed upon innovation and the application of up to date knowledge, the role of business consultant can be a valuable one. At the very least, the nature, status, and extent of business consultancy is exemplary of a dynamic business economy. This is illustrated, moreover, in the way in which new specialisms and expert knowledge are taken into firms by establishing full-time salaried functions, in preference to buying in consultancy help. The nature and activity of business consultancy has therefore, become a focus of study, from the point of view of their economic contribution, as agents for the transmission of new knowledge.[1]

Sociologically, too, consultants attract attention as an identifiable and increasingly large occupational group (part of a very large and fast-growing sectoral group).[2] As an occupation they are of interest in terms of processes of differentiation and division of labour within the economy and their articulation with managerial interests, both as a social group and as providers of services adopted by salaried managers.

Consultants may, therefore, be studied in similar vein to that applied, in their time, to other 'emergent' groups - to management as a 'profession',[3] and to specialist managerial activities within organisations[4] including personnel management.[5]

The interest of this study is in a particular type of consultant who utilizes social and behavioural science knowledge. The character of the disciplines inevitably invites attention from the point of view of the social contribution being made. This immediately places this study with those which have been concerned with the problems for management and for organisations of achieving social integration - that is, with the problem of achieving social cooperation in pursuit of effective production of goods and services. It allies particularly, therefore, with Child's study of British management thought and Watson's of personnel managers.

Basic to such studies of management is the recognition that to administer and coordinate people in the performance of tasks for predetermined ends (that is, by others), and for results which are variably distributed, involves not merely technical skills, but an acceptance of managerial authority and management's social position by those over whom management stands (which must incidentally include large numbers designated 'managers' themselves):

> 'it is evident, both at the level of industry as a whole and within particular organisations, that the technical function of managing is intimately bound up with the social situation of a managing group, and that this relationship has important consequences for the acceptance of managerial authority'.[6]

How legitimacy, or acceptance, is secured for managements role is, therefore an important focus of the studies by Child and Watson. It is recognised further that ideas regarding managing tend to have both a technical <u>and</u> a legitimatory impact.[7] In both these works it is the authors' intention to search for the ways in which ideas may perform a legitimatory function beyond the ostensible technical, or supposedly 'value-neutral', purpose for which they were or are advanced

The kinds of social and behavioural science which influence organisational consultants and the uses to which they put their knowledge, involve specific problems of leadership and employee integration to organisational purposes. That is to say, the work of such consultants is heavily involved in developing legitimation, whatever else (such as improving efficiency and productivity) they may be doing in the course of working on problems of coordination, group-working, job design, and so forth.

At this point it will be useful to consider the perspectives adopted by Child and Watson, in order to signify more precisely the line to be taken in this study. In particular, how do they conceptualise ideology?

1.2 The Conceptualisation of Group Ideology

'British Management Thought'[8] considers the ideological function, for British management, of the ideas propounded by management thinkers and spokesmen over a period of approximately 50 years from the turn of the century to the mid 1950's. 'The Personnel Managers'[9] considers the use made by personnel managers, and their professional institute, of the social sciences, and the ideological significance of such claims as that personnel managers have a social mission and a social responsibility. Both Child and Watson adopt the perspective of the group - management as a group, personnel managers as a group - so that Watson, quite rightly, terms the use of ideas made by spokesmen for the personnel management profession 'group ideology':

> 'Any statement which any group makes which acts to further the interests of that group (whether by articulating interests to increase group identity, an internal function, or to legitimate group interests with reference to other groups, an external function)is conceptualised as an aspect of group ideology.'[10]

The reason Child and Watson adopt the notion of group ideology lies in the fact that both develop their concern with ideology in confronting the claim that ownership and control of industry are now separated, and that management/personnel management have become 'professional' occupations in whom that control may be safely and rightly vested. Attention is thence focused on what purports to be an homogeneous occupation, through the public statements which advance the claim of that

occupation to professional status. They are studies about occupations: about a 'particular' ideology (in Mannheim's term) serving a narrowly defined interest group.

Each considers the questions: (1) how do public spokesmen represent the claims of these 'professionals' to respect and to resources - what are the public definitions propogated and to whom are they appealing? (2) how far are these definitions mutually consistent and compatible, providing a workable basis for the practitioners?

Whereas both start out from what spokesmen say, Watson goes further beyond these. 'The Personnel Managers', being a contemporary view of personnel management, includes the views of practising personnel managers, derived from a survey, alongside the published views of 'spokesmen'. Indeed, the discrepancy between public definitions and the beliefs and practices of the practitioners themselves is a central concern. Child, on the other hand, relies almost exclusively on historical records of what management thinkers said. Hence, his study is more about 'thinkers' than 'managers'.

Management thought, he suggests, performed a legitimatory function insofar as it defended a particular occupational group (managers) by asserting that managerial objectives

and behaviour were in accord with widely accepted social values. But, secondly, it performed a legitimatory function for the management intellectuals themselves. It helped them to defend themselves before other intellectuals, who were anti-business and anti-management, because, whilst they were defending the occupation they represented, they were trying to direct it into channels which made management more defensible. They were trying to make industrial practice "accord more closely to the picture which was being presented to intellectual opinion".[11]

The legitimatory aspects of management thought therefore served to defend interests and to obviate the role strain of the spokesman group themselves (so that Child is led to conclude:

> 'the ideological elements in British management thought were of greater functional consequence for management intellectuals than for practitioners'.[12])

But there is a further sense in which Child employs the term 'ideology':

> 'a search for the legitimation of managerial authority by claiming a community of interests within the enterprise and a pursuit of social responsibility outside it, can readily prejudice an objective appraisal of the social constraints imposed on the operation of that authority. In short, the dilemma is that the ideological purposes of management thought may weaken its capacity to afford managers a balanced assessment of the social organisations within which they have to work.'[13]

He is concerned here with the "distortions" which ideas can make when value-purposes are uppermost. Ideology is here being used in the sense of preventing managers from

taking a realistic view of their own position and problems.[14] Thus, ideas (Child believes) can be distinguished along a continuum between those which are heavily influenced by ideological intent (by prior values, and/or an attempt to use an idea to legitimate one's own advantages), and those which originate in 'logico-experimental' work.

It would appear, however, that managers were in no way incapacitated by the claims made on their behalf by management thinkers:

> 'A considerable part of the indifference and even opposition shown by practising managers towards management thought may have stemmed from their closer contact with the actual complexities and exigencies of organisational life. This suggests that, for practising managers, legitimatory claims designed to justify their authority were of less moment than the practical maintenance of their position through presenting acceptable financial results, offering adequate rewards, and returning an adequate overall record of business performance'.[15]

The relationship between personnel managers and spokesmen for the profession is of a similar kind. Personnel management is distinguished by having taken seriously the view that personnel managers, as <u>managers</u>, have a social responsibility to the community. (Some of Child's 'advanced' management thinkers were indeed instrumental in founding personnel management as a profession, men like Edward Cadbury and Seebohm Rowntree.[16] However, over time, economistic criteria have come to the fore. Within

personnel management now there is, therefore, reference on the one hand to a personal service ethic, and on the other to economic criteria.[17] It has been the job of the professional institute (IPM) to attempt to reconcile these conflicting definitions, in its public statements. Thus,

> 'Personnel management aims to achieve both efficiency and justice, neither of which can be pursued successfully without the other.'[18]

Within such statements lies a claim to professional status on two grounds. The 'personal service ethic' represents an appeal to the general public, to employees, and to the established professions to grant personnel managers the status and responsibility commensurate with giving a personal service, as independent 'neutrals' bound by a code of socially acceptable ethics. The argument that the personnel manager serves economic efficiency, on the contrary, represents an appeal to fellow-managers and in particular to those who distribute rewards within bureaucratic organisations, on the grounds that they serve the organisation in the same manner as other managers do (by maximising the efficient use of resources and ensuring the long-term stability of the enterprise), and have a specific competence based on knowledge and skills, sustained by approved qualifications.[19]

These definitions may be incompatible and a source of tension for personnel managers themselves. But,

separately, they are functional in the relationships of personnel managers with these different audiences, in securing advantages of resources and status.

Taken seriously, the personal service ethic could, like British management thought, act as an ideological distortion on those who accept it, and incapacitate personnel managers from doing the things required of them. However, in practice Watson found that personnel managers adapted to the "situational exigences" in which they found themselves. Where personal ideals were at odds with the requirements of a task (such as making people redundant), they appeared to have no trouble in rationalising these, and in carrying out their duties. The ideology of personal service (Watson implies) did not get in the way. Rather it is the committees, who attempt to draft this sort of encompassing definition of what personnel management is, who really agonize over rendering values like 'efficiency' and 'justice' compatible.

An ideology which made the job of people in instrumentally-oriented roles more difficult would be an odd one. Nevertheless, Gowler and Legge suggest that professional ideologies in general do impose tensions upon practitioners "by embracing a series of normative positions that are opposite and potentially incompatible".[20] As Merton has commented, blending "these potential opposites into a stable pattern of professional practice

seems one of the most difficult tasks confronting (the professional)'.[21] What in fact happens, according to Gowler and Legge, is that "the professional selects (from a general set of meanings) specific definitions explanations, and values for application to actual situations (that is, to specific problems, clients/users) in order to direct and 'justify' a particular course of action".[22]

In an unpublished thesis, Wilkinson[23] in fact shows how the criteria (or 'values') of 'efficiency' and 'justice' are applied in a negotiated way by a personnel manager (in conjunction with a trade union representative and departmental manager) to a redundancy problem. These values are not so much reconciled, as given different weightings according to the circumstances of individual cases, and alternative criteria are consensually evoked to justify different decisions.

Thus, although conflicting values may impose tensions, at the same time they do offer "normative support for the inconsistencies that may inevitably result from (his) necessary pragmatism".[24]

Nevertheless, there remains in Watson's study, as in Child's, a "problematic relationship between practitioners and thinkers".[25] Whether this is occasioned by the public ideology of personnel management lagging behind

professional pragmatism, and belatedly being adjusted to stress economic criteria, or public ideology taking the lead in bringing about a readjustment of practitioners' ideals, or whether the public ideology does indeed reflect genuine confusion of principles in the profession, the fact is there is a gap between "group ideology" and practice. Therefore, whereas Watson's application of the term 'ideology' to cover (1) anything which furthers group interests, is convincing, its application to (2) whatever helps to rationalize personal conflicts, is less so.[26] The problem lies in starting from a definition of "group ideology", which is equated with public statements.

Running through his study, however, is also a third use of the term 'ideology'.

Watson's answer to the claim that ownership and control are now divorced is that the practices of management in general, and personnel management in particular, serve the interests of ownership, through the control they deliver to owners. Personnel management, thus, is functional to the interest of social integration in industrial capitalist society, and acts as a stabilising force to prevent radical change. The ideas personnel management has adopted are therefore ideological in putting a gloss on these 'real' functions. In particular

the ideal of service and the "human relations' ethic serve to conceal the predominant concern with productive efficiency, technical rationality and profit.[27] In Child's study it is implied that it was management thinkers who deceived themselves by elevating the former and understating the latter. In Watson's study the implication is that it is the workers and the rest of us who are deceived.

In this way, the ideas of personnel management serve others' interests, not just those of the group originating them. But by a happy conjunction, in serving directly the interests of owners and controllers, personnel managers benefit indirectly themselves. In this powerful conjunction of interests, social and organisational power is cemented and gradual revolutions in status occur for those who best assist the status quo.

Because the study does not convincingly display how ideas serve personal needs, however, it cannot demonstrate how ideas simultaneously serve personal needs <u>and</u> organisational needs. Those ideas which do, have either to be generated by practitioners themselves as pressures arise, or be drawn selectively from a variety of public assumptions about personnel management's behaviour as characterised by "professional pragmatism". All that has been done is to clear away the lumber of a certain

set of public definitions of personnel management which create an ambivalence about the role and, if adopted, would place the personnel manager in an untenable position as the 'man in the middle'.

The conclusion must be that 'group ideology', whose content is derived from public statements, is an inadequate construct for elucidating behaviour.[28] That being so, it must also cast doubt on the bald presumption that 'ideas serve interests'.

Let us look now at the case of organisational consultants - as it were, a sub-group of a sub-group concerned with managing people. It is possible to observe 'group ideological' processes in relation to them, too. There is a body of literature (epitomised in the Addison-Wesley series) which

(1) defines the skills of consultancy, and
(2) lays claim to an area of expertise, or type of problem, by arguing the need for the reform of organisations and the development of management (so that managers become more human relations conscious and organisations more responsive to individuals and to their environments).

In this way a role is plotted for neo-human relations consultancy, by writers like McGregor, Bennis, Lippitt, Likert and Argyris.[29]

These writings have, therefore, the internal function (following Watson) of establishing a group identity in terms of a coherent body of knowledge and a recognised

professional practice. Bennis, for example, quite explicitly argued for the development of a profession of applied behavioural scientist.[30]

One sees, too, that the spokesmen for the nascent profession of behavioural science consultant constituted a group themselves, being almost exclusively academics - a clear parallel with British management thinkers. By proposing the reform of organisations and the development of management they defend themselves (and the profession of consultancy in which they engaged as a lucrative sideline from academia) in the eyes of fellow liberal academics, whilst seeking to modify management and organisations in a direction that makes them more defensible.

Furthermore, an 'external' ideological function can be seen in (3) those studies which seek, often by empirical means, to justify the use of behavioural science consultancy, by demonstrating the efficacy of such methods for organisational 'success' (frequently defined in terms of reduced conflict and increased output).

In the review of the literature on consultancy, in Chapter 3, it will be seen that many studies are of this kind and can be readily construed in this way. The line taken can, not surprisingly, often be related to the sponsorship of research and consultancy. Ideas developed are thereby ideological to the extent that they support the interests of those who consume consultancy - for example, when they propose better ways to deliver a particular kind

of solution to organisational clients. Obviously, what is good for clients is good for those selling the appropriate skills and knowledge, and brings the indirect benefit of employment.

A final group of writings are 'group ideological' in the sense that they

(4) advocate the claims of one group of organisational consultants against another.

Thus, Dekom argues that,

> 'The internal consultant is management's most versatile, sophisticated fire-fighting arm'.[31]

And commends, in particular, the internal consultant on the grounds that

> 'Here is the key to the consultant's mission and future: to take care of these problems. Success-oriented management will ensure that problem-solving is handled by someone with the gift and mission of solving problems and that a problem is solved below management's level of attention before it can interfere with growth, innovation, progress and profit.'[32]

Others, like Kelley[33] and Hunt[34] argue, respectively for the particular strengths of internal and external consultants.

Thus, the same paraphenalia in respect of organisational consultants can be found, as for management and for personnel management.

1.3 The Phenomenology of Consultants' life-worlds

I want, however, to shift the focus away from ideology as the advancement of narrow occupational interests, to consider the ideological content and effect of ideas and practices as they operate in everyday locations. In other words, to shift the focus away from ideology as public statements (with all the problems of the relationship of these to private practice that this leaves).

The reason for this strategy goes back to a central problem which both Child and Watson highlight - the fact that the ideas propogated at the public level fail to resolve the role-strain which practitioners themselves experience. (Indeed they may even heighten it). Because of the discrepancy between what group 'spokesmen' say and how practitioners behave, practitioners have to find their own ways of managing their personal role-strain.

Practitioners in any field have a set of ideas and practices which help them get by. The first stage in considering ideas as ideology, then, is to discard the assumption of ideology, and to produce an adequate phenomenology of the adoption and use by <u>individuals</u> of ideas and concomitant practices.

This serves the aim of a proper understanding of how ideology takes hold, in two ways:

First, it focuses on ideas which harmonize with a practitioner's personal situation, or which permit role-strain to be overcome or managed effectively. The really revealing case of ideology is that in which the ideas adopted express features of, for example a consultant's immediate personal situation. It is only the fact that ideas have personal valence, that enables the consultant to employ the same set of ideas and skills, that are important coping mechanisms for him, to serve the interests of <u>others</u>.

This is not to deny that people may live in a condition of tension as they try to live by ideas which create conflicts for themselves. But as cognitive dissonance theory argues, people seek to rationalize discrepant items of experience (for example, between what they believe, and what actually occurs). An essential part of the strategy in this study is a basic presumption in favour of treating a person's ideas and practices as functional for him, and therefore to look for ways in which consultants seek to regularize their situations over time.

At this point one looks for whether there are patterns in the ideas which individuals adopt for their own use, and asks, "if patterns exist, what may be the significance of these?"

Secondly, where ideas actively serve personal needs, it puts one in a better position to ask, "how, if at all, do they serve others' needs (that is, serve both a consultant and his clients)?" If there is evidence that a particular set of ideas and practices serve managers and are indeed shared by consultants and managers (that is, there exists a common ideology), can we deduce anything from the form these take?

The method of proceeding is to ascribe significance to ideas, and hence to impute to them an ideological effect, only after they have been discovered to predominate and to occur in certain patterns.

A fault in treatments of ideology has been to take an adversary stance towards a dominant group, to ascribe to it 'interests', and thence to treat all ideas within its ambit as somehow 'conspiring' as ideology to subjugate or confuse subordinate persons. This is to deny the potential of ideological struggle on the one hand,[35] and on the other, to believe that dominant groups are in themselves homogeneous and possess a "monolithic" ideology.[36] This kind of approach stems from a conception of power as 'power over', and a conception of the 'interests' of adversary parties as somehow ascertainable. As Benton argues, we have to discard the notions of 'interests' if we are to identify ideology as a source of social control and political stability. All one need show in the first

instance is "that certain wants, beliefs, practices, etc on the part of a subordinate group are more conducive to the maintenance of control by a dominant group, or of political stability, than are other wants, etc."[37] And secondly, "that the dominant group is able to affect directionally the formation of wants, beliefs, etc. of the subordinate group".[38]

Watson partly circumvents this problem by adopting Habermas' conception of the 'interest of certainty and control.'[39] The techniques of personnel management can then be seen as contributing to the control of labour and ensuring greater predictability ('certainty') in its management. Such an achievement can be regarded as 'in the interests of' senior managers, merely by virtue of the adoption and extension of personnel management techniques by firms: there must be something in it.

This, however, involves a shift of emphasis away from 'ideology' (as something somehow hidden from view, or accompanying action) to 'technique' plain and simple. It also leads to a somewhat a-historical view, that the 'interest of certainty and control' is undeviating, and moreover, that it is confined to the dominant group. Finally, it encourages a post-hoc functionalist mode of explanation that takes as its starting-point the proposition "that the content of theories and the timing

of their appearance merely reflects the changing problems of control, primarily over their work-forces, faced by managers and industrialists, as the economic situation has changed! "[40] The ideas of personnel managers/managers that are elicited are then readily found to be functional for a set of preconceived interests. Accordingly,

> 'management theories are bound to be implemented and effective, that is until the needs of capitalism change; hence an analysis of such theories does not need to involve detailed consideration of such questions as .. why are particular theories and schemes popular at a particular point in time and what are their consequences."[41]

On the contrary, it is necessary to consider and analyse changes in the nature of capitalism (and in particular the economy) in order to explain changes in the theory and practice of management.

This, Child seeks to do and thereby to avoid the impression that there is some kind of mechanical conveyor-belt existing between the formulation of ideas and their adoption by management. Nevertheless, whilst the notion of the 'elective affinity' of ideas, adopted by both Child and Watson (from Weber[42]), appears at first sight to preserve an openness about human social life, it readily lends itself to teleological explanation, given the gift of hindsight. The variety in ideas, and particularly the variety of intentions behind their adoption, gets lost to view.

To summarize: the question to be answered is, why do individuals adopt the ideas they do? The strategy then is first to attempt an analysis, based on adequate reportage, of the phenomenology of consultants' life-worlds. That is not to say 'group ideological' processes cannot be observed. But these are essentially separate: they originate elsewhere from the daily production of behaviour and ideas among consultants - even though every consultant will have some justification for what he is doing, which may connect with publicly available sentiments. The situation is not different from that described by Marx regarding the production of 'ideology'.

> 'inside this class (the ruling class) one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up ideas and illusions about themselves'[43]

Analysis of consultants' 'life-worlds' forms the major part of the data analysis, then, derived from direct interviews with 45 consultants. (Chapters 6 - 9)

The succeeding chapters (10 - 13), however, go on to consider the broader context in which they operate, and ideology in social and behavioural science. No serious analysis of organisational consultancy can fail to consider the effects of what consultants do and the significance of their ideas.

1.4 'General and 'Particular' Ideology

As Child [44] observed, most writing on organisational behaviour today derives from professional scientists. This has revolutionised British management thought, and, through management education, it is directed at managerial consumption to perhaps a greater extent than the writings of management intellectuals formerly were.

At the time he was writing, it appeared to Child that social science (the 'new' social science, as opposed to Mayoite social science) had acquired a primarily technical orientation, relatively free from "distorted observation", though, as with all science, nevertheless occasionally liable to "erroneous observation".[45] It had an avowedly empirical flavour, as it sought to dispel the value distortions which British management thought had acquired from human relations thinking. Child saw this trend in relation to the economic and social background of the post-war era:

> 'Social science research has in various countries received financial support from government agencies on the grounds of its technical utility.... [46] It is meaningful to view this research in relation to the wider post-war social climate with its emphasis on economic growth, competitive industrial performance, and management training ..... In response to this environment, which is conducive to a widespread acceptance of managerial authority rights, management thought had itself shifted towards a concentration on technical purposes once the political uncertainties of the 1940's had passed ..... social science is recognised as a technical aid - the means to a better understanding of industrial behaviour which managers should try to utilize.' [47]

Increasingly, in the period 1960-79 what we have seen, rather, is a revival of political uncertainties, and a renewed challenge to managerial authority rights.[48] In such circumstances, what we find is a revival of older perspectives - legitimatory polemics from management writers, adversary polemics from critics of capitalism, and a modified human relations. In any period, ideas do not simply die out merely because they are thought to be discredited or outmoded. As Child observed,

> 'On the other hand, we noted the continued presence in recent years of older perspectives and of analyses distorted by managerial values, among some writers whose work remains either coloured by a legitimatory purpose (as with Jaques) or marred by ignorance.'[49]

Thus Klein[50] in the mid-1970's complains that a simplistic social-psychology imported from America is displacing the more rigorous home-grown approach, which another sociologist, Lupton,[51] had, apparently, already demolished for its 'universalistic' assumptions.

But not only might a rigorous social science from time to time give way to simplicities. Within the more sophisticated formulations which derive from empirical observations and testing, there may, too, lurk value premisses which support social control through managerial leadership. The evidence of a plurality of divergent

interests in the workplace, for example, does not in itself justify constant negotiation with the purpose of reconciling these.

Thus, instead of there existing a purely empirical science of organisational behaviour, it has become apparent (under the force of the radical critique) that social science itself (and particularly organisation theory) is not so simply devoid of ideological character.

Logico-experimental work in the social arena cannot be perfectly detached from value elements.[52] Partly it is because descriptions of social reality can only be descriptions of prevailing social reality. Theory in the social sciences therefore, tends merely to model prevailing forms in the social world. Taking Popper's observation that logico-experimental science works by a process of 'multiplicative corroboration', Spencer and Dale comment:

> 'Multiplicative corroboration, used alone, tends to produce conservative formulations, since it tests what Popper calls "the world of appearances".'[53]

Whereas, therefore, it may disprove assumed relations, it can still only be reformist in character, modifying what is taken to be a 'true fact'. It cannot radically disclose by hypothesis and testing, the dominant assumptions on which our social life and our institutions are based, (although, of course, we can 'know' these through other means). This was the force of Marx's critique of 19th

century political economy, when he argued that it described and consequently served to legitimize currently existing relations.

Secondly, one cannot proceed without some conceptual framework, some set of assumptions or beliefs, some encompassing theory. All social theories invite inspection on these grounds, and those which are propounded as if they involve no prior constructions especially so:

> 'the very notion that social research can be conducted other than on the basis of the prior development of concepts and theories is held to be ideological.'[54]

Thus, theories may contain both "postulations" ("explicitly formulated assumptions") and also "background assumptions" out of which the "postulations" emerge, but which stand in the background inexplicit and unexamined.[55]

Unmasking ideology is not particularly difficult in respect of those specific ideologies which justify the material or political interests of a social group (such as the personnel management profession), or of a whole class, where 'interests' are opaque. Such ideologies are relatively easy to recognise and where necessary to discount. The real problem lies with the less evident 'general' ideologies in which are embedded and thereby concealed, the working out of social relations. 'General' ideologies work through sets of implicit values,

'not by openly justifying prevailing institutions but by arresting social thought at inadequate and superficial concepts.'[56]

This is an invitation, therefore, to consider social science ideas, not for whether they are 'true' or not, but for the way in which they participate in a general set of ideas ("general social eidos" as Madge[57] phrases it) which exist outside the confines of the discipline. While social science may have been "anti-ideological"[58] in its specific impact on British management thought, it may be seen to be ideological in its general character. In the language of the structuralists consultants' theories and practices may symbolize the deep structures of economic and social relations.

Precisely what these 'deep structures' are and in what way consultants' theories and practices symbolize them is the subject of the concluding chapters.

At the risk, therefore, of smuggling back in functionalist explanations, the eventual aim is to shift focus away from the 'particular' ideology of an occupational group (which Mannheim considered the more productive area of study) to outline the characteristics of a 'general' ideology in organisational life, in the period under study, by suggesting that the ideas of the particular occupational group (social and behavioural science consultants) connect with a general set of ideas broadly underlying and permeating societal and organisational life.

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3. For example, J.Burnham, The Managerial Revolution, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1945; J.Child, British Management Thought, London, George Allen and Unwin,1969.

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5. For example, T.J.Watson, The Personnel Managers: A Study in the sociology of work and employment, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.

6. J.Child, op.cit, p.16

7. Ibid, p.23

8. Ibid

9. T.J.Watson, op.cit.

10. Ibid, p.16. At the same time Watson notes, "The concept (of ideology) is being used here in a manner which is much wider than is generally the case in sociology (and in recognition of this I will retain the wording 'group ideology'). Within this theoretical scheme no statement is inherently ideological - it becomes ideological through the use to which is being put." (ibid,p.16)

11. J.Child, pp.cit. p.229

12. Ibid, p.239

13. Ibid. p.22

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15. J. Child, op.cit. p.238

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23. C.L.Wilkinson, Redundancy: A Personnel Manager's Dilemma?, Unpublished B.A.thesis, Trent Polytechnic, Dept. of Business Studies, C.N.A.A., 1981.

24. D.Gowler and K.Legge, op.cit., p.230

25. T.J.Watson, op.cit., p.41

26. See ibid, p.164

27. Similarly, Child (op.cit.) seeks to show that management thinkers were offering managers (and the general public) an ideology that softened the language of conflict and reduced the evident polarisation of capital and labour which was particularly marked in the 1920's.

28. Or to put it another way, the methodology is insufficiently 'phenomenological'.

29. See, for example, D.McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1960; W.Bennis, Changing Organisations, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966; G.Lippitt, Organisational Renewal, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969. R.Likert, New Patterns of Management, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1961; C.Argyris, Interpersonal competence and organisational effectiveness, Irwin, 1962.

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37. T.Benton, op.cit., p.179.

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42. Use of the term, 'elective affinity', is scattered through various of Weber's works, for example in Wirtschaft and Gesellschaft, Tubingen, Mohr, 1978, pp 201, 780, 795, 796, 815. For a discussion of its meaning, which is neither consistent nor clear in Weber's works, see J.J.R.Thomas, Ideology and Elective Affinity, Sociology, Vol19, No.1, February 1985, pp.39-54.

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44. J.Child, op.cit., p.169.

45. Ibid, pp.221 ff.

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47. J.Child, op.cit., p.206.

48. See, for example, J.Storey, The Challenge to Management Control, Kogan Page, 1980.

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CHAPTER 2

CRITIQUES OF OD

This chapter looks at how the applied social and behavioural science profession has been confronted and how it confronts itself. This is in part to clear away the too-readily simplistic picture painted by the radical critiques of participation, job enrichment etc. in order, in Chapters 6 - 9, to get down to the experience of real consultants. As Gouldner puts it, in another context, "There can be no serious critique (of sociology) without a fine-grained, close analysis of its theories and its theorists".[1] Nevertheless, these critiques do expose something of the philosophical core of applied social science[2] and thus establish its ideological bent.

2.1 The Critique from Without

Criticism from outside the profession focuses on what are taken to be the manipulative features of the techniques used and the exploitative results of the programmes developed. Stephenson[3] thus, is critical of the use of 't-groups' (sensitivity training) because of the totalitarian assumption that it can be right to alter the values, attitudes, personalities even, of people in organisations

(in this case, managers on whom this technique is primarily practised). Others are critical of the manipulation of people's commitment and effort, more especially that of the 'workers'. They are concerned about the exploitative consequences, rather than the particular manipulative techniques used.[4] Thus, the substance and scope of participation and job enrichment schemes do not involve any move in the locus of control away from management towards lower-level employees, but rather a trend for workers to "manage themselves for management".[5] Many participation schemes are forms of 'mock participation', involving control over trivial matters;[6] many job enrichment schemes are confined to re-allocating responsibilities at the lower levels in isolated sections of a firm's total activities, within a framework where control over the major strategic issues remains with senior managers and directors[7].

Consultants who deploy social and behavioural science (variously termed "psycho-sociologists"[8] and "organisational psycho-technologists"[9] are seen as using

> 'a variety of techniques drawn from an individual-centred discipline (psychology) to maintain the status quo in terms of managerial dominance. In this view OD is a means of social control, a more sophisticated version of the welfarism which was one of the roots of Personnel Management. The possibilities of 'participation' or redistribution of power in organisations is a Chimera."[10]

'Progressive' managements adopt these techniques and perspectives (via consultants):

'ChemCo management is a force to be reckoned with .. In it are men who talk of 'communication', 'system meeds', 'job satisfaction', and 'Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory', who are keen on meetings and giving information - 'though you have to be careful' - who talk a lot to workers about profits in an apparently matter-of-fact way - 'after we take off your wages and dividends we have this (profit) left over' - who train themselves and foreman in human relations techniques, and also some higher grades of workers.'[11]

Such a view should be confronting for behavioural science consultants. Yet, as Edmonstone observes:

'Nichols and Beynon's 'Living with Capitalism' .. embodies a critique of OD which I have never seen or heard any OD practitioner attempt to rebut'.[12]

The gulf that actually exists between practitioners and their outside critics is illustrated by the retort that this produced in a following issue of the ODN Newsletter, from a consultant who had himself worked inside 'ChemCo'.

'When I read this book, my inclination was indeed to rebut it, but alas I never got round to doing so. It rang so untrue to my belief about how things really are in factories of the company where the research was done, that I wondered if the authors had ever been exposed to the training in objectivity that I received in my four years of academic research".[13]

It would seem that the profession, if it confronts itself at all, confronts itself on entirely different grounds than its outside critics do.[14]

Common to critiques on the grounds of manipulation and exploitation is an hostility to the idea, actively recommended by Argyris of "integrating the individual and the organisation".[15] Far from desiring this goal, critics see this as fundamentally conservative; for in practice itmeans integrating the individual's goals to the goals

and interests of the organisation's controllers. Thus,

> 'change agents have allied themselves with those groups who benefit from the existing distribution of power" [16]

On the contrary, critics desire to help "people destroy the organisational forms in which they have become imprisoned" [17]

As Strauss notes,

> 'OD is often used as a technique for winning greater acceptance of a management's objectives on the part of lower participants - as are most personnel techniques' [18]

a point confirmed by Watson, who notes the popularity of notions of 'synthesis' (intergration') among writers on personnel management in both the UK and America, who see the major objective of a personnel department as "increasing the 'fit' between employees and organisation" [19]

In terms of our earlier discussion of ideology, these critics see behavioural science as ideological insofar as it deceives others and supports the dominant group by facilitating integration around the status quo. OD consultants in Brimm's words are "system maintainers"20

2.2. The Critique from Within

A second group of critics from <u>within</u> the profession of applied behavioural science, sees it, however, as ideological insofar as it deceives the pra c tioners themselves. The 'O.K.' stance is to take a <u>realistic</u>

attitude to social and behavioural science consultancy, expressed as "higher profits and more satisfied people, in that order"[21]. They recognise OD as having its origins in a set of humanistic values,[22] but wish to free professional practice from dependency on these, because they inhibit realistic diagnosis of organisational problems.

This critique focuses on the 'social movement' character of OD. Proceeding from insights by Back[23] (that the personal-growth movement represents a wish to recreate a lost community and brotherhood) and by Tichy[24] (who observes that there exists an "incongruence" between the values and actions of OD consultants), Tranfield[25] interprets the normative bias of OD practitioners as a form of idealisation, arising from a failure to deal adequately with infantile experiences.

The parallel here with Mannheim's discussion of utopian thinking is striking:

> '(Utopian) thinking is incapable of correctly diagnosing an existing condition of society ... In the Utopian mentality, the collective unconscious, guided by wishful representation and the will to action, hides certain aspects of reality. It turns its back on everything which would shake its belief or paralyze its desire to change things ...
>
> A state of mind is Utopian when it is incongruous with the state of reality within which it occurs'[26]

Transposing, for the Freudian and Jungian constructs that Mannheim uses, the language of 'object relations'

(which has largely superseded classic Freudianism in this country), Tranfield writes:

> 'the split-ego hypothesis .. says that the source of values held by organisation development consultants stems from a defensive function of a divided ego. Such a manoevre would provide defence against painful internal and external objects'.[27]

But whereas Mannheim prefers to reserve the term 'Utopia' "to that type of orientation which transcends reality and which at the same time breaks the bonds of the existing order"[28] (and which therefore sometimes serves the cause of social progress), Tranfield treats the illusions of OD consultants as weakening their capacity to make appropriate adaptions. Cast in an 'underdog' role, the OD consultant as a 'change agent', unlike Mannheim's "oppressed groups", merely makes a poor job of relating to the world as it is, and never effectively changes it.[29]

This is typified for many critics by the lack of attention in OD to the problem of power. As early as 1969, Bennis was lamenting that OD

> 'Systematically avoids the problems of power, or the politics of change'[30]

As a consequence, Bennis argued, the OD practitioner has no

> 'model to guide his practice under conditions of distrust, violence and conflict. Essentially this means that in a pluralistic power situation, in situations not easily controlled, Organisational Development may not reach its desired goals'[31]

Strauss[32], in 1976, reiterates this charge, quoting Bennis' words, despite noting some increased attention to

this neglected area. Lack of attention to power realities is seen as the result of an unrealistic commitment to values of openness and authenticity stigmatised by Bennis as 'love/truth'[33] and by Goodge as 'love/trust'[34] values.

The consequence of this value-set is that the OD practitioner gives insufficient attention to the political processes of bringing about change, a point argued by Friedlander and Brown[35], and by Pettigrew in his attempt to remedy this:

> 'One of the themes noticeably absent from much of the writing on organisational change is the political context of the interventionist's work).'[36]

These writers view OD as essentially powerless to effect change.

The radical critics of OD would have difficulty in recognising the OD consultant as an 'underdog', when their quarrel is with its insidious power to deliver employee groups over to managerial control. Nevertheless, it is possible to reconcile these two images in a synthesis which views a deception practised on one's self as a deception practised all the more effectively on others.

As Mannheim puts it, in defining 'ideology' (where he means 'deceptions which legitimise the status quo' as opposed to 'wishful representations which threaten the status quo'):

'ruling groups can in their thinking become so intensively interest-bound to a situation that they are simply no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domination. There is implicit in the word 'ideology' the insight that in certain situations the collective unconscious of certain groups obscures the real condition of society both to itself and to others and thereby stabilizes it.' [37]

OD can, therefore, be double-edged - the more so as its basic assumptions, or values, resonate with values deep in Western liberal-democratic culture.

'Every period in history has contained ideas transcending the existing order, but these did not function as Utopias; they were rather the appropriate ideologies of this stage of existence as long as they were 'organically' and harmoniously integrated into the world-view characteristic of the period'. [38]

If we turn back to the content of OD consultants' ideas, away from the mechanism of idealisation, we can see how the humanist ideals of OD, genuinely held, may serve an ideological function.

2.3. The Ideals of OD

Tranfield's original respondents[39] described their ideal organisations along strikingly similar lines. They all saw the desirability of maximising human fulfillment, and the possibility of achieving this within the framework of (reformed) organisations. This belief, which has been aptly named "organisational humanism"[40], is a core value in OD. People have a capacity for, a need, and a right to the full development of their abilities; work should

provide opportunities for the full use of their moral, intellectual, aesthetic, as well as of their material productive capacities.

This belief infuses a whole host of technologies and programmes in which social and behavioural science consultants and trainers work.

> ''Collabaration in Work Settings' (CWS) is yet another approach to reshaping the working environments of human beings. As such, CWS joins a list familiar to readers of this journal (Journal of Applied Behavioural Science), some of the more familiar entries being Organisation Development (OD), Sociotechnical Systems (STS), Human Resource Development (HRD), and Quality of Working Life (QWL). While there are variations in these approaches, they share two underlying premises; (1) work must meet the needs of individuals for material survival and the needs of organisations for material growth and productivity; and (2) work must meet the needs of human beings for learning, self-validation, and personal growth in all activities in which they engage. Most oganisational theorists and practitioners believe it possible to consummate a marriage of these two premises.'[41]

Commentators invariably relate this belief to the 'self-actualisation theory of Abraham Maslow[42]

> 'Maslow's 'heirarchy of needs' is the most widely taught view of motivation in North American business schools and provides the theoretical framework for much of organisation theory,'[43]

Thus, Maslow's theory has been a direct influence on theorists like Chris Argyris, perhaps the most influential contemporary exponent of 'organisational humanism',and on other important mediators of this philosophy, such as McGregor and Likert.

In passing, one has to say that any adequate account of

'organisational humanism' would have to recognise other antecedents and progenitors than simply Maslow. A great many influences came together in the 'personal growth' movement (as will be apparent when we set out the ideas and backgrounds of our subjects in due course). These contribute to a theory of the person, a theory of personal change, and, by extension, to a theory of organisational change. But not only are the influences diverse, there are certainly some that are contradictory, so that it is a travesty to equate all with Maslow.[44]

However, limiting our characterisation to the central belief in the potential of man, and with the qualification that this belief is probably stronger within the American tradition (of behavioural science),[45] this still leaves us with the clash, some would say irreconcileable clash, between humanism and utilitarianism in organisations.

The most succinct statement of this contradiction is to be found in a short article aptly entitled 'Collaborative Worksettings: New Titles, Old Contradictions' by Morrow and Thayer[46] The contradiction is between a view of man as a consumer of utilities and as a maximiser of his powers as a human being. Organisations, under capitalism, as producers of goods and services, promote the idea of men (and women) as consumers. In turn, the latter's satisfactions as consumers, translated through pricing and both stimulated and interpreted through promotion, and measured by the yardstick of profit, govern the conduct

of the firm. Workers, as producers, are dispensable according to how the wants of consumers are translated into effective demand - 'dispensable' in the sense of being 'no longer required' if demand is absent, and in the way also labour is allocated to where there is currently effective demand. Capitalist organisations thus dispose of workers as producers in the most efficient (least-unit-cost) and rational way possible in order to maximise, in turn, their power as consumers to purchase "utilities" from the payment of wages and salaries.

This theoretical justification of capitalist society and its organisations is the familiar utilitarian one. The claim for the maximisation of powers, according to Macpherson presents "an almost opposite view of man from that of the Utilitarians":[47]

> 'This claim is based on a view of man's essence not as a consumer of utilities but as a doer, a creator, an enjoyer of his human attributes. Whatever these uniquely human attributes are taken to be, in this view of man their exertion and development are seen as ends in themselves, a satisfaction in themselves, not simply a means to consumer satisfactions. .. Man is not a bundle of appetites seeking satisfactions but a bundle of conscious energies seeking to be exerted.'[48]

This 'humanist' belief, in 'self-actualisation' is part of a long Western humanist tradition going back to Plato, Aristotle, and Christian natural law, revived in western liberal-democracy in the modern era by J.S.Mill, and finding expression, of course, in Marx. It is a core value in liberal-democratic society, of which Maslow is merely a recent interpreter.

There is thus a strong modern flavour about Mill turning to the idea of

> ' a network of co-partnerships in industry, or producers' cooperatives (which) might turn every worker into his own capitalist, and so enable the system of enterprise to operate without the degradation of wage-labour'.[49]

Yet, just as organisational humanists may be supposed to have difficulty now in converting organisations from utilitarian to humanistic values, so Mill, too, had difficulty rendering his democratic beliefs (in equality and in the maximisation of human capacities) compatible with market values. The cooperative ideal, then as now runs, counter to the tide of capitalist development and cannot hope to turn "every worker into his own capitalist" without the economic system around it being changed by institutional force. Macpherson comments:

> 'The founding father of liberal-democratic theory, we are compelled to say, was able to rise above the market morality only because he did not understand the market society'[50]

The conflict between organisational rationality (efficiency) and humanism has been commented on by many. William G. Scott puts the practical (as opposed to the philosophical) case for suspecting any reconcilement of the two, as follows:

> 'Whether deservedly or not, humanism adapted to the management process has the taint of manipulation. It is difficult to imagine management using techniques like organisation development, sensitivity training, or job enrichment out of pure 'milk of kindness' ... One reason for paying humanist-type change agents consulting fees (is) they create and apply behavioural

technologies that management thinks are valuable for raising the efficiency of human resources - humanist technologies and technologists serve materialistic ends.

'The difficulty of applying humanism in this manner is that personal satisfaction and organisational efficiency are compatible only at a most superficial level. The kinds of satisfaction sought for man by true humanists are non-materialistic. Hence, any attempt to mold humanism to the goals of organisations (as we know them) either will pervert the humanistic values or erode organisational rationality. We cannot have it both ways.'[51]

Reconciling the logic of efficiency and the values of humanism, it seems, may only come about through creating new forms of the old contradiction. Those which do so relatively effectively, it may be surmised, do so selectively and to the extent that the theory or programme resonates with a particular combination of values that are currently socially in favour. At the time, a theory or programme may seem to have solved the problem and involve no major contradiction, but only insofar as it is (in Mannheim's words) an "appropriate" ideology

''organically' and harmoniously integrated into the world-view characteristic of the period'[52]

Although it is easily dismissed by anyone with any sophistication in social science, on empirical and conceptual grounds,[53] (and, indeed, for all we know it may be an object of scorn and healthy scepticism among those to whom it is taught), Maslow's theory can be analysed in terms of its 'resonance' with non-psychological theories and values. A more pertinent example in due course will

be analysed, namely how the actual theories of consultants in this study were of and for their time.

The appeal of Maslow's theory is how it apparently combines the motivation theories of Taylorism and Mayo, and goes one better. It embodies the values of utilitarianism, a materialistic philosophy and psychology, at its base, and the values of humanism in its middle and upper reaches. Moreover, it avoids the separation between the 'logic of efficiency' and the 'logic of sentiment', which was Mayo's 'solution' to the opposition between utilitarianism and non-materialistic values. Where Mayo lodged these values in different classes, Maslow implies one and the same person may, at different times, act upon either set of values.

As such, Maslow's theory is appealing to those who want a more inclusive theory of personal psychology and organisational behaviour, and it doesn't overtly offend values of equality in an open, mobile society. But it goes further than this.

Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' can be viewed as a psychological theory based on the neo-classical economist's principle of 'diminishing marginal utility'. As one set of needs become satisfied another set of needs comes to the fore.

Initially, the practical and moral problem the marginal utility theorist had to solve was that of justifying inequality and poverty in terms of aggregate social utility

(the utilitarian's measure of all things). It might appear aggregate social utility (not to mention social justice) is not served by a system that tolerates great wealth and the indulgence of luxurious tastes when the basic needs of the poor for shelter and food are unsatisfied. The trick is to argue that as a man becomes richer his wants change, and are not comparable over time; one man's wants cease therefore to be comparable also with another man's, since their wants are merely manifestations of the particular state of development of their individual needs at a point in time: "In maximising utility (suggests Macpherson) all wants are equal" ... "inter-temporal comparisons of utility are ruled out"[54]

In practical terms this serves to disaggregate utilities: the rich do not profit at the expense of the poor, since there is no evident connection between spending on luxuries and the availability of basics. Or as Macpherson puts it, the theory of marginal utility

> 'had the additional effect of diverting attention from the question of the distribution of the social product between social classes.'[55]

The situation merely reflects 'what the majority of people want' expressed through the market and their contributions to marginal productivity. Political apolgists go further and suggest that when a rich man spends he provides purchasing power to others and is thus a social benefactor.

Maslow's, too, is a theory of diminishing marginal utility

It performs the same trick of disaggregating needs. It implies a qualitative separation between the need for material satisfactions and the need for the satisfaction of 'capacities' (self-actualisation), neither being dependent upon the other. Self-actualisation is a higher goal, and therefore becomes an important increment to the scale of aggregate social value, as important to those who can get it as physiological satisfaction is to the poorer - but immeasurably more desirable (according to Maslow). This has the effect of devaluing wealth: what it can buy is relatively worthless, compared with self-fulfilment (a'higher'need). This is a nice way of passing over economic differentials. Any further increments of money (an increase in 'utilities') beyond a certain point, are less valued than something like increased job satisfaction (an increase in 'powers'). Thus workers may be persuaded to accept 'belongingness', esteem, and self-actualisation (beyond a sufficiency in income), as substitutes for higher wages. Higher order rewards become exchangeable for lower order rewards, through the latter's diminishing marginal utility. Thus it provides warrant for proponents of job enrichment.

The theory thus performs the function of minimising economic differences, and devaluing economic benefits. This may be a convenient set of beliefs for employers and their agents to act on.

At the same time, Maslow's theory embodies an image of the social fabric. The 'hierarchy of needs', with its

promise of progress up the hierarchy towards increasing fulfilment, is consonant with an ideal of an open, mobile society, of 'getting-on', and with the values of self-improvement and social progress.[56] With these inevitably goes the implication of moral superiority in those who have attained leadership roles in the (social) hierarchy. Ipso facto, leadership involves superiority, a concern with higher things. What was explicit in Mayo is implicit in Maslow's model. Nevertheless, as Morrow and Thayer observe, Maslow did argue for the desirability and inevitability of social hierarchy, and the need to identify "superior persons" to be placed in officially designated positions of organisational leadership.[57] Regardless of the Platonic origins of this idea of an 'elite', the fact is it is an invitation to equate station with quality. In its application to hierarchical organisations, the theory disregards that the fulfilment of leaders' capacities in challenging roles might be achieved only at the expense of subordinates not fulfilling theirs. Hierarchy puts limits on the extent of self-actualisation through work, even within the context of a programme of job enrichment.

Looked at this way, Maslow's theory provides a convenient justification for existing disparities of wealth and opportunity, as well as encouraging a belief that fulfilment of capacities in the course of time can be achieved.

It is thus an illustration of how ideas in one realm

(psychological theory) can be homologous with ideas in another realm (economic theory) and with social imagery, which is how the ordinary man sees society and explains it to himself. Maslow's theory, it is suggested, is successful conceptually because it provides a theory of the person which is co-extensive with the dominant theory of economic relations and with a widespread model of social relations. It "resonates" with these, and reinforces a "general ideology".

The explication here is, of course, speculative. It is intended to be illustrative of how ideas might act as ideology. What one can argue is that Maslow's theory offers a convenient fiction along these lines, a symbolic prop to management as an elite social group, which, whilst ostensibly expanding the claims of lower level employees, might work otherwise. Where humanistically - minded consultants may be drawn to the theory for its liberating aspects, and propogate such ideas in good faith, in its practical effect it may merely serve to provide an ideological prop to an existing system of hierarchical control and differential benefits. Thus they practice a deception upon themselves and upon others, by means of an "appropriate ideology ... 'organically' and harmoniously integrated to the world-view characteristic of the period."[58]

References and Notes to CHAPTER 2

1. A.W.Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, London, Heinemann, 1971, p.14.

2. As elsewhere, labels like "applied social science", "O.D.", "social and behavioural science consultancy", and so forth, are deliberately used interchangeably in an imprecise way. This is because, as noted in the Introduction regarding terms, the subject is "a particular kind of activity, rather than distinct and separate subject matters". (p.3)

3. T.E.Stephenson, O.D.: A Critique, Journal of Management Studies, Vol.12, No.3, Oct.1975.

4. See, for example, T.Nichols and P. Armstrong, Workers Divided, Fontana, 1976; T.Nichols and H.Benyon, Living with Capitalism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977; D.Hull The Shop Stewards' Guide to Work Organisation, Spokesman, 1978.

5. T.Nichols, The 'socialism' of management, Sociological Review, Vol.23, No.2, 1975 pp.245-65.

6. M.Poole, Workers' Participation in Industry, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.

7. See T.D.Wall and J.A.Lischeron, Worker Participation: A Critique of the Literature and Some Fresh Evidence, London, McGraw-Hill, 1977.

8. T.Nichols, op.cit.

9. M.Rose, Industrial Behaviour: Theoretical Development Since Taylor, Allen Lane, 1975, p.187.

10. J.Edmonstone, Editorial, Organisation Development Network Newsletter, May, 1981.

11. T.Nichols and P.Armstrong, op.cit., pp.49-50.

12. J.Edmonstone, op.cit.

13. B.Everard, Letter to the Editor, Organisation Development Newsletter, July, 1981.

14. Since 1981 there has, nevertheless, been a greater readiness for introspection and self-critique, for example in the 10th Anniversary review of O.D. initiated by the O.D.Network in the U.K. and in the public discussion in its Newsletter accompanying this.

15. C.Argyris, Integrating the Individual and the Organisation, New York, Wiley, 1964.

16. M.Brimm, When is a Change not a Change? Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, No.18, February 1972 pp.102-107.

17. M. Pages in N.M.Tichy, An interview with Max Pages, Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, Vol.9,pp.8-26.

18. G.Strauss, Organisation Development in R. Dubin (ed), Organisation, and Society, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1976, pp.617-685.

19. T.J.Watson, The Personnel Managers: A study in the sociology of work and employment, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p.151.

20. M.Brimm, op.cit.

21. Quoted in D.R.Tranfield, Some Characteristics of Organisation Development Consultants, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Sheffield City Polytechnic,CNAA, July 1978, p.74.

22. See, for example, S.Koch, The Image of Man in Encounter Group Theory, Journal of Human Pyschology, Vol.11,1971, pp.109-127; and L.N.Solomon, Humanism and the training of applied behavioural scientists, Journal of Applied Behavioural Science,Vol.7, No.5,1971,pp.531-547.

23. K.W.Back, Beyond Words: The Story of Sensitivity Training and the Encounter Movement, Baltimore, Penguin,1972.

24. N.M.Tichy, Agents of Planned Social Change: Congruence of Values, Cognitions and Actions, Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol.19,No.2, 1974, pp.164-182.

25. D.R.Tranfield, op.cit.

26. K.Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936, pp.36, 173.

27. D.R.Tranfield, op.cit, p.185.

28. K.Mannheim, op.cit., p.173.

29. Tranfield's study involves the application of projective tests to a sample of twelve O.D.consultants, against a control group. This seems to show that O.D.consultants are exceptionally different from 'normals', in terms of "unwillingness to confront" and "reserve" (though not so markedly different as schizophrenics who score high also on "low emotionality"). The statistical basis for his conclusions, Tranfield admits, are "weak". This does not, of course, invalidate the insight he is testing, which is based on personal observation that

O.D.consultants have a "propensity to idealize", nor his hypothesis that this derives from failure to handle hostile object relations. But it is not as strong a proof as one would like.

30. W.G.Bennis, Organisation Development: Its Nature, Origin, and Prospects, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1969,p.78.

31. Ibid, p.78.

32. G.Strauss, op.cit., p.659. This criticism is reiterated by A. McLean, Organisation Development: A Case of the Emperor's New Clothes? Personnel Review, Vol.10,No.1, 1981, pp.3-14.

33. W.G.Bennis, op.cit., p.77.

34. P. Goodge, The Love/Trust Model and Progress in O.D., Journal of European Training, Vol.4, No.3, 1975.

35. F.Friedlander and L.D.Brown, Organisation Development in M.Rosenzweig and N.W.Porter, (eds), Annual Review of Psychology, Vol.25, 1974.

36. A. Pettigrew, Towards a Political Theory of Organisational Intervention, Human Relations, Vol.28, No.3, 1975.

37. K.Mannheim, op.cit., p.36.

38. Ibid, p.174.

39. A total of 121 respondents.

40. A.A.Morrow and F.C.Thayer, Collaborative Work Settings: New Titles, Old Contradictions, Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, Vol.13, No.2, 1977, pp.448-457.

41, Ibid, p.448

42. A.H.Maslow, A theory of human motivation, Psychological Review, Vol.50, 1943,pp.370-396.

43. J.Kelly,,Organisation Behaviour, Harewood,Ill., Dorwin and Dorsey Press, 1969,p.176.

44. Other important influences on the 'theory of the person' include (1) Jung, who also sees the person as a self-actualiser in the sense of striving to bring the two sides of his/her personality together in a mature synthesis, and (2) Karl Rogers who, though likewise seeing the person as in a 'state of becoming', places less emphasis on where that process of growth might lead.
Theories of personal change are exceedingly diverse, and include the whole literature on personal therapy

(in which Rogers' 'client-centred therapy' has been prominent). Within this literature, there are major differences of view as between the merits of (a) directive versus non-directive strategies (from operant conditioning to Rogerian 'client-centred therapy'); (b) rational and cognitively-oriented strategies versus cathartic, emotionally-oriented ones; (c) individual versus group-based methods.

Not all of these, of course, are to do with 'humanistic psychology'. But it is precisely where the theory and practice of organisational change draws on these diverse threads that contradictions become evident. Thus, Stephenson (op.cit.) and Strauss (op.cit.) have both criticised the coercive nature of t-groups which purport to change participants' behaviour and attitudes by utilising the pressures of group conformity, and indeed Kurt Lewin's use of group-based methods of attitude-change relied on pressures to group conformity. Many O.D.consultants have themselves expressed unease at this contradiction between 'increasing motivation to change (a Lewinian concept) and 'client-centred change' (a Rogerian concept), both in print (for example, A.Dale, Coercive Persuasion and the Role of the Change Agent, ODMAG, Vol.1, No.2, Spring 1972, pp.19-29), and in the course of interviews during this study. There is, indeed, a distinctive 'behaviourist' strain within O.D., which takes an instrumental attitude towards the people of an organisation, that occasionally finds full expression (for example, T.T.Herbert, Organisational Behaviour: Readings and Cases, New York, MacMillan Publishing Co., 1976, especially the Readings contributed by Harold Rush and by Larry Short; and W.G.Dyer, Insight to Impact: Strategies for Interpersonal and Organisational Change, Provo, Utah, Brigham Young University Press, 1976). It is this tendency which gives O.D., in the eyes of onservers, its manipulative slant.

45. Fritz Steele, Is O.D.work possible in the U.K.culture? Journal of European Training, Vol.5, No.3, pp.105-110, for example, comments that O.D. might find a less hospitable soin in the UK (and Europe) than in the U.S.A., because cultural reasons (and economic experience) encourage Americans to believe in the possibilities of change and self-fulfilment. The preference of Europeans for Freudian psychology over 'personal growth' psychology (epitomised by the Tavistock Institute's commitment to the former) can be seen as an expression of these cultural differences.

46. A.A.Morrow and F.C.Thayer, op.cit.

47. C.B.Macpherson, Democratic theory: Essays in Retrieval, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1973, p.5.

48. Ibid,p.4.

49. C.B.Macpherson, Politics: Post-Liberal-Democracy? in R.Blackburn (ed), Ideology in Social Science, Fontana, 1972, p.22.

50. Ibid, p.22.

51. W.G.Scott, Organisation theory: A reassessment, Academy of Management Journal, Vol.17, No.2, 1974, p.248.

52. K. Mannheim, op.cit.,p.174.

53. See,for example, D.Silverman, The Theory of Organisations, London, Heinemann, 1970, pp.81-2; W.W.Daniel, Understanding employee behaviour in its context, in J. Child (ed), Man and Organisation, London,Allen and Unwin, 1973.

54. C.B.Macpherson (1972), op.cit., p.25.

55. Ibid., p.23. Economists may qualify the theory by noting that the maximisation of utility by the market can only be demonstrated by assuming a certain income distribution. But as Macpherson notes (1972,p.24), "it has, however, been easy for political theorists to overlook these limitations of economic theory."

56. Behind Maslow, we may further recognise the fading ghost of the Protestant ethic, in the form of the Calvinist ladder to elective salvation. (See M.Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, (trans. Talcott Parsons), London, Allen and Unwin,1930) Self-actualisation lies in the hands of the individual himself, and for Maslow involved a spiritual and moral state, as well as creative achievements.

57. A.H.Maslow, The superior person, in W.G.Bennis (ed), American Bureaucracy, Chicago, Aldine (Transaction Books), 1970.

58. K.Mannheim, op.cit., p.174.

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF THE ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND CONSULTANCY LITERATURE

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to delineate, by way of a literature review, the various 'interests' from which research on consulting and consultants has hitherto been conducted, and thereby to justify the particular focus of this study.

While attention will mainly be on actual research, one ought not to neglect what has been said about the need for such research, and debate and theorising about the issues involved in applied social and behavioural science. To put research into context the framework of concerns and assumptions needs first to be sketched.

This is important, because it is these very assumptions which are most often unexamined within research studies. As consultancy within behavioural science has developed, it is indeed, the concerns, (widely and penetratingly discussed in the early literature) which have most readily disappeared from view. This 'ethical' framework (as it were) has relevance for research subsequently conducted insofar as the purposes and methodologies of research on consulting and change can thereby be seen as 'rhetorics', which are 'ideological' for the interests of researchers ('why it is a good thing we are in business to do this

kind of research'), and for the interests of sponsors and clients ('why it is a good thing you do such research so we can use it').

3.2. Themes

The interest in social and behavioural science consultancy on the part of the community of social and behavioural scientists begins, naturally enough, in a feeling that social and behavioural research findings should be made useful. This motivation goes back at least to the 1930's and '40's, when western governments began to use social scientists in the formation and delivery of policy. And before that, of course, to the 1920's, in industry, when industrial psychology and nascent industrial sociology were first applied to industrial problems by the likes of Myers and Mayo.

Application in matters of policy and in the service of private companies became a matter of concern within the scientific community.[1] This led to consideration of the appropriate relationship of the social scientist to government and industry,[2] especially the possibility that his role might be reduced to that of a "policy server" or "technician"[3]. It raised questions about fundamental values - whether it was right to actively assist change of social systems by lending help to one party as opposed to another, and whether this was compatible with democratic ethics[4]. On a positive note, it led to consideration of theory construction, generation of new

knowledge, and its subsequent transmission and diffusion, as a result of this new kind of practice role[5]. The social science community settled upon the rationale for its new role, that

> 'While the immediate purpose of applied social science research is utilitarian, the ultimate result is to validate and refine social science theory'[6]

These are recurrent themes wherever the fundamental issues are debated, and have been restated with increasing sophistication, notably by Cherns[7].

The 'problematic' of applied social and behavioural science thus marked out has been rapidly developed, so that now we can discern the following major strands or research traditions:

(1) the question of utilisation, with reference to broad institutional policy making and social system change[8], and to organisational change[9].

The themes of utilisation in these two spheres overlap, and have jointly been the object of concern, among others, of Havelock et al at CRUSK, Cherns at Loughborough, Sashkin et al, and L. Klein.[10] These writers have sought to define models of the utilisation process and to suggest institutional improvements in the delivery and translation apparatus. This is a major concern of the S.S.R.C. in this country, and as a recent conference sponsored by the S.S.R.C. illustrates, the subject will

just not lie down[11]. Increasing utilisation has also been the subject of a recent major research initiative by the S.S.R.C.[12]

(2) the role of the social scientist in policy making and planned change[13].

(3) the processes of bringing about induced change. This in turn has two levels of focus: the broad system dynamics of bringing about change, and the influence processes which interventionists may engage in. Consequently, the literature can be subdivided, according to the scope of the writer's interest, into

(a) general change models[14]

(b) particular change models (or models of 'consultation')[15]

Inevitably, there is overlap among these areas of interest. For example, in their article, Sashkin et al[16] perforce cover utilisation as a principle, general and organisational change models, and the roles taken by the applied behavioural scientist as change agent.

There has been some shift of interest away from the grander topics, such as 'general change models', and 'utilisation for social system change'. Partly, this is because the larger the theme, the less easily researchable it is,[17] and the harder it is to assemble the necessary resources to study empirically. Partly, it is the level of

generality 'theories' tend towards in these areas, and the resulting disenchantment with them. As Dale put it, theoretical writings on planned change are

> 'frequently speculative and offer very few concepts which could be used operationally to study change' [18]

Partly there is the dominance of seminal ideas to discourage theorising - Lewin's change theory still more or less holds the field[19]. And partly there is a shift of emphasis towards specific contexts as greater experience has eroded some of the simpler propositions and concepts (the reassessment of how to deal with resistance to change[20] is a case in point).

This shift was already being heralded between the first and second editions of the seminal publication, 'The Planning of Change'[21], by the exclusion of readings which dealt with the broad problematic of 'planned change' in favour of many more articles which dealt with the practice and techniques of change. Significantly, too, there is an increasingly uncritical acceptance of the goal of change or simply a lack of definition about it. No end of articles and books [22] from the 1960's onwards include a ritual bow in the direction of the proposition, 'society is undergoing increased change, the pace of this will increase, and we must learn to adapt our institutions and organisations'. Toffler's[23] book (cited as an influence by many consultants) particularly captures this mood. Consequently, in the research which will now be reviewed,[24] the implicit goal (if not explicit one) of the major part has been the improved manipulation of change.

The framework for empirical studies of applied social and behavioural science has been largely defined by the notion of 'planned organisational change', as was the programme for Organisation Development as defined by its early proponents.[25] Though 'logico-deductive', 'theoretical', or 'speculative' accounts intrude upon the field at all points and often provide a necessary framework for it, the starting-point has necessarily been the single case study:

> 'The outstanding characteristic about research into organisational change is that the single case study is by far the most widely used method for analysing and describing the dynamics of change processes'.[26]

According to those who have reviewed the field, this has not been the fruitful source of theory one might have expected. According to Dale, writing in 1973, this is because of the lack of a common theoretical framework for describing and analysing change in different settings:

> 'There is at present a large and growing volume of studies of planned organisational change. One recent estimate (Havelock et al, 1969) is that there are probably about 10,000 examples published in the social science literature, although many of them are in esoteric journals. With this level of activity, it might be supposed that some theoretical advances in the study of planned change must have been made. However this does not appear to be the case. On the contrary, much of the literature is characterised by an approach which can only be called a-theoretical, and the advances which have been made are small. In view of the enormous resources which are required (and sometimes used) in studies of change, there seems to be an urgent need for a theoretical framework with which to guide research and facilitate the comparison of studies.'[27]

Both Dale & McLean see the problem lying in the theoretical biases of the change practitioner and writer, and the

circumstances under which accounts are often written:

> 'There is the problem of the sheer mass of information that needs to be reduced, either consciously or unconsciously, in order to give a manageable account from the point of view of both reader and writer. The writer selects from this mass of information on the basis of <u>his</u> criteria and in so doing is making a judgement of what he considers to be crucial events. The reader is, of course, in no position to judge. In so doing the writer is already operating on his own, however rudimentary, theory of change, even though he may even be unaware of the fact. The criteria on which events are selected are rarely made explicit, nor are the values upon which they are founded.'[28]

To Clark and Ford the problem of deriving general principles concerning the working of organisational systems under conditions of change, and the forms which change, and interventions to promote it, may take, arises from the fact that

> 'such scholarship and research as does exist is primarily directed to the needs of the action oriented social scientists promoting planned organisational change'.[29]

Clark and Ford, and later Mc Lean, argue, therefore, that change should be looked at from the perspective also of others involved in change, than just the change agent/ consultant, and that 'unplanned' or 'natural' processes of change should also be examined. Moreover like Dale, and others they argue that if accounts of 'p.o.c.' are biased by the theoretical framework of the change agent, and assuming these themselves are infuential in creating change, then the theoretical frameworks of practitioners should themselves be studied.

> 'The consideration of practice without its guiding theory frequently makes little sense'[30]

Firstly, therefore, describing the mechanics of interventions is inadequate - it is the lack of an adequate theory of <u>organising</u> which really hampers the description and analysis of change.[31] Secondly, the theory that guides the change agent cannot be assumed. Therefore, McLean calls for

> 'A more explicit recognition and exposition than is currently the case of the values, theories, ideas and hunches that govern the actions and choices of action by practitioners which yet lie outside the recognised body of theories and concepts'[32]

The single case study thus provides a focus for two lines of enquiry - (a) the project itself as a study in system change, (b) the role,behaviour, theories, etc. of the change agent himself. The desire to develop generalisable statements has thence led to comparative studies, on the one hand of programmes and types of interventions, and on the other of change agents themselves. Ganesh thus comments:

> 'There appear to be two useful and complementary paths for furthering the understanding of OD and OD work. One of these is related to understanding the various types of interventions and the other is related to understanding individuals in the field.'[33]

In each case, the emphasis has been upon evaluation, under the pressure to clarify what is pragmatically effective (though a few, such as Hornstein acknowledged that there can be no "exact calculus").[34]

Comparisons of Organisational Change

McLean writes:

> 'The value of comparative studies and surveys is startlingly straightforward. Identifying themes, patterns and contrasts, and separating them from the idiosyncratic features of individual cases is essential if we are to construct any general theories about change. In spite of the undoubted benefits of such forms of research, however, examples are relatively few.'[35]

Familiar examples of survey or comparative evaluation are studies by Bowers, Friedlander, Greiner, Buchanan, and Franklin.[36]

These may be subdivided according to whether they take as their focus:

(a) the evaluation of specific forms of intervention (e.g. Bowers;Friedlander) This interest stems from the early widespread use of laboratory training techniques in organisational change programmes. Laboratory training may be the subject of explicit evaluation as an instrument for change (e.g. Friedlander; Mangham and Cooper[37]); or its nearest rival in the early American change literature, survey feedback, may be favourably evaluated in comparison (e.g. Bowers).

(b) the identification of specific conditions for effective and successful change (e.g. Greiner; Buchanan; Franklin) The aim here is to build up, or to test out, a general model or theory of change to guide practitioners. Thus Jones in his ambitious pioneering study proclaims:

> 'The study attempts to develop a broad model or concept which is based largely upon empirical evidence and which operationalizes social science knowledge and technology for the purpose of implementing planned changes in the type of social entities commonly designated 'organisations'.[38]

The latter in particular demonstrates the shortcomings of comparative evaluation. Jones describes his approach thus:

> 'The principal research methodology employed in this study was the analysis of nearly two hundred cases by the technique of content analysis. The objective was to isolate, identify, define, and classify the significant elements in change and to learn how these elements could be operationalised by professional change agents.'[39]

The problem with this is that such studies are dependent upon the original form of reporting of the single case studies they analyse. This is not just a problem of the selectivity and theoretical biases of the original 'change agents' (as Dale and McLean observed). But a problem compounded by the research evaluator, of comparing like with like (unlike?), and aggregating what is superficially the same in a way that nullifies context.[40] Notwithstanding, such studies, sensitively conducted, can lead to plausibly accurate perceptions of the change process, and the observations and prescriptions of Grėiner, Buchanan, Jones contribute valuable rule of thumb guides to the practice of 'p.o.c.'.

Similarly, Dunn and Swierczek[41] (who acknowledge the influence and support of Garth Jones) employ a method of content analysis which they term a 'grounded' approach, for the reason that they base their choice of variables

for analysing studies on factors previously identified as salient by both general theorists and by those who have conducted empirical studies. Their analysis is 'grounded' in the accumulated wisdom of observers and practitioners. Their study thus becomes a form of test of the hypotheses about 'p.o.c.' advanced by general theorists and empirical students of the subject. One suspects, however, that this approach merely compounds the faults of factorial comparisons of 'p.o.c.'.

Dissatisfaction equally with factorial comparisons deriving from retrospective case analysis and with experimental designs ('rigid research') that measure a small number of parameters (from a great many possible ones) at different points in time, and compare these effects either within or between several organisations, has led others towards the comparative qualitative analysis of projects in which they are personally active.

This is an alternative way of compensating for the shortcomings of the single case study.

Thus Hertog and Wester, after commenting on "the general discontent with the present state of research in the field of organisational change" describe their own approach as "comparative process (or case) analysis".[42] Whilst acknowledging the work of Dunn and Swierczek, and those whom the latter cite (Greiner,Buchanan,Franklin) as having

the same goal - "of matching general knowledge of 'p.o.c.' with the experience from concrete change efforts" - their own work takes a distinctively different path.

> 'In the first place it should be noted that the data comes from different internal sources. We did not rely on external academic publications. Secondly, the element of feedback is built in. The organisation was entered to derive the material and feed it back in different phases of the research project. This means that the outcome of the study is heavily influenced by those who have the practical experience in the field. Thirdly, the choice is made for the selection of a specific area within the company to enhance the comparability of the projects. This means, on the other hand, that generalisations may to a large extent be limited. The relatively intense and qualitative analysis of a limited number of projects represents the fourth option. The relevance and concrete content of the output has been given a higher weight than reliability and possibility for generalisation.'[43]

What this seems to herald is a retreat from system focused evaluation of change across a variety of systems to an actor -, and action -, oriented focus. That is, to the tradition of action-research (or genuine "grounded" theory).

3.4. Studies of Change Agents

Although arguments for comparative studies and surveys of projects and 'interventions' are superficially attractive the results of these typically seem of more value to observers (as "theories of change") than to practitioners (who, as Bennis noted, are more interested in "theories of changing"[44].) This is, indeed, a curious inversion of values and priorities for a subject which owes much to Bennis' instigation in the first place.

The problem is that studies which agglomerate change efforts from a variety of contexts, in the interests of an 'overview' or 'general theory' of change, abstract general features to the extent of rendering these 'findings' inaccessible or inoperable for practitioners.

In point of fact, however, there are many particular theories of change (and creating changes) in circulation, relative to particular contexts and purposes. Much writing on change stems from, and is geared to, the interests and practice of professionals concerned with bringing about particular sorts of change.

The idiosyncratic character of theory and practice is thus recognised and preserved in those studies which focus on the roles and behaviour of change agents themselves.

Much of what passes for 'theory' in the first place, is, in fact, based on the conceptualisation of their own practice by a handful of pioneering consultants (e.g. Argyris, Schein, Jaques, Rice, Blake,) Their conceptualisations have thereafter acted imperialistically to frame the issues to which others have continued to address themselves.

A primitive interest in what change agents, or consultants, do and think thus stems from this fact - that the foundations of 'knowledge' were laid by individual practitioners reporting often through the medium of case studies, on their own practice. Whereas some researchers have been concerned to evaluate and modify

particular conceptions derived from this source, by comparative or experimental means, others have sought to advance fresh conceptions from their own practice and cases, sometimes to challenge accepted models, other times merely to report on their own practice in order to expand appreciation of the scope and variety of consulting work. Thus, Ottaway in 'Change Agents at Work'[45] provides a platform for nine practitioners to demonstrate the differences in their craft.

The primitive interest in personal accounts is unlikely to wither. At the same, research into particular forms of intervention is always liable to return to the subject of the consultants themselves who practise these, and thus may lead (indeed, has) to an explicit recognition of the consultant/change agent as a legitimate subject of study in his own right. This has become a growth area for research, although writing in 1978 Ganesh comments:

> 'Quite in contrast to the vast literature about the concepts and methods of OD, the literature on people who are involved in OD work is very meager'[46]

The heterogeneous literature which focuses on OD people is reviewed below. Whilst the categorisation of this literature may be somewhat imperfect, it is broadly based on the focus that relevant articles and books themselves adopt, - namely,

(1) general styles and personality characteristics of the change agent.

(2) cognitive styles,

(3) behaviours and consulting 'process',

(4) roles and relationships,

Inevitably, as each is but a facet of a common phenomenon (consultants in action, these categories overlap.

3.4.1 Styles

The interest in consultancy styles stems from a desire to establish what makes for effective consulting in different contexts. Thus, Tichy:

> 'We need to establish which change strategies are effective for what.'[47]

Many studies in this area can be seen as conducting a dialogue over the normative prescriptions of OD, for personal openness, trust, and 'good communication'.[48] The preceding chapter considered criticisms which have been made of this modal style. Thus, Goodge[49] and Tranfield[50] point to its inappropriateness in certain contexts, and Tranfield goes on to trace its appeal to personality dynamics, the implication of which is to discredit large numbers of practitioners of OD as being trapped in a fixed set of relationship dynamics.

Empirical studies which seek merely to describe and rate styles for effectiveness vary enormously in quality and scope. At one end, we have Prakash using peer assessments to determine what makes for effective and ineffective OD consultants;[51] Vaill enumerating the qualities in the make-up of the effective change agent;[52]

and Foy using workshops to develop an impressionistic view of what a change agent is (viz. "a catalyst"), what change is about, and what are the attendant problems and opportunities in taking the role.[53] At the other end, we have Ganesh[54] and McLean[55] who each operate out of a deeper acquaintance with the practical and theoretical issues of OD consulting.

McLean and colleagues in producing believable descriptions and characterisations of consultancy styles, urge greater attention to the idiosyncracies of the consultant, his situation, and the tasks he encounters. Effective consulting requires styles to evolve in ways which encompass these variables. The key stylistic factor for theory therefore, is the extent to which a consultant

> 'evolved his own idiosyncratic approach to his work which is intemally consistent (in terms of) his ideas, his skills and his personality'[56]

This is the basis for their characterisation of styles along a continuum of 'centred' - 'unintegrated'. The implication for the work of the researcher is that he should elicit the unique synthesis practitioners achieve.

> 'As a consequence of this work, it is clear that what is important is not for experts to develop and refine the definitive 'blueprint or model of the change process', but for individuals centrally involved in change to evolve their own theories and models, and that ideally they should have evolved a variety of such aids. Furthermore, while incorporating frameworks and paradigms from elsewhere, the most useful blueprints or models are idiosyncratic and incorporate the unique blend of skills, interests, attitudes and situational factors that combine to distinguish one person from another, and one situation from another.[57]

Noel Tichy, along with Harvey Hornstein, had already realised that consultants develop a unique amalgam through their personality and experience, and that this can be apprehended in the cognitive framework with which they approach the world. Thus,

> 'Most practitioners of planned social change are artisans rather than scientists and their approaches are based on implicit ideas rather than a set of clearly formulated principles .... understanding of the field requires knowledge of these implicit ideas ...'[58]

Tichy was concerned, therefore, to discover the implicit or 'pragmatic' theories of change employed by change agents of various kinds. He recognised that change agents, like other people, have 'theories' or 'cognitive frameworks' about the worlds they operate in. These are essentially diagnostic and pragmatic, directing attention to those aspects which enable the individual to make sense of and to manipulate the features of situations which are important to him.

> 'An organisation is many things to many people. What we see in an organisation depends on what we look for. And, together, what we look for and what we see determine how we act. Some time ago, Zajonc (1966) demonstrated that organisational members look for different things; their formal organisational position determines how they "tume in" in order to understand their organisation. Zajonc called the apparatus for tuning in a <u>cognitive structure</u>. These cognitive structures or frameworks represent people's naive and implicit analysis of organisational situations and subsequent actions. We have found that practitioners of organisation development also have different cognitive structures or organisational models for analysing organisations and planning action.'[59]

Moreover, in his interviews with change agents Tichy realised that what the consultant looked for was

influenced by his goals and values.

> 'Now it seems that goals and values are also related to what the change agent looks at during diagnosis.'[60]

And that

> 'There appears to be a relationship between diagnostic categories and subsequent change interventions. This relationship leads to a self-fulfilling cycle in the General Change Model. The most important factors which change agents examine during diagnosis tend to be also those things which are worked at most often to create change in the systems'[61]

In other words, change agents tend to be locked into their own particular style, comprising a set of values, cognitions, and change technologies.

While Tichy departed from the implications of this somewhat in believing that styles could be changed by the process of making cognitive frameworks and values explicit,[62] it suggests there are sound reasons why one might characterise a consultant's style as a stable feature (although as the next section makes clear, this is not the same as being able to predict actual behaviour in a consulting situation). Although a style may have unique properties, as McLean argues, it suggests however, that there is a limit to the ideal of style flexibility (because of the self-perpetuating cycle wrought by the influence of values).

Which is where Tranfield's stigmatisation of OD begins - that too many OD cons. are locked into a single style.

3.4.ii. Cognitive Styles

The notion that 'cognitive structure' provides the key to understanding consultancy style and effectiveness is of interest to other than just behavioural science consultants. Management scientists for many years have been addressing the problem of how to be more effective - in particular, how to overcome what is for them the key problem in achieving implementation of systematically-derived analytic findings. As Doktar and Hamilton put it,

> 'In the minds of many observers, implementation is the critical issue in the management sciences today'[62]

Many such observers have taken the view that the influence process between the management scientist (qua consultant) and client manager is the key factor, and that the writing of reports is the crux of this. They have conceptualised the problem as primarily one of managers and management scientists having different cognitive styles. Zand and Sorensen sum up this position.

> 'Management scientists then formulated a theory of change which centred on the belief that personality differences between managers and management scientists, primarily their cognitive styles, were obstructing change. (Churchman & Schamblatt 1965; Hammond 1974; Hysmans 1970). Managers were pragmatic, concrete, and not rigorous conceptualisers, whereas management scientists were analytic, abstract and rigorous conceptualisers, and these differences would hinder communication and the mutual understanding needed for change. The personality-centred theory of change apparently has a large following as evidenced by the editorial policy of <u>Interfaces</u> (1974), a joint quarterly publication of the Institute of Management Sciences and the Operational Research Society of America, the two leading societies in management science, which specifically invites "articles dealing with difficulties in implementation (and) problem solving

stemming from the personality differences between managers and management scientists (operational researchers".'[64]

A precisely similar line of argument has been developed in relation to social and behavioural science consultancy, to account for non-utilisation of findings.[65]

The notion of cognitive style differences thus offers a rationale for consultant effectiveness, both in terms of a focal relationship between consultant and main clients; and in broader terms, in the potential mismatch, between a consultant operating from a particular knowledge base and utilising particular methodologies, and the general organisational culture of the client organisation. Whether the problem is conceived in the narrow sense, or in the broader sense of a 'culture clash'[66], it draws attention to a key issue - acceptance of the consultant - although it (characteristically) limits attention to the socio-psychological aspects of the problem.[67]

3.4.iii. Behaviours

Accounts which focus on behaviours are moving into the detail of what passes between consultant and client, and within the 'interventions' a consultant makes into the 'client system'. Although one might expect here a degree of concreteness and explicitness, one type of study is vitiated by the interest in evaluating behaviours against some normative standard. In the D/D matrix,

for example of Blake and Mouton,[68] the context is expressed only in terms of highly abstract 'focal issues' ('power/authority', 'morale/cohesion', 'norms/standards', 'goals/objectives').

In a second type of study, however, behaviour is considered in relation to the specific problems of the consultant as an 'interventionist'. The idea of 'phases of consulting'[69] provides a natural framework for this. Thus, Barker comments:

> 'Most of the literature reflects increasing agreement that consulting relations need to go through a number of identifiable phases to be effective'.[70]

The question of 'directive' versus 'non-directive' behaviour, which underlies much of the discussion of consultancy style and appropriate behaviours[71] is thereby linked to the contingencies of consulting activity. The 'phases' model suggests that a range of behaviour is necessary if a consultant is to be effective, and that particular skills are salient at different times.

Thus, Tranfield, Foster and Smith relate the task processes of consulting (corresponding to the 'phases') to interpersonal processes arising at each stage, which need to be managed. They see the interaction between consultant and client (and client others) as operating at three levels - in terms of emotional processes, cognitive processes, and the role relationship.

Behaviour is, therefore, the process of managing all three.

> 'These three levels of analysis are interactive in that whilst the formally assigned roles are important and tend to provide the broad parameters of the relationship (strategic behaviour), the actual detail of behaviour tends to be governed by the cognitive and emotional processes (tactical behaviour). This is because formal roles always have to be interpreted by individuals whose subsequent role behaviour is different because of the different emotional and cognitive 'filters' which we all have'.[72]

This framework is capable of expansion so that inter-personal processes are placed within the larger context of an organisation's politics, and the particular structures and cultures through which these are played out, (although Tranfield, Smith and Foster do not develop this side of their model).

3.4.iv. Role and Role Relationship

Analysis of behaviour thus ranges from the a-contextual to the contextual. The amount of context itself may vary, but in by far the majority of cases the context is limited to consideration of the consultant-client relationship. This is true, also, of those studies which consider explicitly the consultant's role. Despite giving more weight to the idea of role as a 'position' (endowing the consultant with more of less power), the treatment of role tends to remain stubbornly 'social-psychological', insofar as it focuses still on the immediate consultant-client relationship as an influence process.

Although not directly concerned with consultants, Perreault and Miles study is typical of this approach in the way they employ French and Raven's typology of influence strategies in relation to the "target person" in an immediate dyadic encounter:

> 'individuals engage in a mix of different strategies and the composition of this mixture may be influenced by such factors as the characteristics of the target person and the nature of the dyadic relationship with the target person.'[73]

French and Raven's typology (and work deriving from it) itself has been criticised for being overly socio-psychological in its conception of power and influence and neglecting the 'basis' from which power and influence are exercised.[74] That their characterisation of power in terms of 'resources' readily lends itself to analysis of the organisational resources which consultants (and others) can tactically mobilise is shown, however, in Pettigrew's celebrated paper on the organisational politics of consulting.[75] Nevertheless, the emphasis of such work is upon the 'resources' which consultants can use, rather than upon the constraints which their position imposes. And as Pettigrew's paper further makes clear, the ability to mobilise such resources depends upon the cultivation of access, legitimacy, and external (group) support over a period of time. That is, resources need to be carefully developed and are not on 'tap'.

Such work is undoubtedly useful to a practitioner in identifying sources of leverage he has, and doesn't have, upon a system. Similarly, Harrison's typology[76] of organisational ideologies (popularised as 'cultures') - power, role, task, and person - is a useful rule of thumb for identifying whether work is possible, of what kind, and the strategy which should be employed. This expands the notion of consultant-client relationship beyond the dyadic to the whole organisation (or subsystems within it), by suggesting that a consultant's behaviour in any interaction, and the overall potential for change, is circumscribed by the way power is exercised within the client organisation, by the strictures which embody it, and the personalities of its members who have internalised the dominant culture. This, of course, may overstate the degree of internalisation and pervasiveness of a 'culture', but (as Tranfield's study of "the dependent power-oriented client[77]' and Harrison's own misgivings about working in a power-culture[78], indicate some cultures are particularly dependent upon the style of one (or a few) individuals. And, of course, the consultant can scarcely avoid working with the centres of power in a 'power culture'.

Nevertheless, the 'cultures (and structures)' notion may overgeneralise the organisation and insufficiently reflect other aspects of the consultant's role.

A number of taxonomies have sought to spell out in detail the various aspects of context within which a consultant works (and thence to characterise the role-stances which consultants may, or do, adopt). These introduce a number of new variables, particularly deserving of attention in view of their comparative empirical neglect.

Peter Clark, for example, identifies eight aspects of context (client's expectations, timing, existence of a problem, impact studies, integer power centres, knowledge-using style, societal patterns of conflict resolution, and organisational problems of the research agency).[79] Some of these relate to the client organisation, some to the consultant (and his organisation). It thus introduces the important dimension of the role out of which the consultant is coming, for the consultant may have pressing or special needs, or encounter peculiar problems in developing and managing a project. In this instance, these needs are related to the special problems of a research agency doing consultancy or action research work (for Clark writes as a member of such an agency).[80]

A.W.Clark, writing also from the perspective of an agency consultant (the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations) conceptualises the consultant-client relationship as "an intersystem engagement", each having its own set of independent characteristics.[81] Client

system and practitioner system have distinctive 'technologies' (ways of working, and material constraints on these), environments, operating values, reward systems, and power structures. What they share is a negotiated task, the performance of which is crucially affected by their success in "controlling the variance" induced in each 'socio technical system' by the inter-dependency they temporarily enter into. Lisl Klein, similarily, reminds us that both client and consultant system have resources and needs, and that the relationship and its products is a two-way affair[82].

In addition to four basic role models ('collaborative/ dialogic', 'unilateral expert', 'delegated', and 'subordinate technician') which others before him first defined[83] Peter Clark distinguishes five major points of focus ("variables chosen by the practitioner to manipulate",[84] which is to say the things he seeks to change, or his defined 'task'). Likewise, Barber and Nord[85] develop a typology of consultant roles (based on Adelson's role types)[86], which includes, as one of the contingencies to be accommodated to, the type of change problem (others being cognitive style, for which they cite McKenney and Keen, and Doktor and Hamilton , and forms of social influence, where they draw on Kelman's distinctions between compliance, identification, and internalisation).[87] However, 'type of change problem', or 'consultant's work tasks' is not very helpfully defined simply in terms of degree of routinisation and rate of change (after Perrow).[88]

Typologies and taxonomies of this sort take us back into the tradition of normative typing of the applied social/ behavioural scientist. They are 'theoretic' or 'speculative', as Peter Clark notes of his attempt to 'match' role, focus and context:

> 'These profiles are tentative: they have been constructed from a digest of the literature, comparative research, and personal experience'.[89]

Despite being inoperable, however, they do identify two major contingencies which will now be considered at more length.

3.4.v. The Consultant as an Internal or External

Much that has been written about the practice of consulting has been written by academic external to the systems in which they practice. Consequently, the assumption of being an external third party infuses their theorising. This is one reason, it will be argued later (Chapter 8-9) why one finds an emphasis on social-psychological bases of power and influence (for example, in Schein[90]) rather than on control over rewards or other sources of power that come with a position within an organisation. Equally, as academics, the attachment to learning theories in their educational work, which stress the virtues of free, informal choice, carries over into their consultancy work (for example, in Argyris[91].) It is because Pettigrew writes specifically, and empirically, about internal consultants, and management scientists into the bargain, that the non-social- psychological, material sources of

power invite special attention.

Being external to a system to which he is giving help is perhaps a necessary feature in the definition of a consultant, although the status of 'outsider' is capable of flexible interpretation.

> 'Anybody can be an outsider, provided he or she is outside the system where the need is. A manager can be an outside helper to another manager or department, and internal staff group to line departments, or an external consultant can be used. Some organisations are trying to develop outside helper skills in all managers, so that they can assist each other regularly.'[92]

It is not long then before the principles of consultancy, defined as a 'voluntary help-giving relationship',[93] are seen to be capable of extension to, and relevant to, managerial roles and relationships of all kinds, with the result, too, that interpersonal (helping) skills training come to be made available to 'line' managers as well as to 'staff', as a routine part of management training. A manager, after all, like a consultant, is only working through others to get work done.

Such a programme, however, based on the experiences of academic consultants may neglect the actual workings of authority and power relations within an organisation - between managers, and between a consultant and client system.

The extent to which notions applicable (perhaps) to the 'pure' external consultant are carried over into general descriptions of consulting tends,indeed, to be glossed

over. Barker[94] (writing as an internal) is one of the few to have commented on this failure, in descriptions of the consultancy process, to specify whether internal or external location is in question, and to consider the problems of acting as an internal. This major dimension of the consultant's role and his relationships is treated, if at all, largely from the perspective of arguing for the merits of one over the other (see for example, Hunt,Dekom, and Kelley[95]).

These pieces of 'research' are conducted from positions which clearly dispose the writers to act as apologists or propagandists of one or the other. Other writers weigh the case for the internal versus external[96], whilst there has been increasing recognition of the merits of a 'tandem' relationship which maximises the special contribution of each[97], as the crucial variable in effecting change comes to be seen as whether the consultant is internal or external [98].

Actual research into organisational consulting, as opposed to personal report and 'theoretic' and normative writing, has tended, however, to neglect this important dimension of role. Thus, Ganesh's, sample of eleven from the USA and ten from India, consists of eight external and nine externals respectively (17 out of 21, and all presumed to be commercial consultants), whilst "the rest were working from an academic base."[99] That is to say, the external's perspective and problems are not illuminated by any

comparative framework, the internal is totally neglected, nor are possible differences between the two types of external considered explored. Tichy's sample consists of internals, external commercials, and academics, as well as non-consultants.[100] But he does not relate his data on theories, values, and practices systematically to role base.

At first sight McLean and colleagues would appear to offer an analysis which does just this.

> 'Our findings suggest several distinct types of role for consultants who specialise in change. The main distinction depends, not unexpectedly, on whether the interventionist is internal to the organisation (a full-time employee) or an external independent consultant who has a variety of clients on an explicit contractual basis.'[101]

In both their original report to CAPITB and in their subsequent book they classify their descriptions in terms of "The Roles of External Consultants" and "The Roles of Internal Consultants", and many of their descriptions and their chosen metaphors are echoed in Chapters 7 - 9 of this study. Nevertheless, their characterisation of consultants is not related systematically to this dimension which they themselves acknowledge as crucial. It is subordinated, instead, to contrasting the variety of styles and behaviour with the prescriptions and rationalisations of these which pass in the literature, and confronting a variety of issues in the professional identity and practice of O.D. consultants, as part of their revaluation of the OD profession. Theory, practice, behaviour and language are thereby randomised in regard

to role-position.

This is not to denigrate the very real contribution they have made. Indeed, the similarities in characterisations and role nomenclature, and of quotations even, which arise in part from an overlap in the consultant sample interviewed by McLean and colleagues and by myself, are valuable as verification of the interpretations we each make, at least at the level of developing consistent and reliable descriptions. However, the same comment applies as to other studies of consultant role and role-relationship - it is bound by a social-psychological perspective that is in keeping with the background and practical interests of the researchers as behavioural scientists, rather than as sociologists. This is illustrated by the following quotation:

> 'The type of role taken by internals varied according to several circumstances. Not unnaturally, a good deal seems to depend on the personality of the internal himself ... Perhaps of greater significance however was the extent to which the internal was self-aware, in touch with his own feelings and values. His role consequently tended to depend not only on his personality and value system, but how far he had resolved issues of personal identity in his work.' [102]

There is nothing here about the pressures of the role-position. 'Role' is represented as metaphor for behavioural style. This is in spite of the statement that, in addition,

> 'the roles of both externals and internals seem to vary according to the organisation in which they are set. They tailor their roles to work within the various characteristics of those organisations, including predominant value-systems, the history of the organisations involvement in 'Human relations' (in the broadest sense), and the norms and mores concerning 'how to get things done around here.' ' [103]

Such constraints and framework for behaviour, moreover, vary not just between settings, but over time. There is both a 'long phase' to this, involving the development of organisational legitimacy and therefore the type of problems and projects which are put the consultant's way. And a 'short phase', involving the development of role-relationships within a project.

Despite addressing the question of issue-construction [104] this is not related to the ensuing construction of role, whereby a problem becomes a legitimised subject for working on which in turn legitimises the consultant working on it and stimulates his role development. Nor is it related to the background of organisational and extra-organisational roles which brought the issue into focus in the first place and led to the consultant's place in it being defined.

This is a major omission in the literature generally. As Strauss puts it:

> Some writers leave the impression that OD begins only after all the preliminary arrangements have been made. I would argue that the entree period should be regarded as an essential part of the OD process, perhaps the most significant one of all'.[105]

And he lists among questions crucial to understanding the entry and subsequent consulting process the following:-

> 'Why do organisations engage in OD? What is the decision-making process by which they decide to call in a consultant (or establish an internal OD department) ? What are the motives and expectations of the parties involved (for example, how do the consultant's expectations differ from those of the client?) Who is seen as "owning" OD (that is, in

whose interests is the consultant seen as working)? Above all, how is entree best effected? Under what conditions is OD most likely to be successful?'[106]

A very few researchers have attempted and achieved longitudinal studies which address these questions, and consider the entry problem. But none consider both the development of a live project and bring into focus the background aspects of role and organisation. Pettigrew and Bumstead develop one of the few genuinely sociological analyses of consultancy in terms of "organisational antecedents"[107] affecting the role of internal consultants in three ICI divisions.[108] Gill and colleagues trace the development of role-relations within the immediate consultant-client relationship, in terms of changing expectations about roles and behaviour and the definition of the problem and contract.[109]

Apart from the contrast in time-perspective it is notable how these studies highlight the set of assumptions and preoccupations associated respectively with internal consultants and externals. The internals' is all about the making of an organisational space for themselves and the acquisition of a viable identity. The externals' is all about the development of a primary relationship with a client, as a basis for influence and 'doing work' - in other words, how to overcome the problem of 'getting in', This has added significance when one considers the purpose for which the study by Gill and colleagues was undertaken - to consider the problem of the utilisation

of social science research through researcher-user relations. In other words, it reflects not just the prototypical external's problem of 'gaining access', but the academic social scientist's problem of gaining access to organisations other than his own to 'do' social science.

The problems, preoccupations, and strategies of internals, external commercials, and academics require fuller comparison.

3.4.v Type of Change Problem

Comparative studies of consultants display a curious attitude to the change activity in which consultants engage. Whereas self reports will describe the nature of the task and change activity, comparative studies tend to erase this. In the case of OD this seems to happen in one of two ways, with the same result. Either the classic definitions of OD are adopted and OD activity is defined in some standardised general formulation to do with social change, which everybody is presumed to accept (such as the purpose of OD is "to increase organisational effectiveness and health"),[110] in which case attention shifts straight away to processes to bring this about. McLean et al refer to this phenomenon as "Planned Change: A Notion of Convenience".[111] Or OD is defined simply as "what OD people do",[112] as, over time, practitioners and activities have multiplied, in which case its objects and tasks are considered too diverse to be capable of classification. Again, this is a justification for shifting focus to the methods and techniques of bringing about change. Either

way, OD incurs the criticism that it is method-centred and an incidental collection of techniques.[113]

Where change per se is the theme, it is treated in an abstract way which neglects particular contexts and purposes, for the sake of eliciting guidelines for change. Moreover, the body of work which is concerned with 'the quality of working life', on the shopfloor and in the office has its own custom and practice.[114] So has OD, whose focus has tended to lie within the managerial and white-collar echelons of the business.[115]

Although cross-fertilisation and borrowing inevitably occur, and consultants themselves may resist pigeon-holing, the knowledge (certainly) and practice theories (possibly) of practitioners in these two fields is distinctive. We should look, therefore, for accounts which preserve a sense of these differences and discriminate 'what knowledge' is applied to 'what purposes'. The focus of change activity has obvious implications for industrial relations, and therefore, may involve quite different change dynamics, approach and skills, than a project which does not cross the managerial/blue-collar divide.

An important part of the context for consultant role and style (as Barber and Nord remind us (see Page 101 above)), is thus the type of change problem. Neglect of this diminishes understanding of consultants and consultancy in two ways.

Firstly, it presupposes a body of knowledge and relevant skills. We should, therefore, enquire into the training and background of the consultant to understand how he comes to be in a position to tackle particular types of problem, and what approaches to problems he is predisposed to take. Ideas at one level may be shared by identifying oneself with a profession (OD) its theories and techniques. But at another level, there may be considerable diversity arising from different career-paths, previous experience and education.

Secondly, change involves the value positions of consultant and client. The definition of a problem involves assumptions about what is desirable change. The granting of a problem to a consultant, the creation of an internal consultant role, acceptance of a position to work on specified types of problem, all define crucial parameters for the behaviour of consultants. As Pettigrew and Bumstead's study[116] showed, these kinds of question are crucial in the development of an internal consultancy role and the groups which survived spent a lot of time debating these questions. The consultant's role and behaviour cannot be understood without reference to the problems an organisation has and why it has decided to call in a consultant. This may be a purely local affair, or it may be part of a more general phenomenon. Since OD consulting (and job redesign consultancy) burgeoned in the 1960's in the UK, the activities of OD consultants ought not to be considered in isolation from the general socio-economic setting then. Unless one asks 'change for what'? we are left with just a set of incidental techniques for 'change management', unrelated to any coherent purpose.

The type of change problem is relevant, therefore in terms of the consultant's knowledge base and the climate of values and goals (in which his own are but a part). Available accounts do not deal adequately with these together. For example, in his General Change Model, whilst Tichy relates 'Background Characteristics', 'Value Component', 'Cognitive Component', and 'Change Technology Component' the client organisation is missing from all this and the limitations of variable analysis, the aim of identifying 'effectiveness', and the nature of his sample limit the use he makes of these.[117]

It is curious that the literature on 'Action Research' has not developed this area of analysis, having once defined the consultant-client relationship as one in which each has his own distinctive operating values and goals,[118] and where the social scientist qua researcher is avowedly operating out of a set of theories and body of knowledge which may be discrepant with a client's. In the American tradition, Action Research frequently stands for little more than a 'problem-solving method'[119]. In the tradition identified with the Tavistock Institute, which is research-oriented, the theoretical dispositions of practitioners are rarely set out, beyond the early descriptions of the 'sociotherapy' approach[120], and nowhere are these related critically to change problems and change goals in an intervention.[121] It has been left to other commentators outside the tradition to draw out

the implications of holding their particular kind(s) of theory for the roles taken and change goals pursued.[122] Nor of course, is the American Action-Research approach immune from similar critique because it purports to be merely method-centred. There can, indeed, be no practice without a theory, and OD, where such an Action-Research approach nestles, is exceptionally well-endowed with values, as the critisisms set out in Chapter 2 show. A string of writers have drawn out the ideological implications of propagating OD's values within consultancy practice[123] but in general terms as an issue for the discipline.

Only in the isolated writing of Rhenman are the dimensions of the consultants role relationship with a client organisation more fully sketched out. But his is an attempt to sketch out normative patterns, not to describe those that actually exist.[124]

3.5. Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on social and behavioural science consulting. It remains to sum up the kind of research required to redress biases and omissions.

(1) A need for an actor - and action-oriented focus.

The system-focused evaluation of change (that is to say, comparative studies of change programmes) towards which much writing has tended, creates a number of distortions. In terms simply of understanding and improving the

practice of change it has often been premature and, by abstraction, has over-simplified. At the least it needs to be supplemented by actor-oriented studies, which do not treat techniques and strategies in a disembodied, and consequently unproblematic, way. However, as the systematic evaluation of change programmes has the aim of aiding the performance of change it tends also to beg questions of what change is for and who wants it. An actor-oriented focus therefore opens up these questions. We endorse Ganesh' comments:

> 'There is no paucity of writings on the knowledge-base of OD and this continues to expand ... However the crucial issue for people in this area appears to be the application of existing knowledge in ongoing organisations. In this the most crucial link is individual or individuals who pilot the process. Organisation consultants, as a whole, are involved in this very process of helping organisations to utilise knowledge in the area of behavioural sciences. Quite in contrast to the vast literature about the concepts and methods of OD, the literature on people who are involved in OD work is very meager.
> .. Thus, in the OD literature there appears to be a need for understanding individual organisation consultants and their styles, which influence their interventions. It is through understanding individual styles that one can begin to appreciate and understand the process of application of behavioural science knowledge to the development of organisations. In order to understand individuals, it is important to understand both their perceptions of their activities and their perception of themselves in the consulting situation.'[125]

An actor and action-oriented focus is achieved, therefore, by

<u>(2) the study of actual practice and practice theories</u>

This is necessary to remedy the "considerable discrepancy between OD as practised and the prescriptive stances taken by many OD writers."[126] Study of practice is seen as essential to update theory and redress current inadequacies.

> 'The body of knowledge which constitutes the management of change has its origins in attempts to solve practical problems. Not surprisingly, therefore, much of the writing is experience-based and the development of theory and concepts has been inductive and has lagged behind practice.' [127]

The Action Research tradition of course is based on the premise that theory is served by consultants/researchers being open to the continuing development of their practice theories, as they confront the difficulties and novelties of trying to change organisations. The Tavistock Institute has sought to capitalise on the privileged role of the consultant as an interventionist in its notion of the 'professional model',[128] in the same way that Freud develcped his theories from practising as an analyst. Consequently, theory derived from practice has a valued status.

> ' 'Practice theory' is the kind of material that group practitioners have found empirically to be effective and have recorded for the benefit of others. Practice in most instances outstrips validation and centainly it is far in advance of any theorizing that takes place.' [129]

McLean suggests therefore that the development of understanding about the processes of change management will be served by

> 'A more explicit recognition and exposition than is currently the case of the values, theories, ideas, and hunches that govern the actions and choice of actions by practitioners which yet lie outside the recognised body of theories and concepts.' [130]

Noting that the theories on which practitioners act,

> 'incorporate the unique blend of skills,interests, attitudes and <u>situational</u> factors that combine to distinguish one person from another, <u>and one situation from another</u>.' [131]

he advocates, moreover, that the hunches and ideas etc. which influence consultants actions should be ascertained "as

close as possible to the event".[132] In other words, 'practice theories' may be misrepresented if inferred in retrospect, a point made before by Clark:

> 'we know little about the analytical frameworks which consultants use to examine particular situations, though we do learn about the frameworks they present to their clients and to the general public.'[133]

The methodological implication is that consultants' reports are themselves inadequate. They are an advance upon second-hand inferences about what consultants do. But an adequate methodology requires observing consultants at work, seeking their descriptions and their interpretations of what they do, and their reasons, and, ideally, seeking also the perceptions of others who are party to the process. This has always been the stumbling-block to research, however, in terms of access.

What determines whether methodology is adequate, however, is the aim of the research. 'Triangulation'[134] of the above kind may be more requisite if the aim is to understand the process of change. But if the aim is to understand, say, consultancy as a species of action, applied to problems of a particular socio-economic kind, in organisations at a specific historical juncture, the scope for such action and the means by which consultants manage their roles becomes more salient. It is possible that the latter can be adequately studied by reliance on purely verbal accounts from the consultants themselves, without either observation or other actors' accounts. Certainly the idea that an actor's account cannot be fully trusted and that an observer can improve upon it, or that a person's account

may be more valid if taken at or near the event, are them selves problematic. The least that can be said is that we should listen to what consultants themselves have to say.

A further methodological implication follows from what McLean says. If we are to consider actual practice and practice theories, it means we should not assume too much about the body of theory a practitioner might be using (such as labels like 'OD', and 'change agent' presume). This means selecting one's sample to include a variety of possible theoretical orientations, within the broad parameters that the consultants chosen are applying social and behavioural science, in a professional capacity in organisational contexts. It should be left to the analytical stage to impose what classifications then seem relevant.[135]

Ganesh has expressed this well:

> 'Accepted definitions of OD, for example, those provided by Beckhard (1969) and French and Bell (1973), emphasize the application of behavioural science knowledge towards making organisations more effective. They also connote, implicitly or explicitly, the involvement of a 'change agent' or 'consultant' to facilitate this process. Because of its origins in the laboratory training movement, the term OD has often become a synonym for sensitivity or related training efforts and, therefore, the change agents have been equated with 'trainers'. This narrower connotation, unintended in the definitions is a source of discomfort for those who are otherwise doing OD work. A broader connotation and a more acceptable one appears to be the term 'organisational consultant'. The basis for defining people as organisational consultants therefore shifts from the definitions of OD to the work of such people'.[136]

'Organisational consultant' or 'social and behavioural science consultant', are the terms therefore primarily adopted here, and those chosen for the sample are people known to engage in organisational consulting involving social and behavioural science in some form. Further definition of the work they do (such as the type of problem they customarily take on, and the groups of people they do it with) is left till later in the research process.

Although we have to avoid making assumptions about consultants' theories, that is not to say consultants' 'theories in use' do not derive in some measure from visible bodies of knowledge. It is difficult to conceive of the idea of a profession without such. Therefore, it is necessary to recognise that

(3) Formal theories are important to practice

Consultants have been trained in some way; they draw intellectual nourishment from some source(s). Therefore, when Clark and Ford argued that one way in which "sociological research"on planned "organisational change" could proceed was "first by examining the concepts used, the underlying assumptions and the methods employed,"[137] they had a point. It can serve to identify value-biases inherent in theories, and therefore how practitioners versed in particular theories may slant their efforts. OD is heavily weighted towards certain values, and Richard Brown[138] based his criticisms of the Tavistock Institute on this kind of analysis.

Notwithstanding the dangers of deriving one's idea of a consultant's theories from literature written by others - including the fact that consultants may engage in 'model-switching'[139] and draw on conflicting frames of reference to understand the same situation - this line of enquiry ought not to be prematurely discarded in empirical study of actual practice. It has been too easy to focus upon the techniques of OD and the management of change processes (what Clark and Ford call the "relational" aspect of practice) to the neglect of the "intellectual" aspect which guides practice. To avoid prejudging 'practice' theories, however, by an exposition of normative frameworks in advance, the explication of formal theories ought to be developed in relation to patterns as they emerge through the data.

The above requirements for research are by now fairly well recognised, and new studies that fill these omissions are regularly appearing. The major gap remaining, however, is the context in which social and behavioural science consultancy is performed. This indicates, therefore,

(4) <u>a need for a more sociological approach</u>

"Sociological" here means simply getting more of the context

> 'The sociological frame of analysis enables people to see any social phenomenon in its context.'[140]

Context is neglected in abstracted treatments of interventions and of role-taking simply as the management

of interpersonal processes. The neglect of context can be seen as the inevitable counterpart of the often alleged neglect by OD consultants of structural variables in working on attitudes and interpersonal relations. OD consultants and researchers from this background could hardly be expected to look at their own profession in this way. As Strauss put it:

> 'If the only skills they have learned are interpersonal, attitude-oriented ones they are unlikely to think in structural terms'[141]

There are two dimensions of context which are missing: (1) the organisational context, and (2) the consultant in his personal context.

As to the first of these, consultants are employed by, and in, organisations to do certain things for the organisation. How he comes to be there is of fundamental significance. The existence of "market, technological, and organisational antecedents"[142] is not of incidental, but fundamental, interest for the understanding of 'p.o.c.'. Thus, Clark writes of one example, that "a cluster of prior events seems to have been critical to the entry and survival of the consultant"[143], although like most who hint at dark deeds of this kind, he appears constrained from saying what these are.[144] Consultancy needs to be located in a procession of events, and in the broader organisational context, including the formal structure within which he is located (if an internal). Lisl Klein's account of her five years at Esso is an endless testimony to the relevance

of these[145], whilst these dimensions of the consultant's relationship to an organisation are rendered explicit in Pettigrew and Bumstead's analysis.[146]

By relating organisational context, questions of conflict (between consultant and client system, and within the client system), and questions of how the consultant accommodates to and serves particular interests in an organisation, are enabled to surface.[147]

Secondly, consultancy is an activity performed by persons. It is not simply the disembodied application of skills and knowledge: the consultant is part of the process, and part of the data[148]. Style is the man (or woman), and therefore the idiosyncratic features of his theory and practice need to be taken into account. But at the same time, the individual is socially and historically located. The ideas which he projects through his practice are the product of intellectual currents to which he has been exposed and of the particular mix of situations with which he has had to learn to cope. A consultant ought therefore to be seen in terms of his 'career' - a 'lay' concept which symbolic interactionist sociologists (and notably Hughes and his associates[149]) have widened to connote the individual with a range of needs, dispositions, interests, skills, and values (in other words, the content of his personality) following a path through life, encountering organisational and social opportunities and constraints, and having ups and downs on the way. A consultant is not just a consultant, then, but a <u>person</u> who is employed to do things as a consultant.

In the process the goals and interests of consultant and organisation may coincide, or may not. Various forms of accommodation are possible, but the consultant may not be fully aware (or admit) how the theories and practices he espouses and adopts are evolved in relation to his personal needs and the management of role. There opens up, therefore, all sorts of possibilities for understanding both 'consulting' and 'organisational action'. (For example, it makes it legitimate to consider social and behavioural science consultants as 'deviants' as well as 'conformists' (or merely necessary 'servants of power').)

Getting away from consultancy as 'the application of techniques', and seeing the consultant as at the intersection of personal career and organisational setting, is likely to enhance the reality of consultant and consultancy. 'Practice' and 'theory' are seen in a wider sense, and as intrinsically linked.

The principle, then, that a fully contextual representation observes is "to preserve the integrity of the phenomenon".[150]

However, to depict consultancy as 'lives in process' is fine insofar as it removes some of its mystique and refocuses attention on the ordinary aspects of organisational life. But it runs the risk of all ethnographically-sensitive studies, of over-normalising social activities so that one might forget the tasks

consultants are employed to perform. The corollary of this is also that ethnographic studies exaggerate the particular and unique.

It is necessary, therefore,
(5) to offset an ethnographic sociology concerned with live consultancy projects and individuals, with comparative analysis which seeks to establish systematic relationships.

What serves to do this is the treatment of 'career' in its material, occupational sense. 'Career' has both idiosyncratic and patterned aspects. The pattern lies in the extent to which social and behavioural science consultants form a group which capitalise on the existence of a set of problems that organisations have (or key members think they have) at a particular historical juncture, and whose occupational roles and 'practice theories' develop along common lines.

The occupational group gains identity and is shaped along one or more common lines by a number of factors. First is the competition for attention and resources with other groups within organisations.For example, personnel specialists lay claim also to social and behavioural science expertise, and their professional body, the IPM, asserts that the social and behavioural sciences are the intellectual underpinning for personnel work.[151] Personnel managers (and trainers) may well be chary of behavioural science consultants introduced from outside who appear to be trespassing on the territory they have

staked out for themselves. (Equally, consultants from outside may be influenced in their willingness to be identified with the Personnel Department, that is in their self-presentation, by their assessment of the latter's credibility and centrality.)

On the other hand, internal consultants may be shaped by a process of identification, rather than straight competition. They may be influenced in their definitions, of the roles they construct and in their self-presentation by the standing, values, and self-presentation of other 'staff' groups who provide '3rd party' services to 'line' management - viz.Personnel, Training, and Management Services - particularly insofar as their roles are an extension of the activities of those departments into 'purer' social and behavioural science activities. Thus, there may be identification - but not too much. Where the personnel manager now modishly describes himself as a 'human resource manager' to stress the common ground he has with other (real) managers, with a bit of extra special expertise on top of that (an 'expert in his field'), the behavioural science consultant goes one better, whilst retaining the advantages of being thought to be a 'manager'.

> 'OD consultants are human resource managers who specialize in the management of change'.[152]

Thus,the OD consultant lays claim to the mantle of 'innovator', but may seek to draw a careful line between

being a 'deviant' innovator and a 'conformist' innovator adopting management's predominant value system (of financial effeciency, and control values).[153]

A feature of inter-role competition between behavioural science consultants and other occupational groups in an organisation may equally be the extent to which a consultant leans towards a professional identification with social and behavioural science. There may be differences in the extent to which the roles sought out and the strategies and styles adopted are influenced by a formal body of social science knowledge. Thus, there is likely to be a duel influence - the influence of theoretical knowledge with 'model' roles and strategies derived from training and reading, and the practicalities of defining acceptable and viable roles. This may involve a tension which consultants in different situations (for example, externals vis-a-vis internals) are able to resolve differently.

Thus, sources of identification are relevant both to cases of intra-role conflict and inter-role competition.

As to the latter, processes of occupational definition and self-presentation can be seen as claims made by emergent occupations vis-a-vis established ones (and hence are termed by Watson, "group ideological"[154].
Analysis which recognises the sameness and differences projected by consultants vis-a-vis other occupational groups, and can relate questions of strategy and style

(the sort of things subsumed under 'practice theory') to these, puts behavioural science consultancy in an historical and occupational context, and thereby lifts it out of the purely ethnographic.

In similar fashion, social and behavioural scientists acquire identity in relation to divisions within the profession and among social and behavioural scientists of different persuasions. In recent years clear distinctions between professional groups and disciplines have been eroded under the pressure to engage in applied work. To 'apply' industrial psychology and industrial sociology means having to engage with the problems of implementing change. The concept and practice of 'planned organisational change', imported from America, has drawn together practitioners from different disciplinary areas[155]. Thus a succession of commentators have observed the decline of older professional groups and a weakening of the boundaries between them, as a new, multi-disciplinary worker has emerged.

> 'The last twelve years have seen what is, in effect, a complete reconceptualisation - in a sense, a downgrading of industrial sociology, and industrial social psychology. These fields are now but a part of a much more comprehensive study of all kinds of organisation'.[156]

Similarly, de Woolff and Shimmin at an appropriate distance in time noted a similar phenomenon in Britain and Europe:

> 'We wonder if we have identified a new profession of applied social science for those engaged in what is now called the psychology of work.'[157]

The reason, as Landsberger and others like Haire, Argyris and Pugh, have noted, is a shift in focus from a disciplinary to a problem-centred approach.[158]

This does not mean, however, that the completely non-disciplinary behavioural scientist has been created, and all differences subsumed. Far from it. If anything, it has exacerbated territorial and role competition. A new professional emerged on the scene (the OD consultant, the applied behavioural scientist <u>par excellence</u>) providing a wedge for the social sciences in some cases into organisations for the first time, but in the process also threatening the disciplinary integrity, role prerogatives and occupational standing of conventional industrial psychologists and industrial sociologists.

Klein gives a good account of this kind of inter-group rivalry within one firm[159], and in particular illustrating the competing definitions of social science represented by the upstart American import, OD, and the native version fostered at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. De Woolff and Shimmin's article itself can be seen as a response to the process of role decay among industrial psychologists and an attempt to redirect the profession towards claiming a leading role in applying behavioural science.

Behind the way consultants define their roles, the activities they seek out, and the practice theories they

employ may therefore lie a competition for attention and resources among social scientists themselves.

Patterns and systematic relationships may thus be discernable on account of occupational and role competition, within organisations and within the profession.

Finally, as the existence of such struggles suggests, consultancy must change over time, as opportunities for it change. The development of the applied social and behavioural sciences was boosted in the 1960's, and with it opportunities for consultants. As Cherns observes:

> 'Over and over again, we find that the development of the discipline (termed here 'organisational psychology')is made possible by its sanctioning as an area of enquiry, by the recognition of problems as coming within its scope'.[160]

Role development ensued. But equally, a decline in opportunities - perhaps the development of alternative managerial strategies for doing the things behavioural scientists were employed to do - could produce role development in alternative directions, a decline even in consultancy.

Consultants' 'careers' should provide evidence of any such shifts and thereby, place their work, as a profession, within a broader socio-economic historical context.

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95. A. Hunt, The Management Consultant, New York, The Ronald Press Co.,1977; A.K.Dekom, The Internal Consultant, American Management Association, Research Study 101,1969; R.E.Kelly, Should you have an internal consultant? , Harvard Business Review, Nov.-Dec. 1979.

96. See, for example, D.H.Swartz, Similarities and Differences of Internal and External Consultants, Journal of European Training, Vol.4, No.5,pp.258-262.

97. R. and G.L.Lippitt, op.cit., (also G.L. and R.Lippitt, The Consulting Process in Action, University Associates, 1978); R.R.Blake and J.S.Mouton, op.cit.

98. M.Van de Vall, op.cit., 1975.

99. S.R.Ganesh, op.cit.

100. N.M.Tichy, op.cit., 1974.

101. A.J.McLean et al, op.cit., 1979,p.11.

102. A.J.McLean et al, op.cit., 1982, pp32-3.

103. Ibid., p.33

104. Ibid, see Chapter 5.

105. G.Strauss, op.cit., p.645.

106. Ibid., p.645.

107. The phrase is from P.A.Clark, op.cit.

108. A. Pettigrew and D.Bumstead, Strategies of Organisation Development in Differing Organisational Contexts,paper presented at the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management Seminar, Groningen, Holland 1976.

109. J.Gill, op.cit., 1982.

110. R.Beckhard, *Organisation Development: Strategies and Models*, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1969.

111. A.J.McLean et al. op.cit., 1982, Ch.6.

112. G.Strauss, op.cit.

113. Ibid.

114. See for example, L.E.Davis and A.B.Cherns, op.cit.

115. See for comments on this, F.H.M.Blackler and C.A.Brown, *Job Design and Management Control: Studies in British Leyland and Volvo*, Saxon House, 1978, p.16.

116. A. Pettigrew and D.Bumstead, op.cit.

117. See N.M.Tichy, op.cit, 1974.

118. See, for example, R.N.Rapoport, *Three dilemmas in action research*, Human Relations, Vol.23,No.6, 1970; M.Foster, op.cit.; A.W.Clark,op.cit.

119. See for example, in W.L.French and C.H.Bell, op.cit. Thus, Stanford comments, "The emphasis is most certainly not on the study of action as means for advancing science but rather on the application to problems of what is already known." (N.Sanford, *Whatever Happened to Action Research?* Journal of Social Issues, Vol.26, No.4, 1970, pp.3-23.

120. See, A.T.M.Wilson, *Some Implications of Medical Practice and Social Case-Work for Action-Research*, Journal of Social Issues, Vol.3, No.2,1947,pp.11-28; and E.Jaques, op.cit.

121. In his 1971 article Foster claims, "In this section we shall consider the theory and practice which change agents utilize in relating themselves to those parts of an organisation they see as appropriate targets of change". (op.cit.P.542). But he does not relate theory and practice systematically.

122. For example, R.K.Brown, *Research and Consultancy in Industrial Enterprises*, Sociology, Vol.1,No.1,1967, pp.33-60. Although see the essays in E.J.Miller (ed.), *Task and Organisation*, John Wiley, 1976; and W.G. Lawrence (ed.), *Exploring Individual and Organisational Boundaries*, John Wiley, 1979.

123. For example, R.Walton and D.P.Warwick, *The ethics of organisation development*, Journal of Applied Behavioural Science,Vo.9,No.11,1973, pp.681-699; M.Pages in N.M. Tichy, *An Interview with Max Pages*, Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, Vol.10, No.1, 1974, pp.8-27; T.A.Kochan and Dyer, *A Model of Organisational Change: the context of Union-Management Relations*, Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, Vo.12,No.1,1976.

124. E.Rhenman, Organisation Theory for Long-Range Planning, London, John Wiley, 1973, (trans.N.Adler)

125. S.R.Gonesh, op.cit.,p.3-4

126. A.J.McLean, op.cit., 1978, p.55.

127. Ibid., p.19.

128. For a discussion of this, see C.Sofer, op.cit.,1972, Ch.19.

129. T.Douglas, Group Work Practice, London,Tavistock Publications, 1976, p.32.

130. A.J.McLean, op.cit.,1978,p.64.

131. A.J.McLean et al, op.cit.,1979, p.6.

132. A.J.McLean, op.cit., 1980.

133. P.A.Clark, op.cit., 1975, pp.41-2.

134. For this concept, see N.K.Denzin, The Research Act, Chicago, Aldine, 1970.

135. One cannot of course ignore the fact that the choice of sample is likely to involve some working definition of who fits and who doesn't which may be narrower than I have suggested. The decisions made in this respect are outlined in Chapter 4.

136. S.R.Ganesh, op.cit., p.2.

137. P.A.Clark and J.R.Ford, op.cit., p.43.

138. R.K.Brown, op.cit.

139. P.A.Clark and J.R.Ford, op.cit.

140. J.A.Banks, Trade Unionism,London,Collier-MacMillan, 1974, pp.1-2.

141. G.Strauss, op.cit., p.657.

142. P.A. Clark, op.cit.

143. Ibid., p.40.

144. Similarly coy is the account of O.D. at Pilkington Bros. by A. Warmington, T. Lupton, C.Gribbin, Organisational Behaviour and Performance: An Open Systems Approach to Change, MacMillan, 1977.

145. Klein writes,"the (Michigan) project was brought about by a combination of new organisation structures and roles resulting from the creation of Esso Europe, changes in the organisational context of the in-house role itself, and, to some extent, the prevailing preferences for particular kinds of social science intervention. Together these produced a situation where, for six months, the in-house social science activity was overwhelmed by problems of context, new work could not develop, and the role lost autonomy". (L.Klein,op. cit.,p.141)

146. A. Pettigrew and D.Bumstead, op.cit.

147. Again, Klein comments, "It was never possible to handle the issues about territory and competition - which were real and undeniable - separately from the issues of theory and method - which were equally real and undeniable" (L.Klein, op.cit., pp.146-7)

148. Ibid., 'Introduction'.

149. See E.C.Hughes, Men and their Work, Glencoe, Ill,Free Press, 1958.

150. J.Douglas, Understanding Everyday Life: Toward the reconstruction of socialogical knowledge, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.

151. See, for example, T.Lupton, Industrial Behaviour and Personnel Management, London, IPM, 1964

152. A. McLean, op.cit., 1978, p.14.

153. See, K.Legge, Power, innovation, and problem-solving in personnel management, McGraw-Hill, 1978, Ch.4.

154. T.J.Watson, The Personnel Managers: A study in the sociology of work and employment, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.

155. C.J.de Woolff and S. Shimmin, The Psychology of Work in Europe: A Review of a Profession, Personnel Psychology, 29, 1976, pp.175-195.

156. H.A.Landsbeger, The Behavioural Sciences in Industry, Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society, Vol.7, No.1, 1967, pp.1-19.

157. C.J.de Woolff and S. Shimmin, op.cit.

158. D.S.Pugh, Modern Organisation Theory: A psychological and sociological study, Psychological Bulletin, 66, 1966, pp.233-251; M. Haire, Psychology and the Study of Business: Joint Behavioural Sciences, in R.A.Dahl, M. Haire, P.F.Lazarsfeld, Social Science Research on Business: Product and Potential, New York,Columbia Univ. Press, 1959.

159. L.Klein, op.cit.,

160. A.B.Cherns, Ideology, Crises, and Organisational Psychology, in Using the Social Sciences, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979,p.107.

What is true for consultancy is true also for the development of social science as a discipline (Cherns' actual concern here). Opportunities to develop theory depend upon access to study problems, such access itself being dependent upon policy-makers articulating issues and situations as problems:

"I do not mean that it (social science) will develop solely through its application, but I do see the relations between ideological and scientific developments, and between both these and current problems (or 'crises'). Warrant for this view is provided by a highly respectable authority (M.Weber, 1950, On the Methodology of Social Science, Collier-MacMillan, London). 'advances in the sphere of the social sciences are substantively tied up with the drift in practical problems, and take the guise of concept-construction'."

(A.B.Cherns, ibid,p.102.)

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

Empirical work on consultants and their theories, that takes into account the roles out of which they are acting, (which both the review of literature and the discussion of ideology argue the need for), poses problems of methodology. This chapter identifies the decisions to adopt the methodology employed, and considers the issues which this leaves to be resolved in making valid and reliable inferences from the data thereby collected.

4.1. Origins of research in personal experience: formulation of a research question.

The genesis of research may often lie, not in one neatly conceived question, but in one question that becomes increasingly blurred or in several that eventually coalesce. There is clearly merit, as Durkheim argued,[1] in formulating as precisely as possible the problem to be researched, before embarking. For the way a question is formulated may imply a particular methodology, and if the question is not clear an inappropriate methodology may be employed. But as others have testified, research nevertheless often begins in some vaguely defined "puzzlement" or "worry".[2]

What is especially helpful to the researcher at this point is perhaps to clarify the particular 'interest' with which he is coming to a 'problem'. Whereas the area of a study itself can constitute an agreed problem, one researcher may see in it a very different problematic to another, depending on how each defines its exact nature and the causes they attribute to it.[3]

The preconceptions with which one comes to a study, one's relevant experience in the area, can be important sources of bias, the more so if unacknowledged - whilst on the other hand, recognition of these can helpfully clarify to the researcher his intent as to what he wants to come out of the research.

> 'However disguised, an appreciable part of any sociological enterprise devolves from the sociologist's effort to explore, to objectify, and to universalize some of his own most deeply personal experiences... Like it or not, and know it or not, in confronting the social world the theorist is also confronting himself. While this has no bearing on the validity of the resultant theory, it does bear on another legitimate interest: the sources, the motives, and the aims of the sociological quest.'[4]

Following Gouldner, therefore, the origins of the research in personal experience should be made explicit.

This research grew out of my own experience in trying to operate as an organisational consultant, and my conceptualisation of the problems involved in so doing. Thus, the 'interest' of 'howto do it' was uppermost in

the initial formulation of the issue. Unlike Tranfield [5] the 'peculiar' psychological make-up of O.D. practitioners was not an issue for me, as I had not been part of the O.D. culture of the late 1960's, early 1970's, when it first took off and attracted large numbers of acolytes in the training world (so much so that Tranfield was able to characterise it as a "social movement").

I started out more prepared to believe that applied social and behavioural science (whether O.D. or not) is a legitimate occupation, with a future, and that there is a mature form of it that is not 'tainted' by the peculiarities of its proponents. This freed me to locate the representatives of the profession of applied social and behavioural scientist wherever I thought (or was advised) the 'best', most experienced, representatives would be.

My interest was therefore more 'academic', relatively unconcerned with a desire to change organisations, or to suspect the motives of those who did so desire. The question, 'What makes for effective consulting?', derived from my interest in the social sciences per se: How could <u>social and behavioural science</u> be most effectively applied? This was the problem of utilisation discussed in the literature review (Chapter 3) - how can knowledge be effectively transferred from one system (the academic)

to another (the everyday world of formal organisations of all kinds)?

This question, posed from the standpoint of the social sciences strongly influenced my conception of what consultants were doing, and is therefore worth spelling out at some length.

We start from the proposition that the knowledge base and accompanying values of the two systems may well be discrepant. This creates difficulties whenever a researcher or consultant engages with a client organisation and it applies to organisational rapprochements of these two worlds. These problems have been commented on and analysed by many writers,[6] and expressed variously as involving differences between managers and researchers/consultants to do with respective aims, strategies of enquiry, perceptions of problems, time-perspectives, values, and culture.[7] Schutz[8] has expressed this kind of problem as that of trying to reconcile "finite provinces of meaning", and Gill[9] refers to the problem generically as "culture-clash".

In the case of research the suggested solution to this problem has been the adoption of a "grounded approach" - both in the application of social science knowledge,[10] and in the production of knowledge by grounding scientific interpretation in commonsense experience of the social world.[11] 'Action research' is a particular form of

engagement intended to satisfy both application and production of social science knowledge.[12]

In the case of consultancy (and in the practical management of 'action research') a solution to the problem of 'culture clash' commonly advanced has to do with getting out and sharing expectations, perceptions, etc. concerning the definition of a problem, and the basis for working on it. Schein[13] refers to this as 'establishing the psychological contract', and distinguishes aspects of the psychological and the business contract. In this way, questions of time scale, strategies of enquiry, aims, etc., are explored and agreed on. This is expressed, generically, as 'negotiating a relationship'.[14] It applies in the first instance to the agreement and relationship established between consultant and main client. But it is recognised that a consultant has then to establish relationships, based on similar issues, with all members of the organisation he then meets and works with.[15]

The continuing formation, and reformation, of relationships leads to a continuing negotiation of the basis on which the consultant is working, so that the original terms may be revised, explicitly or implicitly. Thus, Rhenman distinguishes for this purpose between the "grounds for the assignment" and the "consultant's action base".[16]

It can be seen from this that there is a problem not just of managing cognitive discrepancies (the 'culture clash') between the consultant operating from a basis of knowledge in the social and behavioural sciences and members of a client system operating from different occupational perspectives and different task perspectives, but a problem also, which is common to all kinds of business consultancy, that the consultant is intervening in the processes of the organisation, particularly in its authority structure. He has therefore, to manage the political aspects of his role, insofar as he may constitute a disturbance to existing patterns of relationships.

> 'Political activity in organisations tends to be particularly associated with change. Since (internal) consultants are the initiators of many organisational changes their activities and plans are inextricably bound up with the politics of change'.[17]

The basis for his own authority, whether 'outsider' or 'insider' - and the nature of consultancy presupposes he is always to some degree an 'outsider' - is also problematic, especially since the involvement of a commercial client organisation and a behavioural scientist is a voluntary relationship. It is not compelling on the commercial organisation as, say, is its need to deal with customers, with suppliers, and with employees.

Consultants try to deal with this 'authority problem', of lacking position, in different ways, to gain credibility and influence.[18] In the process there is a

difficult trade-off to manage, between the expertise assumed and the threat the consultant may constitute for others as an 'expert', and also between his identification with powerful persons (for the sake of gaining sanction for his presence and activities) and the trust he can get from others (upon whom he relies for information).

How he manages these problems determines how successful he may then be in terms of creating changes.

These are the kinds of issues which much of the theorising, description, and empirical analyses of consulting concern themselves with (see Chapter3). The two key tasks of consulting were therefore conceptualised as

(1) managing cognitive discrepancies
(2) managing the political aspects of one's role as an outsider intervening in the processes of a client organisation.[19]

The intention, at this point, was to consider consultants' theories and practice in terms of how effectively they accommodated attention to these two aspects.

4.2. Methodological problems of positivism.

But what are the problems in developing a methodology to research this? There are three basic problems, which can be encapsulated in three questions:

(1) What are the theories consultants use?

(2) What is the connection between their theories and what they do?

(3) Even if we can establish what their theories are, and what their practice is, who is to say what is 'effective' consulting?

Tichy's approach to discovering consultants' theories was to specify a change agent's concepts regarding change and his values regarding what changes he aimed to bring about, in terms of specific items on an instrumented questionnaire.[20] Admittedly, the range of cognitions in his study was extremely limited, having to do with 'bringing about change', rather than with the total content of consultants' theorising about organisation, about being in an organisation, and about changing organisations. But, then, this is a tendency of variable analysis, to narrow the range of what can be registered.

The problem is illustrated in a report of one of the interviews Tichy also conducted:

> (Tichy): "You've described on paper the categories of information you pay particular attention to when diagnosing an organisation. Could you say how you generally use these categories?"
>
> (Roger Harrison): "The problem with that is that it isn't the way I work in fact. I don't approach a system with all these categories. I approach the system with my antennae waving, and as data are produced by the system I probably slot them into these different categories; and then if one or another of them seems predominant as a focus of energy for the system members, then that's the one I'm likely to use as entry."[21]

Itemising elements ("categories", "variables") for subjects to respond to can therefore be a distortion or imposition on the way change agents (consultants) actually think and act. Or as McHugh puts it in a more general context:

> 'a measure imposes its own properties on a concept'[22]

Thus, Tichy's use of structured questionnaires arose because

> 'in response to open-ended questions in preliminary interviews, many respondents had difficulty articulating their assumptions about what mediates social change and about other aspects of social change... This led to data collection methods aimed at better eliciting implicit assumptions.'[23]

But precision in answers may be gained at the expense of the open-endedness of actual thinking and behaviour.

> Anyone approaching the study of a species of social activity and immersed in it, cannot but be impressed by the 'wholeness' of it. And to treat it, descriptively or explanatorily in a way that introduces analytical distinctions must appear as introducing false (i.e. 'not there') separations.[24]

In placing a net over reality, variable analysis derives its epistemological justification from the positivist belief that reality is just waiting, out there, to be uncovered. All that is required are finer grades of questioning, in order to

> 'somehow tapping) the objective reality which underlies appearances.'[25]

But, in the process, meaning becomes of secondary importance, an epi-phenomenon to be disregarded:

> 'While not denying the meaningful character of

> social phenomena, (positivism) attempts to reduce social life to the relationships between variables. Meaning is only treated as an intervening variable. Therefore the meanings of an individual are turned into variables which can be identified in terms of objective indices.'[26]

Such methodological assumptions, however, are compounded (and complemented) in this instance, by the way cognition and values are themselves conceived, in terms of 'structures'. Developments in cognitive psychology, in the work of Zajonc[27] and Bruner[28] throw doubt on whether there exists a precise relationship between elements of cognitive structure, and therefore undermine the attempt to develop schemata, as in the work of Tichy, wherein cognitions and values are presented as if in some "precise algebra",[29] in themselves, in relation to one another, and in relation to the use of change technology. As Zajonc observes, the descriptive approach to cognitive organisation has been superseded by a dynamic theory of cognitive processes, in which the emphasis is primarily on change.

The problems in conceptualising consultants' theories (cognitions) as structures become evident when one turns to the second question, concerning the connection between their theories and what they do. As Deutscher[30] makes abundantly clear, one cannot assume any such connection - a disparity which Argyris and Schon[31] refer to in distinguishing 'espoused theories'(what consultants say are their theories) and 'theories in use' (the theories which their behaviour suggests they really act on). If one starts out with a presumption in favour of a cognitive

structure which can be elicited by a questionnaire device, one is liable therefore to find all manner of inconsistencies, or none, between reported ('described') structures and reported behaviours, or in Tichy's framework between 'values, cognitions, and change technology'. The one does not provide at all a reliable guide to the other.

The picture obtained of a consultant's theories depends a great deal on how one chooses to define 'theory'. First, in terms of its scope (whether it consists solely of compartmentalised cognitions or whether it includes other personality contents). And, second, at what point in relation to action one elicits thinking from the consultant about what he is doing, and names it 'theory'. As the discussion in Chapter 3 shows, my preference eventually was to treat 'theory' in the widest possible sense.

Even if theories can be satisfactorily elicited and their relationship to action reliably established, the third question, 'what is effective consulting?', presents an insurmountable and obvious obstacle. Tichy seeks to operationalise this in terms of congruence and incongruence between 'values' and 'actions', and 'concepts regarding change' and 'action'. A consultant, however, may have an effective 'theory' in these terms (i.e. a high degree of congruence between his aims, his concepts,

and his choice of change technology), but an ineffective 'practice'. To determine effectiveness requires at the very least observation of actual practice.

My own definition, at this stage, turned on how effectively a consultant manages the political aspects of his role. This could be defined in terms of variables derived for example, from the general model of Pettigrew[32] or from the listing by Buchanan[33] of the conditions most frequently present in successful organisational change. Again, it would be necessary to observe live projects systematically with a protocol that identified particular behaviours and actions as 'evidence' of political sensitivity and effectiveness.

However one tries to operationalize measurement of (political) effectiveness, though, the question remains, 'effective for whom?'. What outcomes should we attend to? This would mean specifying the desired outcomes for a range of people. It would involve the problem of defining suitable measures to represent the desired effects in each case, and this in turn would involve problems of the time-scale over which these are to be measured, which raises the question of intended and unintended effects.

The more I thought through these problems in applying a logical empiricist programme to what consultants do, the less worthwhile it seemed. Thus, while it seemed

perfectly plausible to specify consultants' theories in discrete parts, as consisting of a theory (implicit or explicit) of man, of organisation, and of change, and there were many examples[34] of elucidating people's mental models along these lines, what do you then do with that? Do you look for inconsistencies between these, or unexamined implications of implicit-only theories? As with the problem of developing measures of effectiveness, at some point you come up against the problem of applying your own judgements about value. Who is to say what is 'congruence' for another person? Who is to say what is effectiveness for a consultant himself? In what form are a consultants' goals reconcilable with a client's expectations? One is struck by the futility of determining utility.

The intrusion of values can be traced back to the beginning of this line of argument. I started out with a preconception about the application of social and behavioural science involving a problem of 'bridging' knowledge between the two systems of thought and practice. I formed early on an idea that one effective way of doing this was to use a 'modelling' process. The social scientist adjusts to the language, perceptions, notions, expectations, categories, etc. of people in the client organisation, and by dealing from observables in that system first builds up his own understanding of it, in

the light of knowledge and experience he brings with him, and secondly, aims to clarify and extend the clients' perceptions, etc., by grafting onto these his own more abstract thinking. Grounded data leads to conceptualisation and theory-building [35], in which 'raw' data is modelled in order to make sense of the organisation's problems, with a view to stimulating action on these. Hornstein[36] terms this process "orienting" - a process that utilizes, pragmatically basic research with the aim of "bridging the gap between substantive research knowledge and social action."

However, this is merely one stylistic solution to the problem of effective consulting. Nevertheless, it continued to exercise a value for me as a way to do consulting that was right for me.

I mention this to show how influential initial conceptualisation can be on empirical items and measures developed. And also (which will be of particular relevance to the actual findings of this study later) because it illustrates the bias of a consultant operating from an academic position.

Methodological problems, then, were of two sorts:

(1) Logical problems

(2) Practical problems - the problem of getting access to observe and ask questions of various people on a live

project alongside a consultant (as recommended by P. Clark[37]). This is a deterrent to all but the most lucky and diligent. But access of itself does not solve the logical problems. Instead, it can cause these to be overlooked in the satisfaction of getting data.

The solution to these problems involved abandoning a logical empiricist mode, and being clearer about the use of an 'interpretive' methodology. Specifically, it meant

(1) abandoning variable analysis as a way of tapping consultants' theories

(2) abondoning the intention ('interest') of establishing 'effective consulting' i.e. to replace "the interest of certainty and control" with "the interest of understanding".[38] For beyond indentifying the employment of particular models and practices, lay a wish to relate these to particular kinds of problem in particular contexts, to develop a kind of contingency theory of consulting.[39] It meant rejecting the programme laid out by Tichy, viz.

> '(1) we need to establish which change strategies are effective for what,
>
> (2) individuals in decision-making positions should be educated as to the different biases associated with different change agents, to enable them to have greater control and understanding of the process.
>
> (3) change agents themselves might develop greater flexibility, from a knowledge of what works when,

(4) Eventually it may even be possible to develop a general model for organisational diagnosis, one not so wedded to the biases of different types of change agent.'[40]

What the foregoing did was to reveal the "domain assumption" (of "certainty and control") which was being carried through into methodology, and, had the research been carried out using that methodology, it would likely have reinforced it.

> 'Domain assumptions concerning man and society are built not only into substantive social theory but into methodology itself....
> Every research method makes some assumptions about how information may be secured from people and what may be done with people, or to them, in order to secure it; this, in turn, rests on certain domain assumptions concerning <u>who and what people are</u>. To the degree that the social sciences are modelled on the physical sciences, they entail the domain assumption that people are "things" which may be treated and controlled in much the same manner that other sciences control their non-human materials: people are "subjects" which may be subjected to the control of the experimenter for purposes they need not understand or even consent to ...
> When viewed from one standpoint, "methodology" seems a purely technical concern devoid of ideology ...
> Yet it is always a good deal more than that, for it is commonly infused with ideologically resonant assumptions about what the social world is, who the sociologist is, and what the nature of the relation between them is.'[41]

The "interest of understanding" permits the relaxation of assumptions and hypotheses about what is effective, about who is served, or what is functional behaviour for whom. It leaves open an ambiguity about who is served and how by specific practices. It leaves open the question, for

example, of who is the agent and who the instrument in social change. Or as Tranfield put it:

> 'The way the individual uses and is used by society is an important question in the social sciences, particularly in relation to the concept of change.'[42]

This is important for our discussion of ideology later.

It leaves in doubt whether consultants' practices are always functional for themselves, or always functional for others. There is always a degree of ignorance about the conditions of action, and 'flat' spots in one's own theories and practice, so that even where ideas and practice are most thoroughly worked out and behaviour is at its most consciously intentional, things may not turn out as expected. Behaviour is subject to the "ethical irrationality of the world".[43]

4.3. The use of an 'interpretive' methodology

Understanding ("verstehen") involves discovering the 'meaning' in situations - in this case, understanding the meaning consultants attach to their situations. "Verstehen" as a sociological approach involves "the interpretation of action in terms of its subjective meaning"[44]

There are a range of devices which aid such interpretation - participant observation, documentary resources supplied by consultants (for example, articles by them about what they do), semi-structured interviewing. Although one method (the interview) ultimately predominates, the others

are in fact all used in this study. In particular, it could be claimed that a kind of participant observation makes an important contribution. Participant observation is customarily used to understand a 'form of life' which is relatively strange and to which the observer is a relative outsider. It is a means of finding out the language, fixing concepts, identifying characteristic behavioural patterns and the meanings applied to these. It aims at that "agreement on objects known in common"[45] which is the basis of normal social life. To this extent, my experience in taking a Masters course in 'Organisational Development', and doing consulting and training work both before and during this research, was a form of participant observation, insofar as it immersed me in the culture and concepts of social and behavioural science consulting. Though this will remain understated as a form of 'practical exposure' in reporting this research, it is a vital element in the process of understanding what consultants do.

The set of 'common' meanings which this experience supplied about organisational consulting is important for two reasons: first, because it provided the rudiments of a common language for discussing consulting, and second, and in some ways more important, because it provided a basis for trust as between two persons (interviewer and interviewee) whom the interviewee could assume shared common-interests (in consulting),

common values (regarding its aims), etc. The assumption of agreement makes it easier for the interviewee to voice his own conceptions and so enable the interviewer to explore these further.

The interview is a particularly economical way of discovering the meaning consultants attach to their practices, theories, role situations, etc., as well as providing an occasion to reflect better on purposes and problems. It thereby enables the interviewer and interviewee to develop the meaning of these, in a more lucid way, which closeness to events may render obscure. The corollary of this, of course, is that remoteness from events may render meaning artifically distinct. One requirement, then, is that one moves between a variety of time-perspectives in exploring the meanings a consultant applies to events, etc. But also, since we are concerned with consultants' theories and practice as developing phenomena within role patterns that are subject to change, we are concerned not just with meaning attached to past events, but meaning as it directs and transforms action in relation to future events. So, clarification, elaboration, refinement of aims and ideas may become incorporated into a consultant's practice at a future time. As Cannell and Kahn put it:

> 'The criteria of directness and economy, and the ability to collect data about beliefs, feelings, past experiences, and future intentions..... to probe the past or to determine an individual's intentions for the future '[46]

- these are the things the semi-structured interview is good for.

This, then, is one justification for using semi-structured interviews for gathering data - that it favours a process of discovering the meaning of what consultants do.

The second justification is that it preserves the "integrity of the phenomena".[47] It permits the unfolding of consultants' theories through descriptions of events and direct reflection on theories and values within a context over the determination and definition of which the consultant has more control himself. It gets at the actor's own interpretive structure - the 'nexus' of his beliefs, theories, and values, which directs his attention to situations and his treatment of them, without distinction between what is value, what theory, what belief, what dispositions, and so on.

Rationalist philosophers and psychologists would play havoc with these distinctions. But this is precisely where rationalistic 'observer' definitions may impose artificial constructions on actor motivations. Thus Brodbeck[48] asserts the analytical distinction between 'judgements of causal significance' and 'judgements of moral significance' and argues that these can be practically separated.

The process of policy making in bureaucracies may encourage this belief, that diagnosis based on facts, and decisions bases on value judgements, are discrete events. But such

a view is itself criticised by policy analysts, such as Rein.[49] If this distinction is doubtful in the public sphere where mechanisms have been deliberately created to keep causal and moral judgements apart, how much less justification is there for supposing it holds in cases of individual decision-making.[50]

Psychologists, too, are in the habit of distinguishing values, attitudes, cognitions and perceptions, as if they exist on different levels or in clusters encompassing different degrees of complexity.

However, in a series of preliminary interviews it was found that consultants had difficulty in making their 'values' explicit (just as Roger Harrison had difficulty discriminating his cognitive or perceptual categories to Noel Tichy). Above all, accounts were found to hold features of all these categories in a 'whole' response to situations described and to questions asked.

One has, then, a divide between those who take a processual view of phenomena (for example, Weber, Douglas, Bruner) and those who have a static spatial orientation (for example, Brodbeck, Tichy).

The interpretive sociologist dispenses with the apparatus of values, attitudes, cognitions, etc., and traces action from 'interests' and 'purposes'. Whereas the former exist in individual psychological space, the latter exist in a social space. Interpretive (or 'action')

sociologists then talk about 'orientations'. This encompasses guiding ideas and the settings in which they are operative. It includes thereby the role of the actor - what is possible within the situation the actor finds himself in, and what he does.

Within psychology, there are tendencies in the same direction. Hudson for example, argues that

> 'the need is for research on men's assumptions; on the schemata we use intuitively, in interpreting what both we and our neighbours do';[51]

whilst Argyris[52] suggests that practitioners employ "molar" rather than "molecular" models. The human mind (except when researching) operates with broad generalisations, or 'heuristics', or in Von Neumann's[53] terms, "sloppy categories". Argyris accounts for this characteristic of 'action' or 'practice' theories by arguing that it enables the user to experience psychological success and a sense of competence - by enabling a person to make self-fulfilling prophecies about behaviour, to set his own level of aspiration and to explore ambiguity in situations.

Tichy,[54] too, observed this very tendency in consultants' theories - to act in a self-fulfilling manner, directing attention only to what justifies the course of action the consultant is inclined to pursue anyway.

We should, from the foregoing, therefore be prepared to find that consultants' theories satisfy some features of their personal situation - inner needs, or ways of coping with the pressures or the opportunities of their role. Personal theories, revealed through interview accounts, then come to be seen as ways for the consultant of integrating the meaning of his own situation (including role, personal values, career and life goals, motives, past history, organisational and extra-organisational experience).

'Accounts' have to do with 'accounting for' all this - more than with strictly providing an accurate description of own behaviour. While there is likely to be an element of 'distortion' (rationalisation, concealment exaggeration, dramatisation) - accounts as 'justifications'[55] - they are nevertheless liable to reveal more of intention purpose, 'meaning' in behaviour, and reveal what is sociologically interesting - the impact of organisational role on 'personal theories' and the interplay between these (in the direction both of accommodation and unresolved tension). An account

> 'is not to be interpreted as an introspective causal explanation ... (but)... primarily to make actions intelligible and warrantable ... Accounting seems to involve the performance of two main tasks: the explication of action, and the justification of action'.[56]

Semi-structured interviews, properly conducted, would seem, then, to provide a means of generating accounts which give access to experience in 'social' space, and

preserve the "integrity of the phenomena", in terms of theory, practice, and role. But as Harre also says:

> 'Accounts are generated by ordinary people in the ordinary course of social action (and this is encouraged by ethogenically-oriented social psychologists)."[57]

The effect of the interview setting itself on the account has to be considered. The interview is one "ordinary course of social action", the "social action" described in the account is another. "Explication of action" it may produce, but that is likely to be coloured by "justification" to the interviewer.

This is the occasion, then, to consider the actual form of interviews carried out, their conduct and procedure, the questions asked. How valid might these accounts, so obtained, be in giving a 'true' picture of what the consultants surveyed do and think? Thereafter, we consider the problems in analysing them and deriving reliable interpretations.

References and Notes to CHAPTER 4

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CHAPTER 5

THE METHODOLOGY OF ENQUIRY AND ANALYSIS

5.1. Constructing the setting in which accounts are generated, so that respondents give 'valid' reports.

Except in the case of interviews 1 - 4, all interviews were set up through an initial letter (Appendix A) which stated the nature of the research and requested time to interview the recipient, followed by a telephone call to confirm an appointment.

The letter was intended to set up certain expectations, striking a balance between creating trust and putting the consultant on his mettle:

(1) the sender is a colleague in the field of applied and behavioural science

(2) the research is to do with organisational consulting, and consultants' theories

(3) the interview will focus on the consultant's experience

(4) it will be 'in-depth' (offering "an opportunity to reflect upon your assumptions, models and methods").

(5) it will be recorded on tape, but will remain confidential

Only two out of those approached declined to be interviewed (one being "too busy"), the other ("uninterested in that sort of thing"). This high response rate may be

attributed to motives that may be considered normal in a group of high status 'experts' - a certain 'dutifulness' of experts to help out a younger colleague in the same disciplinary area, to do his research; being flattered to be asked to contribute; and a motive to influence the results of such a study. But, in addition, certain special characteristics of this particular group were probably at work - an occupational predisposition towards collaborative activities, in giving their time and engaging in talk; an interest in exploring ideas and engaging in reflexive, mutual enquiry; and the opportunity to talk with a friendly neutral about the difficulties and frustrations of the job.[1]

One of the first things to do when an interview took place was to check out the expectations aroused by the letter. Occasionally this occured over the 'phone, and then, because a discussion like this on the 'phone might indicate some anxiety, a further check on expectations was made at the interview. For example, had the interviewee given any thought to the subject? Had he even read the letter or remembered its contents?

Secondly, it was necessary to develop a framework for the interview that was mutually acceptable. This invariably meant describing in more detail the nature of my research, what I had done so far in it, what ideas I was developing through it. In other words, stating my own requirements from the interview - making myself known. This would

then lead into my suggesting how we might proceed.
For example,

"I'd like to take you through your consulting experience, and develop points as they arise. And at some point talk about actual projects you've done, in order to understand the context of your work."

In this phase, I would be enquiring how the interviewee would like to play it, bearing in mind particularly the importance of satisfying his own energy to talk about himself in the way that best suited him.

Thirdly, I endeavoured to provide a secure and explicit framework - clarifying the use of the tape-recorder, not making notes, having a checklist of questions in my own mind but not working strictly from these and not having these in front of me, and needing to change the tape after one hour. Successful interviewing depends on effectively managing any anxieties an interviewee might have and establishing a personal rapport which encourages the respondent to talk freely. Therefore, I regularly defined the 'interview' at the outset as a "conversation".[2]

Clarifying aims and expectations, and setting the scene in this way, are practices which consultants recognise and employ themselves in working with their clients.[3] Cultural norms of those researched are therefore not offended, but, rather capitalised upon to increase their trust and confidence in the interviewer as someone with whom they can talk on a basis of reasonable equality.

The initial four interviews, involving colleagues in the OD field, were used to iron out these kinds of problems, to develop a facility in managing this kind of interview, and to experiment with different ways of structuring it. To help with this we set aside time at the end of the interview to review the experience of the interviewee and to consider improvements.

The major issue concerned the best way into the consultant's general ideas and the balance to be struck between his general statements and conceptualisations, and particular examples of what he did. It was apparent that two different 'scripts' were required:

- one, which was more contextually bound from which the interviewee could be led into more general themes more comfortably and naturally
- another, in which I should be prepared to activate more conceptually oriented questions, to satisfy someone with definite ideas and to shortcut contextual incidentals (though, nevertheless, pulling in concrete details by asking for examples and illustrations).

Interviewees differed also between

(1) those who liked to develop a story chronologically in detail as they went (their life-history, how they came into consulting, how they had developed). It was necessary then to help these interviewees focus upon general themes.

(2) those who gave a rapid survey and focused particularly on current work. It was necessary then to try to get these interviewees to fill in the background in more detail, via themes and general patterns as they appeared to be developed in recounting the present.

In time, the most consistently successful pattern, in terms of allowing the interviewee to talk freely, was to lead in via his/her career history. The first question, or request, then, was regularly - -

"Could you tell me how you come to be doing what you you are doing now... how you came into this line of work?" An interviewee would often interpret this in response as "You want an overview?" ... "a potted history?" ... "a career history?"

This opening would then create space for the various questions which I wanted answering, as the interviewee developed recall and began to set patterns on his experience. It thus encouraged 'retrospective introspection', which Merton and Kendall[4] argue is a way of achieving specificity and vividness. The order in which these questions were asked and the form they were put varied considerably, however, in accordance with interviewee differences outlined above. As Cannell and Kahn argue,

> 'The sequence of questions should be determined primarily by the interview process rather than the research process."[5]

The basic script I worked with is set out in Appendix B.

The guiding criteria for managing the interviews were as laid down by Madge:

> 'While (the interviewer) must not ask too many questions or lead the informant too much, he must also - as in psychotherapy - avoid the opposite error, which leaves the interview at the level of polite social conversation. He must retain control of the situation, but use it in such a way as to minimize the obtrusion of his own preconceptions. He must recognise that his primary duty is to help the informant to express what is in - or under the surface of - his own mind.
>
> Such interviews also have the advantage, if properly conducted of leaving a favourable effect on the informant, who will have acquired the elements of skill in self-analysis and will be in full sympathy both with the subject-matter and with the substance of the interview record. He will retain the memory of a psychologically significant incident, and perhaps of a distinctive social relationship.'[6]

As a means of stimulating self-analysis,for example, I sought (as already mentioned) to maintain some sort of dynamic in the interview between a consultant talking about particular projects and his experience, and drawing inferences or generalisations about these. Also, I found it encouraged self-reflection to ask consultants, when they described a project, how others (clients) in that situation saw events, what aims they had, what models he believed they worked with. In the process of confronting others' perceptions etc., they would often reveal their own thinking more clearly.[7]

Sharpening up the focus in this way, it was hoped, would secure valid data, in the sense that it faithfully

reflected what was in the respondent's mind, whilst it also ensured it related to the research topic and aims. However, it had a further purpose, which goes in some part beyond Madge's prescriptions. It could contribute to more reliable inferences being made.

As a conversation proceeded, more focused questioning was a way of checking out the inferences I could be drawing about what an interviewee had been saying, testing out patterns that seemed to be emerging. Further, the inferential process in relation to the whole series of interviews could be assisted by testing out hunches about patterns I was beginning to perceive, or which interviewees themselves suggested. Thus, an interviewee could say, "Have you thought that.... (consultants can be considered in terms of 'cosmopolitans' and 'locals')?" and I could put this argument to another interviewee subsequently for comment. In this way, interviewees exercised some influence over, and check upon, the ideas I was developing about them, and re-oriented me to issues which were salient for them. Thus, meaning becomes inter-subjectively validated, and interpretation can be located as a social practice.

However, this goes only part way towards solving the problem of what interpretations one can legitimately derive from accounts. What is recognised, at this point, is that data gathering through the semi-structured, or 'focused' interview, is a social process. Generation of

accounts by this means necessarily involves a self-monitoring, or "reflexive" process, by both parties, interviewer and interviewee. Moreover, one constantly monitors the other's monitoring. It is an instance of "the 'reflexive' monitoring of conduct' as a chronic feature of the enactment of social life"[8]. An account, is, therefore, a joint construction, and is 'situated' in the interaction that takes place between interviewer and interviewee.

> 'Every account is a manifestation of the underlying negotiation of identities'[9]

'Interviewer - (researcher -) effects',[10] such as the pattern of expectations initially built up, have, therefore, to be recognised in the construction of accounts if the inferences drawn from the data are not to be mere reflections of the constructions introduced into the accounts by the interviewer himself.[11]

But we must go beyond the notion of researcher effects as a single problem of 'contamination' and view these not merely as ineradicable but as a necessary and positive part of the process of getting to understand another.[12] Thus, Hudson argues, apropos of the psychologist (though it applies equally to that sociology in which the interpretive method is most deeply rooted), that he

> 'should envisage his work as a process wherein one person becomes acquainted with others'[13]

The "negotiation of identities" is thus central to the process of developing understanding:

> '(1)it enables us to focus on the life-span, the biography, of the individual as the site of (psychological) explanation, (2) it removes from the (psychologist) his God-like exemption from subjectivity of judgement, (3) it accepts the practical constraints of working with other people, (4) it places centrally what belongs centrally - the act of making sense.'[14]

In conducting my research, I was strongly influenced by Argyris' ideal of the "non-exploitative researcher-subject relationship"[15], and have tried to keep faith with this ideal - in the conduct of the interviews, in providing a copy of the research report and the original tape for comment and comparison to those who participated,[16] and in avoiding instrumented research technology and measurement paraphanalia.[17]

However, I have not gone as far as some would argue a non-exploitative subject - subject relationship requires. For example, Reason[18] and Rowan[19] argue that 'participative action research' should involve the researched doing research on themselves. But as Hudson says on this point

> ' the weight of the metaphor is not primarily interpersonal, but interpretative .... Interpretations are its basic concern: interpretations (both our own and other people's), and - especially in teaching - their transmission and control. In a word, the metaphor is 'hermeneutic'. And we, all of us, are interpreters, 'hermeneuts'.'[20]

Any attempt to reduce a person researched to the status of an "object" who can be subjected to the control of the

researcher is apt to be redeemed (and subverted) by the fact that

> 'there is not as great a difference between the sociologist and those he studies as the sociologist seems to think ... those being studied are also avid students of human relations; they too have their social theories.'[21]

In summary, then, it is claimed that the minimal conditions for the generation of 'good' accounts has been set up

- a form of data-collection to which the respondents are well adapted, being equipped by socialisation through professional training and practice to engage routinely in verbalisation at a high level and to take an appropriate role in this kind of social situation (viz a semi-structured interview, offering scope for joint management)[22]
- a conversational framework, of sufficient range, which permits negotiation and clarification of expectations, and which engages the respondent in talking about the things which matter to him (rather than the respondent simply adjusting his sentiments and acts to the interviewer)[23]
- a shared language, based on certain similar experiences, common reading, and use of same terminology and, not unimportant, an assumption that both interviewer and interviewee are in the same business and sympathetically inclined.

The minimal requirement for deriving sense from accounts is that the analyst understand the language, since the words are all one is left with as 'evidence':

> 'Understanding a symbol consists in referring it not to the unknown intentions of the user, but to its commonly grounded usages. In Wittgenstein's words, to understand a language means to know 'a form of life'.'[24]

Nevertheless, the researcher-observer cannot rely on his knowledge as an "unanalysed resource"[25]. Or as Bulmer puts it,

> 'Are there 'universes of meaning' within which members share a common medium of discourse? Or are there parts of a society with their own languages and understandings where the sociologist who assumes linguistic comparability may become badly unstuck?'[26]

Such communicative dysjunctions occurred, for example, where the person interviewed had formed expectations as to what I meant by 'models' (thinking I expected to find 'formal' models, and responding accordingly by delineating formal models, often of a pictorial nature),[27] or where we had incompatible views about the research process, or where, even, I discounted the experience of the consultant by assuming his practice was more role-bound and conventional than it in fact was.

On the other hand, an interview has worked well when the interviewee has talked freely without prompting, using his own formulations to describe his experience, and

defined and elaborated the meaning it has for him to make it clear.[28] Most gratifying of all is when in the process the interviewee has covered all the areas I wished to probe without my having to put the questions directly, since this indicates the way I have mapped what I take to be the relevant areas of experience and the links between these fits the subject's construction of these, too.

Finally, a degree of success in these aims is reflected in the following testimony to the process:

"What I think you started off with rather beautifully was reminding me that my origins, if you like, were the Piagetian head-stuff and the psychoanalytic heart-stuff .. and how do you put them together? .. You've helped me enormously to clarify it With every activity someone has to say, 'we're going' .. including you with your tape recorder .. Somebody has to say, 'Can you pause a bit while I change the reel?'.. Somebody has to say, 'You're not quite taking the line I hoped you would in our interview.... Please take a different tack'... Somebody has to say, 'there's a question you still haven't asked me, which is this ....' In other words, you are managing this interview and I fully accept your right to manage it ... and I think you've been managing it terribly well, because you've let me witter on at considerable length on subjects dear to my heart"

("I thought you were managing it")

"Well that's the marvellous thing ... There's a very real sense in which you set this up, and I didn't. The terms on which we're operating - which is the little bit of quite nice warm technology - are yours and not mine.. And you've provided the framework within which I can gambol in a highly motivated way.. because it's a very loose fitting framework... Now, had you come with 30 questions and a maximum and minimum time for me to answer each question, I would have been much more restive than I've been as your willing associate in this well-managed activity.. So there is a sense in which we're co-managing.. And you think I'm managing and I think you're managing.. and its very nice, and we're associates."

5.2. The status of accounts: what are they good for, what kind of 'evidence'?

What can 'accounts' tell us? How should they be treated? What an account does not do is to give knowledge of something to which a speaker may refer, in any simple, direct way. It may tell us about the conditions of action to which the speaker is orienting himself, as he sees it, but it does not tell us about that something in any reliable way. It merely reveals

> 'those features of a setting that members rely upon, attend to, and use as a basis for action, inference, and analysis on any given occasion.'[29]

Thus the questions to consultants, 'What do you attend to in a project?' and, when a consultant is describing a project, 'What features are essential to an understanding of that situation?', were intended to reveal the 'theories' and action-oriented schema which directed a consultant's attention to particular features.

Nor does an account tell us how a speaker may behave in a situation. An account

> 'is not to be interpreted as an introspective <u>causal</u> explanation .. (but) .. primarily to make actions intelligible and warrantable'.[30]

The study of accounts reveals how actors construe, not how they act.

Just as one cannot infer about the setting in which a person operates, as if the account is a mirror upon the world which reflects an undistorted image, nor is it a window upon his mind that reveals all his motivations and dispositions to act. One account only sheds a little light. Thus, I became aware after interviewing one consultant that he had a long-standing interest in job design and in the ecology movement. This was not apparent in his account. Another had been heavily involved in working with trade unions in the past (though no longer). Although he told me so, it would be easy to pass over this as it didn't figure strongly in his account. Both these facts must influence any inferences one were to make about their values and social commitments, as a basis thence for predicting their actions. And one would be likely to be wrong.

This whole question - the relation between what people say and what they do - has been exhaustively discussed by Deutscher who concludes that the correspondence between them is "doubtful".[31]

These problems, of dealing with people's constructions, through accounts, are considered by ethnomethodologists and symbolic interactionists.

Ethnomethodologists are interested in the way social structure is generated through the ordinary talk of people. 'Structure' is constituted in the talk of people. Talk is then to be analysed as a form of "managed accomplishment of organised settings"[32], and a key criterion is member 'competence' in the "artful practices" of managing organised settings (how members define that competence, not how the sociologist does). Effectively, what the ethnomethodologists have done is to take Austin's[33] notion of 'performatives' in language, whereby speech is a form of doing, and obliterate the distinction between doing and saying, treating language as constituting social structure and action.

Among the exponents of the Symbolic Interactionist perspective, those of the dramaturgical school, such as Goffman, likewise focus on how people construct and manage organised social settings, but widen the scope of what they treat under the heading of 'performances'. By adopting the metaphor of the actor on a stage (as in, prototypically, 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life')[34]

they incline to render behaviour somewhat larger than life and widen what they include for analysis, by observing behaviour as well as talk. The range of resources, or 'props', that are available to the analyst is therefore greater. Thus, Goffman observes and explicates the symbolic meaning of acts, as well as how participants use verbal communications to make their behaviour "intelligible and warrantable". He attends to a wider range of 'expressions' used for the purposes of 'impression management'. By such processes of communicative control, everyday actors present themselves as 'competent' in managing situations. The dramaturgist's world, we may say, thus has greater solidity (or external "facticity"[35]) than the ethnomethodologist's. By setting the actor in a more 'external' relationship to his own behaviour and his props, social life appears more precarious for the actors, but less problematic and intangible for the analyst to grasp.

Thus, the dramaturgist is drawn to those occasions, like 'embarrassment'[36], to observe how 'normality' is restored. Accounts then take the form of "excuses and justifications".[37] Although observing (or inducing) disturbances to normality is a recommended strategy for the ethnomethodologist,[38] the ethnomethodologist sees 'accounts' as taking place all the time in ordinary situations, not merely as called into being to restore orderliness. He would most certainly demur from Scott and Lyman's statement:

> 'An account is not called for when people engage in routine commonsense behaviour in a cultural environment that recognises that behaviour as such.'[39]

On the contrary, members are constantly making the social world accountable and describable to one another.

Nevertheless, these perspectives have much in common:

(1) An emphasis on the 'resources' with which people work to devise and sustain social reality in definable situations (or in 'situated activities');

(2) An interest in the way in which action is made intelligible and warrantable through the giving of accounts.

Because an account is a verbalisation, those resources which are made available for analysis are cognitive resources, that is, how members construe (how they 'know') their situation. Or as Austin put it:

> 'The total speech act in the total speech situation is the <u>only actual</u> phenomenon which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating.'[40]

The sort of constructions which dominate speech are highlighted by Harre:

> 'The analysis of accounts ... yields three main kinds of interlocking material: images of the self and others; definitions of situations; and rules for the proper development of action'.[41]

Therefore, although we have said Symbolic Interactionists attend to a wider range of resources, it is the way people make use of these 'symbolically' which matters,

(a surgeon, for example, uses the physical setting of an operating theatre to present himself in a particular way). Similarly, in the work of Strauss and his colleagues,[42] it is people's construction of images of self and role, their definitions of situations, and their development and interpretation of rules, out of the available resources which the setting of a hospital provides, which constitutes the 'negotiated' order.

Ethnomethodologists and Symbolic Interactionists are interested in 'natural' accounts - pieces of talk (and behaviour) in their natural setting. These accounts, however, are products of an interview situation. Unless all we are interested in is the management and sustaining of the interview itself as a specific social situation (which we are not), we have a problem. The constructions a person as interviewee employs may be very remote from those he employs as an immediate resource in other settings:

> 'interviews and questionnaires usually are removed from the actual conditions of social interaction in which conversations occur, and therefore (are) in doubtful correspondence with the actual activities to which the interview and questionnaire refer'.[43]

Just taking this as a problem of 'translation', the argument is that the interviewee is likely to be 're-constructing' his thoughts and formulating things differently, when remote from the scene of action.

Garfinkel claims that situations are "awesomely indexical",[44] the implication being that speech and behaviour cannot be understood once the peculiar properties of the setting are left behind. However, just on the self-evident grounds that social life is relatively continuous and stable, it must be obvious that language and behaviour persist from one situation to another. Although there are appropriate repetoires for different situations, these are not infinite, nor are people so flexible that they can merely discard the resources ordinarily available to them. It is a fair likelihood they continue to employ the same range of verbal and behavioural resources in novel settings, even where these are not entirely appropriate (or 'competent'). Anyway, most people most of the time operate in familiar settings. Although there is still sufficient complexity to prevent us predicting behaviour reliably, nevertheless, the same cognitive resources are likely to be on display from one situation to another (similar) one.

A consultant, however, is constantly engaged in devising performances with clients with whom he may have only a fleeting involvement. He normally deals in novel settings. He is the exemplar of Douglas'[45] contention that not all situations are routinized and therefore not all accountings are "awesomely indexical", that what is of interest, therefore, is how people organise themselves in new settings. We can expect that as a consultant learns

to cope with different settings he develops a more settled set of behavioural repetoires and habits of construing. The interview as staged, itself is a setting with which the consultant is familiar and in which he is accustomed to perform (even though normally the purpose will be different, with himself in charge). We may, therefore, expect him to use and to make reference to those same habits of construction which are intrinsic to his normal way of coping with novel settings, and by which he accounts for his behaviour, in those settings, to himself.

In consultancy, we are looking at people who do things to and for other people. In their professional lives, they have a specifically instrumental role, to serve clients (even if in carrying this out they may not behave instrumentally). We suppose they possess, like other professionals, theories for this purpose - not so much formal behavioural science theories (which they may, of course, have), but theories of professional practice about how they should operate. That is to say, their behaviour in their work is not likely to be as taken-for-granted as behaviour in the 'every day world; that it is not available to the mind of the consultant and therefore capable of being related in the setting of an interview.

The last thing we want to do, though, is to exaggerate the extent to which consultants' theories can be isolated from an everyday setting. This would go against the strategy of the whole thesis, and we have consultants'

own words for it that consultants' theories, are not intrinsically more rational or scientific than the next man's[45]

> "I don't see O.D. as a scientific discipline .. It's a funny set of things, much of it contained in the phrase 'yourself as an agent of change'."
>
> (an internal consultant)

We go so far only to claim that consultants have professional theories, so that their practice and related theories (in settings which for others at least are everyday ones) are not totally "indexical" to those everyday settings. Their theories of professional practice may be personal theories, but they are nevertheless theories about professional behaviour.

This is also to say, that ethnomethodologists typically neglect work, and where they treat work situations in terms of 'everyday life', they overlook that anything material is meant to get done. Symbolic Interactionists at least see people as both reflexive and instrumental.

> 'The ethogenic point of view in the social sciences conceives of human beings not just as passive responders to the contingencies of their social world, but as agents deploying in their social lives a theory about people and their situation, and a related social technology.'[47]

People 'construct' as well as 'construe'. When people 'construct' their social situations they attempt to achieve control over them. Consultants seek to survive and manage their own situations as much as the next man. Their practices and theories represent ways they do so. And, professionally, consultants are engaged to give other people better control over _their_ situations.[48]

As such, their theories and practices represent an assessment by the consultant, of how mundane, organisational situations are constructed, and may be changed. Their accounts are at the same time 'expert' accounts about other people and their situations.

An illustration of this was when a consultant proceeded from telling how in his own early working life, "it had never occurred to me you could change a job if unhappy with it", and how his career had been a series of chance developments, to representing, then, organisational change as something unpredictable rather than plannable and controllable:

> 'change is fortuitous .. accidental ... a series of accidents and one rather bad piece of work .. it's terribly unpredictable .. good stuff may not lead to anything, bad stuff may lead to quite important reforms'
>
> (an academic consultant)

Similar instances show that 'theories', far from being derived purely from formal 'expert' sources, owe much to personal conviction which comes from experience. Such a consultant approaches professional situations, as an 'expert', mindful of his own experiences (It cannot, however, by itself, tell us what strategies and practices he employs in his work - he may either work with, or try to reduce, this element of impredictability.) But it illustrates the carry-over from one situation to another of habits of construing situations and a personal sense of identity and power of influence. The virtue of the

interview, despite being removed from the "actual conditions of social interaction"[49], is that personal biography recounted in the interview, provides background and insight into other parts of the account which deal with the areas of social interaction (viz. professional situations) in which we are primarily interested.

5.3. Problems in analysis of making inferences

If analysis of accounts is to rise above the level of simply repeating what people have said, it must involve organisation of material, either in terms of pre-existing propositions, concepts or categories, or by deriving these in the process of making connections within the material. The inferences upon which these depend involve some form of generalisation, with the intervention of the analyst. The problem with analysing accounts of an ethogenic nature is with the analyst putting his "second-order constructs" on the "first-order constructs" of his subjects[50]. Therefore, whilst

> 'Doing description is the fundamental act of data collection in a qualitative study'[51]

it is not enough, nor can description be description pure and simple.

Thus, although account analysis "starts always with the particular and local"[52], as in the language members use

it leads to sociologically significant findings only when features are revealed which are common across situations or between persons in situations.[53] The problem, as Giddens observes, is that

> ''Post-Wittgensteinian philosophy' (and sociological methods derived from it) plants us firmly in society, emphasizing both the multifold character of language, and the way it is embedded in social practices. However it also leaves us there.' [54]

Marrying phenomenological and structural levels of analysis is a perennial problem in social analysis. In the structural tradition the danger lies in reification, in which the individual becomes a cipher. As Giddens says of Levi-Strauss' method

> 'The subject is recovered in the analysis only as a set of structural transformations, not as an historically-located actor'.[55]

On the other hand, the problem of inter-pretive sociology lies in introducing subjective assessments at the moment the analysis is lifted out of an individual frame. The solution lies in the sort of assumption adopted in ethnomethodological analysis:

> 'The practices through which a feature is displayed and detected, however, are assumed to display invariant properties across settings whose substantive features they make observable. It is to the discovery of these practices and their invariant properties that inquiry is addressed'.[56]

We are looking for what, in the consultant's eyes, gives management of situations, and work on the belief that

accounts are full of such evidence:

> 'The analysis of the accounts of individuals reveals the cognitive groundings of their individual social competence, and from these a hypothetical grounding for an ideal competence in that milieu can be abstracted ... The capacity for achievement, in the ethnomethodologist's sense, is rooted in the individual's cognitive resources, insofar as these are representations of the local ethnography.'[57]

These "cognitive resources" have already been defined as "images of the self and others; definitions of situations"; and rules for the proper development of action"[58] The concept of 'role' embraces all these.

It is thus <u>the</u> organising feature adopted for explicating the practices and theories of consultants.

This is not because consultants can be assigned, <u>a priori</u> to groups distinguished by position (internal, external commercial, academic), - although it was a stated intention to take account of role differences, and consultants were selected to cover these three groups. It is because, when it came to the point of analysis, and after a lengthy period of immersion looking for common threads and themes, it was observed that the consultants themselves adopted as a major point of reference the habit of characterising themselves in terms of role-identity.

Whilst it would be inappropriate to have recourse to an explanatory device such as role that the analyst erected,

'the members' work of constructing such typologies would be eligible for treatment as a phenomenon'.[59]

'Role' is thus a routine typification by which actors make their behaviour "intelligible and warrantable".

Insofar as role typifications represent a boiling down of experience into a few shorthand phrases, the task of the analyst is then to explicate more fully the meaning in these limited expressions (just as the subjects themselves do in the elaborations of meaning and contextual detail they put into their accounts), by piecing these togther from the actors' accounts. The analyst joins with the actor to 'repair' the "indexicality" of talk.[60]

This tendency of consultants to formulate self-definitions in terms of roles conforms to the predictions of symbolic interactionist theory:

'actors behave <u>as if</u> there were roles' [61]

It is not a peripheral activity, whereby actors merely orient themselves to externally imposed roles:

'this tendency to shape the phenomenal world into roles is the key to role-taking as a core process in interaction'[62]

Additionally, the ethnomethodological view that social structure is generated through speech leads us to expect to find talk about roles as an important resource for assigning meaning:

'Roles are to be found embedded in the language actors normally use to talk about them(selves) [63]

Inspect talk and we will find roles. [64] Or conversely,

'Social roles can be considered linguistically as situated vocabularies or rhetorics' [65]

Role, indeed, has particular salience for consultants because the nature of their activity generates a particular consiousness of the need for relationship-formation. Using oneself, in role, is an important device available to the consultant, a point well-recognised in psychotherapy with its concept of 'transference'. Thus as one consultant among a number commented:

'being there in the role has an effect'

We shall note, in due course, how different consultants use the 'role-effect' (the distinctive properties of their relationship, in role, to others, in role) as a means of helping clients gain understanding and competence in the management of <u>their</u> roles. The fact, therefore, that consultants may be unusually conscious of their roles is due to their habit of sharpening up this consciousness as a professional skill and to their projecting, regularly and routinely, this consciousness at others in their work. It is all the more appropriate, therefore, to adopt 'role' as an organising category, since it is a 'resource' in both a 'phenomenological' sense (by which consultants organise their understanding of situations, like other people) and, on occasion, in an instrumental sense.

They construct social situations in accordance with the verbal devices (viz.role typifications) they use to describe them. At the same time, they use these typifications to make accountable and describable their sense of what is happening in the situations they work in. To the ethnomethodologist circumstances and descriptions are 'mutually constitutive'.[66] To the listener, they are saying what consultancy is - as they make it, as they see it - and thereby make it visible.

> The public displays of rules and definitions are themselves rules and definitions, not surface effluvia of private essences. Definitions are not owned, if by that we mean they are ineluctably private property, hidden away in the recesses of mind and self. They are performances, applied and validated, and thus public and observable.'[67]

Or as Garfinkel puts it:

> 'activities whereby members produce and manage settings ..... are identical with members' procedures for making these settings accountable'.[68]

Conventional treatments of role, in structural sociology, look on it as a focal point for a variety of influences which determine, mould, or affact the attitudes and behaviour of a person. Thus, Child:

> 'It is a manager's location within cultutal value systems, his education and professional training, and his position within the network of activities and relationships in an organisation which are sociologically of greater significance (than tasks alone), for these factors point to some of the major influences upon his orientation (his general set of attitudes and expectations) towards the organisation and his behaviour within it. Differences in managers' social and cultural locations appear to make for quite considerable differences in personal orientation and behaviour.'[69]

Elsewhere Child cites a host of extra-organisational factors [70] which impinge upon the individual.
Conformity, within the organisation is thus modified by values and demands derived from other sources. Formal sociology has then looked for correlations between attitudes and behaviour and these 'background' factors, concentrating on processes of adaptation and conformity, through the operation of organisational filters and sanctions.[71]

The notion of persons having a 'career', however, marks a shift of emphasis away from current location ('job') to 'prior orientations' and aspirations, developed, and developing, through a person's history. The site for organising identity and explaining behaviour becomes then the 'self' rather than formal role. In shifting focus, thus, it becomes permissible to note evidence of such factors as background and recruitment into consulting, training and development therein, organisational setting and locations (particularly where there is evidence of pressures restricting the legitimacy of what a consultant does), type of work engaged in and means of obtaining it, etc. - insofar as the subjects themselves relate these as to suggest such factors exercise some organising power over the way they shape their phenomenological worlds. Especially significant would be where such references are accompanied by indications of personal aims satisfied, or unsatisfied, in organisational contexts, and of efforts to reshape their accepted roles the better to realize these.

Though the methodology of formal sociology is alien to that employed here, role-typing may nevertheless provide a point of reference for explicating a similar range of background factors.

Role typifications are the means by which consultants indicate what manner of behaviour is 'competent' within the particular circumstances they operate in - i.e. how best to get by:

> 'Distinct situations call for distinct styles of performance, and hence present the self under distinct personas'[72]

Competence may be elaborated by consultants in terms of the features outlined above. However, this view of 'competence' is not to be confined to achieved roles. It may be expressed either through a role realized and customarily sanctioned, or as a desired role aspired to - a true 'role in the mind'[73]. Thus, a consultant can define himself in terms of an activity he values, and specify competence in terms which are not confined to formal role performance.

Role-typing thus encompasses 'in order to' motives as well as 'because of' motives.[74] The symbolically-oriented actor has ideal end-results in view, as well as achieving actual concrete results in line with these on occasion (or requiring 'justification'). Through this tension between concepts and action, actors maintain that sense of personal origin in accounts and of career where roles are 'in process'.

Role typing as the lynch-pin of analysis thus serves, firstly, the goal of describing and characterising theories and practices and in such a way that preserves the 'wholeness' of consulting as a species of activity. And, secondly, it permits the development of generalisation.

Generalisation on the basis of 'typing' is the method developed by Weber to advance to a 'structural' level of analysis in interpretive sociology. However, Weber's method is not that adopted here. Whilst Weber's theory of action is the exemplar of 'methodological individualism',[75] it does not provide a viable methodology for investigation and, in fact, Weber's substantive work is based, not on 'real' action in which he, as analyst, followed through the action of persons observed by him, but on the analysis of abstracted types using largely historical materials.[76] The way role-types are derived from accounts here does not involve 'ideal typification' in the classical Weberian sense. These are not abstract, 'ideal' types, " a collection of traits that we expect could occur together"[77] but which "exist nowhere in reality" - a purely "mental construct"[78]. They are, rather, concrete 'actual' types, based on the actual appearances, and self-descriptions and attributions supplied by the actors themselves. Like 'ideal' types they provide empirical evidence for the existence of relationships. They therefore trace, in a way which Weber failed to, the process by which real people attach meaning to their world.[79]

Weber's ideal types of course do the work they are intended to, of formulating abstract "genetic" types[80], whilst what is sought here are "course of action types" which express functions and behaviour[81]. We begin from the "first-order constructs" of the actors themselves, and therefore what results is an "existential type", instead of a "constructed type" from the "second-order constructs" of the observer[82]. Our "actual types" are empirically inferred, rather than normatively constructed.

This rationale apart, the work of building the 'actual type' from the role typifications provided by consultants has still to be done. The analyst's intervention lies in the organising of material, both in the internal construction of types and in their differentiation.

The work of deriving meaning from accounts, using role-typing as the central organising principle, rests on the hermeneutic method. Put simply, this means developing themes, through close iterative inspection of the accounts produced, pulling bits together and checking these out for internal consistency in the single account and across the range of accounts - what Glaser and Strauss call the "constant comparative method".[83] This method is aided by periods of reflection between taking data, so that the interviews of consultants were in fact carried out in two spells, (July - October 1979, and February - April 1980) after four pilot interviews, to allow room for developing ideas in between and get the first sense of themes developing.

It is at this point that hermeneutic 'interpretation' runs the perennial risk of subjectivism.

> 'Our problem as social psychologists is to reveal a match between (a) our imputations of cognitive resources to an individual on the basis of what we, by reference to our accounting system, take to be the structure and meaning of his performances and (b) those resources as indicated in his account'.[84]

What preserves it from this is 'reflexivity'. First, the "reflexive monitoring of action"[85] which occurs in the interview and the production of the account in the first place: Subjects exercise some constraints upon the initial construction of meaning. Secondly, the 'text' of the interview should not itself be treated as a 'finished product' (or "fixed form" as Giddens terms it). The text of an account

> 'should be studied as the concrete medium and outcome of a process of production, reflexively monitored by its author or reader"[86]

That is, the process of 'authoring' (assigning meaning and interpreting) does not stop with the writer but depends too on the reader's response.[87] In this, we are all 'hermeneuts'[88].

> 'These meanings (attributed) are never 'contained' in the text as such, but are enmeshed in the flux of social life in the same way as its initial production was. Consideration of the 'autonomy' of the text, or the escape of its meaning from what its author originally meant, helps re-unite problems of textual interpretation with broader issues of social theory. For in the enactment of social practices more generally, the consequences of actions chronically escape their initiators' intentions in processes of objectification'[89]

This is small comfort, however, if all it means is there are bound to be distortions of meaning. Social science has generally tried to reduce the margin of distortion by various reliability tests - for example, inter-marker reliability measures. Thus, one could enlist the original interviewees to pass judgement on the analysis developed (although, for reasons of practicality and confidentiality, they could not have access to all texts, only the recording of their own interview). However, nor can this be conclusive. It still leaves us in the realm of debate over interpretation which is endemic to social science activity. Here, for example, the interests and priorities of consultants are likely to be different from my own, and we may look for different things in the accounts.

In conclusion, the mode of deriving role typifications sustains generalisation, in the following ways:-

(1) <u>it serves to identify common features.</u>

Hermeneutic understanding depends on viewing the parts in relation to the whole, and the whole in relation to the parts. The hermeneutic process requires that one work back and forth between the parts and the whole to gain a sense of the shape and significance of the whole. This is what is done in the case of individual accounts, and individual accounts in relation to the whole sample. Themes and common features only became evident from reading and re-reading the transcripts of conversations.

The process is more laborious, less communicable; the results less quantifiable, and less replicable by another; but it is working in the same direction as the statistical method of showing concomitance, although, on balance, it is more intent on displaying 'meaningful relations' rather than demonstrating 'causal adequacy'[90]

(2) The common features revealed are internal to the subjects' 'life-world', not externally imposed. Consultants characterise themselves in terms of valued behaviour. In this they display their reasons and intentions in acting.[91] It is plausible to suppose that common meanings they attach to regular forms of action (viz. consultancy) are not arbitrary, but have some enduring significance. As Giddens graphically puts it, reasons and intentions are "routinely .. instantiated[92] in social activity. Therefore, although such intentions may be consciously articulated only in reflexive activity, such as discourse (and then often only partially and imperfectly), they permeate the social activity in which they arise (along with other, unspecified, intentionsoccurring in the flux of action).

(3) When consultants generate metaphors to describe themselves, and sustain these with a variety of other material about themselves, we may believe they are telling us something that has some structural significance (i.e. continuous existence over time and situations). It may be true, as Harre argues, that -

> 'all the evidence we have, slender though it is, suggests that social forms and individual cognitions of these forms are highly unstable and in rapid flux'[93]

But this view depends on the temporal perspective and the observer's focus and knowledge of his subjects. Above all group representations of social forms and phenomena will tend to point the other way. Commonly sustained meanings go beyond definitions of situations and actions that are merely

> 'formulated on particular occasions by the participants in the interaction and (that are) subject to reformulation on subsequent occasions'[94]

(4) Such representations serve to define subjects as a collectivity, as , for example, members of an occupation or social class. At a superficial level, we 'know' as observers such categories as occupations exist, and we can define a group by their outward display of common features, their appeal to a sense of identity with one another, and from inspection of publicly available role definitions which members accept and model themselves on. But such structural representations say little about how social structure is actively sustained, are prone to observer definitions, and liable to be mislead by outward signs. On the other hand, when a number of consultants apply the same terms and similar characterisations to themselves, they generate a sense of structure. Because they are unlikely to interact with all other members, it suggests they share

common structural experiences - that is, they experience similar things in similar sorts of structure.

(5) Thus, terming oneself a 'resource' or saying one acts as a 'bridge' (common role typifications employed by consultants) is saying that there are appropriate ways of behaving in the circumstances in which one finds oneself. This implies a certain conception of social structure. When a number of consultants apply these terms to themselves it signifies systematic perceptions of social structure. It is in this kind of systematic structural representation that social order is said to consist. Thus, ethogenic analysis strives towards and can sustain systematic knowledge of social settings.

> 'The structure revealed by the analysis of accounts represents an ideal social competence for that society, that is, represents the local ethnography in ideal form. The central ethnogenic hypothesis is that this structure also represents the ideal cognitive resources of individuals competent in that society and, coupled with known deficits, the actual resources of real individuals. The structure of social action is matched by the templates of social action, that is, the cognitive resources upon which competence is based.' [95]

(6) Thus, through accounts one does indeed have some kind of window onto the milieux in which actors perform, even though the relationship has to be treated as problematic. It is from this kind of premiss that some sociologists seek to understand class and occupational structure. By attempting to identify prevalent 'images of society' among different groups, they hope to assess

the state of class - and occupational-consciousness, the likelihood of certain kinds of behaviour, and thereby the extent to which a class can be said to exist. In systematic representations of social order by consultants, involving their relationships with organisational others and their interpretations of general organisational relationships, we have a similar example of social structuration - and a similar set of methodological and theoretical problems.

(7) Finally, when the group producing consistent representations of social structure is a group, like consultants, that is <u>in a position to propagate and sustain definitions</u> of relations and behaviours, its representations and the practices which accompany these invite scrutiny as promoting ideological structures, whether or not they do so successfully.

References and Notes to CHAPTER 5

1. Compare the discussion on 'Respondent Motivation' in C.F.Cannell and R.L.Kahn, The Collection of Data by Interviewing, pp.334-340, in L.Festinger and D. Katz (eds.), 'Research Methods in the behavioural sciences' New York, Dryden Press, 1953.
   Indicative of these inclinations, one or two of those interviewed had set up co-consulting relationships with others outside their organisations to 'talk-out' the frustrations and pressures of the job. Most others incorporated activities of this kind routinely into their relationships with colleagues.

2. Following J.Madge, The Tools of Social Science,London, Longmans, 1953, p.144, the interview is defined as a "purposive conversation".

3. See, for example, E.H.Schein, Process Consultation, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1969,Ch.9.

4. R.K.Merton and P.L.Kendall, The Focused Interview, American Journal of Sociology, 51,1946, pp.541-57.

5. C.F.Cannell and R.L.Kahn, op.cit., p.348.

6. J. Madge, op.cit., p.163.

7. Compare A. Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method', London, Hutchinson, 1976, p.19-20.
   "Understanding what one does is only made possible by understanding (i.e. being able to describe) what others do and vice versa."

8. Ibid., p.39.

9. M.B.Scott and S.M.Lyman, Accounts, American Sociological Review, 33. 1968, pp.46-62.

10. See D.L.Phillips, Abandonning Method, San Francisco, Jossey Bass, 1974, especially Ch.5.

11. So too does the tendency, likely in interviews of this kind, but even more so in the presence of a tape-recorder, for subjects to 'perform' and exaggerate, have to be guarded against.

12. D.L.Phillips, op.cit.

13. L.Hudson, The Cult of the Fact, London, Cape, 1972, p.162.

14. Ibid., p.163.

15. Most fully stated in C. Argyris, Intervention Theory and Method, Addison-Wesley, 1970.

16. A research seminar involving feedback from the original participants is being planned.

17. It would have been possible, and some would say a necessary complement to semi-structured interviews, to use brief questionnaires or interview schedules to methodically collect data on what Tichy called "background characteristics" (consultants' training, age, sex, income, affiliation to professional societies and other associations, etc.) and "concurrent characteristics" (organisational context, relationships to clients, position in organisation, etc.) However, (1) these details can be elicited in the course of an interview anyway, (2) a 'structured conversational' type of interview permits one to attach weight ('significance') to these tactors in the individual case, and to pick out the influences which are salient on the consultant's thinking and behaviour (because he says so), and (3) to employ both methodologies together runs the risk of diminishing the 'conversation' as a way of getting rapport and confidence, and undermines the status of the relationship as a "non-exploitative researcher-subject relationship".

18. P.W.Reason, Notes on Holistic Research Processes and Social System Change, ODMAG, Organisation Development Network of Great Britain, 1979.

19. J.Rowan, Research as Interventions, in N. Armistead, Reconstructing Social Psychology, Penguin, 1974.

20. L.Hudson, op.cit., p.163.

21. A.W.Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, London, Heinemann, 1978, p.496.

22. M. Benney and E.C.Hughes, Of Sociology and the Interview, p.237, in M. Bulmer (ed.), Sociological Research Methods: An Introduction, London, Macmillan 1977, comment on the relevance of socialisation: "Probably the most intensive presocialisation of respondents runs in roughly the social strata from which interviewers themselves are drawn - the middle, urban, higher-educated groups"
Likewise, Deutscher (drawing on research by Bertstein) comments on the relationship between social class and verbal fluency and role-taking ability (I.Deutscher, Asking Questions (and Listening to Answers): A Review of some Sociological Precedents and Problems, pp.256-7, in M.Bulmer (ed), ibid. In the case of consultants here, verbal skills and role-taking ability (especially the ability to project the role of another in speech) were very evident, and there was little need (as there might be, according to Deutscher, in the case of lower-class respondents) to adjust the style and range of language used and to rely more on non-verbal indicators for guaging responses.

23. A pitfall described at length by I. Deutscher, What we say / what we do: sentiments and acts, Glenview, Illinois, Scott Foresman, 1973.

24. Z. Bauman, Hermeneutics and Social Science: Approaches to 'understanding', London, Hutchinson, 1978,p.216.

25. D.E.Zimmerman and M.Pollner, The Everyday World as a Phenomenon, p.98, in J.D.Douglas (ed), Understanding Everyday Life: Towards the reconstruction of sociological knowledge, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.

26. M. Bulmer, op.cit., p.31.

27. Equally, though, those few who responded like this were probably behaving to type, insofar as they used graphic representations as a training device - a case of the 'flip-chart' handler'.

28. Weber somewhere comments on the merits of getting "unprompted accounts".

29. D.E.Zimmerman and M.Pollner, op.cit., p.96

30. R. Harre, The Ethogenic Approach, Advances in Experimental Social Psychology,10,1977, pp.283-314

31. I.Deutscher, 1973, op.cit. Similarly, this issue bedevils efforts to use a person's orientation to work' as a predictor of his behaviour (see the criticism of Goldthorpe et al's The Affluent Worker, by W.W.Daniel, Understanding employee behaviour in its context, in J. Child (ed.), Man and Organisation, London, Allen and Unwin, 1973); and bedevils also the attempt to use a person's 'image of society' as a predictor of behaviour in political and industrial settings (criticism of a belief in such a relationship can be found in a number of essays in J. Child, ibid., for example R.K. Bronw, Sources of Objectives in Work and Employment, and J.E.T.Eldridge, Industrial Conflict: Some Problems of Theory and Method)

32. H.Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1967, p.32.

33. See J.L.Austin, Philosophical Papers, Oxford Univ. Press, 1970.

34. E.Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, New York, Doubleday Anchor, 1959.

35. For this evocative way of referring to the world in which 'actors' move, which is on many occasions an 'institutionalised' world, see P.L.Berger and T.Luckman, The Social Construction of Reality, Allan Lane, The Penguin Press, 1967, p.77 ff.

36. See, for example, E.Goffman, Interaction Ritual, Allan Lane, The Penguin Press, 1972.

37. M.B.Scott and S.M.Lyman, op.cit.

38. See, for example, H.Garfinkel, op.cit.

39. M.B.Scott and S.M.Lyman, op.cit.

40. J.L.Austin, How to do Things with Words, Oxford Univ. Press, 1971, p.147.

41. R.Harre, The Constructive Role of Models, p.40, in L. Collins (ed), The Use of Models in the Spcial Sciences, Tavistock, 1976.

42. See A.L.Strauss, L. Schatzman, D.Ehrlich, R.Bucher, and M. Sabshin, The hospital and its negotiated order, in G. Salaman and K. Thompson, (eds.) People and Organisations, London, Longman, 1973.

43. A.V.Cicourel, Kinship, Marriage and Divorce in Comparative Family Law, Law Society Review,1,pp.103-29, 1967.

44. H.Garfinkel, op.cit.,p.10.

45. See J.Douglas, op.cit., pp.39-41

46. Compare H.Garfinkel, op.cit., Ch.8, 'The rational properties of scientific and common sense activities'.

47. R.Harre, op.cit., 1976, p.45

48. Giddens comments on this incompleteness in the ethnomethodological programme:

> "identifying rationality with 'accountability' cuts off the description of acts and communications from any analysis of purposive or motivated conduct, the strivings of actors to realize definite interests. This explains, I think, the peculiarly disembodies and empty character of the reports of interactions or conversations that appear in the writings of Garfinkel and others influenced by him", A.Giddens, op.cit, p.40.

49. A.V.Cicourel, op.cit.

50. See, A. Schutz, Concept and theory formation in the social sciences, p.497, in K. Thompson and J.Tunstall, Sociological Perspectives, Penguin, 1971.

51. J.Van Maanen, Reclaiming Qualitative Methods for Organisational Research, A Preface, Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol.24, December 1979, pp.520-526.

52. R.Harre, op.cit. 1977, p.303.

53. See, for example, R.P.Gephart, Status Degradation and Organisational Succession: An Emthnomethodological Approach, Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol.23, Dec. 1978, pp.553-581. Also Douglas "the analysts of

everyday life must become increasingly concerned with the ways in which human beings construct order across their social situations .. To do less would be to doom the effort to practical irrelevance" (J.D.Douglas, op.cit., p.12)

54. A. Giddens, op.cit.,p.17.

55. A. Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory,London, Macmillan, 1979, p.29.

56. D.E.Zimmerman and M. Pollner, op.cit., p.95.

57. R.Harre, op.cit., 1977, p.303.

58. R. Harre,op.cit., 1976, p.40.

59. D.E.Zimmerman and M. Pollner, op.cit., 1971, p.97.

60. Despite Garfinkel's assertion that the task of ethnomethodology is not to 'repair' indexical expressions, this appears to be what ethnomethodologists are doing all the time insofar as they are the interpreters of the 'background expectancies' through which they unfold the 'indexicality' of others' talk.

61. H.H.Turner, Role-Taking: Process versus Conformity, p.22, in A.M.Rose (ed.), Human Behaviour and Social Processes: An Interactionist Approach, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.

62. Ibid, p.22.

63. P.K.Manning, Talking and Becoming: A view of Organisational Socialisation, p.250, in J.D.Douglas, (ed.), op.cit.

64. Arguably, there is the problem here of what Giddens calls the 'double hermeneutic' - that lay persons borrow certain linguistic categories from the social sciences, and therefore the origin of the linguistic ascription cannot be assigned naively to the actor's own phenomenology. This is all the more likely with consultants who are, to some degree, professionals in behavioural and social science. However, it is the role typifications, not the fact that they believe role typifications are important, which is the immediate object of inspection. These are formulated in ordinary language terms.

65. Ibid, p.247

66. See, for example, H.Garfinkel, op.cit.,p.34.

67. P.McHugh, Defining the Situation: The Organisation of Meaning in Social Interaction, Bobbs-Merrill,1968.p.134.

68. H. Garfinkel, op.cit., p.1.
Thus echoing Wittgenstein's proposition that "language is its use" and that meaning therefore resides in the context of use (practical and linguistic). (See J.D. Douglas, op.cit., pp.31-38)

69. J.Child, Management, p.116, in S.R.Parker, R.K.Brown, J. Child, and M.A.Smith, The Sociology of Industry 3rd. ed), London, George Allen & Unwin, 1977.

70. See J. Child, The Business Enterprise in Modern Industrial Society, London, Collier-MacMillan, 1969, and also B.A.Turner, Exploring the Industrial Sub-Culture, London, Macmillan, 1971, p.2.

71. See, for example, A. Etziom, Managers, Staff Experts, and Authority, p.287, in R. Dubin, Human Relations in Administration (3rd ed.),New Jersey, Prentice-Hall,1968 for discussion of (1) organisational filtering by selection processes, and (2) operating controls which sanction role-compliant behaviour. Also, T.Ellis and J. Child, Placing Stereotypes of the Manager into Perspective, Journal of Management Studies, Vol.1o No.3, 1973.

72. R. Harre, op.cit., 1977, p.305.

73. For this notion, see G.Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind, St. Albans, Herts, Paladin, 1973.

74. See A. Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, Heinemann, 1972 and the discussion of 'in order to' and 'because of' motives in L. Spencer and A. Dale, Integration and Regulation in Organisations: A Contectual Approach, Sociological Review, Vol.27,No.4, 1979, pp.679-701.

75. See I.C.Jarvie, Concepts and Society, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

76. See E.C.Cuff and G.C.F.Payne (eds), Perspectives in Sociology, London, George Allen & Unwin,1979, p.168 for this criticism.

77. H. Fallding, Explanatory Theory, Analytical Theory and the Ideal Type, p.505, in K.Thompson and J.Tunstall, op.cit.

78. M. Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, Free Press, 1949, pp.89-90.

79. For this criticism of Weber see A. Schutz, op.cit.,1972.

80. M.Weber, op.cit.,p.89.

81. For Schutz definitions of 'types' see the discussion in R.Jehenson, A Phenomenological Approach to the Study of Formal Organisation, G.Psathas (ed.), Phenomenological Sociology, Wiley Interscience,1973,pp.220-223.

82. This whole area is an invitation to terminological proliferation, but the essential distinction lies simply between 'types' introduced by the researcher as observer and those used by the actors themselves in the course of ordinary processes of 'typification' which Schutz argued are fundamental to the individual's knowing and action in the world:
"The individual's commonsense knowledge of the world is a system of constructs of its typicality". (A.Schutz, Collected Papers, Vol.1: The Problem of Social Reality edited by M.Natanson and M. Nijhoff, The Hague, 1971.

83. See B.G.Glaser and A.L.Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory: strategies for qualitative research, Chicago, Aldine, 1967, Ch.5.

84. R.Harre, op.cit., 1977, p.303.

85. A. Giddens, op.cit., 1979, p.43.

86. Ibid, p.43.

87. See B.Sandywell et al, Problems of Reflexivity and Dialetics in Sociological Inquiry, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

88. L.Hudson, op.cit.

89. A. Giddens, op.cit.,1979, p.44.

90. The dual aims of social science, as Weber saw it: "a science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course, and effects" (M.Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, Free Press, 1964, p.88.

91. L. Spencer and A. Dale, op.cit., comment on the virtue of a comparative review of cases of O.D. interventions in bringing 'in-order-to' motives to the fore, and causing 'because of' motives to fade from prominence. Social science's tendency to focus on the latter, they argue, produces an unreliable guide to the actions of subjects, since subjects tend to proffer 'justifications' (and'excuses') rather than accurate descriptions of intent. Comparison between consultants' accounts likewise serves to strike a better balance between types of motive, and particularly to grasp intentions, which are the more enduring.

92. A. Giddens, op.cit., 1979, p.40.

93. R. Harre, op.cit., 1977. p.304.

94. T.P.Wilson, Normative and Interpretive Paradigms in Sociology, in J.D.Douglas, op.cit.

95. R.Harre, op.cit.,1972, p.306.

96. Through the 'images of society' that people hold, sociologists have attempted to relate subjective experience and meaning to objective social structure - to show, as Lockwood put it, the "reciprocity" between the two (see D.Lockwood, Sources of variation in working class images of society, Sociological Review, 1966, pp.249-67). The concepts of 'image', 'topoi', 'theme' and 'sterotypes' derived from Popitz and Bahradt, and Willener, are not dissimilar from the "images of self and others", and "definitions of situations" which Harre (op.cit.,1976) suggests accounts yield and which this research on consultants explores. As Davis in his review of the 'class images' approach puts it, 'image' performs the important role for the worker of helping him.

> "in actively making sense of (his) experience of work, institutions and social relations"

(H.H.Davis,Beyond Class Images, London,Crook Helm, 1979, p.10)

The theoretical trap to guard against is to avoid thinking of such images as "consistent and complete representations of an existing social order" (ibid,p.11) - as simply mirroring social order. Davis argues instead, that

> "An image of society is for the most part a projection of the process of social constructing rather than a depiction of social structure" (ibid. p.29)

Consequently, the appropriate methodology is to explore people's social constructions through 'accounts' rather than through questionnaires, which have tended to encourage the view that images provide a mirror on and an unpronlematic relationship to action. Thus, the method of looking for 'topoi' or 'images',

> "rests on the assumption that, for the majority of people, the most accessible source of information about society is the collectively owned stock of ideas, themes, and cliches which is specific to their social group, which for these purposes can be likened to a 'speech community' " (ibid.,p.17)

(For the theoretical background to this area of sociology and methodological problems of research into class imagery, see the editorial contributions in M. Bulmer (ed.), Working Class Images of Society, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

CHAPTER 6

THE FRAMEWORK FOR PRESENTING CONSULTANTS' ACCOUNTS

> 'It is a manager's location within cultural value systems, his education and professional training, and his position within the network of activities and relationships in an organisation which are sociologically of greater significance, for these factors point to some of the major influences upon his orientation (his general set of attitudes and expectations) towards the organisation and his behaviour within it. Differences in managers' social and cultural locations appear to make for quite considerable differences in personal orientation and behaviour.'[1]

> 'it's the basis of payment that really determines your role.'
>
> (academic consultant)

In wishing to present consultants' theories and practices in such a way that preserves their complexity and the "integrity of the phenomena", we are faced with a problem of organisation. We have suggested, however that consultants' own typifications of their role offer a basis for doing so. This has been a common way, in fact, for commentators to organise descriptions. However, the typifications consultants employ are capable of having any amount of material loaded into them. What determines the meanings commentators discover in a 'role typification'?

McLean, for example, writes of internals' roles as "varying according to several circumstances" - the personality of the internal himself: whether or not there

is an external consultant working alongside; the organisation in which he is set; and the preferences and personal variations for defining the role of the interventionist.[2] Since his interest is in consultant roles in organisational change,[3] and given also an inclination to find explanations in terms of personality ("not unnaturally a good deal seems to depend on the personality of the internal himself"),[4] role is presented in largely behavioural terms.

An alternative view of role might involve deeper exploration of specific contingencies - for example, of the employment relationship which is so central to the issue of a consultant's power, objectivity, independence, and security, and therefore to the type of issues handled and outcomes the consultant can influence.

What the analyst finds is undoubtedly influenced by his framework of concerns. Nevertheless, an attachment to the method of gathering accounts by semi-structured interviews does argue an openness to the data and a certain naive faith in 'raw empiricism'. Therefore, it is claimed that the meanings and implications discerned here in consultants' role characterisations are the result of empirically inspecting their accounts, not a normative imposition.

This section describes the framework adopted in Chapters 7 - 9 for laying out consultants' role characterisations.

Consultants appear to make role-attributions of three types:-

First, there are those which concern the employment relationship. Clearly, the internal, commercial, and academic depend in differing degrees for theirlivelihood on a firm with which they have a consultancy relationship. Here, consultants are expressing something about the nature of that dependency - how far they are 'bought' by any one organisation. The external (commercial and academic) is expressing, too, something about the problem of 'getting in'. This kind of issue is implied by typifications like 'resource', 'retainer', and 'non-executive director'. This is a generally disregarded area but crucial insofar as it arguably precedes any other feature of work-role management. Thus, the nature and extent of the attachment to the client materially affects the work that can be done.

Second, and closely-related, are those typifications which have to do with the social relationship ensuing. Here the consultant is concerned with how he manages himself in role. In particular, these role images define the social distance between a consultant and a client, and as such reflect the social distance which begins in the employment relationship. Thus, favoured attributions are 'action-researcher', 'bridge' and 'mirror'. In using these images consultants describe the problems of how they go to work on an assignment, how they gather information,

what they are able to do with it, and so on. Clearly, the scope for doing these things is a major factor in personal style and inevitably preoccupy consultants.

Third, the consultant has personal needs, values, and goals, which cause him to structure relationships and lead the action in directions which he feels comfortable with. They will influence how a consultant reacts to the constraints and opportunities implied by the employment relationship and by the social relationship which that tends to structure. This includes what kinds of things the consultant likes to do, what kind of behaviour he likes to engage in, what kind of work he chooses to take on, what ends he seeks to realize through his work. (And he may, of course, be frustrated in these). In particular, personality will affect how he manages social distance in the consultancy role - that is, the sort of social relationship he seeks. For example, it dictates the desire to work "not for you or at you .. not to do things to you or for you .. but to work with you" (an internal consultant). Relevant attributions which reveal personal values, etc., are 'developer', 'engineer', 'advocate', 'counsellor'.

These three types of role-attribution offer a preliminary means for organising accounts, especially as we find that the kind of attributions internals, commercials, and academics make to themselves systematically differ. Thus internals make considerable use of the self-ascription 'resource', whilst commercial consultants make most use of

terms like 'mirror' and 'bridge'. That is to say, each is emphasizing a different aspect of himself in role - internals their employment relationship, commercials their social relationships to clients, whilst academics lay greatest stress on the area of personal values and goals, as if to emphasize the degree of personal choice they have (which includes not needing to do consultancy at all).

This says something about the conditions for operating effectively in these roles, the scope for acting and the things to which the consultant needs to give attention. The sorts of theory and skills adopted and developed can therefore be seen as a response to the specific contingencies of their roles (formally conceived) and to the opportunities presented. Thus, theories of consultancy and change have a differential salience to internals, commercials, and academics and it is misleading therefore to represent (for example) a phase model of the consulting process, or the issue of whether O.D. is about developing systems or solving problems, as if these are equally significant to all classes of consultant, no matter how widely disseminated knowledge of these actually is. The aim is to describe each group in its own terms, and therefore to draw out, in the presentation of each, only those key ideas suggested by the dominant role-images each group applies to itself.

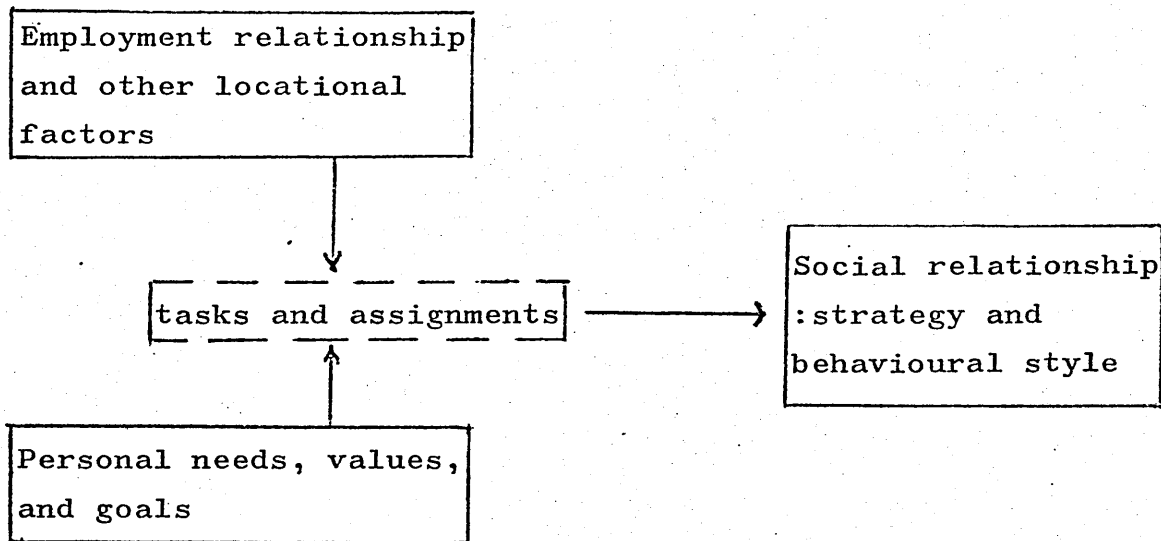
In consequence, Chapters 7 - 9 might appear a little diffuse, especially as there is no attempt to develop any

transcendent ideal-types or to discuss all groups in relation to the same set of ideas. This difficulty will be overcome however, if one remembers that each of these Chapters considers sequentially the typifications each group uses in relation to its employment situation, social relationships and personal values and goals.

In this way, the choices available to each group are progressively discriminated and characteristic patterns of working are established. Thus, beyond providing a framework for presenting accounts, the three types of role-attribution also reflect the contingencies determining the development of practice and theory. The employment relationship occasions certain aspects of the social relationship and thereby aspects of style and strategy, whilst equally style and strategy are a product of personal values, needs, and goals as consultants structure social relationships and settings in accordance with these. The employment relationship, on the one hand, with locational factors associated with that, such as an internal's departmental position, and personal motivations, on the other, exercise a combined influence over the social relationships through which work is carried out and on behaviour within these. These two factors in practice are mediated through the tasks and assignments granted by the employing organisation (or 'client') and the tasks sought by the consultant, so that these relationships can be expressed in the following diagram:

Figure 1.

Determinants of Consultant Strategy and Style.

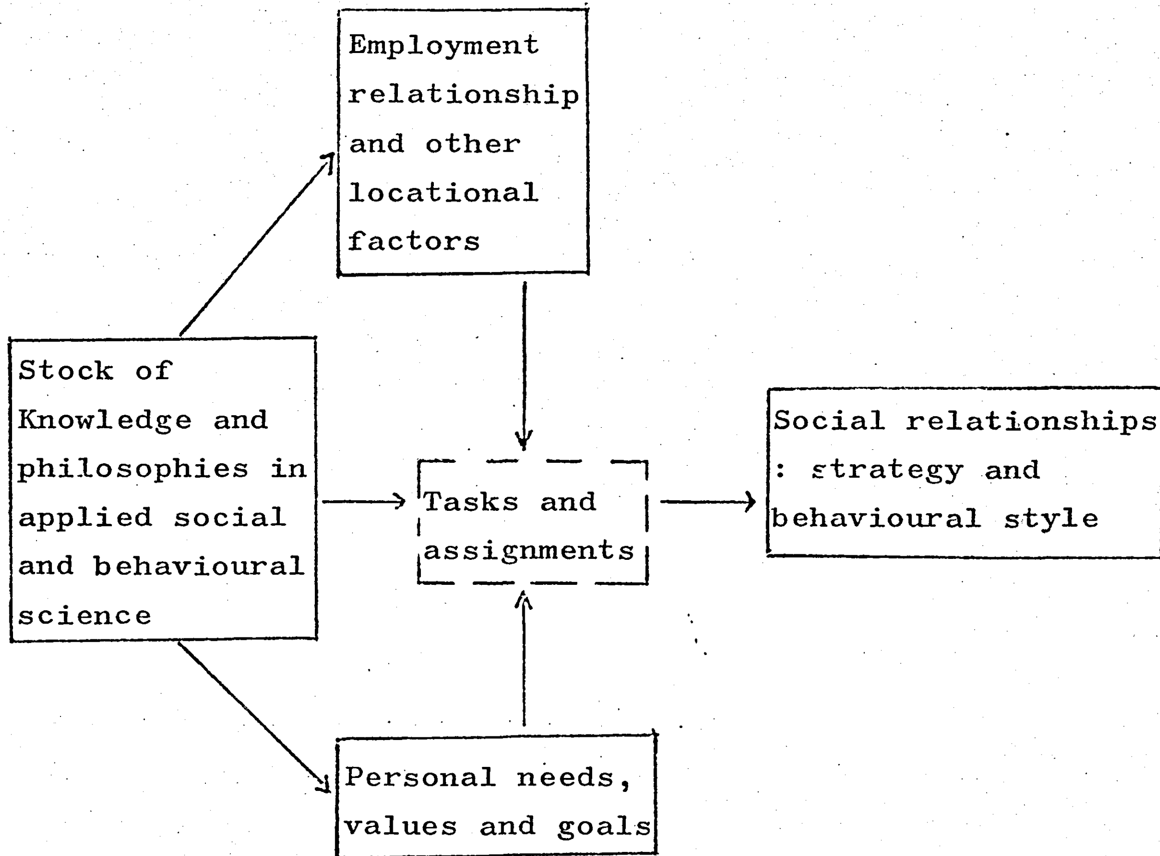


In effect, the elements in the model correspond to Harre's suggestion that accounts provide evidence of "images of self images of the situation, and rules for the development of action".[5]

At the same time, however, social and behavioural consultants are an occupational group drawing on formal bodies of knowledge and the philosophies of the social and behavioural sciences. These have to an extent an autonomous existence, and in construing their situations, interpreting tasks, projecting their goals, and developing strategy and style, consultants make use of this formal knowledge and incorporate relevant features into their personal theories. (Figure 2 refers)

Figure 2

The Impact of Formal Theories



Formal theories and philosophies, however, are subordinate to the construction of personal theory in the course of practice, and exposition of these in Chapters 7 - 9 reflects this. At a deeper level, however, common elements of a wider implicit theory can be discerned where received theory and philosophy merge with operating (or 'practice') theories. Whereas Chapters 7 - 9 are primarily concerned with the different ways practice is constructed, through the images made available, Chapter 10 goes on to explore

the wider implicit theories (or 'paradigms') which infuse consultants' conceptions and behaviour, and in the process relates these to features of the consultancy role common to internals, commercials, and academics.

References and Notes to CHAPTER 6

1. J.Child, p.116, in S.R.Parker, R.K.Brown, J.Child, and M.A.Smith, The Sociology of Industry, (3rd ed.), London, George Allen & Unwin, 1977.

2. A.J.McLean, D.B.P.Sims, I.L.Mangham, D. Tuffield, Organisation Development in Transition: Evidence of an Evolving Profession, John Wiley, 1982, pp.32-3.

3. Ibid, p.21

4. Ibid, p.32

5. R.Harre, The Constructive Use of Models, p.40 in L. Collins (ed.), The Use of Models in the Social Sciences, Tavistock, 1976

CHAPTER 7

INTERNAL CONSULTANTS

'I'm not around changing anything. I'm around just trying to help these human beings get on with some sort of job they feel is important to them .. that helps pay me a certain wage .. That's it in a nutshell .. I'm a resource, you see'.

(an internal)

'Some would say that by definition it's not possible to be a change agent inside a company .. trying to disconfirm highly rational-empirical values that an organisation's established on .. trying to replace these by humanistic values .. No one's ever convinced me it's possible'.

(an academic)

7.1. Introduction

An academic consultant observed that most internals were ex-line managers who had been given a bit of behavioural science training and translated into internal O.D. consultancy roles. This tallies with the evidence in our sample of 18 internals interviewed.[1] Two points are being made. The first is that most internals are ex-line managers who retain an affinity with the problems of line managers or with management generally. Secondly, that most internals came into the behavioural science consultancy role without extensive formal training in

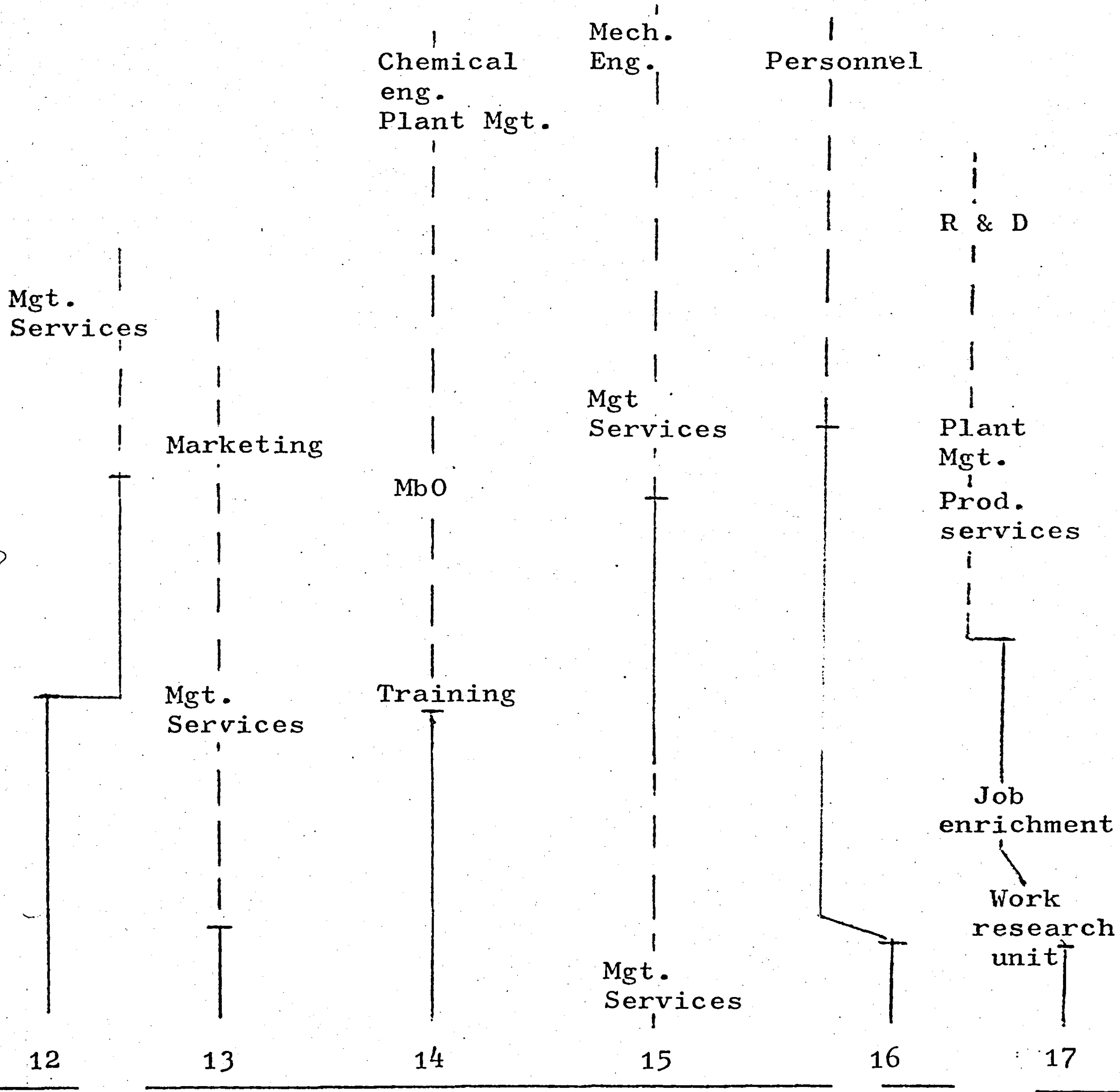


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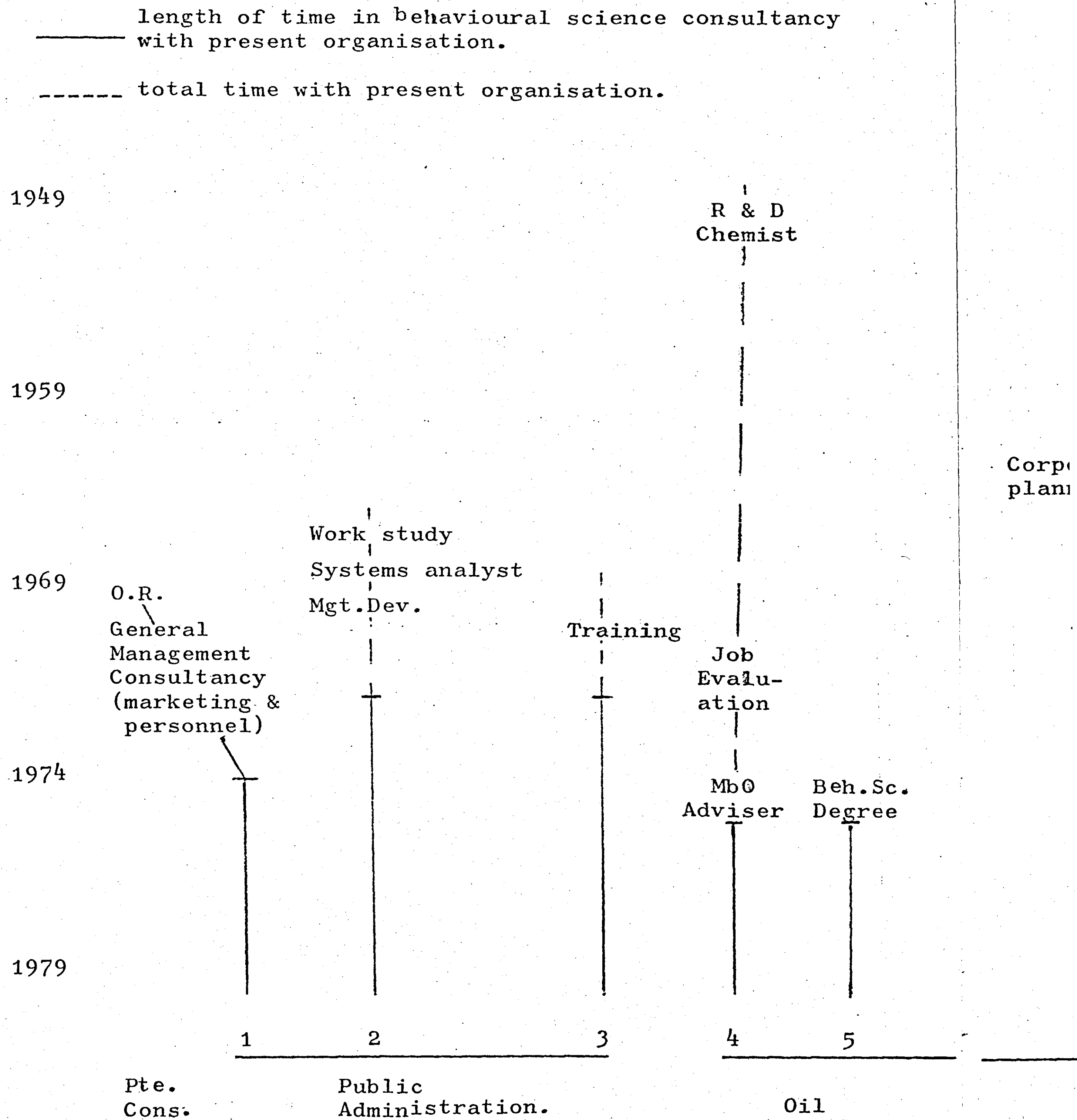
Figure 3

Career Paths of Internal Consultants



social or behavioural science. Relevant indicators of an affinity with line managers would be (1) what internal consultants were doing before they got into this line of work, (2) whether the change of role occurred without changing organisations, (3) whether they still remain in the organisation which first ushered them into their new role. Broadly, the question is whether they remain company men ('locals' whose reference group is other managers), or have become 'behavioural science consultants' ('cosmopolitans' whose reference group is other behavioural science consultants).

Figure 1 profiles the career paths of the internals interviewed, whilst Tables 1 and 2 summarize the information from this in relation to the types of organisation in which they currently work and educational background.[2]

Type of Organisation (based on S.I.C.)	Number of Consultants	Number of Companies
Public Administration	3	2
Oil	4	3
Engineering & Construction	1	1
Glass	1	1
Other manufacturing (gases)	3	1
Chemicals	3	1
Electrical engineering	1	1
Food,drink and tobacco	2	2
TOTAL	18	12

Table 1: Internal Consultants by Type of Organisation.

One unexpected feature to emerge about the 'educational' background of internal consultants was the prevalence of an involvement in MbO, either as advisers or as members of an organisation that went through an MbO programme. This might be purely circumstantial were it not that we have a number of internals explicitly extolling the relevance of a background in MbO as a way of facilitating the transition from line manager to O.D. consultant. And, indeed, MbO was one of the first human resource-oriented packages to be widely adopted by British organisations. A background involving MbO is noted alongside educational background in Table 2. The significance of the MbO link is explored later.

The figures appear to support the assertion and the implications that internal consultants are likely to be oriented towards the line manager's problems and to be more company-oriented, than towards the profession of behavioural scientist. Whether the orientation of those 6 out of 18 internals who had taken full-time courses in behavioural science, at Batchelors or Masters level, materially differs will be considered in due course.

The truest measure of consultants' orientations is not, however, the bare statistics of length of service or background, but what they say about themselves.

	Consultant	Behavioural Science degree	Training through Management by objectives	Other
Public Adminstration	1	X		
	2	X	X	
	3	X		
Oil	4		X	
	5	X		
	6		X	
	7		X	
Engineering & Construction	8	X		Relationship with external consultant
Glass	9			
Other manufacturing (gases)	10	X		
	11			
	12		X	'Eastbourne'
Chemicals	13			
	14		X	'Eastbourne'
	15			'Eastbourne'
Electrical engineering	16		X	'Eastbourne'
Food, drink & Tobacco	17		X	
	18			Stanlow productivity bargaining
TOTAL	18	6	8	

Table 2 : Formal Training for the Role of Behavioural Science Consultant (excluding miscellaneous short courses).

7.2. Internals as 'Resources'

The notion that the people employed in an organisation are 'human resources', to be used like money and materials has gained wide currency in recent years (so that Personnel Management is often now referred to as 'Human Resource Management')[3]. In his study of consultants, McLean takes over this notion and suggests that

> 'O.D.consultants are human resource managers who specialize in the management of change'.[4]

Since internal consultants are themselves employees, it is but a logical extension of the idea to see them, too, as 'resources' which are put to use by the employing organisation. And this, in fact, is how a number explicitly see themselves.

The internal is a special resource that is called upon, works alongside, is made available to, other more powerful individuals, or to teams of people who need help.

This dependent relationship is most clearly defined where the relationship is to a single powerful sponsor in the organisation:

> 'The Chairman saw himself as the man who was the key change agent on the Board, the Key change manager on the Board, backed up by some resources, internal and external'.

The kind of help given marks out such an internal as a subordinate:

'I help the Chairman clarify his ideas and what he wants to do. This might include getting some data from other people who'll be at the meeting presided over by the Chairman, on what their hopes and expectations are, and helping design the processes for the meeting.. He values that kind of thing and uses it like hell - a lot of planning and preparation and afterwards asking ourselves 'where did we go wrong.. What did we learn .. What can we action?' .. I say 'we' .. we may speak corporately, but he'll be doing it, not me .. During the meeting, I'm essentially a flip-chart handler.'

Such a role we might term 'resource-to-the-boss manager.'

But equally, where the relationship is to a team, in the classic O.D.mode of 'process consultant', the internal is essentially a resource providing a temporary service. As such, he is used and dispensed with eventually:

'Three weeks ago I was called down to observe and help .. That's the way it happens .. I'm busy doing training, or policy and planning, and next minute I'm sent somewhere else .. I'm a resource, you see'.

And in the same way the helper defines his role in a subordinate relationship to the major heirarchical power there:

'You're monitoring the behavioural flows, and really saying, 'have we had sufficient discussion on it? .. this is what I'm hearing'. But you're never usurping the guy who's up front .. his role.'

'Process Consulting' means 'to be there as a resource .. as an observer'.

The consultant's view of his role in each case may be regarded as rationalising the absence of heirarchical power:

> 'The consultant lives in the shadow .. that's his power .. At times, I swan around all the Vice-Presidents .. People look at me and think,'gee there he is again .. how does he get up there?' .. I explain to them, 'visibly, I'm around this power, but I have absolutely none'.
>
> (Interviewer (I): 'it's borrowed power .. if you've got it')
>
> 'Exactly'

These are two extreme manifestations of the internal as resource. In other instances the consultant may operate predominantly as a manager of other consultants, whom he nevertheless thinks of, and assigns as, resources, at his command, to assist those line managers who control the actual physical and technical resources of the organisation:

> 'Survival was the name of the game .. survival on the basis of tough, achieving managers - the ability to achieve, problem-solve, amass resources .. so building up units, groups, clubs of people who could cope with, understand that kind of thing .. looking for achieving

problem-solvers, then building things round them .. I inherited one North American consultant who was living with problems inside the company, and I built around him .. Much of what I did had managerial content - to defend provide a kind of organisational umbrella .. over guys who were helping managers out in the parishes ..
So, much of it was in resources provision .. I got educated by just having to manage those resources (for help-giving) in a totally different way'.

The internal lines up with the tasks of managers either as a resource himself, or by deploying other internals as resources.

In a fourth instance, he may even appear as an extra managerial resource in situations where, otherwise, he is the consultant:

'I would often feel like a very informal chairman .. because it was often useful for the boss man to come out of the role of chairman. In most of the kind of workshops I'm involved in, it doesn't feel like there's a heavy chairman.. But an outsider would see me as the bloke pushing it along .. Sometimes he wouldn't be able to twig who the boss is .. because the boss'd been enabled to listen and participate.'

Similarly:

'So for two days I ensured that what I had seen as the key issues were shared, owned, tabled, debated .. Around the middle of the week this changed - and I had told

them what the process was - that the roles would change, and I would wish to see the Divisional Manager take over and run the rest of the week with me as the process consultant.

A fifth manifestation of the notion of 'resource' is to shift the meaning from the person, to his skills as an instrument. Much in the same way that the consultant may lend his managerial skills to a situation, behavioural science techniques are lent out. Thus, skills may be reified as an organisational resource:

'O.D. can join anything and everything in an organisation that makes an organisation more effective and helps it achieve what it wants to achieve .. So if you need to put a computer in .. that's O.D. .. and where O.D. works is to get acceptance of that and its effective working.'

Or both the person and his skills may be used as commodities:

'People find me helpful .. I'm almost like a shopkeeper I've got goods on display .. people use me .. I'm achieving something and being used, in an area I see as an uncertain area .. to do with behaviour and decision-making'.

All those quoted so far (n = 7) had long careers as managers before becoming consultants, and might therefore be broadly termed 'managerial consultants'. Only two in the sample of 18 internals took a first degree in behavioural science (four others took post-experience Masters degrees). In each case they followed this with

further degrees (a Masters in Occupational Psychology, a PhD in human factor engineering) before taking full-time employment. Nevertheless, the trained behavioural scientist, as internal consultant, is still a 'resource', used in a way similar to the 'managerial resource consultant's':

> 'Because we get about more than most, we hear a lot of things .. So we are a good sensing device, not in the sense of reporting on people .. I've been used quite a lot in this way by my previous boss .. He'd ask, 'What do you feel would be the right way to present this subject?' .. on things like salary changes, Government things .. In my first job I was seen more as a behavioural science resource, particularly to the Personnel Department .. Here I'm much more a resource to line management'.

The 'behavioural science resource' in the traditional occupational psychology role, is the expert source of knowledge about such matters as personnel selection, testing, appraisal, training, job design. Although both internals with this background have moved perceptibly away from this into a broader-based role of organisational consultant, working on problem-solving with line management, they still have a recognised distinctive competence in behavioural science applied to personnel matters:

> 'I've also got a role, a Personnel role, where I'm responsible for all new Personnel thinking .. progressive thinking (though I don't do it myself .. I get a

consultant in .. I have responsibility for signing them up)'

To distinguish their special background and additional competence, we may call these two consultants 'behavioural science resources'. On one measure, therefore - orientation towards the company and its management, as against orientation towards behavioural science - the whole spectrum of internal consultants is herein reflected. It is not wide. The educational predilection to cosmopolitanism is expressed in the statement,

> 'We don't see ourselves as particularly committed to this company. It's much more that we believe in what we're doing .. We could be equally committed working in other places doing the same thing.'

Other internals from a line management background, it could be argued, have equally testified to cosmopolitanism by moving around. But the more relevant test is how far he expresses personal values rather than organisational values, by, for example, engaging in external consultancy assignments in his own time out of, perhaps, a commitment to other social goals. That is, the extent to which internals define themselves in terms of personal values and goals (the third component of meaning in 'role') or in terms of the employment relationship (the first component of meaning)[5] The analysis will conclude by looking at values expressed. But first we will review the internal's role management problems.

7.2.1 Hierarchy

These are well-known.[6] They derive in part from his position

within a visible organisational hierarchy:

(a) 'One of the difficulties an internal consultant can suffer from is if you find yourself reporting on areas in which you're not greatly experienced .. or even in areas where you're knowledgeable .. you can find because of your perceived hierarchical status as an individual, it's easy for General Managers and Trading Directors to put you down .. When a report is written by a man who originally worked at a relatively modest level in that department, he finds it easy to say 'that's old so-and-so .. what is he trying to tell me' .. Outside consultants don't have that kind of problem to anything like the same degree - they have no direct hierarchical relationship with individuals in the company .. no company record which can often be unfairly put against internal consultants'.

(b) 'I wrote that Production were not committed to customer service .. The Production Director got me in his office and chewed my balls off .. Fortunately, because I'd been up at the Works and been one of the Work's Manager's right-hand men, I said, 'I can speak from experience.. In all the reports and graphs these guys have, there's not one mention of customer service' .. He just wouldn't have it.'

The internals grade in the hierarchy is a recognised impediment. One senior consultant, when reviewing the various consultants working across I.C.I., mentally

checked off who was in the 'blue book' (middle management grades 11/12) and who were in senior management grades (above 14/15), and by implication how important could be considered the kind of work they would be doing.

How big a problem hierarchy is must inevitably depend on the kind of organisation it is. The way an organisation chooses to establish an internal consultancy role is indicative of this. For example, it is likely that an organisation which is strongly hierarchical, will at the same time favour clear departmentalism,[7] and therefore establish an internal consultancy 'unit' or create pressures for consultants to come together into a unit. A less hierarchical organisation will tolerate greater ambiguity around a consultant's role, and permit consultants to be 'free-floating' individuals. Paradoxically, therefore, the unit, whilst seemingly more established, is also the more controlled and threatened, since it is more visible and prone to clearer expectations. Calling something a 'behavioural science unit' or 'O.D. unit' or 'Staff Training College' prescribes certain sorts of activity, and marks them out as 'expert resources' for certain sorts of discrete services. Such units, therefore, need to devote a considerable part of their time to protecting their backs - what members of one unit referred to as 'the O.D. maintenance role, ensuring survival':

> 'This organisation is very hierarchical .. We try to operate in a non-hierarchical way, yet I'm part of the

hierarchy .. we all are .. So I play a boundary role protecting the team from that, and also trying to allow them to be non-hierarchical .. which they are in projects out in other Divisions. We're slotted into grading in an arbitrary way. People working for me are of a level who would never normally talk to top people .. but they are working with them, which is fine ..'

(I: 'When you're working in another Division or function')

'Yes .. but it's very difficult for them to do that in our own system, when our own department is one of the clients .. I try to help them to do that .. but being an internal consultancy unit, you can't escape from the hierarchy of the organisation'.

How clearly a consultant's remit is defined (and how well understood) is a function of the kind of organisation itself, and of the stage of development the consultancy role is at, including its past history and record of success (that is, its achieved credibility).[8] I.C.I. is sometimes cited,[9] as an organisation that has a sophisticated understanding of the consultancy role, through longer experience than most of operating with internal (and external) consultants. It is prepared to tolerate ambiguity about the role of its internal consultants in the Divisions, in the belief that a certain ambiguity permits surprising things to be done. In another company, less familiar with the role, but also less open and more hierarchical, internal O.D.Consultancy effectively collapsed:

(I: 'That was a success story .. but you were still dependent on word getting around, or the M.D.sending things your way .. Did that process begin to snowball?')

'No .. the M.D.changed .. The Works Manager got fed up with us charging for our services. The general guide-line in this building is that you have to recover your costs. That was harsh for a tender flower like O.D. .. There was also a different Management Services Manager over there. He had the view, 'I know best .. I don't need you lot' .. Despite whatever success we'd had, there was therefore a reduction in activity .. Also, we perhaps were led to push our own solutions. Senior managers who joined the team expected if they coughed, the world will obey .. but it didn't when they didn't have managerial authority ..

O.D. was deliberately kept unhitched for some time to any major lump of the organisation structure. We tried to keep it separate and low-key. Some of us would have preferred it to remain so, others wanted it to become higher key'.

(I: 'What happened?')

'It developed an image .. If it's visible, someone in the organisation will take a pot-shot at it.. It was unpleasant at the time.'

(I: 'A natural life and death cycle?')

'I think so .. Unfortunately it hasn't left much seed around to become the next crop under whatever guise it might be.'

Eventually, fearing for their career, people deserted it, back into main-line departments, other companies and private consultancy.

Without hierarchical power, the internal's best weapon necessarily has to be to structure people's expectations, and the claim to be a 'resource' is a claim to being useful. If he is wise, he will develop that claim only at a rate at which the organisation can accept it:

(I: 'You said your remit is not very much defined, and implied this was an advantage .. It enables you to get out and do things. But it also has some disadvantages?')

'That's right .. The disadvantage is people don't necessarily look to us as being a resource in certain situations. We've got to create that feeling of being a resource, in individual people's minds. That's not just a statement about us being a resource .. We have no functional authority over training functions within the Divisions .. so it's a case of very much making our name, being credible with individuals within Divisions.')

(I: 'Who over-sees the training college?')

'The Board advises us what we should do, and should not be doing. It also provides a vehicle for us to be able to take some initiative .. We tell them what we should be doing. Sometimes we go ahead and do it, then we tell them .. In one sense they set the boundaries for us, in another sense they create a way for opening up the

boundaries. But very little gets formally stated. There's no formal statement that we are an O.D.resource .. We cannot be so explicit at the moment as I see it. To try to be explicit we'd find ourselves having to start fighting political battles, and starting to be constrained, rather than being freed up .. I'd rather use the guerilla approach.'

7.2.ii Credibility

Despite the foregoing quotations, internals do not make as much of working in a hierarchy as one might expect. It is an accepted fact of life with all employees, that

'There's a power structure .. a power-cum-approval structure in the company .. and one just has to work through it'

Far more problematic is simply the degree of acceptance for the kind of expertise the internal behavioural science consultant offers. Internals claim to be resources that are useful to the mainline activities of the business, and are acutely aware, therefore, that their credibility lies in their being identified with the real problems of the business. It is the same daim of the Personnel Management profession to raise its status:[10]

'If you don't attack where the business issues are, you've got no credibility in a manufacturing commercial organisation .. O.D., inside a commercial organisation, if it means anything at all, must help identify and tap the crucial issues which affect the business.'

Conspicuous success in this obviously goes a long way to securing the future of the role.[11]

In individual terms, having been a successful manager previously gives the internal behavioural science consultant a credibility he can continue to draw on:

> 'My credibility (I've found this more than once) as an O.D.consultant .. is based on a proven track record as a line manager .. One of the key people in the refinery, who's now Head of Engineering, makes no secret of that. More than once when he's disagreed with me, in O.D. terms, he's said, 'But I've got to listen to you .. I can't discount what you say .. You've run a major department for 15 years .. I've got to listen to you' .. I had sanction to be listened to .. nobody could say I didn't know what I was talking about.'

Conversely, those with formal behavioural science training may first have to prove to managers that they are not impractical 'academics':

(a) 'they put you through the test .. to find you're not an academic person talking jargon .. that you are pragmatic'

(b) 'We're de-theorising ourselves as we go along .. we're helping clients as practical men of affairs.'

7.2.iii <u>MbO</u>

Chapter 11 will deal at length with how behavioural science consultants actually helped managers in the period 1960-79.

But it is evident, from many of the quotations, that being a 'resource' entails contributing to the processes of decision-making and problem-solving, by helping individuals and groups to clarify objectives, to set goals, and to improve the group's working processes, and, beyond the immediate group, thereby to contribute to the better coordination of the whole organisation. Thus, internals describe the kind of activity they engage in, in terms such as 'assisting the Business System Planning Process'. They are imbued with the outlook that you ask, "What are your objectives .. what decisions do you take .. what information do you need?"

Besides being consonant with the goals of team development as widely described in the O.D. literature,[12] this outlook owes a lot (in this sample) to first-hand experience of Management by Objectives (MbO), as well as to Richard Beckhard's[13] approach, both of which figure heavily in internals' accounts of influences on their thinking and their practice. Table 3 summarizes the extent of personal experience with MbO and explicit references to Beckhard as an influence. (Thakur[14] elsewhere has noted that Beckhard's is the most widely quoted definition of O.D.) It is precisely through the kind of thinking symbolised by MbO that internals achieve identification with the concerns of line managers, and through stimulating that kind of thinking that they assist line managers in their own sphere of activity. At the same time they are enabled

	Consultant	Behavioural Science degree	Training through Management by objectives	Beckhard cited as a major influence
Public Administration	1	X		
	2	X	X	
	3	X		
Oil	4		X	X
	5	X		X
	6		X	
	7		X	
Engineering & Construction	8	X		X
Glass	9			
Other manufacturing (gases)	10	X		
	11			
	12		X	
Chemicals	13			X
	14		X	X
	15			X
Electrical engineering	16		X	
Food, drink & tobacco	17		X	X
	18			
TOTAL	18	6	8	7

Table 3 : Formal training for the role of Behavioural Science Consultant, with the influence of Richard Beckhard.

to lay claim to identification with the over-riding goals of the organisation by virtue of their position outside departmental interests.

In contrast, no academic refers to MbO, whilst among commercials three out of eleven have some background in MbO. Nevertheless, among commercials there is also outright hostility to it, whilst those with experience of it regard other influences as more important. Nor does Beckhard get a mention from either academics or commercials (though the practice of some in each group is not dissimilar).

It is suggested, then, that the 'managerial resource consultant' can be identified on the grounds of his involvement in the key tasks of the business, and the contribution he makes to co-ordination, decision-making and problem-solving, through the processes of objective-setting and goal clarification. And although academics and commercials do so, also, in their own way, internals do so explicitly from a background which often feature MbO. For many, MbO was their first encounter with 'American management methods' - with, that is, "modern man management .. the systematic approach to management":

(a)(I: 'What did you get out of that phase of working with MbO?')

'It was my first introduction to the non-manufacturing world. It was a formative period .. I got quite a bit in terms of becoming a facilitator, a fix-it man .. I

got breathing-space .. I wouldn't like to have been taken out of line management and told, 'you are an organisation adviser' .. It would have been traumatic and not very effective. If you wanted to make an O.D. man and asked 'What's the best kind of route you could think of?', I'd want a model quite similar to what I experienced .. Take a line management fellow (I'm not saying this is the only way to do it, but it probably has a better success rate than any other), pluck him out into some activity that gives him time, breathing-space, a chance to adapt and think .. and at the end of that time you could say, 'now you're a facilitator, a helper' .. If you said, 'What kind of experience is most helpful to bridge the gap?', I'd say MbO is helpful .. (a) it began by focusing on objectives and targets .. then (b) it has a heavy focus on what you're going to do about them .. In any group I was working with, you'd be often involved in action-planning things. The model is very similar to the typical organisational consultancy model, of saying 'What is it you can't achieve, and how can we help them work towards achieving them?'

(I: 'And focusing on things manufacturing people appreciate as relevant to what they're doing?')

'Yes .. It certainly gave you a very good empathy for their manufacturing position'.

Two other examples show how experience in implementing MbO programmes became assimilated into behavioural science consultancy:

(b) 'I moved into the O.D.frame by MbO .. the Humble approach It seemed to fit with concepts of helping people to improve themselves and the organisation. So I worked on MbO for quite a while - getting people to identify what was important in their jobs, in terms of achievement, and to analyse them in terms of key tasks.. It had an emphasis on involvement and sharing between boss and subordinate, an emphasis on the review process .. It was the way we got into helping people work on problems of their own organisation .. identifying the objectives of teams, how they related to one another, and what their various roles were .. What I try to create is an organisation that knows what it's doing, where it's going, and why'.

(c) 'MbO has always been something I'm deeply interested in. It's logical and usable. It fitted with my training as an analytical chemist .. If you ask, 'Have I got a model?' the model says, pre-work and post-work .. formulating operational objectives .. the long plan has to have a first step .. the plan has to have some projections and contingencies .. That's the concept of MbO, a totality broken down into key areas, having performance standards, having improvement tasks'.

Whereas MbO, in this sample, was brought into British companies via the large English commercial consultancy firms, particularly Urwick Orr, the influence of Beckhard derived from (a) direct encounter with Beckhard and his

methods, during that period when American consultants were being flown in and out of our major multinational companies (particularly I.C.I.), or (b) his writings. Wherever it is the latter case, it is likely that Beckhard has been assimilated with other concepts of 'task-centred team development.'[15] So it is not surprising to find other concepts which tend towards the same end (such as Bridger's 'double-task')[16] cited along with Beckhard, by those who have studied in the profession of behavioural science consultants:

> 'I came in with Harold Bridger's 'double-task' .. The whole thing I work on is trying to get a double-task going .. My role is to get them to work on the task, and as it's happening, I talk about the behaviour as it's going on. In the past they tended to work on behaviour as a task. By having a double task it's very much easier for them .. I structured things much more .. At the same time we kept pointing to that, saying, 'What are we doing .. where are we?' .. that's the Lievegoed[17] model .. I'm using the Beckhard model of consultancy - providing the methodology, making sure the agenda is right, that the right people are there, the purpose is clear .. and then working on 'what is it you're trying to achieve .. what methodology do you use?' .. and giving them a methodology for that..'

7.3. The Social Location of the Internal

Directing those they work with towards clearer objectives may be part of a general process of organisational improvement and hence have a long time-horizon, or it may be aimed towards the solution of an immediate problem. Around this kind of consideration we can distinguish a number of sub-types of the consultant as managerial or behavioural science resource. These represent distinctive strategies by which internals cope with and exploit their special role circumstances, as well as important philosophical differences about what their role as resource entails (or what best benefits organisations).

Characterisations of styles tend to account for differences in terms particularly of "(personal) preferences and personal variations"[18] The relevance of departmental location is acknowledged but seldom explored. Rather, departmental location is treated more often as an incidental to what the O.D.Consultant really does:

> 'Only comparatively rarely do such people publicly (in terms of their own organisations) label themselves as Organisation Development specialists. Some masqueraded as personnel officers, others as Management Services specialists, and yet others as trainers.'[19]

Yet departmental location is likely to define expectations of what the consultant can do and how he will work, as well as develop habits of working. We choose, therefore,

to trace the influence of location first, before considering the impact of personal values and goals upon style. In this way, we can see how the dominant self-characterisation, 'resource', that derives from the employment relationship, splits down into a number of distinctive forms occasioned by the different forms of social relationship arising from where within the employing organisation, the internal consultant is located. As a result, there are displayed different behavioural styles and different ways of coping with the problem of getting acceptance:

(a) 'I still am in Management Services, and it tends to give a different orientation to Personnel work here .. Although the Management Services Manager, to whom I respond, is the O.D.focus for the Division, each Division in the company has an O.D. focus .. Sometimes he's in Personnel, sometimes in Training, sometimes in Management Services. . It's largely to do with where work tends to be carried out, and the personality of the individual manager.'

(b) (I: 'Are you linked to a training function?')

'No, I'm within Management Services, and specifically within Work Study .. The reasons for this are historical. Training had tended to be the administration of courses, and Personnel an 'establishment' organisation. It seemed that any forward thinking in terms of manpower was coming from Management Services .. It was fortunate. We gained a lot of freedom to do things that otherwise we would

not have been able to do .. Management Services and Work Study had got an identity as being of help.'

The actual location of consultants is thus partly an accident of history. The development of a role in O.D. consultancy is the outcome of one of two processes, and possible both together - personal aspirations 'to do O.D.' and a decision taken from on high to create an O.D. resource.[20] The process by which most internal behavioural science consultants have been translated into their roles (it is suggested)owes more, in the first instance, to decisions within a company to initiate a new position, or positions, than to the aspirations of those who were eventually so earmarked. The 'masquerading' has more often been of Personnel Officers, Management Services specialists and trainers trying to be O.D. specialists.[21] To become a genuine O.D. consultant in Britain in the late 1960's, it was necessary to get a proper training, and this required the company sanctioning it - for example, by putting selected personnel through the 'Eastbourne Conferences' (as I.C.I. did)[22] or by seconding to full-time courses as others later did.

Where a company,or division, culled its embryo consultants from, or located a new expertise, is likely to have reflected a number of factors - (1) the contribution which a particular function was seen to be capable of making towards dealing with the problems a company was facing at

that time, (2) the influence of powerful individuals and departments (who might well be the same as in (1)) in determining the location of a new resource, (3) the availability of suitable candidates in the areas in which such a search would then be conducted.[23] Organisational location and background of the O.D. consultant is not, therefore, fortuitous. Certainly, who does O.D. is a function of organisational politics, and under its influence the fortunes of individuals and consultancy groups wax and wane:

'From the formation of the Unit it's never been clear what our role would be in areas such as Organisational Development. We were drawn into it to some extent partly because there was no alternative area of O.D. concern or activity in the Company .. We were drawn into it in a very loose sort of way, and we do a fair amount in conjunction with the Training Department, in connection with Company courses, which moved into the behavioural side .. We did that in conjunction with an interest we had on a fairly comprehensive scale in MbO, not in the packaged MbO sense, but as part of the question of management attitudes and management style. But since a new manager has been appointed to the Training Division, and since (J-) was appointed to the head of our consultancy group, our interest in that area has been quite severely attenuated .. We're interested but not active, because the manager of the Training Division

came in with a very strong interest in O.D. .. So now if there is an O.D. focus in the company it's more on the Training/Personnel side.'

Equally a function of organisational location and background as <u>who</u> does O.D., is <u>how</u> they do O.D. Differences in strategy and style between internals can be seen in part as local variations in style, linked to the types of tasks, influence strategies, and behavioural styles prevalent in the part of the organisation they come from. This is not to deny that as an internal O.D. man becomes accustomed to his new role and develops a perspective on its possibilities, he is likely to make a series of role adaptations. Personal motives and interests, new possibilities for action, retraining and new professional contacts lead to personal development, which modify the influence of departmental factors. Nor is it to deny the likelihood that candidates will have been selected for stereotypical qualities of the 'O.D. Consultant', such as good social skills. But the process of selective recruitment is as likely to be conducted with a view to the needs of the organisation as defined by particular (departmental) interests and perspectives at that time, and role adaptation be in the direction of greater compatibility with the way sponsors have defined the roles.[24]

With the potential sources of variability in mind, the types of strategy outlined here should be thought of as 'ideal types' rather than consistently distinctive styles

always associated with the particular departmental locations.

Table 4 summarizes the location of internals. The respective styles are characterised for convenience in terms which are the author's - they are not true self-ascriptions, as is the term 'resource'. They are the 'organisation studies' type, the 'personnel manager gambit', and the 'training role'.

These terms are deliberately used rather than the more obvious 'Management Services', 'Personnel Manager', and 'Training Department' (a) to avoid the suggestion of a simple correlation of style with a department, and (b) because consultants may no longer be resident in the department where they acquired their style of working. Other distinctions could be made, such as the 'unit' or the 'non-assigned' (or lone operator) role. But these do not constitute any stable distinction of strategy, and may be encompassed by descriptions of the strategic styles associated with the three modal styles referred to (since units and non-assigned individuals may be tied into an organisation in a variety of ways).

7.3.i. Organisation Studies

Management services typically engage in organisation studies, with a remit to tackle defined problems ("often under pressure Management Services is directed to solve a

		Personnel	Training	Management Services	Other
Public Administration	1	X *			
	2			X *	
	3			X *	
Oil	4				Refinery mgr.
	5	X *			
	6				) Ø
	7				) Executive) Chairman
Engineering & Construction	8		X		
Glass	9			X	
Other Manufacturing (Gases)	10		X+		
	11		X+		
	12		X+		
Chemicals	13			X	
	14	X			
	15			X	
Electrical Engineering	16	X			
Food, drink & tobacco	17	X			
	18	X			
TOTAL	18	6	4	5	3

* O.D. or Beh.Sc.Unit
\+ Staff training college
Ø General Consultancy unit

Table 4 : Internal Consultants by Present Location

stated problem"), and with an operating criterion of securing greater efficiency. Where behavioural science consultancy enters an organisation through this channel it is likely to be influenced by this perspective:

> 'In the kind of work referred to us, and in the kind of work we have solicited and felt comfortable with, demand has been mainly at the level of senior, high-level organisational questions... concerning Head Office organisation and the structure of the Group, and relations between Head Office and parts of the Group. Our major sponsors are concerned with organisational strategy, development, and ultimately with revenue costs, manpower numbers, and developments over the next year and long-term'.

In this example, the consultancy unit was itself formed out of a review of the use of manpower (which in such circumstances always implies the efficient use of human resources). Similarly,

> 'When the Division started to become more pressed for economic performance and profitability, there was a growing realizathon that it was all very well working at the individual, personal level .. but maybe the whole structural base needed to be changed in response to the environment.'

Consequently, a role was created to be filled by

> 'Someone from one of the works, with an orthodox Management Services background, in process control,

computers, method study, information systems .. specifically, at the start anyway, to look at structures.'

Thereafter moving over to embrace O.D.-type activities:

> 'It was important for me to work on group and inter-personal process issues as being relevant - particularly in order that I didn't get stereotyped as a structure man .. structure has been seen to be a method of reducing numbers.'

Organisational studies proceeds from a perspective that

> 'The Key issues and decisions are where do we put our capital now? .. (that) the autonomy extended to the parts of the business, and hence leadership style are dependent on the shape of the business .. (and that) people and attitudes can be affected in many cases more easily by changing the structure than by any workshop.'

Consequently, in the projects which are referred to him, this type of consultant intervenes in the formal structure of relationships through the allocation of resources and jobs, and is identified with the efficiency criterion in the allocation of these. His activities are geared to discrete studies, culminating in a report, and hence his strategy is heavily shaped by the way these structure his time. It means, also, that his activities are inherently more visible than the resource who merely lends his process skills to others, and the end-product open

to evaluation (which may not be to his disadvantage).

Nevertheless, once the consultant originating in Management Services enters the 'process' area, to influence relationships and management style, the orientation to carrying out organisation studies is liable to be modified:

(I: 'Opportunities for doing that - for educating people to see the interdependence of structures, tasks, people, and operating mechanisms[25] - do they exist outside the projects you've mentioned?')

'One uses every opportunity .. whether meeting people round the bar, social opportunities - wherever it seems relevant .. It's not concentrated merely into actual projects'

(I: 'Is your diary filled exclusively with projects?')

'No, I will mosey round the place, meeting people. If there's an open door, and the fellow doesn't look as if he's up to his eyebrows, I'll pop in and talk, out of curiosity .. So if there's an opportunity to talk to management, at least I've got some idea of what the business issues are .. and if I can weave that into the conversation fairly early it gives the impression you're not completely on the outside .. you are aware of the business of what really matters to him. I do that fairly consciously .. and using some of the contacts I used to have, in marketing particularly'.

(I: 'building up a constituency of interest, making yourself visible to potential clients, re-educating them

that you're not a plain Management Services guy?')

'Yes, that's important .. I think where many in Personnel suffer is being seen to be outside the business problems. Management Services are seen to be business problem solvers, and they've got the advantage there .. they're closer to, more concerned with the business .. whereas training is more about leadership styles, specific skills .. something you can bring into the business, but it's not part and parcel of the business.'

Special pleading to be an effective kind of resource, and the influence of origins, is never far away.

7.3.ii <u>The Personnel Manager gambit</u>

The 'organisation studies' man and the 'personnel manager' type have distinctive strategies, based in their different perceptions of and relationship to power. In some respects they are similar in that each bids to intervene in the formal structure of relationships through the allocation of resources and position:

'Properly played, there's a brisk market for the management development type of business, concerned with career-planning and the development of people .. I'd had a pretty considerable organisation understanding and background, particularly in the personnel function .. I'd done everything in it .. This job provided a ready-made framework - direct responsibility for career-placing, recruitment, selection of senior people.. It looked like

a place to be to try to influence things.'

The personnel type, however, affects a looser style. He projects an image of one who is more comfortable working from within and playing the system. He relies for his influence on knowing the people to influence, watching always for opportunities to do so, and laying the ground over the longer -term for bringing about key shifts in the way things are done. His focus is on the procedures and processes (from interpersonal processes to the more formal personnel systems and procedures), rather than on formal structures for getting things done. He thus appears more opportunistic than the 'organisation studies' man, relying on 'being known in the system .. being seen as helpful', engaging with whatever is going on that might have longer-term pay-off, looking for critical incidents and capitalizing on these. To an extent, he eschews 'executive tasks' that might tie him up in organisational routines:

'I'm fairly strong on never taking papers out of the room so as to not let anyone think I was going to do anything about something .. I'd make notes in the car afterwards.'

The personnel type works process issues in their natural setting:

'I've identified one or two significant clubs here .. I will use them to push ideas.'

(I: 'Your levers are the occasional small project .. but more importantly being able to influence groupings like the Assessment Centre to start looking for a different type of person?')

> 'Yes .. and raising questions, passing information around, challenging assumptions when you hear them .. a lot of trickles on stones.'

As a 'real-time', or crypto -process consultant he sees the value of all kinds of communications. He sees,'information as a resource that everything else runs on,' and himself as a 'linkman': a key source of his influence is his being in a position to push around the system bits of information and ideas that will get to influential individuals:

> 'I wrote it as a draft, the kind of thing you never finish, that's meant just to stimulate things .. It enables ideas or questions to go round without setting up too much opposition .. I find the circulation of these things, providing you've got it right, tends to be quite extensive. You get bubbles back from unlikely places .. It's a fairly effective testing mechanism - they say it's rubbish, or they bring evidence to support your ideas, increasing the data available .. I see myself as testing, challenging, the operating sinews of the organisation.'

As McLean puts it, in relation to what he terms the 'cultivator' role:

> 'the cultivator carefully sows the seeds of ideas, nurtures them throughout the organisation and often over a long period of time, while at the same time ensuring that he is not seen to be too obviously campaigning for them'[26]

Whilst opportunistic, getting involved in the nitty-gritty of day-to-day departmental management issues, he

nevertheless sees himself as programmatic, operating in a wider arena even while engaged in small-group events and casual incidents. He sees himself as a 'long-termer', engaged ultimately in bringing about 'system changes'. The organisation studies man, by contrast takes on assignments and completes them. Even though the projects themselves probably have serious long-term structural implications, they are not conceived as climate-setting activities, and they force the process of change:

> 'the model of external help, 'in-do-out', is the characteristic view of what most people in Management Services are doing .. except for me and one or two other people .. If you had enough things on the go at once, to keep you turned on, interested, alive, you would keep in touch with lots of little worlds .. with little flurries of activity .. And you can allow things to happen at a pace which seems natural to them .. It becomes less and less possible the more you become visible up the top .. The other kind of model of change, forced change, is where it's brought about by external cleverness.'

7.3.iii Training Role

The 'training role' stands between these two. Training, within O.D., purports to be concerned with long-term developmental activities, but at the same time does this by offering discrete services (the packaging and running

of courses) or by being assigned to cope with a particular problem (of management skills, leadership style, group-working, etc.) as a 'troubleshooter'. At the same time, in building up a role in the provision of a behavioural science consultancy service, Training (like Personnel) depends often on expanding its assigned role, and as such pursues an opportunistic strategy:

> 'I don't think we can claim to have a strategy plan .. It's very much a reactive, opportunistic thing, partly because we have no real official role in this thing .. Our official role is to give a training and consultancy service ..
>
> .. If I mapped out our history, what's happened .. the nature of the things we've been involved in, the way in which things have grown, the strategies we set out at the beginning .. We have deliberately used a 'snowball' strategy or 'seeding' strategy .. rather than a 'top-down' approach .. We started with little things that grew'.

The training role is often regarded as the weakest role to operate from, and the claim of training staff to being consultants is often disparaged.[27] But since all internal behavioural science consultancy which is not mainstream management services or personnel work exhibits some of the difficulties inherent in the training role (and invariably include some kinds of training activity), the 'training role' justifies treatment as a role type and behavioural

style. Whenever the internal is not carrying out studies or doing personnel administration, but working with groups of people, he needs to deploy certain skills which are requisite for training people (process skills, chairmanship skills, the ability'to give people a good event'.) The individual or the unit which successfully escapes or eschews an 'organisational studies' or 'personnel manager' type of strategy can therefore be seen as adopting a training style - that is, the classic O.D. role of facilitator or developer. (Equally, a consultant may shift back into either of the other roles from a training one.)

> 'I have three kinds of work .. (1) an ongoing consultancy relationship with a major department .. (2) discrete pieces of work - a manager says 'I've got trouble with my outfit' .. (3) odds and sods .. one-offs that I get involved in where I would often feel like a very informal chairman .. The range of activities in (1) includes working with their top-box once a year. I'd be responsible for preparing the agenda. I'd be seen as a kind of fixer for that and do my usual thing - the man who works the flip chart most of the time, capturing the essence or whatever, stopping the activity if it seems appropriate and doing something with it .. saying 'What's going on here doesn't sound very realistic.'

The typical presentation of consultancy help in O.D. is

of a neutral third party, facilitating behavioural changes and the development of clients' own solution to problems, without recourse to the coercive instruments of organisational power.[28] What the consultant wants is neither her nor there. That this is untenable is evidenced by the psychological condition of consultant 'burn out'[29] (that being a pawn in other people's tasks is an unhealthy thing to be[30]), and by the fact that trainers are drawn to acquire power either overtly by taking on administrative roles (such as in Personnel) or covertly. Attitudes towards using formal sources of organisational power can be seen as reflecting the real lack of access to such power (whether willed or not). Thus, beyond a realistic acceptance of situation, the notion of non-dependent-inducing help can be seen as a rationalisation of low power, or as an attempt to establish countervailing bases for influence which the trainer may command (namely, social, even charismatic, sources of authority). Where personal pressures to have power over another are strong, the trainer role provides a covert strategy of exercising psychological manipulation (or what Dale terms 'coercive persuasion')[31]. On the other hand, there are those who resolve the situation by seeking to get alongside real power-holders as 'resources', or by moving into mainstream activities.

A reflection of the contrasting power situations of trainer, personnel manager, and organisation studies type is suggested by the following remarks:

(a) 'I've always accepted being organisationally powerless .. unable to cause anything to happen except by persuasion .. listening a lot .. listening and high-lighting in a fairly gentle way.'

(b) 'I believe organisations exist to exert power .. If you're in the organisation business, you are in the power-dealing business .. To be effective in organisations, you've got to be in the power game.'

(c) 'I feel myself to be more part of the power system. I have heard O.D. types who say people come before organisations. They say they don't feel they belong to the organisation. But I think they overstate that .. they must, they do belong in some sense.'

7.4. Personal Values and Goals

Consultancy style is built partly on how tasks are received, which is a function of where a consultant is located and the expectations attaching to that corner of the organisation. But style and strategy are also a product of personal values and goals.

In Organisation Development, 'development' is a key concept (even value), and this relates both to the importance of developing an organisation as a continuing process, and to the kind of changes desired in an organisation. Statements in these two areas constitute,

therefore, important value-statements for consultants. The kind of values held and how heavily these weigh upon the interpretation of role are important characteristics distinguishing internals, commercials, and academics. This section considers therefore the nature and prominence of personal values and goals, for internals, in these two aspects: (1) the consultant's interpretation of what is the appropriate 'modus operandi' of behavioural science consultancy (i.e. whether the consultant should be oriented towards tangible outcomes to immediate problems ('product-oriented') or be oriented towards long-term continuing improvements ('process-oriented'); (2) what are the ultimate ends sought.

The former of these will clearly impinge very directly on a consultant's strategy and style. As was suggested in the preceding section, the distinctive strategies described there reflect special role circumstances as well as philosophical differences about what the role of resource entails: personal role orientation is an amalgam of locational factors and values. Thus, where we distinguish values, we try to link these to the role 'types' already described.

The second area in which value-statements were made - the ultimate ends sought - are of more general significance. Views of the individual, organisation, and society provide a focus for discriminating internals, commercials, and academics, rather than for discriminating among internals

alone. The concluding part of this section therefore brings us back to the formulation of internals as 'resources' not 'change agents'.

7.4.i. Process Values

The following two sets of quotations express, respectively a 'process' and a 'product-orientation',[32] and it will be seen that these are consistent with the 'training role' and 'organisation studies role' already described. Moreover, these strategy values are tied up with ultimate end values as the further quotations show:

> 'The nature of our role is usually quite different between the two types of work .. A number are to do with 'problems', which can be described in all sorts of ways - 'morale', 'structure', 'communications', 'interface frictions'. These are what I call 'problems'. We're looking at what has arisen in the past, their historical derivation, and helping to 'solve' them, to make something better .. Others involve looking more forward into the future - at the way the business might be changing, at the environment, at what sort of organisational resources might be required, and how we might move towards that goal. It usually involves a number of people in the organisation examining that as part of their learning process. I feel these are more significant in terms of our contribution .. A lot of people see O.D. as 'problem-centred'. I don't see that as our main contribution. A lot of work in this area

involves looking at a problem, but that then leads one into looking forward and at the environment .. It's always very clear to me that our contribution is a process one .. helping with the process of change they're going through .. I avoid making business contributions.'

This strategy and style is consistent with the consultant's ultimate end values:

'I see what we're doing as helping people to learn .. I like to see that happen, and for people to become more aware of the effect of what they do .. I also like to see a better use of human resources. Hierarchies limit people by putting them in boxes .. I see the interface problem as the classic case for learning. You get teams of people who actually work together across the interface, to debate, work on, and to produce some action plans to solve a stated problem .. so in the process you're trying to double the learning process.'

In the second example, 'development' for the organisation studies man is less significant:

'Some people see their mission as helping the organisation learning how to learn .. I see myself, rather, the primary success criteria as, 'has the organisation' improved its outputs?' .. only secondly, 'has the organisation improved its capacity, has it learnt more?' .. The other way round is a cop-out. Output is very important, whether it's a question of morale, unit costs

success, energy, whatever .. however people measure it.'

This strategy value, whose practical features were described earlier is consistent with the following ultimate value:

> 'Where I think much O.D.stuff is misguided is that they overgeneralise .. There's far too much emphasis on personal growth, democracy, etc. I'm not convinced many people want that - opportunities for growth etc. within a work context. Some O.D. people expect everyone to have their values and expect to be able to make every job fulfilling, growthful, self-actualising .. all that sort of jazz. I'm much more organisation-minded.'

There is no simple correlation of role situation and personal values, though. A role base in Management Services cannot be simply equated with the type of role orientation that is referred to as 'organisation studies'. A Management Services man, forced by a decline in O.D. activity into a highly constrained role, may nevertheless approach a project which in other respects is a typical organisation study, with hopes of enhancing organisational processes and producing a more humane organisation as a result of it:

> 'This project arises out of a stated problem .. by someone high in Engineering saying, 'I'm being asked to design plants which are going to be working in a few years time, but I really wonder whather we're designing 'orrible jobs for people that no-one will want to do.' ..

We hope we've left behind a different way of tackling a problem. Although I may have described it as a one-off solution to a problem, I see it as a development of the organisation's method of tackling problems, rather than a solution bought in off the shelf'.

Conversely, personal values may have to be trimmed to questions of role survival:

'I've tried to have a balance between work we can ensure will happen, and O.D. work in the departments .. When you work within departments, you've got 'problems' - for example, defined as teams not working properly. In tackling those, you get suspicious, delays, lask of visibility .. When you're dealing with the outside world, people say 'the problem's out there', because that's what they'd like to deal with .. In this case, it really is, and people want to deal with them. There's a greater commitment, and a ready flow of clients, because the risk to them is only a technical risk .. People see you're doing something useful, your chances are higher, you're not dealing with the internal machinations of a department, on an outside problem .. I said we should have a proportion of work of that kind, the (--) dealing with the outside world. It has meant we've got quite a lot of work. We don't have to try any more, we're less of a threat to the internal organisation .. and we can be readily identified as valuable .. If you said, 'make up your own assignments', and people do say, 'you

should be doing this' .. I say, 'for whom? .. Where is the client for it?' .. If I set up a project, people would be resisting all the way. Give me the right client for it .. People say, 'You should be looking at the organisation'. I've already dealt with a reluctant Secretary-General .. I know there are areas much more important .. for example, the relationship between officers and Members. It's killing the organisation .. The problem is not getting assignments, but working in an organisation which chops and changes, and is in decline. My main concern is in fighting internal political battles to keep us alive.. I've never come across an organisation quite as bad as this, such a low level of awareness. It's unbelievable. I've come across some primitive outfits in consulting, but at least the're aware something has to be done. That's the biggest killer. Pressures from the market place are the ones that are most favourable to the behavioural scientist, when people are trying to manufacture something, to get the product right, etc., to get the system right. They're motivated to turn elsewhere. It's a ready force for the behavioural scientist .. A place like this, which is really just trying to make the politicians happy, where do you fit into that?'

A final example shows, by contrast, how opportunities presented may support a forward strategy and values associated with O.D. (for a more open, responsive

organisation and the better use of human resources):

'A lot of managers in (--) recognise two great sets of forces in the environment .. (1) about people, about involvement, participation .. to give people more effective, more worthwhile jobs - not for altruistic reasons, but simply it makes more money. They're the sort of forces we can work with quite easily .. (2) the other set of forces are economic - like we need to make a better bottom-line. Coupled with that is we're now becoming an international company. We're no longer the big brother in England. That for a lot of our managers is a difficult thing to assimilate. That means our managers' performance is being compared with overseas.. They recognise those two sets of forces and that they need to cope with those sets of forces - what's happening in the environment outside, the fact that (--) isn't a closed system .. So that makes them a bit more open to being helped by ourselves, but they're not very clear how .. so it leads to our opportunistic strategy .. One of the best things O.D. people can do in any organisation is just develop coping skills, because otherwise all you do is free up the organisation and then reset it again in concrete. And that's all some interventions do .. What we ought to be doing is develop coping skills, so no matter what the environment throws up, people can go and cope with it .. and so they can throw one or two things at the environment for that matter.'

What these circumstances favour is a training role, as previously outlined - skills training and personal counselling to help free up managers to relieve them of doubts, to lend support, around areas of leadership style, and from the trust and confidence so built up to open their minds to new ways of operating.

In these examples we are constantly reminded that the goals a consultant may wish to pursue are constrained by the types of opportunity presented and the circumstances in which the work is carried out. The internal experiences very specific constraints from operating within the one organisation.

7.4.ii <u>End-result values</u>

By contrast with commercials (who are specific about the need to reform British organisations and management) and academics (many of whom are emphatic about their own value positions), internals do not pronounce upon these things. They are most emphatic about their values when they are disavowing any intent to change managers, and when claiming to embrace the purposes of the organisation.

(a) 'I'm not around changing anything .. '

(b) 'O.D. inside a commercial organisation, if it means anything at all, must help identify and tap the crucial issues which affect the business.'

The affirmation of the organisation is partly a rhetorical device to distance themselves from an image that hangs around a personal growth concept of O.D. which would harm them in the eyes of their would-be clients. But other values, that describe the kind of organisations they would like to bring about, can be gleaned from numerous passing comments. These fit into an almost uniform pattern, which might be described as the 'business systems concept of O.D.' Some of its features have already been identified.

Internal consultants, in the sample, essentially stand in opposition to closed system thinking among managers. They contrast the prevalent outlook of managers with an 'open socio-technical systems view of the organisation (though specific reference to 'socio-technical' theory is more typical of commercials and academics). Their aim is to make managers more aware of other functions in the organisation, to see the business as a whole, to see the connections and inter-relationships among issues, among procedures, and the consequences flowing from their acts. That is, to take a more systemic view. It means seeing the organisation in an environment.

The aspect of the model stressed depends on the level at which the internal is working. The predominant focus is on opening up inter-departmental boundaries, working on the <u>internal</u> boundaries of the organisation. The environment most of the time, for many managers, and for most internal

consultants, is other people in the same organisation. The 'open socio-technical systems' view, for the behavioural scientist means, therefore, making managers more aware of the social implications of their acts and of social and psychological processes in their own and others behaviour (rather than the more specific association it has for some externals working in the specialised field of job redesign). The commonest complaint made is thus the lack of attention among managers to social processes, an attitude (said to be) bred of the dominance of a technical systems logic and fixity on task-accomplishment. Internals frequently confront this through the Leavitt model (depicting the inter-relationship between 'structure-tasks-technology-people'), the cruciform diagram expressing this being displayed on the office wall of as many as a half of internals seen.

In the adoption of systems thinking, internals do no more than re-iterate what is commonplace within organisation literature. But its thorough-going acceptance demands recognition, even though it is given relatively conventional expression as compared with commercials, for whom systems ideas have a special personal significance beyond their theoretical appeal.

Despite the criticism of management and organisations, this is generally muted, however. Internals speak sympathetically and matter-of-factly of autocratic

management. They do not display a mission to change managers. The following quotations illustrate the kind of criticisms made, and by inference the change values of the consultants.

(a) Managers are dominated by a technical systems logic:

'It's a black and white thing in this organisation, and especially you find it in the process industry - the idea of 'mix plus temperature equals product', and where feedback is quick'.

(I: 'A closed system?')

'Yes .. and they don't quite understand other than that you can formulate a solution to any problem. For me to go in and say 'I don't know .. I can't give you a solution and a formula', it's not very helpful to the guy .. I can't say, 'plug something in and it will work'. That's what he's used to from a production sense. He's got a quite different philosophic stance.'

(b) Managers fail to see the business as a whole:

'Their definition of the purpose of a refinery allowed them to concentrate on managing the technology and disown everything else. It made them a cost-minimisation centre, focusing on technical parameters only. So it didn't matter if the business was going down the drain .. they could say, 'Oh, but our unit costs on the plant are marvellous'. Too many people

spend time polishing the cabin without checking the ship is still afloat .. There's no hope for MbO if you don't own the idea of the commonality of objectives.'

(c) Managers can be autocratic, unaware of the personnel management aspects of their role:

'The culture up until 1970 was highly autocratic .. in Blake's grid terms '10 : fuck-all'

'What a lot of people are doing is to integrate business planning with human resource planning .. It's what we've been doing, I suppose .. I look to see people become more aware of what they do - that making business decisions as managers affects a lot of other things, and is interdependent with a lot of other things, including the people they're working for .. In a way it's something we preach and believe in .. Managers are very task-oriented .. they don't see these relationships.'

(d) Managers are socially irresponsible in their attitudes to other man-management duties:

'(--) is a company of systems. They're coming out of their ears .. I've never seen so many orders and procedures .. My view is that managers shelter enormously behind systems. The tendency is to see a problem .. they accept that it may have a social, a behavioural element, and they try to solve it by producing a system. It produces a great defence for

everybody. . 'We've got a system we can refer to' .. Then you don't have to actually deal with it. The manager thus becomes non-responsible. Clearly our managers don't take full responsibility in social terms for their staff.'

'Change agent' is a much over-used term in the literature of O.D. Whilst it may mean any person who strives to effect change[33] its conventional usage in O.D. has come to be one who espouses democratic-humanist values and who seeks to maximise these in an organisational setting by changing organisational culture and structure in the direction of greater openness.[34] Apart from sharing the group characteristic of behavioural science consultants generally, of having humanistic rather than authoritarian sympathies, these internals do not conform to this stereotype. This may be a function of 'skewness' in the sample - practioners of longer-standing, mostly at higher levels in their organisations, who have by inclination or necessity developed limited goals which do not mark them out as deviants.

Anecdotal evidence from those surveyed clearly shows the missionary streak, scorned by Back[35] and Tranfield,[36] is alive in pockets:

'Our central training centre has a manager, a lecturer, and training officers. Two are ex-O.D. department, another has read the book. It leaves them feeling they know what O.D. is .. Maslow, Herzberg, .. They would say they include socio-technical ideas in their courses,

but it's at a superficial level.'

(I: 'They're in the business of purveying O.D. interpersonal values?')

'I'm not saying it's rubbish, but it's only a part.'

(I: 'And in an organisation with a fairly high-level of technology ..)

'Yes ..'

(I: '.. an approach which only stresses interpersonal behaviour is not going to make an impact?')

'It's laughed at ..'

On the other hand,what we find conforms to growing evidence that the stereotype is out of date,[37] at least in respect of internals.

Internals do not express an ambivalence about organisations, born of a sense of a conflict between the individual and the organisation, or downright hostility to contemporary organisations, as many academics do. Nor do they present themselves particularly as challenging existing managerial values and behaviour, in the cause of reforming British industrial and employee relations, making management more responsible,effective, and thereby legitimate, as commercial consultants do. They describe their goals, in terms which are less conspicuously idealogical, as simply improving <u>organisational</u> functioning.

This disavowal of any intent to change managers or organisations radically further justifies our use of the characterisation 'resource'. As one internal put it,

'By what right do you do that - change people's attitudes?'

And another:

'I don't carry flags around with me, with issues on, that I'm trying to work .. It's more pragmatic, saying, 'Where is there, somewhere, where my help is needed .. and how can I slant that help towards the needs of the organisation?'

The claim merely to be a 'resource' is tantamount to saying organisational values are accepted .. that it is not the business of the consultant to go round disputing these.

One or two internals, nevertheless, do see themselves as consciously working out their own values:

'This organisation is so wide and disparate, it's easy to find people whose values and viewpoints I respect, and feel comfortable working with .. and to work with those whose values resemble mine .. There's no doubt about it, I recognise that.'

This active searching out of allies to promote changes the consultant deems desirable is to be distinguished from a more general sympathy with anyone getting a raw deal such as motivates the speaker before:

'What's on my flag is the underdog .. I believe everybody does have something on their flag .. The most motivating

thing for me is to come across a situation where some people are being unfairly done unto .. it happens all over and trying to make that situation better .. I'm not bothered what level, or what their status.'

Searching out allies, on the contrary, is a political act, to 'empower' both them and the consultant:

'I recognise there are people whose interests are best served by no change, and others whose interests are in change .. and I'm working with them. And that's where the political thing comes in .. I'm helping individuals and groups of people clarify where they are, where they want to go, and in some cases empowering them to do just that .. in cases where I find some match between what they want to do and what I want to do.'

A consultant expressing such sentiments (which are more typical of academics in the sample) might rightly be called a 'change agent', or 'value-oriented O.D.' (to avoid the ambiguity attaching to the former term). Indeed this particular internal consultant, 'cosmopolitan' by inclination and by professional training in the behavioural sciences, maintains an academic reference group and in many of his utterances espouses a position which is more typical of the 'developmental' type of academic consultant described in Chapter 9.

Similarly, from one internal, one finds also sentiments more typical of commercial consultants in a wider and

more emphatic concern with improving the quality of management and reforming organisations - again, not surprisingly since he had spent much of his previous career as a commercial consultant and had been in the post as an internal with his present company only for the last eighteen months:

'Communications is part of the management role, in the same way as Industrial relations is part of the management role .. as is career development, management development, training. But what Personnel Departments have done is take those off him and compartmentalize them .. and then people have copped out from coping with industrial relations problems .. managers pass it all off to the Personnel function. So what does the manager do out there? .. He progresses chases .. The manager is a manager of people. If you take away the key things like communicating, sorting out problems, developing, what have you left with the manager, except the actual producing of the product, task-processes? .. You've taken away all the people element. He's only responsible for materials and finance .. but then we've got a financial officer, too .. They've taken that away from him as well'.

7.5. Internals as 'Locals': the influence on perspectives

'(C)orporate patronage gives rise to the 'house' man, either directly as an employee or within the organisational context of a professional bureaucracy ..

'Patronage is associated with a fragmented, hierarchical,

> locally oriented occupational group. The 'housed' practitioner defers and refers to his patron or patrons and identifies with the court or the corporation, not primarily with the 'professional' community .. Fragmentation arises in response to the local needs of patrons; local knowledge and skills relevant to local demands are developed.' 38

Johnson's general characterisation of 'in-house' professional groups captures many of the features of the internal behavioural science consultant that we have described. It suggests the skills he develops, his style and strategy of operating, the knowledge he values and the ideas he embraces and evolves, are not coincidental but products of a typical set of circumstances. Thus, typical qualities of the internal consultant are usually described in terms of his particular advantages and disadvantages in bringing about change, and these are well-known. They centre on his inside knowledge of the organisation, his over-absorption in it, and weak power position to achieve radical change. He is best as an 'implementer',[39] therefore, of other people's schemes:

> 'These in-house consultants usually know their company's operations well, and, equally as important, they know the philosophy underlying these operations.
> 'However, when in-house consultants begin to operate at higher levels of management they are usually not so effective .. many of them cannot be completely free in their recommendations because of their reluctance to offend executives in the company, who may, at some future date, have a say in their advancement. Secondly there is the problem of lack of objectivity, or 'not being able to see the forest for the trees'. These people have become so deeply ingrained with the philosophy that certain actions are always taken in this company or in this industry that they see no reason to question them'[40]

But we go further and suggest certain values and habits of construing vary systematically. One manifestation of this is that the localised perspective of the internal is reflected in distinctive conceptualisations of the individual, the organisation and society, which contrast with those of commercial and academic consultants.

Firstly, internals tend to subsume the individual in the organisation. They do this whenever they refer to themselves as 'resources', whom the organisation "pays a certain wage". As Johnson tellingly writes of in-house professionals:

> 'As Fromm pointed out, personal identity takes on an exchange value as all are dependent for their material success on a personal acceptance by those who need resources and employ them'.[41]

Equally, they subsume the individual in the organisation when they say,

> 'It's a question of how do you tie the man in an intelligent way to the system'.

Commercials typically stress the differences of interest which are to be found in organisations, but temper this with an over-riding attachment to the 'corporate commitment of organisations':

> 'If you're working to a joint end, individual ends ought to be subordinated to the jointgoal.'

Academics maintain even more distance, and above all express a sense of the tension and contradictions between the individual and the organisation. These

attitudes will be fully presented in Chapter 9. But lest it be thought we are proposing an entirely consistent relationship between situation and ideas, as if some simple determinism or thorough-going evolutionary selection process is at work, we illustrate this sense of tension and contradiction between the individual and organisation, by a quotation from the internal consultant whom we have already identified as inclined towards the academic grouping:

> 'My aims? .. vaguely humanistic .. I believe it's possible in some places and at some times that the organisations I work with can become more effective and people can have more fun and get more satisfaction . .. But I also believe we're in a win-lose situation, that it's a political exercise a lot of the time .. Nor is it completely true that organisations are simply an arena where people are scratching one another's eyes out .. Each is partly true .. I want to hold the part truths there.'

Or his colleague, with similar though less accentuated leanings, put it:

> 'The big problem is that organisations, to perform their tasks, have got to restrict people. At some point, there's a breaking point .. they're too restrictive or not restrictive enough. Finding that point is the dilemma.'

The second area of difference is in the connection consultants make between society, the organisation and the individual. The internal, by inclination or by force of circumstance, says:

> 'Work is work, and separate .. though that's not to say community and social issues are not important and worth working in their own right.'

Academic and commercial consultants, however, are far less reluctant to make a connection between society and the organisation. They make it in the first place in their own lives in accepting an overlap of experience from one area to another. Again, using the exceptional internal to illustrate this outlook, prior to fully presenting it in Chapter 9:

> 'I get a lot of learning from home life, discovering correspondences between relationships .. I used to try to compartmentalize a lot, believing professional learning and personal learning are separate .. that professional development is subsumed to personal development.'

In the second place, academics and commercial consultants put greater emphasis on personal relations (a societal value imported to organisational settings), 'gemeinschaft' before 'gesellschaft':

> 'People come before organisations .. I join people rather than companies.'

The differences in attitude and interest indicated here are merely suggestive of the limitation on the professional outlook of the internal, Chapters 8 and 9 will provide further illustration of the wider perspective of the commercial and academic, made possible by greater detachment.

Generalisations about 'cosmopolitanism' and 'localism' are difficult to sustain, though, especially against evidence among internals professionally-qualified in the behavioural sciences of consulting involvements outside their organisations. But this issue is in any case secondary to the principal point concerning the impact of employment and locational factors on internals' practice theories <u>within their consulting</u>. The way practice theories reflect circumstances becomes more evident still when we consider commercial consultants.

References and Notes to CHAPTER 7

1. The straight lines in figure 1 show that the majority of internals (n = 10, or 55%) are single company people, although only two (11%) of the sample have had more than two employers in roles as O.D.consultants.

   - 9 graduated into O.D. consultancy roles with the organisation that currently employs them (50%), although 2 were given secondment to obtain behavioural science degrees.
   - 3 entered via external consultancy (17%)
   - 3 came direct from another company (17%)
   - 3 came as graduates in behavioural science (17%)

   In total, as Table 2 shows, only 6 (33%) have behavioural science degrees.

   This compares with figures from Kelley on the origins of internal management consultants (including O.D.)

1. An existing function such as human resources 2. A manager who has a problem-solving reputation can either create the position or be designated as the internal consultant (the most common procedure)	66%
3. An external consultant can be hired to act as an internal one	15%
4. A person can be brought in from outside - from another company, an external firm, or a graduate school	19%

   (R.E.Kelley, Should you have an internal consultant? Harvard Business Review, Nov.-Dec. 1979,pp110-120)

2. L.Lovelady, 'A Strategy for Change in Organisations: the use of internal consultants in Organisation Development Unpublished Ph.D.thesis, Univ. of Salford, 1983

3. See, for example, H.T.Graham, Human Resources Management, Macdonald Exams, 1974; and Inbucon Consultants, Managing Human Resources, Heinemann, 1976.

4. A.McLean, Organisation Development: A Review of Theory, Practice and Research, Centre for the Study of Organisational Change and Development, Univ. of Bath, 1978, p.14.

5. See Chapter 6.

6. See, for example, R.E.Kelley, op.cit.; A. Hunt, The Management Consultant, New York, Ronald Press, 1977.

7. This is the correlation between high 'formalisation' and high 'specialisation' observed by Pugh and his colleagues in large-scale manugacturing industry especially, and in public bureaucracy (D.S.Pugh and D.J.Hickson, The Comparative Study of Organisations, in D.Pym (ed.), Industrial Society, Harmondsworth, Penguin,1968.) It is not clear, though, what those who refer to their organisations as 'hierarchical' mean, although we may surmise that it has something to do also with a high degree of 'standardisation' (whether of work procedures or employment activities), whilst the 'less hierarchical' organisation allows greater latitude in the latter area, at least outside production areas.

8. See, A. Pettigrew and D.Bumstead, Strategies of Organisation Development in Differing Organisational Contexts, paper presented at European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management seminar, Groningen, Holland, Nov.1976, for a fuller development of this framework and a comparative analysis of O.D.consultancy in three ICI Divisions.

9. For example, an ex-ICI man, who had moved to a consultancy 'unit' in another company: "ICI managers have a better understanding of how to use an O.D.function".

10. See K.Legge, Power, innovation, and problem-solving in Personnel management, London, McGraw-Hill,1978,Chapter 4.

11. See A. Pettigrew and D.Bumstead, op.cit.

12. See, for example, G.Lippitt, Organisational Renewal, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969; S.A.Davis, An organic problem-solving method of organisational change, Journal of Applied Behavioural Science,Vol.3,No.1. 1967, pp.3-21.

13. See, R.Beckhard, Organisation Development: Strategies and Models, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1969.

14. M. Thakur, The Search for Identity, IPM Information Report 16, 1974.

15. See S.A.Davis, op.cit.

16. See H.Bridger, Course design and methods within the organisation, in M.L. and P.J.Berger (eds), Group Training Techniques, Gower, 1972.

17. B.E.Lievegoed, The Developing Organisation, London, Tavistock, 1973.

18. A.J.McLean, D.B.P.Sims, I.L.Mangham, D.Tuffield, Organisation Development in Transition: Evidence of an Evolving Profession, John Wiley, 1982, p.33.

19. Ibid, p.32

20. For example, Roeber says of the creation of O.D. roles in ICI that having got the power system of the company mobilised and placed behing the manpower productivity and wages reform programme (MUPS)

> "With that programme had to go another of resource development, 'so that when the managers returned to their works, with their attitudes unfrozen they would be able to call on expert resources to help them.' This meant that internal O.D.consultants had to be trained within the company. ICI therefore set up and ran two six-week courses of its own in 1969 and 1970. A number of other companies (Shell and Unilever among them) took part,making it a cooperative effort, and some 50 consultants were trained, to staff O.D. departments in the divisions."

(J.Roeber, Social Change at Work, London, Duckworth, 1975, pp.157-8) See also, D.Rawlinson, My Years with O.D., in R.N.Ottaway (ed.), Change Agents at Work, Associated Business Press, 1979, for the origins of the role at Shell (UK).

21. See, D.R.Tranfield, Some Characteristics of Organisation Development Consultants, Unpublished PhD. thesis, CNAA, Sheffield City Polytechnic, July 1978 for a survey of who was doing O.D. in the chemical and allied industries in the early 1970's, which showed a marked disparity between those"with perceived knowledge but no perceived role performance". (p.45)

22. See J. Roeber, op.cit., p.57-8.

23. See A. Pettigrew and D.Bumstead, op.cit., for detailed accounts of the setting up of internal consultancy at ICI.

24. See A. Etzioni, Managers, Staff, Experts and Authority, in R.Dubin (ed.), Human Relations in Administration, (3rd ed.) New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1968. Selective recruitment and subsequent role adaptation is likely, he argues, to produce a correlation between role, personality, background (both educational and of occupational experience), and normative orientations. (pp.286-7)

25. We were referring here to the Leavitt model he used, and had drawn on his wall. (See, H.J.Leavitt, Applied organisation change in industry: structural, technical and human approaches, in W.W.Cooper, H.J.Leavitt, and M.W.Shelley, (eds.), New Perspectives in Organisational Research, Wiley, 1964, pp.55-71).

26. A.J.McLean et al, op.cit., p.37

27. See, for example, D.R.Tranfield, op.cit., Also R.N. Ottaway distinguishes in the organisation of accounts in his book between 'trainers' and 'consultants'.

28. See, for example, J.F.Fordyce and R.Weil, Managing With People: A Manager's Handbook of Organisation Development Methods, Reading, Mass, Addison-Wesley, 1971, pp.19-23; and E.H.Schein, Process Consultation, Reading, Mass, Addison-Wesley, 1969, pp.3-9.

29. M.D.Mitchell, Consultant Burnout, in J.E.Jones and J.W.Pfeiffer (eds.), The 1977 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, La Jolla, California, University Associates, 1977, pp.143 -146.

30. See A.Dale, Coercive Persuasion and the Role of the Change Agent, ODMAG, Vol.1,No.2, Spring 1972, pp.19-29.

31. Ibid.

32. See N.Margulies and A. Raia, O.D.:Values, Processes and Technology, McGraw Hill, 1972, for the similar distinction between 'process orientation' and 'task orientation'.

33. As in P.Tisdall, Agents of Change: The Development and Practice of Management Consultancy, London, Heinemann, 1982.

34. See, for example, W.L.French and C.H.Bell, Organisation Development: Behavioural Science Interventions for Organisation Improvement, Prentice-Hall, 1973.

35. K.Back, Beyond Words: The Story of Sensitivity Training and the Encounter Movement, Russell Sage Foundation, 1972

36. D.R.Tranfield, op.cit.,

37. See also, A. McLean et al, op.cit.

38. T.J.Johnson, Professions and Power, Macmillan, 1972,p.68

39. See R.E.Kelley, op.cit.

40. A.Hunt, The Management Consultant, New York, Ronald Press, 1977, p.37.

41. T.J.Johnson, op.cit., p.68

CHAPTER 8

COMMERCIAL CONSULTANTS

'Existing disciplines and roles suck people into them .. like heavenly bodies exerting a gravitational pull on people in the O.D.community, though some go spinning off into outer space'.

(an internal)

'As a company trainer, the structure I was operating out of wasn't the right structure'.

(internal, turned commercial)

8.1. Introduction

We have characterised internals by saying, firstly, that employment in the organisation to which they consult is the major "gravitational pull"; social and behavioural science disciplines, or the community of social and behavioural scientists, are decidedly secondary. This is despite the fact that all eighteen internals interviewed belonged to the O.D. Network,[1] and were selected from the Network's directory. Secondly, within the organisation, the internal is susceptible to the "gravitational pull" of the part of the organisation that he works out of, though, thirdly, personal values and goals may always moderate such influences. Thus, the extent of active involvement in the O.D.Network may itself be a function of the need for a support group, for those whose values and goals set them at odds with their organisational ethos.

We adopt the same procedure in relation to commercial consultants, as for internals. We take the personal role concepts they employ, as an organising frame to describe style, strategies and methods, and we try to account for these by reference to difficulties and opportunities in their role together with the effect of personal values and goals they espouse.

Put crudely, whereas the internal's problem is coping with the constraints of permanent employment within the organisation to which he consults, the commercial's is in getting employed. Insofar as the commercial (or academic) is not part of the hierarchial pattern of relations within the organisations to which he consults, he is not subject to these pressures in the same way as the internal. Internals who consult to parts of an organisation outside their immediate set of relations indeed report the greater ease with which they can operate further off from home base.

The way the internal copes with working hierarchial relationships, and with people who may be in higher grades than himself, is to align himself with those people, and with the concept of the organisation, in various ways. Expressing an identification with the needs and goals of the business, (often in an overcompensatory way), and taking the role of a facilitator in managerial acts in relation to groups, are two of the most conspicuous ways he does this. What Argyris[2] terms "easing in", our internals identify by defining themselves as "resources". They lay claim to being an essential part of the hierarchy of

power, tasks and goals. They are in the cleft stick of being within an hierarchy, without hierarchical power of their own. Claiming the role of "resource" is a rationalisation of hierarchical constraints, and at the same time a claim to use power inhering in organisation or belonging to a specific other person (their sponsor) who disposes of them. Commercials, as an occupational gambit of their own may express doubt about these claims:

> 'Internals have no power. Their power is personal or technical, there is no hierarchical component to it. Whereas it's to our advantage externally to have technical and personal power over an M.D., I would hate to have hierarchical power in an organisation. It would be death to us. To them, it's death not to have it.'

Whilst commercials necessarily work with the power system of an organisation, they repudiate any idea that they actively manipulate it (in contrast to some internals). Nor do they assert their identification with the needs and goals of the business to the same degree. Although they may have to undergo a process of satisfying a client that they are competent, they do not need to proclaim their attachment to business goals. This is more taken for granted. After all, he is a 'consultant', of wide business experience:

> 'We've all managed something, so we don't come across as very bright, academically-trained consultants.[3]
> We try to project ourselves as 'Well, I've run a

contract with 500 dirty buggers doing all sorts of things. I can understand how you feel .. ' Within a few hours of meeting any senior manager or Chief Executive, its always, 'What's your background, what have you done?' It's reaching out, 'What's your experience compared with mine?'

For the internal, being 'pro-business' is an important rhetoric to protect against an image of being 'soft' (working in a vague behavioural science area, perhaps part of Personnel or Training, not identified by colleagues as committed to improving efficiency). He has to overcome the stereotype of the role, whereas the commercial consultant has merely to satisfy the client on the basis of personal experience.

The internal counters doubts about his usefulness by talking the language of 'business effectiveness', and presenting himself as a <u>routine</u> contributor to organisational effectiveness (i.e. a "resource"). On the contrary, providing a 'routine' service is the last thing the commercial wants to appear to be doing. His is a special contribution; his skills are not to be found within the organisation. His skill may be to focus up issues of business strategy or organisational weakness; to provide advice, or design help, on some aspect of organisational operations or its systems; or to perform some kind of behavioural magic. Each may be more acceptable coming from an external consultant. Behavioural training expertise, for example, may be more acceptable as a one-off infusion from

an outsider: it is shrouded in more of an air of mystery, bestowed at the hands of an 'expert'. and consequently the outsider can risk more (so adding to the aura surrounding it and the consultant). But one wouldn't want to repeat the experience too often.

The employment side of the relationship, its basis in money and an effort-reward contract which ensues in heirarchical relationships for the internal, is understated, therefore, because the commercial want to emphasize other things - viz. the expertise that flows from the special kind of social (non-hierarchical) relationship that is created. This claim to a special social relationship - personal service to a client - and special technical provision will be recognised as a typical gambit of professionally-aspiring groups.[4] Likewise, commercial consultants writing about consultancy[5] concentrate their rhetoric, to justify externals, on the ethics of consultancy within a business project, particularly the value of independence which the external enjoys - that is, on its social and moral, rather than positional, obligations and ties.

It is suggested, therefore, that why externals (both commercials and academics) do not make much of being identified with the business is because, palpably, they are not. What the client is buying is precisely this detachment. How externals conceptualise their role is around the opportunities (and problems) presented by this contingency of being 'external'. In trading on this externality,moreover, they emphasize its social, rather than its 'economic' or 'employment', features, whether they are offering detachment and objectivity in the way they report things, or"friendliness".

The differences between externals lie in how they exploit their externality; how far they seek to moderate it or abolish it by getting into a counselling mode, or to accentuate it by trading on a stance of the detached expert. They may, of course, on different occasions do both, but personality differences may encourage one rather than the other to predominate.

What the variety of images which commercials employ reflect in common, is a consciousness of their external position and the options available for managing it. Yet like the images others adopt, implicit and along with the advantages and opportunities claimed for the role, is an anxiety about the threats to their autonomy which arises from their economic and social position - in the commercial's case, not constraints, but the lack of organisational security. Role-images are partly a defence against this - a rationalisation, 'justification' or 'excuse', if we consider them in terms of an 'account' being given[6] - at the same time as they represent a claim to particular advantages.

Before exploring the form that social images take, however, we should note what little is reflected of the employment relationship.

8.2. The Employment Relationship

One commercial alone talks of seeking "non-executive director" roles and "retainer" roles. Retainer roles are implicit whenever an external has a long-standing periodic relationship with a client, and one would have thought this ensured some continuity of income. The lack

of reference to it, however suggests the commercial sees it otherwise. It cannot guarantee regularity of income, nor cover the overheads of the consultancy <u>group</u>. The commercial consultant depends upon blocks of work; therefore most talk in terms of on-going projects. The justification for a "retainer" role offered is in terms of "the least damaging provision of help", which may in fact, not be most advantageous financially to the commercial consultant, and tenable only by the solo consultant:

> 'I'm beginning to be more and more convinced of the legitimacy of the non-executive director thing .. You can do the all dancing, showman thing. If it's helpful to them, they can own it; if damaging, they can drop it. Typically, you get twenty managers to a one-day seminar, and you might get work from five of them for 5 days each, although you're hoping for one person for 100 days.. Or you can do the quieter thing, hoping to make the minimum claims, and become an insider .. one who is trustable and therefore seen as committed to the long-term success of the outfit. You continue to be accessible, and yet by being in several places at once, as an insider working with four or five such firms, being seen as prepared to take risks which those who are there all the time can't'.

The crux, then, is in turning a "retainer" relationship into regular contact, so as to satisfy the consultant both financially and professionally, thus:

> 'I operate in two scenes at the same time: first, steady standard seminar type of activity .. not as most people

do it, as a soft-sell to get other business out of it; and secondly, I earn money working as an outsider to small groups, who own companies or run them .. a non-executive director type of long, low-volume relationship .. rather than the itinerant purveyor of cleverness type of relationship.'

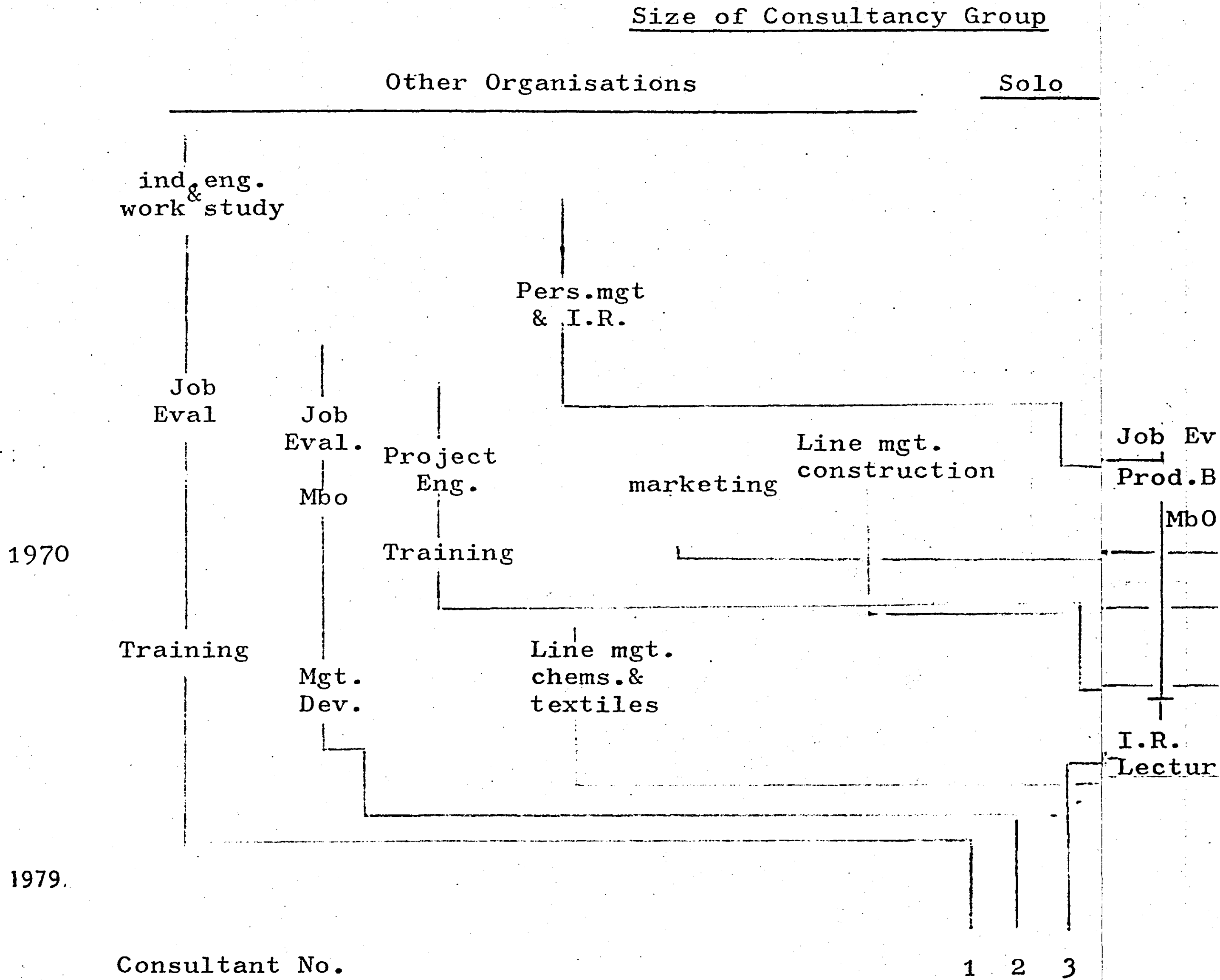
Role-definitions relating to the basis of employment are surprising, however, by their absence, in view of the undoubted financial precariousness of the commercial consultant's existence. Evidence for believing this to be so is to be found in several indirect manifestations. Initially, there is the under-employment which enables many commercials to devote a considerable part of the day to the interviews (in their own home), and the difficulties with efficient time-management accompanying an irregular working-life. Then there is the extreme volatility of the group. As Fig.4 shows, there is considerable shifting in and out of internal and external roles, and between different external roles in the course of their careers (especially when we add in those internals who had returned to large organisations after a spell as commercial consultants).

The real pain of operating as a commercial, however, is expressed in <u>social</u> terms. This is the problem of working in a social limbo, far from a parent organisation which can provide regular role relationships, known rules and norms, and feelings of security:

'In fact I was made redundant at the end of last year .. What does one do? I wasn't ready to retire .. I had had ideas that one day I would work freelance. O.K., so it's

Figure 4.

Career paths of Commercial Consultants



come five years earlier than I would have liked .. it's been thrust on me. It's not something one welcomes. If I'd carried on till normal retirement age, I would have started to build up for going independent. It was a surprise. Apart from the whole question of income, it was a matter of being occupied, getting identity again. Having been with a company like (--) for a long time, there's a certain style, a way of working you've become used to it's there - you don't think about it. It's not a matter of being comfortable and complacent .. It's familiar .. you know where you stand .. people know you .. what you can do, what you can't do .. It gives you a bit of orientation'

The absence of assured organisational relationships makes the commercial consultant prey to being sucked into a client organisation. Not only does this give more social stability it also creates longer-term relationships, which ensure longer employment and improved financial security:

'You do build up a tremendous relationship as a consultant, especially as an external, away from home five days a week .. I had damn all else to do, except work. So, in the evenings (it was very good for me) I used to dine with one or two of my clients .. breakfast with some .. and always have a drink at the end of the day, after reporting. I always used to develop a close relationship because you're a personal consultant to your main client often .. You're the one guy he can talk to outside the organisation. You don't have a political axe to grind, and if he's got personal problems

or there are interpersonal problems with him and some of his seniors, you can debate those with him and get very close, because he knows you can shop him.. And inevitably you're saying things about yourself, to get somebody else's confidence.. You get what you give, and I find that very satisfying .. stimulating.

(I: 'What were the pains of operating like that? .. Why did you break out of that?')

'The pain was the family .. having to create a new relationship with your family at the weekend, and having only two days to do it. The client was paying for you from Monday onto Friday night'.

At the same time, the consulting organisation is placed under stress, and this becomes another personal pressure:

'You get tremendous satisfaction out of doing a job with a client. You get so identified .. It's a classic triangle - the consultant, the client, and the 'consultant-parent'. You need to keep that triangle linked together .. The tendency is for the consultant to get divorced from the 'consultant-parent'. The client tends to link himself only with the consultant .. the 'consultant-parent' thinks it's being ostracised by both client and consultant, and tries to intervene. And gets clobbered by both consultant and client - by the consultant because it's interfering in his patch .. by the client because he sees the 'consultant-parent' as irrelevant to the problems and the relationship he's built up with the consultant. These were the sorts of issues we were always debating as consultants. They were always clouding the problem'.

The tensions experienced may be peculiar to this consultant, given a personal disposition he describes elsewhere[7] to get "close" to his clients. However, having recently relinquished the commercial role to become an internal, it may well be that he merely expresses what commercials generally experience, but are unable to admit freely, in an interview with a stranger. The same need to preserve face and self-respect may account for the lack of reference to the economic problems of the commercial. This same consultant is alone in addressing these (having become distant from them):

> 'One of the traumas of small group consultancy work is clients don't pay on time. You've terrible cash-flow problems all the time .. never the right balance of work and numbers of consultants, never steady bread and butter work coming in all the time. If you're doing the sort of work we were doing - a fairly small firm of 10 to 12 consultants, who didn't run continuous courses nor take a basic retainer - we were relying on the assignments we had. One could go suddenly bang .. or a big job would come in, and either you didn't have enough disposable consultants, or they were then all tied up on one job that wasn't paying for some time .. So the trauma of having a family and four children, and no money some months .. People who work in large organisations don't actually understand the real economics of business. They've never faced it .. Part of the break-up was we overstretched ourselves.'

A further reason why commercials do not use images suggestive of an employment relationship (as "resource"does

for the internal) but use ones, instead, which characterise social relationships, is because it is their success in establishing social relationships which determines whether they get employment; and it is the way they structure the social relationship which determines what they are employed to do. In other words, employment precedes the social relationship in the case of the internal. But it follows the creation of a social relationship in the external's case. 'Getting in', therefore, is the problem, and the key process in this is 'contracting'. Externals recognise this in the amount of explicit attention they give to 'contracting'.

8.3. The Social Relationship

8.3.1. 'Getting in' - the importance of 'contracting'

The external's relationship to a client organisation begins in an arms-length relationship. The consultant's and the client's organisation are conceived as separate systems.[8] The modal strategy then is to confirm the client organisation as a separate system by using the relationship to clarify the distinctive, unique qualities of the client organisation. This may mean helping a client organisation to perceive the distinctive environment in which it operates and the paths it should take, in a strategic business sense. Or it may mean highlighting weaknesses, faults, confusions and making organisational adjustments to fit it better for following its chosen strategy.

Many internals strive towards the same goals with their clients (for example, by encouraging thinking in open systems terms) and towards the kind of relationship which will permit them to carry out this function. However,

> 'Looking at an organisation from within its own boundary internals don't recognise where that boundary is, and when that is the right boundary and whether it's the right business to be in. If you're within the boundary, you have to accept as given the stated tablets, on 'this is the way we're going to run this business .. You can't turn round to the boss and say, 'I don't think it is the right way'.

Possibly this overstates the problem for an internal of stimulating colleagues to look at strategic issues. More difficult is taking a 'process consultancy' role towards a client group (where managers are being asked to stand back and reflect upon their behaviour, and the consultant takes a role apart from the internal group processes). An internal may achieve this relationship for a while, but not on the scale or to the degree the external is capable of. Where the internal is conceived as a "resource", an extension of the client or of his boss (his sponsor), or as a "sensing" device, his boss' eyes and ears, the external conceives of himself as a "mirror", a quite separate entity standing in a relationship of relative equality. He is not a mere channel[9] or vessel, conveying received views, but someone who forces people to look at the image of their own performance and behaviour.

The role of 'process consultant' was first conceptualised and elaborated by an external academic[10]. Many consultants in all kinds of positions have since aspired towards that role. For many internals, in the early 1970's, it was a major model of what consulting was about. The experience of many internal consultants, however, has been that it is not a tenable role for an internal:

> 'My first reaction was to read the Addison-Wesley series - 'how did Schein do it?' But it's not like that .. people don't behave like that .. Everyone then, in 1974, said, 'that's how it's done' - But I found it didn't work when I tried it myself .. I was left scratching my head'.

The external, however, being distinct and independent from the client, uses this fact in the practices he develops. He places great stress on the skills of listening, reflecting and modelling. The major virtues he should develop, building upon the strengths of his role-relationship with a client, are being clear and providing clarity. This applies whether the consultant opts to contribute at the level of content or at the level of process. Quite often what a client seeks to buy is precisely the clarity of a fully-worked out consultant's solution to a problem. Though a behavioural consultant may regard this particular route as ineffectual and undesirable, the same criterion should govern the contributions he makes towards a client's finding his own solutions:

> 'I believe consultants can always be clear .. the expectation is that they will be clear. If they're not

clear about solutions .. which is very seldom the case that they are clear about solutions .. then their contribution is clarity about process. 'How do we get to solutions or understandings or whatever?' .. 'Give us some guidelines about the way forward.'

Creating this clarity begins with the act of contracting:

'The one skill that every consultant must have .. and I don't really feel I've got it, is contracting .. an ability to work expectations and aspirations and information, in such a way that a clear psychological contract comes out of that. And then the ability to rework it, as inevitably things don't quite go the way you thought they would .. The contracting process is the key to consulting. People's expectations can then be shared with you and yours with them'.

Internals often describe projects as "messy", as having no distinct starting point, clear shape, or distinct end as far as their relationship with the client system goes. The internal who goes 'external' in moving outside his own part of an organisation to work with other bits becomes conscious of this. Where hs is known,

'Casual encounters on a personal level are crucial, I've found'.

But beyond this sphere,

'I saw myself as a free agent, and became very much aware of the importance of the contract with the client'

A model of consulting then becomes clearer:

'Comments about a model are more relevant .. Lippitt's[11] book is very good.. I very much had in mind the phases -

phase 1, contact and entry .. phase 2, helping and clarifying the need for change..phase 3, exploring the readiness for change .. phase 4, moving onto exploring the potential for work, formulating the contract and establishing a relationship.'

The significance of contracting is that the external is very definitely not a member of the client organisation. Whereas an employee has a legal and, in Schein's[12] term (borrowed from Etzioni and now widely reproduced in the Personnel literature[13]), a "psychological contract", the external has not. To work with an organisation he has quickly to establish an agreed basis for working which comprises these two aspects. This is not to say internals don't contract, they do. But they start from a position where a lot may already be mutually understood from familiarity with the organisation's culture. This is why internals say very little about contracting. The culture is taken for granted, the processes of accommodation within it are more constrained, 'rules' of behaviour and for doing work are known to the parties. At the same time, contracting is an ever-present process of mutual adjustment between colleagues, and contracting, as an internal consultant with colleagues is merely an extension of normal practices. Externals acknowledge this problem when they offer behavioural science 'packages'. Whatever else may be said about 'packages' (and they have had a lot of criticism[14]), they simplify the contracting (and 'entry') process considerably. They define the types of problem to be worked on; they project clear end-goals; they describe

procedures, tasks and processes; and specify who will participate, in what roles. It is the ambition of every commercial consultant, therefore, to develop a distinctive product or service, which avoids (of course) the rigidities of the 'packages' which others have sold: to create a product that is both distinctive but can be tailored to the unique requirements of the client.

The following quotation describes the virtues of a 'package' (as seen by an internal), and illustrates also how an internal can draw upon a common culture as his starting point:

> (I: 'What does a package like MbO achieve?')
> 'It gives you a common language, and a common language enables dialogue to take place. From a systems point of view that is helpful. At the same time as MbO came in, the Weekly Staff Agreement was coming in .. a new employment agreement with the workers. So people would all have the management guide in their drawer, about training and developing their subordinates .. Packages enable, from a systems point of view, a few things to go on at once under the umbrella of the package .. a package helps achieve critical mass.'

Without a package, contracting is a lengthy process, in which the terms of the contract have to be progressively redefined:

> 'That was the way you proved yourself .. You sorted out an initial problem, and became an expert .. You were credible on marketing, production control .. you

solved it. And you developed a relationship upstairs, and that allowed you to solve the real thing .. Inevitably we had a 1 - 3 month proving stage. If we didn't make it then, that was it. If we made it, we got them to start talking about the real problem.. Getting credits in one particular function was a necessary step to being perceived as an expert .. We developed a relationship with the head guy .. the M.D., Chief Executive, or Chairman .. at the same time as solving the initial problem, which was really symptomatic anyway of the underlying problem, .. Most of our approaches were covert. He'd say, 'The problem is, we need an incentive scheme. Are you good at incentive schemes?' .. 'Of course, we're good at incentive schemes - We're consultants, of course we're good at it .. And there are other things like relationships, which often ..' .. And the guy, perhaps unconsciously, thought, 'that's better than those other consultants who can do incentive schemes, but don't really talk about those things .. We know it's down there, but we never talk about it' .. So we got the job, and solved his problem, by pretending in the early stages, that was the problem. But by finding out what the real problem was, by getting a feel for it, as you got credibility you can start moving the man from his initial position .. It was important to get him with you, though, all the way along the line, during the initial period. You have to move at his pace, not yours. Within a week you can see it, but you can't say, 'the whole brief's wrong, sir ..' You've got to slowly pick away at it.'

8.3.ii 'Getting on', and finding out: the uses of data collection

Externals have a clear model not only of the contracting phase, but of the whole consulting process. (Inevitably, it is academics who go furthest in clarifying and formulating a model[15] of this, since they are in the business of formulating models and have most ready access to publication channels.) The next steps after contracting and problem-formulation are data-collection, feedback and the formation of a diagnosis. With the proviso that these phases in consulting are iterative, this is a logical sequence. Solving a problem depends, first, on agreeing on the problem, and, second, on marshalling information that bears on it.

But consulting is not merely a problem-solving activity; it is not a mechanical process. It depends on the consultant. Getting access to problems depends on the forming of relationships:

> 'Consultants help in solving the problems of other people and organisations. There are therefore, two major aspects of any consulting relationship: (1) the analysis and solution of the problem and (2) the relationship between consultant and client. These aspects are interlinked and if the consultant-client relationship is not properly understood by both the parties, even the best scientific approach to problem-solving will give no practical results.'[16]

The consultant can only go as far down the road of data-collection, diagnosis, developing plans and actions, (towards 'successful' problem-solutions), as he develops legitimacy for doing so.[17] The data collection/ diagnostic phase has, therefore, a simple but vital 'social' function beyond (or prior to) its 'intelligence' purpose. It enables the external consultant to get to know the personnel of the organisation and to become familiar with language, practices, norms, and meanings. It continues and widens the process of getting social acceptance. It is, therefore, essentially role-building, developing expectations, liking, and respect, whatever else comes out of it. 'Getting in' involves, therefore, an extended process of 'finding out'.

Formal data collection is, therefore, often only a necessary hoop to go through, while it is a front for developing acceptance - credibility is earned and the main client can see something being done. Formal diagnosis can thus assist entry, like a 'package' does (although paradoxically it may delay the client doing real work on his problems). Many well-known behavioural science packages, indeed, include a diagnostic stage,[18] and a diagnostic process has been seen as a general device for gaining authority in a professional relationship:

> 'The dignostic relationship is used as a control mechanism both within an occupation and in relationships with other allied occupations, for whatever the problem (mechanical, physical, psychological or social), action (plans, therapy or policy) stems from the diagnosis and the diagnostician assumes an authoritative role. The diagnostic relationship is given pre-eminence by those practitioners who personally confront laymen as an essential part of their work task and consequently need to have their expertise taken for granted.'[19]

How much time a consultant spends on extensive data-collection, however, may be a measure of lack of status and ready acceptance. Widespread renown permits a top consultant to go anywhere and start calling the shots. But, equally, some externals, having trained within a company and gone commercial, continue on contract to spend a considerable portion of their time in their former company. They likewise can avoid the hoop of large-scale data-collection, for the purpose merely of sizing up the organisations and getting credibility.

The outcome of a diagnostic phase, in social terms, is confidence, trust, "friendliness", and perceived expertise:

> 'Generally speaking we get credibility by doing a really good diagnosis. In that diagnosis, when you are in fact looking at a specific problem they've raised, you're also getting a feel for the whole organisation.. and if at the end of that period you can give a diagnosis that is highly challenging, but also seems to be true, they say, 'Yes, you're right there .. I've been avoiding that, but I can see now that's probably right' .. If you can do that, you've got it and you're credible. It does the thing nobody in the company can do.. (a) to recognise what's going on, which some of them can do,(b) but actually tell people in a non-threatening way what's going on. They suddenly say 'You've done something no-one else can do, and you're friendly .. you're with us, in the way you've said nasty things' .. Then they'll start to show some confidence. That's generally the bit that

gets you on, a really good diagnosis .. 'We do understand your problem and we can help you with it'.

The other social aspect to diagnostic data collection is, of course, to develop motivation - an issue discussed in the literature under the heading, 'increasing the readiness to change'.[20] Again, the extent to which a commercial consultant can dispense with or foreshorten it is a function of other factors - depth of the problem and resistance to dealing with it, company culture, how well insinuated the consultant is into the decision-making and opinion-forming councils of the organisation, and his own sensitivity and security in working these:

'An alternative strategy is to get them altogether, to do it straightaway and say, 'It's perfectly obvious you're not happy about this .. Why don't you talk about it?' But I expect if we tried to do that, we'd be out the door .. We need to go through this lengthy process, and come up with all the documents and reports, which will enable them to start getting it out.
(I: 'You think you'll have to go through the hoop of presenting reports?')
'I don't think there's any alternative .. They're a very paper-oriented company. They like nice reports, and it's useful, as technical hard data. They can use it as a basis for planning and further change, but their major use will be to release this tension and anxiety ..
(I: 'So, although all as individuals, at one time or another might say to you, 'I always thought ..', to get

them to own it and talk about it publicly, you've got to lay it out?).

'Absolutely .. In a sense, what we will do is, create a problem, which we'll take over ownership of. Then we'll go back to them, as consultants, and say, 'This is a problem, we found it for you .. You've got to take it over ..' And if they reject it, well, that's it. But it's only by somebody taking together all these little problems and creating one single problem, that they will be able to face up to that problem, and take it on themselves.'

A data collection/diagnostic phase is an opportunity for total immersion, for "getting into bed with the client and talking their language", for being seen as an "ordinary guy". The process is akin to that of the anthropologist going native to learn about an alien people. First, there is the openness to the data, taking it as it comes:

'There's such a mass of data on certain types of jobs .. I try to look at something on a week by week basis .. 'What's it looking like? How do I see it?' .. I try to precis it, extract things .. If you go right through, blindly, the whole six weeks, it's impossible .. Sometimes you can adopt different change tactics, if you've been there a fortnight, because you've looked back on a week by week basis. You develop certain ideas, and you test them out.

(I: 'That does include also who you then go and see, because talking to someone is not just getting data from them .. It's maybe influencing them?)

'Right .. because you start the change process as you go along. The first interview starts the process .. One point I've realized, there's no information that's any more important than any other information, though none of us ever behave that way. We treat certain types of information, like objectives or planning, as more important than other information .. like, 'how you feel' or 'what's happening over there' .. When I first started I would say, 'this is important information .. I want to collect stuff on it' .. We still do that, but more and more I'm beginning to feel that that's a mistake. We should treat all as if it's of equal importance .. so you see everything, fresh as it is, not as you're projecting it .. Then one does this data collection and data review and over the process of weeks you start to see what the inportant information is .. and it may not be the objectives or the plans or the marketing strategy .. It may be that the Chairman has a certain picture about how he wants to see the company behaving. And that's the bit you've got to delve into.. That's one rationale for collecting lots of information and not actually doing much with it. Just letting it swill around, and perhaps then saying, 'Ah, I think it's time to point there' .. and you collect a bit more in that area .. and then, 'No I think we'll go back there' .. And slowly the sort of sub-conscious, I think, starts to pop things up, and you say, 'No, I think that's important' .. What used to happen in the beginning was this would happen to me, but because I had all these analytical schemes, I would churn on through these bloody interviews and have ten categories

of information and write them all out, on a huge piece of paper, with thousands of bits of information on it, categorised in some analytical scheme.. And I'd say, 'Yes, I think that's a bloody good analysis' .. But I'd be feeling that it actually isn't it .. What got me to change was I threw a bit of paper away .. 'sod it' ,, and went for a walk .. 'What do I want to say right now?' .. and I got a bit of paper and started writing. That's what was in me and that's the sub-conscious.. Then I looked at all the information, and could start to see that information in a useful way. In a way I have these two processes in me fighting, and more and more we're probably tending to allow the sub-conscious or intuitive thing to play more of a role.'[21]

The second aspect of a process of immersion is that which is associated with the method Sofer termed 'social consultancy'[22] deriving from psycho-analytic practice. Using the emotions and reactions (he assumes) he has in common with other people, the consultant uses himself as a sensor or filter for perceiving what is going on among people in the organisation:

'We could have done an analysis of the market, in a conventional way, fed that up, then argued the pros and cons of that. But what we did was to take the frustations of individuals as evidence that something was wrong .. and to work with that might well be more effective .. It's quicker, yes .. We don't go for these big market things. I think because we don't like them .. they're boring.

Everyone does them anyway. Go to McKinsey's if you want that done .. But in a way underlying all our work is that the 'feel' there can tell you an awful lot. They will always know the market better than you .. they may not see it quite in the way market research would, but they know something .. the product's selling or not selling .. they know they're as good as their competitors or they aren't .. If you can pick that up, you can start to say, 'What's the reason for this frustration? Is it purely internal, or something to do with outside? .. If you think a company's a closed system, then of course it can be purely internal, but more and more that's not the case. Then it's the centre not reacting to the environment correctly, and the periphery's getting frustrated, putting their resentment into the centre .. but in fact the problem's at the periphery .. We do tend to use that method of reading the environment we try to read people's views, the level of frustration, and what's it due to .. 'You say its your superior, or your boss, but what actually are you frustrated about? What is he not doing? Or what is the company not doing?' .. And you can then get to a position where you are reading something about the environment'.

8.3.iii. The Consultant as a 'Mirror'

The differences between commercials depend in part on how far they stay with data-collection/diagnostic processes - collating information and developing 'solutions'. And how far they diverge from this - merely using a formal

diagnosis as a way of getting onto terms with, and into the organisational system (or even dispensing with it). Their practice in this respect relates to how they exploit their externality - adapting the mantle of 'expert' and assuming "technical and personal power over", or seeking to moderate and abolish the social distance implied by this, by "getting alongside" the client(s) into a role of 'confidant'. Either way, the modal role is to act as a "mirror", giving the client organisation a clearer image of itself as a prelude to 'correcting' any unfavourable aspects - what Boulding calls "the proprioceptive function"[23] of the consultant.

As an outsider, the commercial consultant sets up favourable expectations that he will offer an unbiased viewpoint:

> (I: 'What skills do you bring, that you yourself value?')
> 'One of the interesting things about that question is how my view's been changing over the years. When you say 'skills', I'd put it wider than that, as 'the role of the consultant' .. He may not be terribly skilled, but being there in the role has an effect, for good or ill. The consultant is an external third party .. there is the impartiality he brings .. the hope, willingness, a greater ability to see a whole set of issues, rather than narrower vested interests'.

From this position, he can create a better appreciation of reality, of what's outside or within the organisation, by reflecting data that's there but unrecognised:

> 'A lot of what I've been doing has been raising the level of awareness .. One of the things an external can and should be doing for a client is to hold up a mirror, as

it were, and to raise the level of awareness and understanding, of what's going on in the organisation.. though at the end of it, it's their choice what they're going to do about it'.

"Mirroring" is "to reflect back to them what they see", to act as a "catalyst". The mirroring function was epitomised by one commercial in his interest in video for giving clarity of feedback. Other externals provide well-documented accounts of their use of audio tapes for the same purpose.[24] In less structured situations than skills training and group process work, mirroring depends on recasting facts and putting information together in unexpected ways. (Mirroring this is not simply reflection but involves the interpretation by the consultant of what he sees).

It begins with the process of challenging thinking:

'We tend to get change by getting the key power figures to move from inside the system to outside the system, so they can see what's going on .. so they see all the same facts in a different light, and start behaving differently. And one of the first things they might need to do is to change their structure, and they might say, 'no wonder this is not working. I'm seeing it this way, which is a blocked way .. now I've moved over to here and I can see why people behave in the way they behave .. ah! ah! perhaps we need to change the way we're organised'.. (I: 'How are you getting them to stand outside the system .. you're not talking about taking them away for the weekend?')

'No .. we just try to give them insight, by getting them to examine their own thoughts and concepts .. we try to give them some evidence .. 'this is the way I see the organisation .. how does it compare with yours?' .. And then you get them to consider, 'Why do we see it differently?' .. So they examine their own picture, their world-view, and ask, 'is it necessarily the right one for the organisation?' .. 'I'm not saying my view is the right view, but are you sure what you're seeing is right? .. how do these people react? .. is it a logical reaction? .. do you <u>know</u> what the reaction is?'.. So you get them perhaps to consider, 'Is there another view?' .. You shake them a little from their concrete picture, and they might suddenly get an insight, 'I thought it was resistance .. because they were lazy, etc .. but it isn't that at all .. They're frustrated, unable to contribute' .. If you can get the guy to do that, that's half the battle. Then the structural and procedural changes can follow .. So I've moved away from structural change, which is fairly violent, to trying to get the thinking of top people modified. Then they can make the structural change and I can help them with that, and say, 'I'm an expert .. I can help you with what happens' .. But at least they've fastened onto some objectives'.

Changing thinking ends, then, with constructing ways to get through their problems:

'Clients value strategic thinking - the ability to step back .. to have an outsider balance things up .. and

to work through those things. They really value the skills of listening and reflecting .. they value that process .. plus the connections he makes to, 'What can we do now?' ..

Or as another put it:

'There's a contrast with when I started .. The great training and approach then was analysis, splitting things down, a kind of reductionism. The more experience I get, I see another more important skill .. Synthesis, integration, the ability to bring a lot of things together, to make sense of it .. That is the skill.'

'Mirroring' is thus catalytic to the process of change:

'We're fairly sure we'll be used as a catalyst, for actually discussing the very nasty possibility that they've spent two years on a major change programme that hasn't worked and not been accepted .. As an organisation they can't face that. They've had success. For them to face the reality that they've done it the wrong way is too much for them .. They couldn't do it internally, no-one internally could stand up and say, 'Excuse me, sir, but it's a balls-up'. So they need an external agent who can do that. In a sense, we're doing classic psychotherapy, enabling them to get down on a couch. Someone eventually will take us aside, in an aeroplane or restaurant, and say, 'I never said so, but I always thought it was a load of rubbish .. If only we'd done this, or that ..' We've had hints of that already ... In a sense what we will do is create a problem, which we'll take over ownership of .. then go back to them as

consultants and say, 'this is a problem .. we found it for you .. you've got to take it over'.. '

'Mirroring starts with the consultant collecting data, as he asks questions and checks out answers. From the consultant's point of view, this is part of the broader process of building up an understanding of an organisation. But this can be shared with members of the organisation, and so the act of developing understanding can be systematically put to the service of the organisation, and becomes a way of clarification for them:

'If I had to use one model to describe what I was doing then it would be Paulo Freire's model, in South America. described in 'Pedagogy of the oppressed', where it was associated with the literacy programme - describing and building a story of what things were like in a village, its hygiene or waste disposal or whatever .. building a story about an issue or series of issues over a long time period. The very act of doing that, and making it a clear and understood story, leads to a lot of energy to act, in some way or another .. At that point, you bring in the expert, not before .. when they want to act.'

More focused versions of this process in common use are the various forms of 'role negotiation', where the "shared story" relates to the specific tasks, expectations, responsibilities of members in role relationships[25]. Kelly's[26] method of writing a script in role therapy is of this kind:

'I'm just doing some work at the moment associated with that (Kelly's method) .. developing a script around the

expectations of a brand new team coming together. I'm going there this afternoon .. One guy has 'written' the story originally, but it's not been checked .. and he wonders why there's so much bloody confusion around. What we're doing there is developing scripts about the expectations of people there'.

Others formalise the process of clarification for generating a shared understanding,into a series of definable stages:

'At every stage I'm working between two realities - a reality of what <u>is</u> the situation .. and a reality of the ideas <u>about</u> the situation.'
(I: 'the realities of all the people involved?')
'Right'..
(I: 'Aren't they slightly different?')
'Yes .. and some of them may not be in the room .. Stage one is working between ideas to the current situation, and back to ideas again - a process of continuous movement between the world of ideas and the world of reality. That's one of the models we always work with .. the other polarity is of the past and future. At every stage we're asking, 'How did this situation come about? How did that idea come about?' as well as 'if that idea works in that situation, what kind of future could there be .. what would happen?' It's very important to us to understand how it came about. We spend a lot of time just getting different perspectives on what has played into it.'

(I: 'Like talking to people .. getting their stories .. how they saw the situation coming about?')
'Yes .. Now I come into another model, the problem-solving model. We start by looking at the level of phenomena .. at observable fact .. The second stage is to do with what structures underlie those phenomena.. The third stage, what values underlie those structures .. That's what I mean by, 'how did it come about?' .. What are the values underlying the attitudes the structures of thinking, as well as the structures in the management sense.'

With another, this process is formalised and elaborated to the extent it becomes a 'package':
'We have a process, consisting of four steps .. (1) an analysis of the current organisation .. (2) then analysis of the organisational determinants .. (3) then a 'cascade comparison' process.. (4) then an implementation step .. Very simplistic stuff .. The organisation analysis stuff is the process of building up a picture .. The way organisations are managed seems to us to be through what we see as management policies. The shape and form of an organisation is really determined by things like pay policy, Industrial relations policy, management development policy, job descriptions, etc.. But one of the great problems of organisation analysis is you can't talk to a client about the impact of a pay policy .. it's just too complicated. So we look at three things - structure, style, and philosophy. These three things overlap

tremendously .. It's just an intellectual trick, that gives us a handle on these aspects .. only by looking at these three aspects, we can start to get an image for the organisation as a whole, and can talk to managers about it.'

'Mirroring' may thus be conducted through 'discussions', or in more formal ways through written reports as part of an ostensible diagnostic phase, "relating back to them their subjective judgements, but in a very hard, tangible way". But at the same time, in order to keep the mirroring process going, it has to be drawn out, not start and end in the production of a report:

'As far as possible we work collaboratively with the client or his representatives, so he gets information feed back over a long period.. We're in a position to say, 'Is this making sense to you? .. does it fit your views,your image?' .. because ultimately they know their own organisation much better than we do .. the only trouble is, they can't see it'.

8.3.iv. 'Bridge-building': the consultant as 'engineer'

Beyond 'mirroring', the role may be extended in one direction by introducing new data. At its furthest reach this means creating ('engineering') a new reality:

'You're expected to know not just about principles, but about practice - what they do in other industries, what they do in this kind of industry in other places.. In a way a management consultant is like a kind of engineer,

who's taking more general findings, notions of science as it were, and applying them .. Roads, tracks, bridges are built by very primitive people, in all sorts of places, but the more experience we get at building these structures, the more we introduce more systematic ways of going about it. I see my job as a person out there, helping clients to do their thing a bit better. I see myself as a bridge, between the general state of the art as it's known in the literature, and in the archives of companies, and in my own experience. I act as a bridge between all that, and the actual practical situation that's there .. I work with the practical situation, but using whatever theories, models I can pick up.'

Bowers and Franklin similarly define the role of a consultant as a 'bridge', using an electrical rather than civil engineering metaphor -

> 'a transducer (i.e. an energy link between scientific knowledge regarding principles of organisational functioning and the particular organisation or group with which he is working)'.[27]

This raises the question of how far consultants may import a theory or well-tried solution. In the matter of 'theories' commercials are more ready than internals to admit to having, using, and liking theories:

'The thing with theories is .. I like theories, I find them useful. They're useful to talk to people as well as useful to think in .. The key is how to recast the theory in down-to-earth language that you can share, so people don't see it as a theory.'

In the process of building up a story about an organisation and developing an appreciation of its culture, the commercial is more inclined then the internal to give play to his fantasy, to apply behavioural theories freely, to make 'psychological interpretations' even. They are trying to get a hold on organisational phenomena and are more prone to make interpretative judgements, therefore - for example, to see an organisation as suffering from a "mid-life crisis":

'The passion and emotion in there is at sexual level .. It's very fundamental, because it's a very virile, masculine, potent company, very male-dominated, where all men are men, and all secretaries are very female and expected to be so .. and on the 6th floor there ain't a woman in sight .. They're all ex-salesmen, and women were not salesmen in their time .. What we've got to do is challenge their virility .. there's a mid life crisis'
(I: 'You've read Alistair Mant?')
'He uses the same idea .. Most people in their mid-30's have to face up to the reality that they ain't young anymore, and they're going to die. In a sense, this company has a mid-life crises, it's no longer youthful .. it's gone through adolescence - it could be in its young adulthood, or it could be a mid-life crisis. But one way or another, they ain't eighteen any longer, and they're not sure how to handle that.. And in fact, of course, the interesting thing is the average age of the executives is the early 40's and the average age of the people underneath them is the mid 30's.. And the real problem is having lots of bright young people underneath,

with nowhere to go, and they're leaving the company .. So also there's that going on, and they're asking themselves, 'If we've got it wrong, how are we going to be able to hold onto this any longer?' .. But as consultants we can only tackle these problems indirectly .. we can hardly go straight to the Chairman .. '

Thus, although they may use 'theories' for themselves, using these with clients requires discretion:

'Models can become a cultural imposition if wheeled out too early.'

But,

'Once you've proved yourself, you can start pulling out a few theories from the air .. handing out a few papers .. give a process of education. But only after a certain period of time.'

Although internals distance themselves even more carefully from seeming theoretical, some do run into trouble, expecially in the training area, through excessive use of bits of theory. ("Oh the models I've used, I can't tell you .. '). McLean et al[28] refer to the condition that is likely to result from undigested theories as the "unintegrated practitioner".

The issue of using theory generally is addressed by consultants under the rubric of 'action-research'. The broad meaning it has for the two internals (both 'behavioural science resource' types) who refer to it and for commercials is as a process of finding out and

developing new solutions collaboratively ,typified in the comment:

'I see change as a joint learning discovery process'

The emphasis, so far as commercials are concerned, falls, therefore on the process, rather than on the substance of what is exchanged through action-research.[29] It denotes a process wherein knowledge is built up slowly, solutions unfold, and change is cumulative:

'My concept of action-research is where the process of investigation is part of the analysis and also part of implementation .. because it's an ongoing thing'.

The Kolb learning cycle is therefore a kindred model to 'action-research', for the purposes of 'engineering' change:

'As a design principle, proceeding incrementally is known to be a very effective learning process .. It's built into the Kolb learning cycle - take a bit of experience, consider that, modify your concepts, plan another bit of experience .. putting that to him in terms directly related to the activities you're talking about .. At each step in the cycle you have managerial control, because there's no chance of making irretrievable decisions .. You have your options open .. People have all sorts of fears and worries about their ability to cope with the consequences of blueprint change .. it's overwhelming .. and often it will get rejected. Adding to the arguments for incrementalism is that it will often give more scope for managerial control'.

Like 'action-research', the client retains control and doesn't cede it all to the researcher/consultant.

The commerical consultant may make use of theories, therefore in the process of developing understanding. It is almost inevitable that he works with analogies and tests them out against particular situations, and thus introduces theories or models. But these remain subordinated to the particular and unique situation:

> 'I'm using whatever theories and models I can pick up' (I: 'And adapting them to the needs of the situation?') 'That's right .. A lot of it is 'theory-in-use' type .. not necessarily explicit theories. But whatever I do it represents some kind of view of the situation, some kind of values, judgements, priorities I'm making .. and maybe that I'm not even aware of'.

As an 'engineer' the commercial may introduce this comparative experience of organisations to suggest, or to justify, a particular way of doing things. But he is less concerned to impose a particular piece (it may be) of organisational design, than to propose ways of developing designs appropriate and unique to the organisation:

> 'What we've tried to do is produce some way of thinking, a model, a paradigm .. based on a whole stretch of other people's work, only plagiarising it in a sense. We see that as being our role - commercially plagiarising academic work, turning it into something managers can find useful .. some way of doing some strategic organisational

planning, giving them a process, something they can actually get involved with .. for thinking about, 'what kind of business are we going to be?' and in terms of, ' how do we manage it?' .. The core thing we can do for clients is to provide some means of tackling problems, some means of conceptualising it .. and of course, I suppose come up with technical solutions they may never have thought about .. But that's secondary .. they can buy that from anybody.'

Labelling social science consultants as 'engineers' has tended to depict him as some kind of hired expert.[30] But this is too simplistic, and not what these consultants mean. Big consultancy firms, like McKinsey, may use junior personnel as technicians to do the donkey-work of collecting data for the expert analysis of senior consultants who present design proposals. But the consultants in this sample who apply the designation 'engineer' to their way of operating eschew an expert role, and enlist the help of people in the client organisation. This is partly a question of size - big firms can take over all the work, small firms can't. Thus, commercial consultants here adopting the term 'engineer' distinguish it from an 'expert' role; the 'engineer' makes contributions from the side, applying his knowledge to client requirements. It is also partly a question of values - that better solutions result from involving people who have ideas to contribute. This is not just a phenomenon of the behavioural science approach. True developmental engineering of a technological kind recognizes the value of involving

client departments and that better, practical solutions are evolved by accommodating client needs:[31]

'We don't like playing expert roles, nor do we like playing counselling roles .. we tend to play an engineering role more than anything else .. We don't have a fixed idea where we're going - We have a series of preferred options, which will end up with a strategic plan for a client, for what he's going to do and the way he's going to do it.. And that will be done in a highly collaborative way, with the client involved in providing information and defining technology .. and he will do as much as possible of the legwork.'

Acting as a 'bridge', therefore, is a very apt cognate image, because it implies a process (towards something new) and being part of that process oneself, as the one devising the means as well, perhaps, as communicating some new ideas. It may be preferred, therefore, as avoiding the instrumental overtones of 'engineer'. It accommodates the idea of a 'collaborative-dialogic' role which is usually contrasted with an 'engineering' role.[32]

3.3.v. 'Bridge-building': the consultant as 'counsellor'

As an indication of the potential within the bridging metaphor for a collaborative, two-way relationship, in the following quotations the role of the commercial consultant shifts right away from any engineering connotation (which implies some distance from the client, and "technical power over") to a 'counselling' orientation (where social-

-psychological distance is diminished). In the process, a different aspect of the external's role in raising awareness is developed:

'What's crucial about being a change agent is an awareness of self .. and I keep on struggling to know who I am, and where I am, and what values I hold, what principles, what philosophy. I need to know that before I can know if I'm trying to put something on you or to help that organisation move from where it is .. When I talk about it, I draw two circles - 'that's where they are .. and that's where I am' .. I've got to identify both these positions first, then I've got to build a bridge. So many consultants (certainly in my early consultancy life),[33] we used to stand on our side of the bridge with a loud-hailer and say, 'Come on over and join me, because I've got the answer for you', if anybody ought to be able to walk across that bridge, it ought to be me. If they could, they wouldn't need me. I'm there to help them to move somewhere. It may not be the place I originally thought they should move, and I ought not to be that arrogant, but if we move down another path, in the process of moving somewhere else we both learn. And if I stop learning, and start introducing some of my own prejudices, I'm not then responding to where they are .. I'm cajoling them.' (I: 'If you want to set up a dialogue, you've got to enter into a dialogue?')

'You've got to be alongside them'

Another commercial takes this even further:

'I had a certain kind of personality. I always got

engaged with people and their problems, their problems became mine. It took me a long time to see that was the missing ingredient .. It seems the majority of people have severe limitations about what commitment to another person's problems they're prepared to accept .. what responsibility they feel for his problems. It's a question for me whether they see the man as a client or as a colleague, and see themselves as committed within the circle, or outside it .. and whether they want to be. I'm not saying one stands in the circle all the time .. One has to be able to stand outside it in order to help. But there has to be a willingness to stand in the circle with the people one is trying to help.. The other missing element is to what extent is my professional colleague open to change himself? I'd go further than the word 'open', to say 'actively develop himself'.'

8.4. Personal Values and Goals

Developing personal relations is a necessary condition for an external to do consultancy work in an organisation. It also mitigates the anguish of operating constantly away from one's home territory. But the extent to which consultants seek personal relationships with clients is likely also to be a reflection of personal needs (the substance of Tranfield's argument[34]), and of personal values about change - how it's brought about, what should be developed, what should be the goals of organisational (and personal) change. 'Engineering' and 'counselling'

orientations, which were defined in terms of social distance can be set therefore, also within the context of personal values and goals.

Lisl Klein distinguishes between a 'healing' and a 'reforming' orientation:

> 'The difference between reforming and healing is the difference between wanting to change a system and wanting to find remedies within it.'[35]

Counselling may support either motive, depending on who is counselled, how, and to what purpose:

> 'When the O.D.Consultant wakes up, he'll find he's in the healing business. Most of them haven't woken up to that .. When they realize that, they'll realize how much money gets in the way'
>
> (I: 'A lot of them are in the money business')
>
> 'You can't heal with that value .. You may help, but you won't heal .. You won't heal yourself.. You won't heal the people you're helping .. You won't heal the social situation'.

Inevitably, the refusal to attend to such serious sources of difference and conflict between people (as money) leads to tacit acceptance of prevailing organisational values and to reconciling people within these - counselling to achieve personal change as the counterpart of a quiescent organisational philosophy:

> 'What the project has essentially done is to help them to be more human, because they're more aware of one another and of how human makes the procedures and cost-controls work, profitably for Ford .. It was simply that the lead

man found he could change, although the world around him the people to whom he was relating, were not changing .. and certainly there was no change in the management style of Ford .. Within his own team he had a lot of freedom. That's another characteristic of Ford .. in some ways there's a lot of freedom, yet in some issues (money, head-counts) there's no freedom worth talking about. How he did it was entirely up to him, as long as he produced the results that were required. How he did it was to accommodate to the preferred style of his subordinates, which was what the project was all about .. for people to recognise their interdependence, that they had to work together better, taking trouble of one another's problems and needs. Consequently, the work as well as the feelings of the people improved.'

On the other hand, counselling may be used to develop people in a way that encourages ("empowers") them to do things that change the organisation - 'reforming' it to improve system performance. Reform thus begins with perceived grievances, but assumes all along the need to preserve an effective operation:

'There had been a very successful strike. The view was that if something wasn't done, there wouldn't be a Social Security system any more.. the whole thing was becoming ungovernable. It sounds dramatic, but it was in that sort of state, and nobody really knew why .. It was faced with a real problem that it might not survive. It's better now, but in 1971 it was in a real mess. The way it managed its people and the way it responded to its

customers were both getting increasingly out of line with the way its customers were and the way its staff were .. It had to change or die - its been deciding which .. It's going along in the direction of change now, but every now and then it wants to die again..

'The important thing that has been achieved is the organisation will never be the same again .. that's one thing. The other thing, job satisfaction, remains central, but that's been moved away from. It's not just job satisfaction, it'sjob satisfaction, customer service and industrial relations .. all have to be attended to. At first we were aiming to improve job satisfaction .. now we're aiming to improve all three things .. they're all part of the same overall objective.'

To achieve this organisational reform, raising the confidence of staff by counselling was a necessary prerequisite, and central to the whole process:

'To change the feeling of powerlessness, that's the central thing. The crucial problem in the Civil Service is that people haven't the confidence to apply their experience and commonsense .. they feel powerless. If you can change that, you can change everything .. all sorts of consequences flow from that'.

(I: 'What have you done to overcome that feeling?')

'It comes down to working with individuals .. (1) with the person who's got the idea, and (2) with the person who's blocking the idea. You help the one with the idea to keep developing the idea and to keep pushing it, and

you help the other to listen .. The Civil Service doesn't reward people for taking risks .. I've learnt since how much help you need to give people in that position. You can't believe their initial enthusiasm .. it's safer assuming they're going to find it difficult'.
(I: 'You do that by ensuring supportive noises are coming from outside that part of the system?')
'And often that they get some training, plus counselling and the chance to talk things over. Staff wanted to make changes, but they didn't have the support of their managers .. One of the important things we have to do is to get people to understand the constraints they're under.'

Commercial consultants are more explicit, than are internals, about what they want to achieve. Most want to see organisations that are more open places to work, partly as an end in itself but also as a source of improved organisational effectiveness. There is the usual spread of orientations, from emphasizing "business systems improvement" through to "empowering people", in which those who adopt an "engineering" role are more willingly indifferent to end-results in human terms. Nevertheless, among the whole sample there is an over-riding sense of wanting to strike a balance between humanistic and system needs. The following quotations illustrate the range of orientations, from a more humanistic to a more organisational focus:

(a) 'To change the feeling of powerlessness .. that's the central thing.. Helping people to do what they want to do when previously they've been stopped from doing it for no good reason'

(b) 'I've got a very strong value that everyone's got something to offer, given the right sort of environment. We have to be more creative about finding systems and structures in which people can allow their energies to flow. There are some real crappy structures we still use that really screw people.'

(c) 'The most significant thing for me is the extent to which people's natural inclination to contribute, collaborate, be co-operative can sometimes be destroyed by systems and styles of management .. People working in an organisation have a stake in it, they have a right to be heard on things of direct relevance to them in the job they do .. I home in on 'effectiveness', not to say 'let's treat employees like this because it's a good thing', because then you get hung up on values. But as an extension of the industrial engineering notion of making efficient use of the resources you have'.

(d) 'I aimed at building people who could be managed by the situation rather than by their boss .. who had a willingness to think about the business as a whole. That was unlikely to occur if you treated him like some sort of trainable monkey .. Trying to produce a con-free society where you don't have to put all your energy into making the unreasonable tolerable .. which was necessary in British Steel.'

(e) 'I don't think we have a conscious ideology as to how companies should be run .. though the flavour tends to be a bit more openness than I think it is typically in this

country .. In some companies you don't want more openness more enriched jobs, more responsibility pushed down. But our experiences with most companies is that they need to have more teamworking, that individuals tend to need to have a bit more space, so they can start to exert more responsibility.'

(I: 'What do you personally get out of it?')

'Seeing change take place .. Having been involved in line and general management, having been caught up in the politics in a poor organisation if you like, being stuck in roles, constrained, frustrated and being able to go back,and look at similar organisations with similar problems, and being able to do something about it .. actually be able to do something about it. That's the thing .. not only to make the recommendations, but to implement it. Everyone here will tell you exactly the same. That's what turns you on, to see the change actually taking place. The kick is to counsel a guy and see him tackling his problems and situation better.'

(I: 'How are you able to measure change?)

'There's no direct way in relation to productivity .. There's a general gut-feel with senior managers that the organisation is performing better, that there's less tension in the place, a more relaxed atmosphere, better relations with the unions.'

(f) 'I've been aware over my career as a consultant that the changes I was recommending, pushing even, were going to have an adverse effect on some people, whilst being

beneficial for others. It's just something you have to live with .. As far as the consultant is concerned, he has to have some frame of reference within which to make those judgements. I have never found personal difficulty with that .. even though I know some changes I've recommended have meant people being redeployed, activities being run down, and jobs disappearing.. Sure .. But I've also been involved in the other things.. things expanding. I don't find much of a conflict. That is an issue I can see links into personal values, political values. I tend to find it easy to identify with the organisational goals. Again, I see that as a boundary issue .. What is the boundary, what is the level at which I'm optimising things? And for the consultant that will usually be the organisational boundary, though it might be a sub-system, the production department or the marketing department .. I like to think in terms of the organisational boundary, but I'm not all that concerned with what happens outside it.'

(g) 'I'm fairly cynical about counselling .. I believe that you can't normally change attitudes in an organisation. At the root of it is I believe organisations tend to be bigger than individuals, and solving individuals problems is short term .. organisations tend to win out in the end. It's entirely a question of 'what can we do with this organisation, at this time?' It's easy in certain organisations at certain times to get everybody together. But in the steel industry where the environment is market sanctions, diversified locality, declining product,

a constant threat of breakdown in the organisation, you're bound to get conflict and disagreements. It's no use going along saying, 'excuse me, I think it would be nice if you work as a team' .. Equally, if you go to some, like ICI, and suggest they don't have common interests .. it's inapplicable in that liberal ethos .. They're not equally applicable, they're not useful ideas .. the concept of human relations, that participation is good and autocracy is bad .. They're redundant concepts .. some people love working for autocratic management, and some hate working for participative systems'.

8.5 Carry-over: Commercials' theories and practices as a case in the 'Sociology of Knowledge'

As this chapter has sought to show, certain practices among commercial consultants arise to cope with the contingency of being external to client organisations. The external engages in contracting out of necessity, and 'mirroring' is a device whereby he increases his acquaintance with the organisation. They serve the consultant, but at the same time, the consultancy process in the part they play in problem-definition and clarification, increasing the motivation for change, etc.

Similarly, there are aspects of the systems model which have pragmatic value for the consultant, whatever truths they also represent about organisations. Approaching an organisation as an outsider, and then, when working in it, being mobile and not tied to a job or department, the commercial

consultant can learn to see an organisation in the round. He is made aware of boundaries, which are physical and cultural, between the organisation and himself out in its environment, and of boundaries between parts of the organisation. He discovers these things through trying to gain access and acceptance. Open systems thinking is not just a matter of intellectual conviction, therefore, but a matter of personal experience. The whole of the external's experience in consultancy is a reminder that organisations are to an extent inpenetrable, but can be penetrated; hence, are 'quasi' - open systems'. Also that belonging to an organisation provides a protective covering which the commercial, certainly in the smaller practice, largely lacks - although he is free, too, of an organisation's restrictive integument. If the consultancy practice he is operating from has any substance and continuity, he is made even more aware of the barriers to be crossed - hence, the characterisation of consultancy as an "inter-system engagement".[36]

As also with the internal consultant there is intellectual truth in the systems model:

'The kind of problems I tend to deal with involve the effective operation of companies .. in terms of their cost effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, their ability to cope with the task they've got. But when you get into those problems, you've got sociotechnical systems.. there's technology, people, money, materials. It seems to me that to cope with those problems, you've got to see them in the round'.

But conceptualisation in terms of linkages has also practical utility:

> 'If I have a way of looking at things .. one way .. at the problems of people working in an organisation, it is that they may have a variety of presenting problems, and there will also be a whole variety of points of entry into that system. But my experience and very firm belief is that once you look at presenting problems, you are likely to find clusters of associated problems which hang together .. It doesn't matter which point of entry you take, you'll find a similar range of things are going to be coming up .. What I tackle first is then conditioned by my belief that tangible, visible, fairly quick success is important, to get impetus to do more'.

Thus, the systems model, in its stress on the inter-connectedness between parts (whether these be processes or problems arising within these processes), has a practical value in assisting the consultant in pin-pointing points of entry, indicating that action on one feature will have a knock-on effect onto others and create a momentum for change, and hence aid action-planning. Similarly, the systems concepts of 'homeostosis', and 'resistances', along with the method of 'force-field analysis',[37] help to focus the consultant upon areas to concentrate his efforts. Anything which provides a map and suggests a route and point of attack is especially salient for an external consultant. Thus, the open systems model gives the external a handle upon an organisation, like a 'package' does and like a behavioural theory may do.

It follows also that if an improvement in any one area is likely to require a range of adjustments, to obtain the full benefits without 'oscillations' developing, the external is likely to be implicitly attached to developing general system effectiveness. The question of whether a consultant is 'product' or 'process-oriented', which has meaning for internals, is therefore not an issue for commercials, since developing system effectiveness involves a larger-scale programme of change, in which people's skills are enhanced and attitudes changed in the process of developing and managing new arrangements.

Systems thinking is widely adopted by both internals and commercials and may owe a lot to background and training in engineering and the physical sciences, backgrounds which are common to both groups and particularly evident among advocates of systems ideas among commercials:

> 'Our whole thinking tends to be open systems .. probably because Roger and I, being chemists and bio-chemists, naturally fall into that sort of area. The whole concept of systems theory is at a fundamental level similar. Playing about with a system at an organisational level is no different from that of dealing with biological or physical or chemical systems'.

What was characterised as the modal role for commercial consultants, however, namely 'mirroring' is less evidently contaminated by outside influences of this kind (by the "double hermeneutic" effect[38]).

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degrees

Consultant	Engineering	Physical Sciences	MBA or similar	Social Sciences	Liberal Arts
1	X				
2			X		
3			X		
4	X				
5		X	X		
6		X	X		
7		X	X		
8				X	
9	X				
10					X
11				X	
Total	3	3	5	2	1

Table 5:
Educational background of Commercial Consultants.

The external consultant is able to 'mirror' what he sees because the 'strangeness' of an organisation makes its pecularities evident to him. His situation disposes him to perceive differences. He sees the differences in the perspective he has upon an organisation from that of organisational members. He sees also the differences among organisational members themselves. He sees mismatches between aspects of the organisation and members' understanding and interpretation of those. As an individual from outside the organisation, he can acknowledge these differences more freely and talk about them. He can recognise the disjunctions between one individual and another; between each individual and the organisational purposes of those running the organisation, between the individual and the policies and procedures that are intended to direct him; and the gap between the intentions of those who make policy and the consequences of the policies formulated. He reflects back these differences, he draws attention to inconsistencies, challenges assumptions.

Since he is forced to be conscious of differences, the external consultant has, therefore, a natural affinity for the idea of 'pluralism' - that there are competing interests and perspectives:

> 'For any effective consultant there must be an ability to get on with people. This means an awareness of his own hang-ups and prejudices, and an awareness that other people have points of view, that reflect their own interests, expectations, aspirations.'

But also constrained as organisational consultants to accept organisations as a 'good', seeing an organisation as a system of forces held in some sort of balance, and accepting the good intentions of people, 'pluralism' appeals as a value, because 'pluralism' assumes differences can be held in check and made to work for mutual improvement and advantage:

(I: 'You mentioned Alan Fox and pluralism, that it influenced the way you look at management - union power each had .. each possibly having different goals. How has that influenced your thinking, how have you drawn on that?')

> 'It helped to clarify, to see the usefulness of clarifying for myself, different groupings, different interests, that were there in an organisation .. to try to understand how that comes about .. just to see the differences. Quite often you hear people talking in ways that tend to deny differences and smooth them over. Some people, well-known and articulate, talk in a unitary frame of reference .. 'We're all in the same team', 'we sink or swim toether', 'we all have the same objectives'. It doesn't fit with my experience. To plan for change, to engineer change, to bring change about, I've got to understand what forces are operating in the system, do a simple force-field analysis .. that idea of Kurt Lewin is very simple, very powerful.. It's useful to me to see things in pluralistic terms.'

In the kind of work he does, also, the commercial has to take proper account not merely of differences of

perspective, but of differences of interest. For it involves more often than is the case with internals issues at the interface of management and trade unions. The nature of client groups and the tasks he undertakes accentuate, therefore, how he encounters reality:

> 'The different ways different people construe reality, the degrees of freedom you have .. the more scope there is for people to take up positions, to express their own vested interests. And productivity is wide open for that'.

To work in such situations requires therefore:

> 'Getting in among the people, sitting around with them and recognising the realities of power and negotiating positions .. which are not necessarily about logic, but about the crunches that can be brought about'.

So, although much of his effort in getting change comes from patiently comparing positions - that is, performing his intermediary 'Mirroring' function - in some contexts he knows that outcomes depend upon the exercise of power:

> 'The problem of productivity is who should benefit, who has a call. If there is an improvement, how do you share that out .. It's not something you can calculate.'
> (I: 'You can only negotiate ..')
> 'Sure, and that gets you into power rather than logic .. Twenty years ago I would have been strong on the logic and seen power as something which affects the logic. Today I will see logic as something that is done within a framework of power'.

Commercial consultants debate questions of industrial democracy and rights far more than internals do. Their work brings them into contact with these kind of issues.

But their distance from organisations also enables them to talk more freely about these things. Though internals might be constrained from putting their views on such subjects, this can hardly account for their almost total silence on trade union issues (except for two who were formerly commercial consultants and one other who no longer had any involvement in that area). Indeed, what clients may be buying from commercials, along with their 'neutrality', is a sophistication about industrial relations affairs. At the very least, a commercial should be able to express coherent views on the subject which involves an appreciation of (then) contemporary standpoints in favour of pluralism.

In pluralism and systems theory, however, what we have are two conceptual correlates of the experience of commercial consultants, which are more than conventionally espoused ideas. They are as much a function of perception. Insofar as commercials adopted them and integrated them, it owed a lot to the confirmation these received in their own experience and the practical utility they had as perspectives. Commercial consultants were natural proponents of a widespread contemporary ideology.

1. Members' definitions of the O.D.N. as a 'network' are instructive:

   "When the ODN was created in 1971 (and refounded in 1974) it was quite specifically as a 'network. A recent in-depth survey of an ODN regional group proposed:-

   > 'the network form emerges as a kind of mirror-image of bureaucracy, a pluralistic association of individuals with an emphasis on inclusion and connection which is almost anti-organisation in principle. As an 'organised anarchy' the network combines ambiguous goals, a loose structural form, strong norms against evaluation, maximum autonomy and unstable involvement of members. On the one hand it has an outward form ... but on the other it is intensely individual-centred, providing sympathy, understanding and community and being essentially reactive in providing support for more dynamic personal networks .. (it) is best understood as a temporary system which may evolve into some other organisational forms in the future.'

   .. In reality, the creators of the ODN devised what was essentially a compromise between an extremely fluid face-to-face network and a professional (or more accurately semi-professional) association. Evidence of the latter lies in the emphasis on improving theory and practice, publications (newsletter and journal) and a societal role for the ODN, all of which were mentioned by the 'founders' and all of which resurface from time to time" (J.Edmonstone, New Directions for the ODN: A Semi-Professional Option, ODN Newsletter, March 1982,p.10)

   Whilst active members may subscribe to the "face-to-face" definition of the Network, the less active may seek to derive the peripheral benefits of "professional association". Membership alone therefore is certainly insufficient evidence of any orientation among internals to a community outside the employing organisation.

2. C.Argyris and D.A.Schon, Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness, London, Jossey-Bass, 1974 pp.156-172

3. Not entirely true, since of the five consultants in their firm four had MBA's from the London Business School. But their managerial experience ranged from 5 to 17 years

4. See, for example, T.J.Johnson, Professions and Power, Macmillan, 1972, Chapter 4

5. See, for example, M.Kubr (ed.), Management Consulting: A Guide to the Profession, Geneva, International Labour Office, 1976, Chapter 5.

6. See M.B.Scott and S.M.Lyman, Accounts, American Sociological Review, 33, 1968, pp.46-62

7. See page 337 of this thesis.

8. See L.Klein, A Social Scientist in Industry, London, Gower Press, 1976, Chapter 12.

9. See A.T.M.Wilson, Social science research and industry, Harrap, 1971.

10. E.H.Schein, Process Consultation, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1969.

11. G.Lippitt, Organisational Renewal, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969

12. E.H.Schein, op.cit., p.84

13. See, for example, E.Mumford, Job Satisfaction: A method of analysis, Personnel Review, Vol.1, No.2, pp.48-57, 1972; D.Torrington and J.Chapman, Personnel Management, London, Prentice-Hall, 1983.

14. See, for example, A.Dale and R.Payne, Consulting Interventions Using Structured Instruments: A Critique, a working paper prepared for a seminar on Client-Consultant-Relationships, Groningen, Holland, Nov.1976; and also for a general criticism of the "behavioural science entrepreneurs" marketing such "packages", see T.J. Watson, The Personnel Managers, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p.149

15. See G.Lippitt, op.cit.; and pp.96-97, Chapter 3 of this thesis.

16. M.Kubr, op.cit., p.21.

17. See C.Eden and D.Sims, On the Nature of Problems in Consulting Practice, Omega, Vol.7, No.2, 1979, pp.119-127

18. For example, 'Blake's grid', see R.R.Blake and J.S. Mouton, Building a Dynamic Corporation through Grid Organisation Development, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1969.

19. T.J.Johnson, op.cit., p.57

20. See, for example, 'Model for Increasing Motivation for Change', in D.Moscow and C.Sheppard, Basic Consultancy Skills for O.D., Sheppard Moscow Associates, 1967

21. See, F.I.Steele, Consulting for Organisational Change, Amherst, Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1975 for a similar account where the role of consultant is equated with that of a 'detective'.

22. See, C.Sofer, Organisations in Theory and Practice, Heinemann, 1972, Chapter 19.

23. K.Boulding, The organisation as a party to conflict, in J.M.Thomas and W.G.Bennis,(eds.), Management of Change and Conflict, Hammondsworth, Penguin,1972,p.403

24. For example, F.Heller, Group feedback analysis as a change agent, Human Relations, Vol.23,No.4, 1970.

25. See R.Harrison, Role Negotiation: A tough-minded approach to Team-Building in W.G.Bennis, D.E.B E.H.Schein, F.I.Steele (eds), Interpersonal Dynamics, (3rd. ed.) Dorsey Press, 1973.

26. See D.Bannister and F.Fransella, Inquiring Man: The Theory of Personal Constructs, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971, pp.133-134, for the technique of writing a "fixed role sketch" in psychotherapy.

27. D.G.Bowers and J.L.Franklin, Survey-Guided Development: Using Human Resources Measurement in Organisational Change, Journal of Contemporary Business, Summer 1972.

28. A.J.McLean, D.B.P.Sims, I.L.Mangham, D.Tuffield, Organisation Development in Transition: Evidence of an Evolving Profession, John Wiley, 1982, Chapter 7.

29. It conforms to the presentation of action-research as a cyclical, problem-solving process acting cumulatively as in W.L.French and C.H.Bell, op.cit.

30. As for example in A.W.Gouldner, Applied Social Science: Clinical and Engineering Models, in W.G.Bennis, K.D.Benne, and R.Chin (eds.), The Planning of Change, New York,Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961, and P.A.Clark, Intervention Theory: Matching Role, Focus and Context, in L.E.Davis and A.B.Cherns (eds), The Quality of Working Life: Vol.1 New York, Free Press, 1975.

31. Two of the three commercial consultants who adopt the 'engineering' label trained as engineer (mechanical and mining), whilst the third was technologically trained in bio-chemistry.

32. See P.A.Clark, op.cit.

33. The speaker has in mind the Herzbergian approach to job enrichment, the area in which he then worked, where the consultant acted as expert to devise enriched jobs without getting the workforce collaboratively involved.

34. D.R.Tranfield, Some Characteristics of Organisation Development Consultants, Unpublished PhD.thesis, CNAA, Sheffield City Polytechnic, 1978.

35. L.Klein, op.cit., p.239

36. A.W.Clark, The Client-Practitioner Relationship as an Intersystem Engagement, in L.E.Davis and A.B.Cherns op.cit.

37. For these concepts see K.Lewin, Frontiers in Group Dynamics, Human Relations, 1, 1947, pp.5-42

38. A.Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method, London, Hutchinson, 1976, 156 ff.

CHAPTER 9

ACADEMIC CONSULTANTS

'I work in a number of modes: a listening post, guru mode, facilitator, action-researcher, O.D.consultant mode on longer-term projects .. It all depends on who rings the telephone what is appropriate .. I can't be like a commercial consultant using legmen, either. I can only play an adviser, facilitator role over a longish period. That lends itself to a joint problem-solving thing, helping with advice and little things like advising on surveys .. There's a congenial match between time-constraints and my preferred style.'

(an academic)

'All research and consultancy is autobiographical'.

(an academic)

9.1. Introduction

All of consultancy motivated by the social and behavioural sciences may be loosely conceived as 'educational'. One of the aims of internal consultants is to educate managers into greater appreciation of the social and behavioural, in organisations dominated by a technical philosophy. Many internals also argue that their long-term aims are to raise individual and 'system' competence in dealing with problems, by constructing a problem-solving method that is also a learning vehicle.

However, there is an inherent limitation on the internal to act educatively. He cannot challenge thinking and broaden conceptions as readily as one standing outside the structure of hierarchical relations. The training department man who wants to act as a 'developer' or a 'change agent' faces considerable role restrictions, the consequences of which have been described in terms of "values-action incongruence".[1] The tension between what they want to do and what they can, and actually, do is managed with varying degrees of adjustment. Meanwhile the great majority of internals accommodate themselves to the organisational purposes of their sponsors.

Between the commercial and the academic, there is in turn also difference in how far each can, and wants, to go. Although underlying the orientation of commercial consultants is a conception of themselves as acting educatively - increasing awareness, reforming organisations, improving management - the academic criticises the commercial because he "doesn't challenge awareness enough".

Insofar as behavioural science consultancy can be conceived as acting educatively, academic consultants represent a 'pure type'. They operate from a role in which education has a paramount legitimacy. They carry this over into a set of practices and theories in which 'learning', 'cognition', 'testing and remaking reality', and similar terms, are key words. For many, consultancy is an extension of their educational arena. Thus:

'I don't draw a sharp line between consulting and mentoring or tutoring'.

Because, also it is something they are free to do, or no. They can exercise choice to do just those things which fit in with their personal sentiments, interests, and goals.

Whilst the internal responds to the needs presented to him in his own local patch, and the commercial consultant in the course of earning his living may espouse larger goals of reforming British industrial management, the academic is much more free to pursue his 'personal projects' - to take just those jobs which interest him, that fit his intellectual preoccupations, and which have potential for creating changes he values. We find, therefore, a far greater emphasis in their accounts on their personal biographies and values, and an assertion that these are basic to an understanding of what they do.

Nevertheless, because academic consultants have often been taken as exemplars[2] for social and behavioural science consultancy, in looking at academic consultants one is also investigating the "gravitational pull" of academic social and behavioural science in its various guises. Through the themes that appear central in the thinking of academic consultants we may thereby understand more clearly latent themes in the thinking, practice, and aspirations of other consultants,

9.2 Employment Situation:

9.2.1. Financial Independence

In considering the employment situation of consultants in the preceding chapters, we have seen how employment has a financial or economic aspect, and a social aspect. The internal has financial security, but the price of this is to be an (economic) "resource" dispensed within a hierarchical structure of social relationships. The commercial suffers financial and social insecurity, but his social independence becomes the basis of his way of working with client organisations. The academic has both financial security (wherein he enjoys colleague relationships less dominated by hierarchical forms) and social independence of clients. This opens up new opportunities to him as a consultant. But at the same time his permanent other employment imposes restrictions on his consulting commitments.

Academics have an assured income from their employment as lecturers and professors. This frames their relationship with outside organisations. It limits dependence and permits choice:

> 'I can earn a lot of money in consulting without much work .. It gives me freedom to do other things and keeps me in touch with a certain reality.'

It allows the academic to mix his activities in ways wherein consultancy may not take priority:

> 'I have lots of interest in research that takes precedence or consultancy work generates some research'

The academic institution provides him with a springboard for following his own concerns. Consultancy may then be the means by which he tries to effect social and political changes:

'A university is a slack time to think, research, act out, work ideas out. A University is a power centre in the culture .. but there's not enough interaction'.

Or consultancy may merely provide some kind of intellectual stimulus (the means by which he tries to keep in touch with a certain reality):

(I: 'What brought you into consultancy?')

'I came purely accidentally into O.D. .. I don't think I could ever do it in a full-time way. It's like a jigsaw puzzle, a pastime. The sort of consultancy I would like to do is problem-solving type of consultancy. But I never see it as a full-time occupation.'

His financial independence of clients, and his ability to do consultancy under cover of research ("the fudged issue of funding") allow him to vary the fees he charges. This may enable him to engage with a different sort of client than do commercial consultants - one whom he can afford to take on and who can afford to take him. This gives him scope to do work where his values can have greater play. In turn, his beliefs about what is achievable in consultancy may be a function of the type of client he works with. Thus are opportunities and values mutually reinforcing.

Included as 'academics', however, are not only 'pure academics' based in Universities, Polytechnics, and Business Schools, but also those based in independent Institutes (like the Tavistock Institute) that make their living by research, consultancy, and training. The Institute, and the consultant, has to earn its living and thus faces financial insecurity, like commercial consultants:

> 'Society doesn't owe the social scientist a living .. but I resent the insecurity ..
> The Tavistock is accused of not doing enough teaching. But the problems of securing income prohibit it and prevent recruiting and passing on knowledge. We have no untied funds.. It ought to be institutionalised so we can pass on a body of work'.

To relieve this insecurity, such Institutes direct a lot of effort towards securing research contracts which lift the pressure of a hand-to-mouth existence.

The involvement in research is one reason for grouping Institute based consultants with academics. A second reason would be simply their own self-perception:

> 'The Tavistock Institute is a peculiar case of an academic institution'.

A third reason, however, is that from a basis of medium- to long-term research projects, whereby the Institute achieves a moderate permanence, its members are enabled to select consultancy work which resonates with their own

particular interests (and, indeed, research projects will be sought after that equally fit with these):

> 'The kind of work we do is partly conditioned by the financial constraints we work under .. We're somewhere between an academic and a commercial consultancy. Everyone has a target proportional to their own salary, but income is to the Institute .. There are three categories of work .. (1) funded research projects which lead to a report
> (2) consultancy or advisory work .. to sort out some issue, usually in the area of, 'what is the task of the organisation?', 'What are the roles of the people in it?' Or to deal with some crisis in the organisation
> (3) training and management development in which group relations training is the core event. It's integral to our own way of working and we also use it for staff training.. Our strategy, our aim, is ultimately to improve the quality of debate about key issues .. to put potent ideas into circulation .. that policy-makers adopt. There's an element of opportunism, picking some things up .. But others we've specifically gone after.. We have two criteria for tackling an issue .. (1) how influential is this area in our lives? (2) does it resonate with our particular interests?'

Although having less financial independence than the true academic, the institute-based consultant thus exercises a certain freedom to work with clients and in situations where his values can have play (and thus, too, his beliefs may be reinforced):

''We're paying the Tavi. to learn from us' .. that always comes up .. 'You should be paying us', they say, because we don't give the seven point action plan. People always get angry initially because they say we're making it too complicated. A lot of projects (8 out of 10) don't proceed .. It often takes an odd organisation to want to work with us .. one that's willing to think, that's not set about what it wants to do.. There's a lot of self-selection.'

9.2.ii. Limited Time

The price the academic pays for the security of a permanent other job is that the time he can devote to consultancy is limited. This time-constraint reduces involvement with clients and to an extent dictates the kinds of things he can do. The structuring of time thus structures aspects of his role. This can be used to advantage:

'I try to shake a client out of a dependency mode as quickly as possible .. I can nip off quick, so I'm not round their neck.'

A common role-attribution, then, is to call himself an 'adviser'. This means brief interventions, "little things like advising on surveys".

Longer-term relationships are sustained by taking the role of 'retainer' - contacts are brief, but relationships are prolonged. The consultant provides advice on periodic visits or when called upon, and questions what is going on

as occasions arise, rather than doing specific time-bound projects.

We noted the limited advantages of the 'retainer' role for the commercial consultant, but more particularly for the solo consultant, in providing some continuity of income. It is also, of course, a way of overcoming the disability of being outside the business, insofar as it creates a semi-permanent relationship with a client organisation. It gives him a regular place in certain key activities often alongside the chief executive or some key decision-making group:

> 'I'm called in as and when appropriate, in a retainer role .. I'm basically part of the company, just one of the people there in monthly meetings .. I get completely caught up with what's going on in the company.'

The 'retainer' role, with its traditional economic overtones, is thus at the same time involved with the social aspect of being an external. It is a way of managing some of the problems of getting in, finding out, and getting some action. Above all, as a long-term relationship that is invoked at cruicial moments in an organisation's life, it accords with the view that social change is slow. Any relationship, as with a consultant, that exists to produce social change is likely to need to be a long-term one:

> 'One of the key things is managing your absence .. Success as an O.D. consultant is when things are happening whether you're there or not. Change is a matter of 'eating your elephant a spoonful at a time', having patience to keep

working at it. A problem evolves over time, and the role of the O.D. is then challenging people by well-timed, well-placed ideas, sowing seeds at the right time. I'm very suspicious if a problem seems to be solved very quickly .. by, for example, quick in-out consultants. Organisations are very conservative, especially in O.D. where you're working on raising awareness and fundamental issues of culture .. Some of the patterns and themes of behaviour, you can't spot them quickly.'

A form of the 'retainer' role that is particularly adapted to the long-term promotion of change is, therefore where the external acts as a "back-up" to 'in-house' consultants. It combines with insiders who can provide a constant push and the advantage of familiarity with cultural patterns (which they can check out with the external to improve their own awareness, whilst informing him).

As long as the role of 'retainer' means infrequent contacts, however, it is not an entirely satisfactory relationship for an institute-based consultant, whose time is not so limited and who needs more than occasional paydays.

Some academics refer also to being a 'guru'. (Acting on a retainer-basis may incorporate being a 'guru'.) On the face of it, this is to do with personal style, not anything to do with an employment relationship. But acquiring a reputation as a 'guru' facilitates access to organisations and makes employment more readily forthcoming. It thus has

selling appeal, and institute-based consultants may be pushed into this high visibility role:

> 'The basis of payment determines your role .. On a daily pay basis there's a pressure to be a 'guru' .. to say wise things .. I try to get out of that'.

The ambivalence here may again be because payment on a daily basis is precarious for the institute-based consultant, even while the style buys employment, as much as it is motivated by a distaste for the style.

For precisely the same reasons the guru-mode may appeal to pure academics. It assists the process of 'getting in'. The visibility he may have as a writer and public speaker builds up an aura as a 'guru', contributing both to being asked to do work and to the expectations the client has of the consultant:

> 'Most of my consultancy work arises out of the things I've written'.

Secondly, it fits with the limited time the academic has to devote to assignments. 'Gurus' are magic: they perform a quick laying-on of hands, and promise quick results. A brief charismatic appearance may be all he can spare (and brief appearances preserve charisma). A 'guru' on a retainer is a valuable beast, but a captive one:

> 'I was brought in to say a few bright things. Being a guru is very seductive .. After two years I was pissed off. They said, 'We like you, we like what you do .. but we're not into development.. We don't need any more bright ideas'.'

9.3. Role correlates of the social situation

Since academics share in common with commercials the position of being external, not surprisingly their role-conceptions parallel those of commercial consultants. Thus, they employ similar conceptions like 'bridge', and 'sounding-board', which denote social distance from clients. In the same way that commercials do when they invoke images like these, they are saying something both about the problems and advantages of being an external. They are turning to advantage and using as a resource for consulting purposes, something that constitutes at the same time an obstacle to be overcome. This is of course, that facing an external of 'getting in' and 'finding out'.

The principle example of this, with the academic, is his attachment to the idea of 'action-research'.

'Action-research' is professedly an arrangement whereby knowledge is made available for action. It implies processes of data collection at which an outside researcher is skilled. It is thus a natural role for an academic to operate in. It legitimises a particular skill of his, for the purpose of problem-solving in organisations, and can therefore be seen as a tactic to help the academic to 'get in' to an organisation.

As a role attribution which is widely used by academic consultants 'action-researcher' is highly cognate with that of 'bridge'. First, in the sense that it provides a 'bridge' for the academic into an organisation, breaking

down the barrier between the 'research' world and the 'practical' world.[3] And second, in the sense that it may involve "bridging knowledge", by a transfer of knowledge from the research-consultant to the organisation. As such, therefore, 'action-researcher' is adopted as an attribute by those academics who lie more to that end of the spectrum which we called 'engineering' in relation to commercial consultants.

The implications of 'action-research' as a designation are quite intricate, however, the precise meaning depending on other idea-sets and value-orientations. Thus we get nuances like "field-grounded action-research style", and "research-action". The case of academics illustrates the particular qualification that must be made about any analysis that proposes 'ideal types'. There are layers of meaning deriving from different sources - employment aspects, social relationship aspects, and personal values and goals. The precise fusion of circumstances and the individual vary. Nowhere is this more so than with the academic, whose personal values have greater play.

9.4. Two types of Academic Consultant

Academics, like commercials, work, then towards changes in client organisations which involve some process of learning. At one end, there are those who incline more towards close relationships with organisational members, and seek to raise, or "transform", awareness in some way which produces or facilitates personal development. Development in the

organisation is held to be synonomous with the development of relationships between persons. This involves a process of "mutual learning" and a style of working closely with the issues, ideas, and beliefs of organisational members.

At the other end, there are those who adopt a more stand-offish posture, as expert diagnosticians - who treat the collection of data as a process of 'finding out more'; who feed this back in relatively formal ways (for example, by delivering reports), and who see change as resulting from policy-makers having better information. Change is directed towards the solution of particular problems, and organisational outputs are the measure of success.

These two positions approximate respectively to what Benne and Chin[4] termed 'normative-re-educative' and 'rational-empirical' strategies, and Janowitz[5] 'enlightenment' and 'engineering' models. They have been well understood for some time as contrasting approaches among change-agents:

> 'Change agents seem to have two broadly-different approaches. The first involves mainly the improvement of a system's functioning by "removing stresses and strains" and "improving the goodness-of-fit" between its various components. In terms of power relations, such approaches are essentially conservative, although small adjustments are sometimes made. The second approach is more radical, involving attempts to permanently improve the "health" of the system; that is, to raise capacities for performing tasks, making relationships, learning and adapting. The latter is often called the development approach and is said to be analogous with the development of the person to maturity. This approach is sometimes a good deal less conservative in terms of power-relations, since the development of an individual involves increasing his capacity and disposition to act and, thus, his power.'[6]

Nevertheless, consultants still incline to one or the other position and, therefore, they remain phenomenologically real as positions consultants take up: they are not mere 'ideal types'. It is to put some flesh on these characterisations, to draw out the implications, and to reveal the grounds for these orientations that the following is written.

9.4.i. The Researcher/Engineer/Policy Adviser

(I) Orientation

The detachment of the 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser begins in an orientation to "things":

> 'Consultancy to me is an intellectual exercise .. an exercise in practical puzzles. I like mending, improving the way something works, understanding the way a thing works .. I increasingly find I enjoy working with things.'

Or, finding out

> 'What makes an organisation and the economy tick'

"Things" go wrong, get out of step, and need "mending". Therefore, consultants become involved to solve "problems":

> 'You don't look at organisations .. you look at a problem .. It always starts with a pain'.

The result of his help is some sort of better functioning 'system', better balanced, more equipped to contend in its specific environment. His focus is on better systems, or "organisational design":

> 'If there's anything I'm committed to, it's the view that we should be looking for ways of making organisations more responsive, proactive .. And if it turns out that the way to do that is through rigid bureaucracies, I'd

be all for rigid bureaucracies. The organisation design stance is 'let's look for contingent designs' .. I'm a crazy contingent man .. the aim is to help them survive in their own terms in the environments they find themselves in'.

But an organisation is not just a "thing". Since the objects in question are organisations, these academics recognise a social as well as a material component in them that has to be reconciled:

'The starting-point, the model I work with, is the 'equilibrium - concept' .. Organisations have a certain sort of 'efficiency imperative' (the efficient use of resources) which tend to guide techno-rational drives in the workplace (to satisfy the market-place) .. all the efficiency values we've been brought up to subscribe to .. But there's another set of values, humane values .. that 'people ought to be happy with what they're doing, they ought to relate to one another, they ought to be frank' .. the Democratic thing .. Those exist in all organisations, and they conflict. So some way has to be found of managing the conflict .. I'm interested in the whole range of things organisations do to trade off between the two values, to manage the conflict between them'.

However, the backgrounds of these consultants in engineering (see Fig.5.p415)make them especially aware of the technical and technological features of an organisation, and they are therefore inclined to treat these as constraints upon behaviour and upon the range of possible designs:

'The aim is to design a socio-technical mix .. jobs and work organisation that are compatible with the task and the technology'

This means,

'Finding out what are the detailed constraints and opportunities within engineered systems .. developing engineering models that have some social and psychological variables in them'

Therefore, although "everyone wants a better socio-technical system", they recognise there are limitations on securing ideal social systems - that in the end,

'one may expect no more than a more viable,reasonable system'.

(II) Method

A problem has specific origins, and an organisation is the result of specific historical and environmental circumstances - "an outcome of management's responses to the environment, internal and external". Achieving a readjustment, therefore involves studying these precise circumstances past and present:

'Change should stem from an analysis of the situation as it is .. in facts, fantasy, or whatever .. with the learning situation that this gives rise to, which becomes the starting-point for change. A consultant can do a great deal of researching .. It's a situationally- based approach, with the learning evolving from the situation .. Some call this a contingency-based approach, it's not

universalistic or going by generalities. You use facts to give you your solution, not facts to fit your preconceived framework'.

At times the research method may not be unlike that used by the 'developmental' consultant (since methods are influenced by a common role as an external):

'I go round, talk and listen, to find out what's going on, and put it in some strategic form that makes sense .. building up a picture as I go along. It's so contingent, I don't have any generalisations about Organisations (with a capital "O") .. except a generality of clues you can pick up, to do with 'Organisational pathologies'. It's a diagnostic frame, a kind of way of finding out. It involves listening to people and their accounts, a feel for meanings they're trying to convey. Then you read the patterns and what it's possible to do.'

Nevertheless, data collection for the 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser' also involves instrumented methods, such as the use of questionnaires, and tape-recorded interviews and discussions, to be formally analysed and played back:

'I combine 'hard' and 'soft' methodologies. The hard data shows the contingencies .. then you can go into depth, using discussions. You're not then basing observations on well-made fantasy .. It's a deliberate attempt to steer between the extremes of ethnomethodology and instrumentality.'

Different occasions may require different methods (a properly contingent attitude to data collection). Instead of going round personally talking to people, it may mean

"giving a systematic methodology":

> 'I investigated what people wanted (whether they wanted a Scanlon plan or not). I suggested they have a climate survey to see whether it was suitable for a Scanlon-type plan, with feedback to all two thousand people'

Despite some similarities in technique, however, across the whole spectrum of academics, overshadowing the work of the 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser' is the desire to produce an "expert systemic diagnosis" - though to avoid client dependency he may not himself always do it. It is in this that the orientation to detachment, to organisations as objects, and to scientific knowledge, reasserts itself. Thus, he sees his role as ultimately,

> 'to bring some sort of understanding to a situation that they haven't got .. it's bridge-building, your knowledge to their understanding and action'.

> 'It's being belpful both conceptually and methodologically .. working detachedly alongside.'

Since it is a lack of knowledge that impedes systems performance, creating better system functioning may, therefore, mean:

> 'We will collect information and give it to you, if you don't have enough.'

Or asking,

> 'What research do we need for an informed social policy'

Consultancy is thus highly geared to intellectual analysis, and a belief in (social) science as having something to contribute:

'Science is in opposition to commonsense .. It might occasionally confirm it, but if it does it is no longer commonsense.'

'Science is the only thing that continually questions and changes.'

Science may even have answers:

'I get a kick out of applying bits of knowledge that work .. I believe valid knowledge exists and can be applied. That's the predictive value of social science.'

Although he may well be attuned to the fact that "organisations are a political arena" (as all profess to be), belief in the power and objectivity of knowledge enables him to feel a sense of neutrality in his dealings with organisations and the policy-makers who necessarily manage such systems (being 'things'). He aims at, and believes it's possible to achieve,

'a form of consultancy that's oriented much more to the problem, than to the values of one side or the other'

Faith in science also may incline him to write reports, where findings are set out for the judgement of the parties in quiet reflection. The enduring power of knowledge offers some hope of a response, even if no action is immediately forthcoming. Moreover, conceiving organisations as mechanisms (a bureaucratic means-end chain, or techno-rational instrument) gives him confidence that its established channels for information, decision, and action will eventually absorb the findings set out in a report:

'Reports have a long time fuse. They influence through (a) the heirarchy, and (b) technical service people'

However, he is appropriately sceptical about the predictability of social change (although he may be baffled by it) and about the rationality of people:

(a) 'So many accounts of change present it as 'x then y then z'. Change is often indirect, change is often fortuitous .. a series of accidents and one rather had piece of work. It's terribly unpredictable .. Good stuff may not lead to anything, bad stuff may .. I don't know what success is in this business.'

(b) 'The influence that goes on is a major problem .. between research producer and research consumer. There's a whole range of problems .. I'm under no illusion it will ever be solved. There's no reason why research should be used really, except for the logical reason .. But since we're not logical (and most of our social science work is based on the assumption) we shouldn't expect it to be .. The problem is management .. the idea that management want genuine research that might bring change to a situation, even if its absolutely correct, in terms, say, of increasing productivity. But a manager is primarily concerned with a solution that's congruent with his own values and structures. The penetration of research findings into action systems in this country is slower, more fraught than in any other country I've worked with.'

But for the 'researcher' there's always the fallback:

'If the consultancy doesn't work, maybe you'll get something out of the research.'

With this orientation towards research this type of academic consultant is treating the data collection phase much more at face value, as a process simply of getting data. He doesn't suggest it is a period for forming relationships, developing legitimacy, and for influencing people. He abjures the idea that he should develop "friendliness" in order to become influential (because, by implication, this prejudices his objectivity):

(a) 'Consultants who want to be successful will always talk about commonsense, while consultants who are not so determined to be commercially successful, will be more inclined to doubt the value of commonsense.'

(b) 'I might guess that the things I don't like in terms of professionalism and ethics are very successful, and the things I do like are not very successful. Some of the most awful O.D.rubbish meets a need, at least for a time, which more sober knowledge, the kind I use in social science, doesn't touch'.

Commercial consultants see forming personal relationships as crucial, and data collection as a phase when client acceptance is secured and motivation developed. They adopt, therefore, styles which permit a period of immersion in the client system to facilitate this. The 'researcher/ engineer/policy adviser', however, would appear to discount on ethical grounds the use of data collection as a strategem for gaining acceptance whilst ostensibly 'finding out'. Social relationships should not be used to increase the uptake of research. Nor should the consultant curry personal liking and prestige:

'Good design is unobtrusive .. If you do a good socio-technical design, you don't get any credit. That's one of the dilemmas.'

In addition rational-empirical views on the uses of data embody a belief that changes can be brought about by the weight of evidence and more informed opinion (even if frequently they are not):

'There's the American pragmatist .. I don't care a shit where I get data from, only 'how many do you win at' .. Here's the esteemed author of 'Human Relations', an academic, who says 'I do it right .. Bit of a problem, though, is I don't get to complete it' .. Americans are theoretically uninterested. Bennis is theoretically arid. Our attitude is, 'let's get things done and tell people how we got it done' .. Lewin's idea of action-research .. The difference is very much the expert outsider, the fixation with the concept of purity of form .. very scientific, follow form and rule .. go through data collection, feedback, data clarification .. it's information, the rational-empirical approach.. Americans have no confidence in that at all. If you go to take a driving test in America, the driving instructor says, 'Start the car, park the car' .. He doesn't care if you've got your hands in your pocket at the time, he doesn't care. There's no prescribed way to do it. There's a prescribed end. If you can get it in and out of that parking lot, that's it .. it's your car .. It goes over into O.D.'

The 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser' may be aware that data-collection has other uses, as an instrument of change:

'to test commitment I used a questionnaire'

Indeed, a social researcher is trained to realize that there is a social effect of collecting data. But often he may be unwilling, or unable, to exploit this effect. The third factor influencing the orientation to data collection and general style is therefore his personality:

(a) 'I'm better at diagnosis .. and poor at implementing change'

(b) 'As an 'organisational engineer' I'm better at analysis and design than implementation - at having ideas, than in making them happen. I'm not easy with people .. I find the initial contact difficult, making relations is difficult, selling myself is difficult'

(I: 'What skills as a consultant do you value most in yourself .. What do you perform particularly well at?')
'It's easier to find out the things you feel poorly about. It says something about me .. I'm increasingly finding an ability to turn on, to do a turn .. given the need of the situation, to do a sales pitch. I find it easy to talk to people at a data-gathering level.'
(I: 'What do you have most difficulty doing?')
'The non-working things .. I can go in and do a job of interviewing if there's a firm focus .. where there's a task .. but not social chatting up. If I've no

no agenda to work, I find it difficult, exhausting. I don't find it difficult to do most things, if I've defined a role in my own mind.'

The corollary of seeing an organisation as a thing is to see one's own behaviour as a thing that can be manipulated, or varied. The personal value that is uppermost, therefore, among this group (excluding the most purely oriented towards research) is 'style flexibility'. Relatively free, when consulting, of routine situational constraints, they seek to adapt themselves to the requirements of the situations that arise:

'It depends who rings the telephone, what mode is appropriate ..'

Other academic consultants may be equally adept at responding to social situations, but they use their relative role freedom differently, to introduce and to pursue personal end-values. Where one constructs roles about his person, to contend with situations, the other seeks out and aims to create situations in which persons, including himself, can be more fully themselves. The one maximises the personal, the other the situation.

9.4.ii The Developmental Consultant

(I) Orientation

Whereas the 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser' begins with an orientation to organisations as 'things', the theory and practice of the 'developmental' academic begins in a concept of the person. He is more person-centred. The person is

at the centre of his concept of the organisation, and himself as a person is at the centre of his concept of consultancy.

The background to this is illustrated in Figure 5(p.415) All those labelled 'developmentalists' have a background that is strong in social-psychology. Moreover, the kind of social-psychology studied and research experience has a strong bias towards developmental theories and therapeutic uses. Those furthest to the left of the spectrum have in their degree work, training, and early work experience, or in the kind of clients they have subsequently had, a considerable involvement in things like community projects, mental health institutions, hospitals, working with adolescents - that is, a concern with 'health', with the 'fully functioning person', and with 'therapy' for the restoration of health. The theorists whom they cite and from whom they derive their theories of development (Kohlberg, Piaget, Bateson, Kelly, Rogers) are themselves notable for their work with similar groups of people, in similar settings.

This is not to say that 'developmental' consultants automatically carry over models of growth, development, therapy, and health unmodified into organisational consulting. They are often clear that a different paradigm operates there:

> 'I also do research into healing and psychic phenomena. But the models are totally different than those I use in consulting. The two models .. one of conflict, the other of Harmony. The models I use in industry and

experiences there, are about confrontation .. different interests banging into one another. You've got to work with them .. and it can be creative or destructive. In healing models the world is a place of harmony. You've got to restore it, create commonalities, experience potentiality. In working for them you experience purpose. You're working with people who are blocked, not realizing their energy .. the energy is not flowing, and you're healing and relieving blockages. the mind is supporting the body in harmony. The result is a sense of purpose, being, fulfilment, of something in the Universe that counts .. A healthy operating system also has that'

Nevertheless, in whichever setting they operate, they carry with them certain central convictions that "there is always more" - people have unrealized potential for "development, growth, enlightenment, maturity, learning". Secondly, as persons, people have the capacity to be free agents - "the capacity to be self-directing, to take charge of their lives". Thirdly, personal development means becoming more complete or more whole. The notion of the 'person' means, therefore, a rejection of the kind of dualisms that have characterised analytical thinking in Western philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Dichotomies which split 'cognitive' and 'affective', 'process' and 'structure', the 'organisation' and the 'individual', are frequently rejected as conceptually untenable and practically not useful and unhelpful. Above all, the notion of the person as an 'agent' is not a purely individualised conception, but a view of man as embedded in relationships and having

to take proper responsibility for those. It is a view of 'human relations':

> 'not the isolated individual .. The dyad is the natural unit, not the person'

Further, such relations operate whether the individual is in an organisational community, marital, or whatever social context, and the different contexts impinge upon one another through the individual's multiple membership in these:

> 'It's difficult to separate the personal from the institutional'.

The ability to become a whole person, therefore, is affected by how far these contexts are divorced from one another. The extreme separations which modern industrial society makes between work and family life, and between these and public life, are regarded as psychologically undesirable for the person, and socially undesirable for the public polity.

Fourthly, a major block to the individual's ability to take personal responsibility and to act as an "agent" is the very way power and authority are distributed within organisations, and therefore some degree of democratisation of policy-making is desirable:

> 'All our institutions bring us up not to genuinely feel empowered .. not to be responsible .. not to effectively say, 'it's up to me'.'

The exclusion of persons from responsibility in organisations is part and parcel of the separation, for the

majority, of modern life into autonomous compartments, and the two processes support the deleterious effects of the other:

'The trouble with our organisations is there's little real sense of the 'collective' .. There's 'persons' and 'aggregates of persons' .. and particular persons are almost synonomous with the organisation because they hold all the cards. We've almost lost the capacity to conduct a public life. The individual is unable to express himself through collective policy-forming.'

Personal, organisational, and societal contexts are connected by persons. To work on one is therefore to work on all. Organisationa are merely accessible, highly focused, energy-charged modes that are particularly important in the modern world as concentrations of power and wealth, which offer opportunities to do work that can have wider social impacts:

'Organisations are playing out the conflicts and issues of our time.'

'Organisations are part of the matrix of society .. part of how power changes, and how ideas are reproduced'.

In confronting organisations and working with the members of organisations, the consultant is confronting issues which are his own as well as those of organisational members:

'The consultant, like other members of an organisation, is trying to contain tensions, manage dilemmas and conflicts, that are part of living.'

He confronts "key issues in living":

> 'There's an inherent conflict built into our social arrangements, which will always persist, between two sets of values which we've internalised .. the 'efficiency' values and the 'democratic-humanist' ones. And they exist in all organisations to confirm the hang-ups we've all got about them .. and we're always looking for ways of resolving them. It's an ideological thing, the conflict between these two basic values as they get themselves expressed in organisational terms. But also they're differentially held in the social structure, too.. In some strata, particularly in the rough working class, it's the relationship-values that predominate. In the professional middle class, it's the efficiency values. So there's an in-built conflict in the social structure itself which is emphasised by the lack of social mobility. So one could demonstrate it empirically .. But everyone wants to solve it, and it's a hateful thing, because it's inside them. I see myself latching onto that issue, to help with it .. not as a social mission, but to work with it as a manager.'

This characterises something of the "tensions, dilemmas and conflicts" which 'developmental' consultants confront but is spoken by an academic who has already been labelled as a 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser'. Partly this illustrates the inevitable overlap around the middle of any spectrum. Nevertheless, the weight of emphasis in the above quotation falls upon the inertia of the social system - 'quasi-equilibrium' around unchanging values and

experiences - a managed system. It denies the possibilities of fundamental development through liberation. As such it also marks the divide between the two types.

Organisational consulting, then, is not just about 'what organisations do' and about 'what consultants do in organisations'. It is about 'what people do in organisations with the resources of organisations and to one another', and about 'what consultants do with their own lives in working with people in organisations'. The notion of 'holism' logically implies that the consultant will be implicated in whatever he does inside an organisation; whilst the notions of 'development' and 'agency' suggest that he should reflexively confront the issues which are raised for him by organisational consulting. Thus, 'developmentalists' regard consulting as one part of a broader "life-task" that encompasses other aspects of their life.

There is therefore more explicitly than in any of the accounts among other groups of consultants, an emphasis on the significance of personal biography for the understanding of their work as consultants:

> 'All research and consultancy is autobiographical .. so I don't feel bad telling you about my autobiography'

> 'Practice is the product of experience .. hence the importance of biography.'

Many consultants in this group not only relate their autobiography when asked how they came into this line of work. They specifically connect their life-story to their

consulting work and volunteer additional snippets of biography:

> 'In many ways I'm following in the steps of my paternal grandfather .. an intellectual, a parson. In terms of family history I see myself picking up that.'

The 'developmental' consultant thus has a perception of his life as a career unfolding. His professional activity is not merely part of his personal identity (as it must be, too, for other consultants), something he does. It is a vehicle for what might be termed his 'personal life-project'. He is fulfilling some part of himself through consulting:

> 'Everyone has to have a life-task .. the 'Human Enterprise Institute' was an expression of me. I was the entrepreneur, because I created it, I raised the money for it, I hired the people - it was my way of extending myself .. Writing a thesis later was for me a mid-life venture.'

By contrast, the internal labelled 'resource', talks of his professional career simply in terms of milestones or stages of transition within his employing organisation (for example, becoming involved in MbO, or moving out of one line of work into another): whilst the commercial limits himself to recounting developments of an intellectual and applications kind, in his professional awareness and practice.

In terms of his personal responsibility for carrying out his 'life-task' (or 'personal life project'), it is

therefore not professionally improper, but morally requisite, as a consultant, to be "working out one's own issue in and through consulting". It is not that he (necessarily) hawks round his own hang-ups and problems to find a congenial environment for off-loading these (as critics of this posture would argue[7]), but that one dimension of working effectively as a consultant, and as a person, is to bring to the fore those personal issues which resonate with those of other persons.

The contrast is therefore between asking (as the 'researcher/ engineer/policy adviser' does),

'What work needs to be done to accomplish <u>their</u> mission'

with the aim of

'maximising the client's values and solving their set of problems'

And deciding, on the other hand,

'If I can't get comfortable with what they want to do, I can't live with it'

It is faintly immoral to the 'developmentalist' to hold himself back, to profess detachment, to put up separations between his own values and what he is doing:

(a) 'The most common manifest presentation of consultants is, 'You're there to assist the process, to help them to get some sense of purpose, to solve their problems .. Whilst what you as consultant want is neither here nor there.'

(b) 'What I reject is the totally pragmatic, hired-gun thing ..'I'm just a professional' .. In the end, the really important thing about O.D. is its values.'

Neutrality is not possible:

> 'What their background is, what consultants do, who they work with, what models they hold, are not just coincidental .. There's no value-free science, especially social science. It always contains or supports certain values .. It's a question of being clear about what your values are .. Social scientists are collectively not responsible for what they do. They opt out of what's going on in society, either by going academic and writing books. Or they line up in the name of neutrality with 'Interests' - most with that 'interest' called 'management'. Not that they say they do, but it's a case of 'What's the behaviour that's being supported?' That's non-responsible. It's O.K. if they do line up with management .. but then you can actually engage with them and can communicate.'

In the end, the 'developmentalist' is in the business of social change. He sees himself not merely adding to what exists, or 'facilitating' a solution to a problem, but as helping to transform what exists. In having and pursuing a "life-task", he sees himself making some wider contribution which is more than mere 'organisation development'. This contribution to social change may range in scope. It might be as

> 'A-Broker between old and new powers, emerging powers .. blacks, the unemployed. Marshall McLuhan said, 'The role of the intelligentsia is always to act as a liaison between old and new powers'. That's exactly what I'd like to do, I don't care where .. but not to be confined

in just doing it in IBM, Esso, etc., but roving around, asking, 'where would new social institutions, new social patterns, or new normative behaviour, be helpful or needed?'.

Or it might involve adopting a posture of "advocacy" within projects, to working on what are seen the growth points inside organisations or in individuals' working lives. Whatever scale he works on, the 'developmental' consultant is motivated to do things that he sees as making some difference in the scheme of things in which he has a part:

'remaking reality is what I'm interested in .. at my personal level and at our collective level'

By beginning with people's capacity and willingness to "remake reality", he is doing something which is potentially subversive of social inertia.

II Method

We turn now to how this kind of consultant translates his convictions into working practices. It is entirely appropriate in the light of his values that he extends these and his conceptions about himself to those with whom he works, beginning with the centrality of the person. He sees the individual, as a life unfolding, in his intersecting social contexts:

'I work in the meso-level - the developing individual as a maturing resourceful person, working on his life-career development. Not only round organisational effectiveness, but I draw the boundary round the 'individual and his work'.

Instead of jobs, there are careers:

'Careers are lives in progress, working lives .. rather than a string of jobs put together by strangers for someone else to perform'

Clearly however, some situations are more promising for assisting "life career development" and for realizing the values of 'development, 'agency', and 'holism':

'The best development project is starting one's own business, where there's a convergence of a person's life-project .. of the business, and the family, and the person's life.'

Thus, the 'developmental' consultant selects situations and clients where he can be himself "an agent working with agents":

'What I'm about is developing resourceful managers, rather than people who are resources .. Working with agents rather than patients .. 95 per cent of training is about making management into resources for higher management to use as resources .. people as resources, assembled and trained, along with the other non-human resources, by the other 5 per cent who are the resourceful managers .. resourceful managers turning other people into usable human resources to fit into the organisation. The criterion is always 'fit', 'adaptation', 'matching' .. Resourceful managers adapt things to them, they don't accommodate themselves to external circumstances'

Thus does the selection of opportunities, for achieving real change centred on the person, colour perceptions of possibilities and appropriate strategies.

Instead of organisations, there are "processes of organising" and "patterned relationships":

> 'saying, 'there are individuals' and 'there are structures' is a delusion. The patterns of relationships are the structures .. 'Organisation' as a metaphor is not valid for me. As a unitary concept it's a nebulous entity, it's not dominant and visable. You can find buildings, plant, technology .. you can sort out a sense of culture .. you can see people .. but you can't see a thing called 'Organisation'.'

The concept of 'organisation' as a 'thing' over and above the individual, exercises a mental constraint upon people taking responsibility for themselves:

> 'The distinction between personal development and organisation development is extremely dangerous. It's based on the assumption that an organisation is a container and people are dropped into it.'

To demystify 'the Organisation' is to break the spell 'it' (and other people) exercise over people's perceptions. Change becomes a possibility if, instead, attention is directed to the "processes of organising". What matters are the relationships between people, how these are structured in "rules" and "norms", how these are brought about and changed through "policy-making", the "ideology" around norms and the undercurrents of fantasy and myth which inhibits people. Since these are made, they can also be remade, "by people who are agents":

> 'I see organisations as 'patterned relationships', that are dynamic and repeat. Either party can change that .. The crucial thing is the shift from rule-following to rule-making, from 'patterns' to 'remaking patterns'.'

The first step in "remaking patterns" is a perceptual one – to arouse "a consciousness of patterns":

'All revolutions begin in transformations of awareness.'

'My view of O.D. is educating people, raising awareness. It goes back to Argyris .. get people to look at patterns, have more conscious choice, scan alternatives.'

(Paraphrasing W.G.Lawrence one consultant calls this "the maieutic role of the consultant – raising consciousness by helping members realize their interpretations of the situation. The goal is not regulation ('return to homeostatis') but growth")[8]

Awareness is necessary to overcome feelings of powerlessness:

'to make people conscious where the power is .. helping people to learn about the organisation and how to steer it'

Whatever they do next, all 'developmental' consultants agree that a first step has to be to engage with the people in the organisation "to help people think explicitly about what is going on":

'Every now and again you need to get out your theories about a thing and have a look at them, become aware of what they are, and then put them away and forget about them, and become unaware of what they are in an action-context .. 'Now and again' is the sort of contact people have with consultants, and for me consultancy is about getting things out and examining things. If you don't know the theories that you're operating on, how do you learn? because you don't know what it is you're changing in the process of learning. How do you tell anybody else?

How do you learn or teach?'

(I: 'the unexamined life is not worth living?')

'And the rider to that, 'the unlived life is not worth examining' .. There's a phase for examination, but while examining it, you're less capable of doing it'

The corollary of this phase (aptly called "the intellectual side of personal growth") is therefore to "develop ways of using that power," as people become clearer how things work and can be made to happen. This requires not just "consciousness of patterns", but resources and a willingness to change patterns". The 'developmental' consultant does not just work on increasing awareness, but on translating that awareness into action, by developing skills and increasing the confidence to act. He is "an agent of <u>practical</u> awareness":

'I help people to work at a higher level of practical aware ness .. knowing what you're doing, knowing what you've done, knowing what you hope to be doing if circumstances are favourable .. so it's action-related awareness.'

Hence, he will be wanting to move people on, from a reflective phase to an action-phase (and to alternate the two):

'Action-planning is a waste of time until it becomes 'action-programming' - In my experience as a consultant, nothing becomes real until people clear time for it and pay for it .. Therefore, I will be extremely active in helping with planning, programming, monitoring and reviewing'

We characterised the 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser' as a detached expert. This appears in his attitude to data-collection (supplying information) and in his relative indifference to relationships. The contrast with 'developmental' consultants is evident in the way the latter work through an assignment. Because they "see change as a human problem of seeing things more clearly", they work closely with exactly how client subjects see and articulate perceptions. This begins with how a client has framed a request for help:

> 'The starting-point has to be a live-question, put to you as a person by another person, who sees you as helpful to take the next step.'

The choice of terms is not fortuitous. The corollary of starting from a "question" put by a person is "to go forward" developing persons, whereas the corollary of starting from a "problem" is to "mend" organisational "things", restoring them (or it) to a satisfactory state. Thus, a 'developmental' consultant may explicitly distance himself from the problematic the 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser' frames:

> 'Someone asks you for help with a live question, 'How do we go forward?' .. for example, from one style of management to another .. not as a problem, 'we're suffering pain .. how do we alleviate that?'

However, a consultant may draw on both humanistic and systems paradigms, and then mix his terminology:

'I work with organisations on problems .. People come with a question. An organisation approaches because it's got a particular issue. We talk about that for one day, five days, half a year .. is that issue a good starting-point, or is it linked to something which should be starting-point? We work from the word go on that, and set the presenting symptom in a context that allows you to do some work on it.'

The ability of some person in an organisation to formulate a question is indicative of some motivation (or 'felt need') to do something about it. The motivation a 'developmental consultant needs to work from can only come from 'persons', not from an 'organisation'. This contrasts also with the 'researcher' adopting an 'action-research' stance where the motive to do research or to define a problem may come initially from the researcher and not be fully shared at that stage by the client. The 'developmental' consultant's professed stance is,

'I avoid negotiating a role in a problem that I don't have a role in .. It's an abuse of problem construction if you have some motivation for producing a problem that's got a space for you in it.'

Thus, the assignment is put on a personal basis from the start, with the 'developmental' consultant working "alongside" members of the organisation. He seeks not detachment, but immersion in the life of the organisation:

'People come with a question. I try to help them learn a lot about it, and get somewhere with it .. We're

working with our feet on the ground in the day to day practice of the organisation. And going from that practice outwards into the things that are surrounding it .. questioning, confronting issues from where they are. We don't work on big broad things, because people in organisations don't work on big broad things .. They see them as they're immersed in them.'

'Immersion' therefore, is the necessary means by which the consultant becomes aware of the "patterns" that constitute an organisation:

'like an anthropologist who goes into a culture, becomes partly taken over by it, and tries to be reflexively aware of what's happening to him, as a measure, qualitatively, of what the state of the system is'

From this immersion in the normal life of the organisation, he tries to communicate his understanding, to develop an awareness of organisational patterns with its members:

'We try to build up a picture of what is happening - not by big data gathering, but through intimate contact with people .. 'to tell you the 'idea' of the organisation that's taken shape in our mind' .. to talk and be around.'

The anthropological style is a device for unwrapping the phenomena that are ordinarily present, but unappreciated by those who are totally immersed in that organisation. The process may be drawn out:

'Like groupwork .. in the first 2-3 minutes everything is there that you'll be working on, but you can never see it until well on. It's the same in organisation

consulting. Therefore we write copious notes, keep files, log each contact with the organisation. It's a device for undoing difficulties .. to see why a project's gone crazy .. It's what you do in group-work, but you keep it in your head. It provides a sound basis for interpretation'

Or the process may be telescoped into a formal event:

'We design an event that brings into focus, that brings out of the shadows, 'what is their image of this organisation .. its aims, its values, its history, etc. And we make the subject of the discussion what is tacit .. their myth, their fear for the organisation .. We set it up on a much more conversational level than that .. All staff meet in professional and administrative groups. They meet with me, and I'd give them questions to discuss, such as (1) what is the most important thing this outfit is doing, (2) who are the people who influence affairs, who maintain or change its character. Each then, in this example, had meetings with me. I took notes and circulated them around. The whole staff came together 24 hours later and I made an extended presentation as 'my image of the Centre' as I'd formed it from all these comments I'd collected. I concluded with, 'What are the issues you now want to examine?' Individuals wrote up their answers on the Board and convened groups for two half days continuing the work of this delegate activity. People said things they never had before. Certain very significant things about the culture of the organisation came into view.'

Anthropological immersion has the same functions, as for the commercial consultant, of helping him to learn about a stranger organisation, whilst using his externality to help members' learning by 'building a picture', 'reflecting an image', etc. The process is one of mutual learning. But for the 'developmental' consultant it is mutual learning in a special sense too. The academic is not merely a 'mirror', 'reflecting' back the organisation and its environment. This choice of terms by commercials tends to imply they are not introducing their own constructions. Academics, however, are often explicit that they are offering their own constructions as part of a continuing dialogue:

> 'There's a version of non-directiveness which is unrealistic .. that you just create some kind of a vacuum and a person will unpack their insight .. We put our ideas in, but we help person to distinguish what we're saying and what they're saying .. so they know if they take it on board, they do it advisedly .. For a long time we were very naive about how far the behaviour of participants on training courses was not just their 'defence' or 'irrationality' coming to the surface, but was a response to the way the staff had treated them in the first place. It's the reflexiveness question. Staff need to be aware how far their own behaviour affected participants, otherwise they just project onto them .. Maybe we've learnt something about their culture, or maybe I've foisted something alien onto them'.

The assumption that he is just 'mirroring' or 'reflecting' data gives the consultant an authoritative view that denies the client the right to disagree, and promotes dependence rather than liberates:

> 'Groupwork helps one to have a sense of what's going on .. to be able to 'hear' the visible and invisible data. There are some who slam that invisible data back in .. others of us who use it for themselves, who are not very interpretative. I'm too much of a democrat, I have no notion of what's right.. They're assuming they're right It comes down to the belief that an organisation is a human social phenomenon .. that there's a level of the imponderable'

'Mutual learning' has, however, a further implication for the 'developmental academic'.Learning is mutual, reflexivity is a two-way thing: it is consultant 'reflexiveness'. He subjects not just clients' statements and inferences to critical examination, but his own too. He is personally implicated, and is working out his own (and Society's) issues too. An awareness of this provides further data to work on. This may be at the level of (a) the consultant client relationship:

> 'What happens between the analyst and patient is 'isomorphic', replicating what's happening out in society. Unless one can cue into that story that's being represented, you're missing the key thing.'

Or, (b) it may be at an institutional level:

> 'An Institute can have two functions .. (1) the Institute stands back and does research. That's what most Institutes, as organisations, are about .. task-

team problem-solving .. and they have an internal organisation adapted to doing that. (2) the Institute is a laboratory, a container .. processes filter in .. it's a microcosm of what's happening in society (if it's at all open). As a laboratory, it experiments on itself, on its relationships .. it tests out various models. And one uses that as a guiding model in doing one's work.. The two principles are totally different. They are essentially different models which are operating out there, which people are bringing in and work with. Thus, what consultants do, who they work with, what models they hold, are not just coincidental to the models they advocate back home in the Institute.[9]

The aim of this process (drawing out data that is present in the social system of an organisation and pushing it back to test the acceptability of interpretations) is to increase understanding of blockages to action and to increase the capacity for acting through better knowledge of one's situation. This is not simply a matter of increasing 'cognitive clarity', as the mirroring metaphor implies. It involves not simplification, but increasing the capacity to handle complexity. Inability to cope with the real complexity of social life, adopting instead simplifications, is regarded as the source of "deadlocks", breakdowns, and failure to move forward:

'A lot of organisational dysjunctions arise from the fact that people are operating at different levels of

abstraction. Failures arise with senior management where some of the processes will involve them in complexity and they don't want to know, because they can't cope with it, or they don't want to expose themselves to people who do understand it.'

The 'developmental' consultant and the 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser' both have a goal, as educators, to "enrich awareness", to "challenge awareness". Both see a problem in the tendency of the educational system and organisational hierarchies "to deskill our mental mechanisms". But if this is the problem, what is needed (the 'developmental' consultant would argue) is to work closely with clients, to expand their capacity to take in information. Simply more information (through, for example, research reports) may be indigestible, blocked out or simplified and distorted. Working alongside, working through the data with the client(s), is a necessary process:

'What's guiding me in dealing with such a team is that there's an excess of wisdom and knowledge in it about what's going on, not a deficiency. And that's the problem. Therefore, I facilitate them using more of that data, that they have .. I'm interested in the issue of handling complexity .. to make people's beliefs explicit in order to handle more complexity, making objective aspects of the person's subjective, internal, political, and qualitative world .. so that we could play with it, dialogue with it.'

This is backed by a developmental theory of education:

'For 3 - 4 months we collect data, and work it out as it comes out, in a joint conceptualisation .. It's a legacy of personal construct theory and the 'cognitive complexity

model .. about the acquisition of cognitive structures. The structural aspect is concerned with what's construed with what, and how that's linked to other things. The 'cognitive complexity' model says in addition, 'if people have a limited number of constructs, they can't integrate a massive amount of new information' (which is the way a report often works). Instead, you work by jigsaw-puzzling data, to build up constructs.'

They reject therefore, collecting facts for its own sake, adding more data to what is already not manageable, or simplified, or blocked:

'People define issues in terms of what they already know, rather than in terms of what they feel they need to know. Therefore I'm not interested in doing anything that looks like collecting facts'
(I: 'colluding in the belief that they don't know')
'Not projects where I get into data-collection .. 'Action Research' .. no, I'm not interested in that. I don't know how to do that kind of thing. An organisation has to have a defined felt-need before it can change. If they do data-collection, they're really checking out if it's O.K. to have a felt-need .. they know what they want to do, but they're not sure whether to. A lot of data-gathering I see is deciding whether to change, not how to change.'

Data-collection can thus become a way the client and the consultant avoid confronting issues and each other. By contrast, the stance of the 'developmental' consultant is 'engagement', whether confronting, supporting, working through, or whatever.

Learning to handle complexity is thus a necessary part in the process of seeing patterns and making patterns, of enhancing and enriching people:

(a)'Having enriched their awareness of the situation they're in, it will enable people in positions of influence to make better decisions about the future'.

(b)'Social science by definition is reformist .. you expose options, understand the values implicit, understand what people are doing in terms of ideology. As a psychologist, I help people to strike the relationship that makes sense to them. I try to give them more flexibility to permit alternatives'.

It enhances people's ability to manage their lives by generating greater membership participation, "helping people to learn about their organisation <u>and</u> how to steer it":

'In a way it's an exercise in participation .. a policy-forming,image-forming, ideology-forming exercise. I try to create conditions where people can take authority and bring to the surface their own feel about what needs to be done, and how it can be done ..and then testing out their sanction to do that from the people who pay them, sanction them, or whatever, to negotiate that or test that, and not expect their agenda to be dictated to them.'

Participation (the "social ownership"model) does not imply though, rejection of systems of power and authority, but using these, because they are part of the complex reality that has to be encompassed, in their own as in clients' lives:

'I don't want to reject something because it's got a flaw .. I feel simultaneously strong and weak, rational and emotional. It's a question of recognising those realities and trying to use them .. Being conscious is moral conflicts.'

In summary, as with the 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser', but in contradistinction to him, the stance of the 'developmental' academic is partly a matter of ethical conviction (being a whole person means that "a consultant is not a very healthy thing to be, unless you live what you're supposed to be doing"); partly of a theory of change (involving a developmental theory of the person because change begins with people's motivation, awareness, and capacity); and partly a matter of personality (a preference for working with people rather than 'things'):

(a) 'You can trust people, or find reasons for their behaviour ,, breakdowns are explainable. Technology you can't trust.'

(b) 'I have least affinity with machine-related skills .. but with whatever involves the living interests of an organisation's members, things that have some heart behind them'.

9.5 'Carry-Over': Academics theories and practices as a case in the 'Sociology of Knowledge'

The 'developmental' consultant's approach is a conscious effort not to put his life into watertight compartments; but to effect some carry-over between personal and professional life.

This happens with all academic consultants insofar as they carry-over intellectual stances, and commitments to particular styles of research, into their consultancy (for example in their approach to data- collection). Thus 'developmental' consultants adopt a phenomenological model of knowledge and of the research process, which shows itself in their consulting practices:

> 'The traditional research paradigm doesn't produce anything. It's a waste of time .. It's too general to be of any use .. it's controlling, one-way. How can you describe people's experience by collecting data without referring back to them as the referent of that experience? It's oversimplified .. someone going out, seizing data, taking it away out of its context. It becomes meaningless .. Unless I really engage with you, you're not sure of the value of the data you get. That takes time, to set up a relationship .. otherwise how do you know I'm not just spouting my mouth off? I could be telling you any story I like. I have no responsibility in this style of research for the validity of the stuff that comes out. I see consultancy as an exercise in New Paradigm Research, to help people understand their world better.'

At the same time as they carry over intellectual frameworks and practices from the academic arena, however, 'developmental' consultants carry over, also, their experience of relationships, and to an extent work out and reproduce their other work-role experiences within consultancy. The character of their role experiences in

academic life is relatively un-hierarchical and participative:

> 'the (--) is co-managed .. the Director is a representative of me .. I am a voluntary member of a work association called the (--)'

This experience (it is hypothesised) forms an ideal that infuses his aspirations in consulting, even where he may have to recognise irreconcilable differences:

> 'It's an enormously sophisticated way of being .. a group working in a non-dependent mode. As educators, we're interested in that sort of thing, but it's not real in the industrial business world .. But some sort of mutual encounter, mutually - directed is possible among colleagues where you're operating on a peer-footing .. I've been expecting that sort of relationship over-night, but it doen't happen like that. I've been expecting too much of O.D.'

The experience of professional colleague relationships, of being a member of a group participating in the management of the group, can thus foster excessive expectations of people in other settings:

> 'I took for granted the 'representative model'. They couldn't work it .. the notion that members of an organisation can step back and take stock of their organisation. They couldn't engage with that. They were so slotted into an individual vantage point, they had no conception of the individual constrained by an organisation or gaining potential from membership .. no sense of themselves as an institution. I've been

involved in several situations where I've found people cannot take on board the anxiety, the responsibility, of thinking on behalf of the whole. Not everyone wants to or is able to take that on. The more ancillary people you bring in, you undermine that. I wish now I had stuck to the professional staff.'

In addition, the relatively open character of the academic work-role leaves more opportunity to experience, simultaneously, membership of family and community. The office and the lecture-room are not his exclusive work arena; preparing work at home diminishes the barrier between workplace and home; the irregular commitment of time to teaching duties leaves time for outside pursuits including consultancy. The academic institution, as an organisation, exercises less than total control over the academic's commitments and nourishes a taste for independence from organisations:

'I have an enormous distaste for organisations of all kinds, they're all bureaucratic .. Except this one .. this one is an anarchy, except we have enough political clout to protect us, so we can exist on the fringe .. Universities are anyway. I like existing on the fringe of organisations. I can sit there and comment. As an internal, I'd have to behave .. I don't like behaviour, where you're on stage all the time, playing games .. I prefer to pontificate.'

Or less immoderately:

'People say to us, 'Why don't we go in and manage organisations if we learn so much about them?' .. I

don't want to get locked in .. it's a luxury, the variety .. It's satisfying seeing other people take things on, but it's difficult to move organisations far.'

The experience of being freer from organisational constraints nourishes an holistic philosophy, by making it possible to pursue "self-integrative purposes"[10] through the arenas of work, family, and community (if the academic so wishes). At the same time by permitting a degree of disengagement from organisations, it can breed a scepticism about organisations and membership of them, and permits an attachment to a more inclusive and larger value of "citizenship" which displaces organisational membership from the centre of the social stage:

'The more you integrate the individual and the organisation, the more you disintegrate the individual and the community .. O.D. had some idea that you can make the organisation a place in which he gets turned on, some model that there's a 'good work role' which people can achieve. Specifying an enriched workrole, though, is as totalitarian as screwing somebody down and giving them no work role at all. The organisation becomes a society in its own right .. If you try to make them into the ideal society, what do you do to the Society out there, when you try to turn organisations into hyper-efficient, hyper-satisfying places? In advanced organisations, people are just taken over by the organisation. It's maybe better to have a gap, to create some space for the self .. rather than to be

totally integrated, to be cut off from society and see it through trans-national eyes, all systems and procedures, and getting lots of rewards.'

The big transnational organisation (which typically is the employer of internal consultants) thus threatens (in the eyes of the 'developmental' academic consultant) to displace the ties of national and local community, and to diminish the individual:

'It's a case of 'working associations' versus 'big organisations' .. Big organisations with personages and persons, where the penalty we have to pay is that everyone else is a non-person .. Associations are not like that. People move freely and typically belong to a number .. Every organisation wants to become a life-purpose to its members and get big 'L' Loyalty.'

Though we can relate features of the academic's situation to the attitudes, theories and practices of the 'developmental' consultant, this leaves, however, the large question, 'Why are not all academic consultants the same?' Why have we chosen to stress the differences in order that they appear so marked, more so than apparently for any other group? Briefly, the answer is that academics display a greater degree of internal discrimination because their roles allow greater play to intellectual theorising about organisations and persons, and greater play to personality and personal preferences as to what they do. Assuming that a participative ethos, greater openness to non-work experiences, and disengagement from organisations, were all common experiences, (which they may not be), the reason

they do not all seek to reproduce these same kind of experiences through consulting is that their relative freedom enables them to maximise different potentials within the academic (and consultancy) role - either for knowledge-giving or for collegial relationships - whichever their personal tastes incline them to.

Similar differences in intellectual frameworks, values, and personality can be found among any collection of social and behavioural science consultants, and academic consultants are a prime source of these different sets of ideas and change values. To an extent we have traced these in earlier chapters. But over and above these similarities and differences that derive from a common stock of knowledge and personality differences, we have sought to bring out the impact of role factors - to reveal differences between <u>groups</u> of consultants (as internals, commercials and academics), as well as the similarities where groups have some major role characteristic in common (viz. academics and commercials as externals). We have sought to show that the extent to which one set of ideas are espoused in preference to another set is function in some degree of role factors, and particularly to characterise consultants' use-theories as special to their role situation. Ideas have a certain autonomy; the person his needs and inclinations; but role is (at the least) a mediating variable. Role has an homogenising influence upon the ideas adopted, and upon practices developed.

d of Academic Consultants

3	4	5	6	7	8
aining an.dev.)	Chemistry	Economics & Sociology	Occupational Psychology	Economics & Industrial Sociology	Operational Research
diploma		(Adult Education)			
	Theology			Industrial Sociology ('mgt of R & D')	Organisatio Behaviour
hil anned ange')		Social Psychology ('developmental psychology')	Industrial Psychology ('resistance to change')	Industrial Social Psychology ('Org. & mgt of mental health inst.')	Social Psychology ('problem constructio in teams')
sity	Independent Research Institute	Business School	Independent Research Institute	Business School	University
lland nmark	UK	UK USA	UK Brazil	USA UK	UK

Consultant	Eng.	Physical Sciences	Business Studies related (inc.IPM)	Social Sciences	Liberal Arts	Ascribed Orientation
	Degree and sub-degree qualifications					
1				X	X	
2				X		
3			X	X		
4		X		( )	X	
5				X		
6				X		
7				X		
8			X	X		
9				X		
10			X			
11			X			
12	X			X		
13			X	X		
14	X			X		
15			X	X	X	
16	X			X		
Total	3	1	6	13	3	

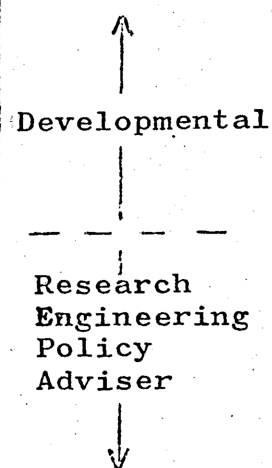


Table 6:

Educational background of Academic Consultants (summarised)

References and Notes to CHAPTER 9

1. N.M.Tichy, Agents of Planned Social Change: Congruence of Values, Cognitions, and Actions, Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol.19,No.2,1974,pp.164-182

2. For example, Schein, Harrison, Beckhard out of the American O.D.tradition, and Rice, Sofer, Bridger out of the British Tavistock tradition, have been influential as theorists and practitioners.

3. See Chapter 4, p.144-5 of this thesis.

4. R.Chin and K.D.Benne, General Strategies for Effecting Change in Human Systems, in W.G.Bennis, K.D.Benne and R.Chin (eds.), The Planning of Change, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961.

5. M.Janowitz, Professionalisation of Sociology,American Journal of Sociology, 78, No.1,1972,p.105-135.

6. A.Dale, Coercive Persuasion and the Role of the Change Agent, p.1-2. ODMAG, Vol.1,No.2,Spring 1972,pp.19-29.

7. See, for example, D.R.Tranfield, Some Characteristics of of Organisation Development Consultants, unpublished PhD.thesis, CNAA, Sheffield City Polytechnic, 1978.

8. W.G.Lawrence (ed), Exploring Individual and Organisational Boundaries, Wiley, 1979, p.6.

9. The isomorphic relationship applies consequently also to that between organisations and theories of organisation. As a colleague in the same Institute put it:
   "those two paradigms of organisation .. it's not just that you can describe organisations in terms of those, but you can describe organisation theory in those terms .. which has to be because structurally it's the same"
   S.Clegg and D.Dunkerley, Critical Issues in Organisations, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977 make a similar point.

10. A. Dawe, The role of experience in the construction of social theories, Sociological Review, Vol.21, 1973.

CHAPTER 10

CONSULTANTS' THEORIES AND THE IMPACT OF ROLE

10.1 Introduction

The intent of the preceeding chapters has been to give an adequate basis in reportage ('description') for developing analysis a stage further

> 'In every case we can aim to give as accurate and verifiable a description of the evidence as possible, so that we can invite independent criticism of our interpretations and inferences.'[1]

However, a certain level of organisation has already been put on the data, (a) to facilitate reading, and (b) in the belief that

> 'the primary goal of social science is to obtain organised knowledge of social reality'[2]

Any selection of data involves some organising intent. But it was argued that organising the data around consultants' own typifications of their role employed their habits of organising, rather than the observer's (the researcher's)

In this chapter we go beyond the actor's own perspectives, and offer an observer's view. We firm up on our theoretical framework and draw together major features of consultants' own working models to bring their ideas into sharper relief.

Within this thesis we are operating with two related, but potentially opposed, theoretical frameworks. The first of these arises from a concern to place consultants in context (see Chapter 3,p.119ff)and goes under the rubric,'the sociology of knowledge'. Merton states the aim of the

sociology of knowledge as being to answer the questions, 'where is the existential basis of mental productions located?' and 'how are mental productions related to their existential basis?'[3] Marx affirms that "social being determines consciousness", each class developing its own appropriate "sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life".[4] Similarly, Mannheims,

> 'the thought of every group is seen as arising out of its life conditions.'[5]

The second framework concerns the ideological character and impact of consultants ideas and concomitant practices. This arises out of a presumption that consultants somehow serve management and follows cognate studies by Child and Watson (see Chapter 1). This framework is characterised by the proposition drawn from Marx and Engels that

> 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.'[6]

Ideology is constituted in the way material interests tend to influence the construction of ideas among a group. This proposition could equally apply to all groups. But the form in which Marx and Engels state the proposition - that dominant groups exercise an hegemonic power over the formation of ideas - has tended to set the terms of the debate.

> 'The chief usefulness of the concept of ideology concerns the critique of domination"[7]

The potential conflict between the two sources of ideas - a group's own social experience and the ruling class' control over the means of mental production - makes imperative a close inspection of the ideas consultants work with and the factors influencing their production, before ever we proceed to evaluate them as ideology (even where, as a group, management consultants may appear close to the 'ruling class' and to management as a controlling group). In other words, it is necessary to establish first what their ideas are and whether these predominate in any sort of pattern which could be said to have ideological force. For this reason we argued in Chapter 1 that "the first stage in considering ideas as ideology is to discard the assumption of ideology, and to produce an adequate phenomenology of the adoption and use by individuals of ideas and concomitant practices". (p.38)

In Chapters 7 - 9, therefore, we have actedunder the theoretical aegis of the 'sociology of knowledge'. By adopting a stance of 'naive empiricism' when inspecting the data, we noted consultants' widespread use of role typifications, relating to their employment position and social relationship towards clients. We took this to be an indication that work-role is one of the primary "social or cultural factors which influence knowledge" (as Macquet[8] put it). But equally in our analysis we have acknowledged the impact of the stock of knowledge and of the philosophies in the social and behavioural sciences to which consultants, as an occupational group, have access. In other words, that

ideas are to an extent 'autonomous'. At the same time, we noted the part personality - personal preferences, needs, and values - plays in the construction of roles, in the adoption of ideas, and in the goals sought. To answer the question, 'how are mental productions related to their existential basis?' means giving due acknowledgement to the consultant as an agent, as he constructs a professional work-role:

> 'A truly human science like a truly human society must give full cognitive status to the whole man which a reified reality fragments and hides; it must give cognitive status to consciously active men who strive to transcend their determination by things'[9]

The person, being an active thinking subject, will try to bring the elements of his life into relation with one another. But part of this will necessitate a constructive adaptation of ideas to the actor's role circumstances.

There are therefore, two dynamics. One is the person seeking to realize himself through his sundry roles and adopting ideas which personally inspire. The other is the homogenising influence of work-role. It is a medium (one role among many) through which the person has to realize his personal needs and values, and in which he discovers the relevance of certain ideas which consequently become selectively developed. An adequate phenomenology of knowledge requires recognition of both.

In this chapter, therefore, we seek to clarify the inter-relationship between ideas, personality and role. Initially this means affirming the importance of personal agency. However we conclude that institutional frameworks create

certain perceptual-sets which influence the choice and construction of theories. At one level this consists in the impact of the specific work-role whereby consultants stand in different role relationships to clients. Thus, work-role accounts for certain differences among consultants. At another level, however, consultants share a common occupational role-context which is wider that the localised setting. By concentrating more precisely on consultants' working models, we identify two paradigms - the negotiative and systems paradigms. The manner in which, and the degree to which, consultants embrace these, it is argued, involve projections of consultants' different role experiences and consciousness. At the same time, however, the extent to which these paradigms are common and widely-distributed, regardless of the consultant's specific role-context, prepares the ground for considering what students in the sociology of knowledge would regard as the more fundamental question.

> 'the nature of the relationship between knowledge and social structures'[10]

or more emphatically,

> 'the manner in which knowledge of various kinds is related to social class.'[11]

At this point, therefore, the questions pertinent to the sociology of knowledge perspective shade over into issues to do with ideology,[12] to which we turn in Chapters 11 and 12.

10.2 The Person as Agent

The dynamic of personal agency is depicted by Dawe in his essay - 'The role of experience in the construction of

social theories'.[13] As we move through different situations and circumstances and interact with different others so we adjust ourselves to achieve "self-integrative purposes". Life is seen as a process, a 'career' through which the concept of self develops.

We argued that academics are freer to achieve this through their choice of situations. But the process is seen no more clearly in fact than when a person is presented with a substantial obstacle to self fulfilment which makes 'self-integration' on his terms difficult - in other words, where role imposes but the person rebels. This situation is signalled by direct comments on the frustration and role tension caused by operating under role requirements that are at odds with personal goals. But more significantly it shows in the use of diffuse and contradictory self-presentation for this provides evidence that there are typically effective ways of managing roles and appropriate idea-sets given the scope for enacting these in the role.

(a)Among those interviewed was a management development adviser for an Industrial Training Board. Such an adviser operated in some respects like an 'external'. The power of the Board to impose a levy and statutory powers of access created unusual entry opportunities (which bred resistance): but also firms could get themselves some free consulting help and would willingly avail themselves of it where it defrayed some of their statutory costs. Such circumstances meant the adviser personally enjoyed some of the freedoms

of the academic consultant who had independent sources of funding. A number of management development advisers in the 1970's had expanded their interests into O.D. type activities as a result of this freedom and a certain role ambiguity which was permitted in an era of ITB expansion.[14] And of course they absorbed the ideas and aspirations associated with O.D.[15] At the same time, the adviser endured the role-constraints which employment in a bureaucratic organisation imposed. The statutory role of the Board imposed an obligation on firms to meet standards of training provision and on the adviser to monitor these. His role in this was to respond as an 'internal'. Cutbacks and reallocation of duties impending at the Board at the time the interview took place increased the need to respond, for the sake of survival in the role. The model of consultancy here was an interventionist one, and the conceptual models for training drew (according to the interviewee) on mechanistic systems and stimulus-response psychology (in which he was himself trained as an occupational psychologist). We find the interviewee espousing a liberationist philosophy:

> 'I tend to try to open the organisation up in some way. I wouldn't want to see organisations set up as at the moment. Most formal work organisations are inclined to produce some sort of clinical pathology in people ... they're not very healthy places to be'

But without the intellectual framework to fully express his convictions:

> 'At the moment I've still got this repetoire of fairly mechanistic concepts from psychology, and I haven't got

the necessary alternative labels and concepts. It's very frustrating. I can see there's something more fluid I want to describe it differently, and I can't'

He experiences his role in terms that

'companies see us as an appropriate resource to contact'

Yet he resists the instrumental implications of that:

'I don't like accepting roles, but tend to accept a role in being accepted as a helper. I never accept an 'expert' or 'professional' label. I tend to be as an individual, rather than in role.

(I:'You're in an organisation that's putting quite a strongly defined role on you..')

'Yes I'm struggling within that'

(I:'It's getting tighter?')

'It is.. in the sense that bits have got lopped off it. Its a multiple role.'

(I:'The attractive bits have got lopped off it?')

'It's a multiple role, I find it quite alienating. I find more and more I'm in to playing a role. More and more I feel like a mechanical thing, doing something.. while the real me is looking on, not being part of it.'

The choice presented to him was to resolve these conflicts at the expense of formal role performance:

'The requirements on me in my professional role involve incredible conflicts .. so I'm being deliberately subversive of some of the objectives of my own organisation '.

Or to leave the role and the organisation for one which was more congenial.

This sort of example provides evidence that congruency of

role, personality, and ideas is a valid hypothesis, it identifies what is functional by showing where an actor perceives conflicts arising in his own experience, rather than relying on an observer's intuition to relate social phenomena:

> 'The method of social analysis I shall propose may be regarded as almost the obverse of functionalism, its guiding tenet is: don't look for the functions social practices fulfil, look for the contradictions they embody'.[16]

(b) The role-constraints and the mismatch of personal motivation to these in this example are, however, extreme. Consultants' roles are generally not so constrictive. Indeed, one could say that a consultancy or advisory role necessitates a degree of independence, and that without it we are not looking at a consultant. It is in the nature of the role of the internals in this sample to be free to operate across the organisation and therefore to act in many ways like an external. Thus, an internal may use imagery considered particularly characteristic of a commercial consultant:

> 'The objectivity of the outsider is both a help and a hinderance .. to be able to listen sympathetically in a non-evaluative way. In (-) there's a tremendous scope for counselling, to be able to talk to someone off the record, who's prepared to support them. Clients do value the skills they see of someone who's able to analyse the organisation quickly, to highlight things they didn't perhaps see. Part is attributable to being a sympathetic outsider, a fly on the wall, with a bird's eye view, who can operate as some form of <u>mirror</u>. The O.D. consultant is

not quite a mirror. It's having a different perspective, being able to see events differently .. being able to share different perceptions.'

(an internal consultant)

However, the necessary characteristic of the internal is to be able to accept the constraints of the organisation and to find personal fulfilment within those:

'I tend to transfer what's good for me to others. It's difficult to be objective .. To know the parameters, the boundaries of a job, to understand what the job is, how it relates to us, and then have the freedom within those parameters to do it.. to know its contribution and its relationship to the organisation. That's good for me. It conditions my view of others' jobs. I feel they're most comfortable when working in that sort of way.. The irony is the job I've got now is not like that at all. I'm testing the parameters all the time, the ambiguities, and uncertainties of it. You don't know something is permissible until you've done it. I enjoy that, it's stimulating.. But it depends to what extent you take into account the need for the organisation to achieve its objectives. An organisation is restricting, by definition, of the individual. It implies the individual has got to submit himself to some extent to that organisation if he's going to join it. It can only produce what it's producing if it carries out some fairly clearly-defined courses of action to tighten down to some extent the parameters of freedom'.

Thus, his working theories, which are mainstream ones for the internal O.D. consultant, are integrated to his own needs and values:

'I try to create an organisation that knows what it is doing, where it's going, and why'

(I: 'Is the value you place on having some certainty entirely a personal instinct, or do you put in any theoretical stuff.. have a rationale?')

'I don't know if I would identify any theorists. I got past that when I left the M.Sc. course. I'm undoubtedly influenced by my own values, and partly by what I've seen in publications. What I'd get from various theories would be conditioned by my own values anyway. I'd be selective. My theories are a reflection of my values.'

(I: 'And experience?')

'To be honest, it's what I feel.'

Chapter 7 traced the mode of adjustment for internals in terms of developing a conception of themselves as 'resources', implying a (willing) accommodation to the organisation. As the preceding quotation shows, this adjustment leaves room for the achievement of "self-integrative purposes". The internal can find an accommodation between his personal values and the requirements of his job. Indeed, he may find a high degree of realization from being within an organisation.

(c) Academics have a high degree of freedom to choose and to vary the roles they operate in. In the first place, they have greater scope for role-development to meet the needs

of the changing person. This is epitomised in one academic's account of his developing career-roles, interests, and self-concept, from a commitment to a 'developmental' orientation to that of a 'researcher/ engineer/policy adviser'. From being

> 'a child of the 60's, with ideas about the fully functioning organisation, integrating the organisation and the individual, 'theory x' and 'theory y', a gap theory of change .. Creating normative structures, ideal organisations .. I experienced the world as frightening, threatening, conflictful .. I was working out personal issues, an emotional projection of internal and external persecutors'.

To operating

> 'a more client-centred helping model, going for incremental change .. achieving better socio-technical matching, looking at roles, the environment, the work-flow'

To becoming

> 'an expert, diagnostic .. an organisational engineer .. getting intellectual pleasure, having ideas, then making them happen .. I can work without value-problems in most situations .. Everyone wants a better socio-technical system .. A scientist, being more objective, struggling with oneself rather than acting it'.

And for the future?

> 'I've not many consulting aspirations left .. more towards line-management .. More strategy-planning, less training .. counselling, team-building are too easy .. More

systems-type consultancy.. more team consultancy with non-behavioural scientists .. I would like a 'think-tank' job .. with an economist, an Operational Researcher, an accountant, a marketeer whose job it would be to do a 3 - 5 year job monitoring the environment and then looking at the impact it would have on the organisation .. the machines needed, the manpower'.

(an academic consultant)

Aside from the scope for role-development in line with a changing self-concept, the academic consultant can pursue a deliberate maximisation of his personal purposes, to transcend "determination by things".[17] Consequently academics' accounts are qualitively different in the sense they convey of

> "an awareness of themselves as carrying through some individual or more probably family project - their awareness of being engaged in a course of action aimed at effecting some basic change in their life-situation and, perhaps, in their social identity'.[18]

10.3 Ideas and the Consultant's Role

Having acknowledged the agency of the person, we turn now to the impact of factors external to the consultant - to role and a consultant's institutional contexts:

> 'a career is an actor's attempt to impose an ordered meaning on the events, identities, interactions etc. that he has been exposed to or involved in. Clearly, then, a career will be closely tied to the various institutional contexts within which he has moved, but marshalled into a personal, subjectively meaningful coherence'[19]

The impact of institutional contexts has both a specific and a general character. Work-role has an homogenising influence, exhibited in common role imagery and practice theories adapted to specific operating situations. Work-role narrows the institutional contexts to which internals typically respond, whilst academics are open to wider institutional contexts. But whilst the operating situations of consultants differ in terms of their being internals, commercials and academics, they share a wider occupational role-context as social and behavioural science consultants. They have characteristics in common as a whole group, as well as sub-group characteristics that we have so far concentrated on. They have certain common frames of role experience and intellectual reference.

The section that follows considers the common intellectual paradigms in use among consultants, whilst showing how these are particularly accentuated in specific role-contexts.

We will first set out these paradigms and describe how we see them as projections of consultants' own role experience and consciousness. Then we will clarify what the exact impact of role is - what it has an impact on, and how. That takes us into general issues in the sociology of knowledge, preparatory to opening up the question of ideology.

10.3.i The Negotiative Paradigm

In a classic definition that came to underly O.D.'s approach to change, Chin and Benne wrote that 'normative - re-educative' change (as they termed it) aimed at:

(1) improving the problem-solving capabilities of a system,
(2) releasing and fostering growth in the persons who make up the system to be changed, and
(3) perceptual and conceptual reorganisation through the clarification of language.[20]

Aims (1) and (2) to do with the healthy operating system and personal growth have generally been taken to be the hallmarks of O.D. However, the third of these does not pre-empt ends in quite the same way. It is much more about a method of proceeding, closer to normal processes of interaction, where people receive perceptions and form meanings, and in turn give off impressions (which form the perceptions others receive) and exchange meanings. "Reorganisation" (perceptual and conceptual) is something that goes on all the time through interaction, or simply is a special case of interaction.

What we have described commercials and academics as doing is paying special attention to the processes of constructing meaning and forming perceptions - as part of the process of establishing themselves in an organisation in order to get work done, and self-consciously as an integral part of the process of getting change. Thus, commercials have a heightened sense of a contracting process which is the beginning of influence:

'contracting .. an ability to work expections and aspirations and information, in such a way that a clear psychological contract comes out of that .. And then the ability to rework it, as inevitably things don't quite go the way you thought they would. The contracting process is the key to consultancy. People's expectations can then be shared with you and yours with them.'

Commercials too have a sense of a subsequent "immersion" in the organisation as a learning and influence process: "getting into bed with the client and learning their language"

These processes provide the basis for the external generally to perform his special function of 'mirroring', reflecting what he sees and hears:

'to raise the level of awareness and understanding of what's going on in the organisation.'

With fewer overtones of creating a process that allows them to exercise influence, 'developmental' academics are very precise about setting up a process which involves the examination, clarification and reconstruction of meanings to stimulate change:

(a) 'consultancy is about getting things out and examining things'

(b) 'change (is) a human problem of seeing things more clearly'

"Remaking patterns" requires as its first step the perceptual one of arousing a "conciousness of patterns",

and then "having enriched their awareness" of their organisation helping people learn "how to steer it". The developmental' consultant's approach is to share meanings and interpretations:

> 'We try to build up a picture of what is happening .. not by big data gathering, but through intimate contact with people .. 'to tell you the 'idea' of the organisation that's taken shape in our mind' .. to talk and be around'

But though academics (and commercials) who take an 'engineering' stance - who engage in more formal data collection, add information, and generally rely on a rational-empirical strategy of change - stand back more, nevertheless, they are engaged in the same processes of exchanging knowledge and concepts, whatever these happen to be about. Their methods, too, are devised with the educative end of enriching and challenging awareness. Thus, 'action-research' is a conscious methodology and policy for exchanging and modifying concepts. As Cherns' description of the process makes clear:

> 'When a social scientist is asked by management for advice on a particular problem, he must first discover which concepts are most likely to be useful to managers in their particular situation. Second, he has to devise a strategy for introducing his own concepts where they are likely to be appropriate. Thus, we have a process of mutual learning; perhaps we should describe it more precisely as 'trading concepts'. Shared concepts that emerge from this trading process provide a basis for making a fruitful analysis, determining the 'facts' and influencing perceptions.'[21]

The concepts exchanged and around which clarification takes place, between consultants and clients, might be to do with system performance or they might be to do with human fulfilment (or anything else). But whether the social science consultant has, what we might term, a predominantly 'systems' bias or a 'humanistic' bias, we are arguing those here have in common an implicit theory about the exchange and negotiation of ideas that is evident in their practice. This is most highly formulated around the question of contracting, because this is a process all externals have to go through in common.[22] Those social scientists who are most oriented to the person as the source of problem-definition, reality-construction, organisational action, and therefore of change, are likely to be most sensitive to the contracting process and to the subsequent processes for influencing people. Thus, management scientists, such as, operational researchers, are often characterised as having a 'systems' view of the world <u>and</u> being neglectful of contracting and influence processes.[23] Equally, one can conceive of a consultant who is so ideological for 'humanism' in organisations that he is more concerned to put over his own set of values than to engage with others' conceptions.[24] In this sample, however, across the whole range, there is an implicit paradigm in use which I call the 'negotiative paradigm'.

It is evident, moreover, among internal consultants. It is, though, less explicitly stated for a number of reasons, principally I would argue because 'negotiation'

is an indispensable and ingrained background to organisational life and the circumstances of internal consultants' work provide fewer occassions, in an interview, to bring it into view. Thus, contracting is not once mentioned by an internal, except by way of contrast with what it felt like to act as a consultant <u>outside</u> the parent organisation. Projects often don't fall into neat structures which can be worked through with a clear sense of the activities that need to be covered (such as a contracting phase). Being a 'resource' means the internal is frequently working alongside people on a regular basis, and much that an external has to negotiate and check out, the internal can comfortably take for granted. At the same time, the role offers less freedom for actively confronting awareness in a way intended to force a review of perception. Negotiation of new perceptions is a slow, attritional process.

However, what suggests 'negotiation' is a working paradigm for the internal are those activities which are treated as core techniques in O.D., which Friedlander and Brown refer to as 'human processual'.[25] For the internal, as for externals, group working is a primary activity, along with working with individuals in a counselling capacity. The substance of this work are the purposes, tasks, roles, and interaction of the members, involving the adjustment of their individual positions. The internal's role is to facilitate negotiation among others.

Thus, as a 'resource' he engages with a powerful sponsor to "clarify his ideas and what he wants to do", and gets

data "from other people who'll be at the meeting presided over by the Chairman, on what their hopes and expectations are".

In his relationship to a group he will act as a "flip-chart handler", "capturing the essence or whatever, stopping the action if it seems appropriate and doing something with it .. saying, 'What's going on here doesn't sound very realistic'. Or ensuring "that what I had seen as the Key issues were shared, owned, tabled, debated. In his process role he facilitates discussion and encourages attention to issues he feels the group should be addressing but may, for undisclosed reasons, be missing.

The general thrust of his work is what he learnt from MbO:

> 'getting people to identify what was important in their jobs, in terms of achievement, and to analyse them in terms of key tasks .. an emphasis on involvement and sharing between boss and subordinate, an emphasis on the review process .. helping people work on problems in their own organisation .. identifying the objectives of teams, how they related to one another, and what their various roles were.'

Above all, internals display their sense of organisational reality as a negotiating and influence process in their management of communication and relationships, on a continuing basis. To gather impressions and pass them on:

> 'One uses every opportunity (for educating people) .. whether meeting people round the bar, social opportunities - wherever it seems relevant .. I will mosey round the

the place, meeting people. If there's an open door, I'll pop in and talk, out of curiosity.'

Or to advance projects of their own, "raising questions, passing information around, challenging assumptions when you hear them .. a lot of trickles on stones":

'I wrote it as a draft .. to stimulate things. It enables ideas or questions to go round without setting up too much opposition.. It's a fairly effective testing mechanism - they say it's rubbish, or they bring evidence to support your ideas, increasing the data available'.

Thus, the awareness of political processes goes beyond "the clarification of language", and is certainly not encompassed by the conventional paradigm of O.D. which advocated open, authentic communication and relationships. For this reason we prefer to speak of the 'negotiative paradigm', since it also suggests the trading and bargaining processes which occur between people with different interests. Thus, Eden and Sims in their own adoption of the phrase to describe problem definition in consulting write:

'problem definition involves negotiation between individuals with different realities, and like all negotiations different interests are represented and different power bases apparent'.[26]

We find in consultants' accounts, therefore, a dominant paradigm around 'negotiation'. As Mangham, who has done much to set out a consultancy model based on this principle (or what he terms 'the consultant as dramaturgist'), and who described its theoretical underpinnings, says:

'Much of the accepted language of organisational development is not related to the dramaturgical perspective, but much of the practice is explicable within it'[27]

Others similarly have pointed to the popularity of 'role negotiation' in its various guises[28] among social and behavioural consultants, as evidence of the "pervasiveness of negotiation".[29]

The centrality of negotiation in consultants' practice ought not to be surprising. 'Symbolic interactionism', the underlying theory, is purportedly a theory and a statement about social interaction universally (although we shall argue it has culturally-specific features.) Any society including organisations, is conceived as a 'negotiated order'.[30] Consultancy is merely a particular instance of social interaction involving intervention into, and change of, a 'negotiated order'.

'Society is constantly being organised and reorganised. Its arrangements are constantly being 'worked at' by those who live within them, they are constantly being arranged, modified, rearranged, sustained, defended and undermined. The members of society are, therefore, constantly involved in a process of 'negotiation' with one another as they make agreements on how they will conduct themselves and as they reaffirm, revise and replace these agreements over the passage of time .. people are (not) all the time engaged in the explicit negotiation of their relative positions; they are not openly making deals or writing out agreements. Sometimes they are, but more usually they are involved in the kind of implicit, unspoken, mutual adjustment of action, feeling, attitude, interest and understanding which Strauss proposes we think of as though it were a process of negotiation and bargaining'[31]

The practices we 'see' consultants engaging in involve negotiating order around their consultancy role in order to gain access to these processes in organisations.

Moreover, what in fact we <u>hear</u> to a high degree, especially among external consultants and above all among 'developmental' academics, is that whilst they talk of "debating with", "dialoguing with", and "discussions", they display a facility for negotiating meaning by 'taking the role of the other'[32] in conversation and for entering into joint management of the interview:

> 'If you said, 'make up your own arrangements,' and people do say, 'you should be doing this' .. I say, 'for whom? Where is the client for it?'

> 'The last point on the agenda of the negotiating meeting should be an agreed statement of what went on, which is common to both parties. It's quite natural that the trade union, and management, should each go away interpreting what happened in that meeting their way. When you're in a conflict situation you're obviously going to see it differently from the other guy .. You won't perceive what's happening now the way I will. What's wrong is if you stop me communicating it my way, or I you .. or if I abdicate my responsibility for communicating it. . if I say, 'never mind, Chris will go and do it for me' .. That's what we've done in management circles .. While it's a monologue he's happy no-one can answer him back. With the whole era of employee participation, he's expected to enter into a dialogue..'

(c) ' I got a request on the telephone .. I said 'How come you want to do this?' .. 'How come you only just thought of this. Why do you want to do it now?' (that's

the felt-need) .. 'Last time we had a negotiation, the unions got the piece-rate written in. Now we've got nothing to motivate them. We need to get closer to them to motivate'.. 'You ain't got a chance. You can't get away with that. That's manipulation, that's not participation'..

(d) 'With every activity someone has to say, 'We're going'.. including you with your tape-recorder .. Somebody has to say, 'Can you pause a bit while I change the reel?' Somebody has to say, 'You're not quite taking the line I hoped you would in our interview .. Please take a different tack'.. Somebody has to say, 'there's a question you still haven't asked me, which is this ..' In other words, you are managing this interview and I fully accept your right to manage it .. And you think I'm managing and I think you're managing .. and it's very nice, and we're associates'.

10.3.ii. Role and the Negotiative Paradigm

We commented in Chapter 9 that all of consultancy motivated by social and behavioural sciences could be broadly conceived as 'educational', in raising and challenging awareness, but that externals and academics in particular, were best placed to do this.

The key to this style has to do with the scope for role distance available to any 3rd party, but particularly to an external consultant. It enables him to play the role of critic - to excite reflection on taken-for-granted

practices. It involves, as Mangham says, capitalising on the alienation natural to one's state of an intellegence in a material world.[33] Not being constrained by membership of the organisation consulted to adds a dimension of role separation to this 'natural state' of intellegence. For some; this alienation extends to finding organisations oppressive, and a preference for existing "on the fringe". It is notable, too, how far 'developmental' academic consultants have a background and experience that is international and multicultural: (See fig.5 p.415) :

> 'I was born in America and lived in seven different countries since a child .. This is important for what I do now since it gave me experience of different cultures and being sometimes marginal .. The other thing was I was incarcerated in a number of total institutions called boarding schools, which gave me a strong sense of distrust of large organisations, and that's something I'm probably still working out .. these are two things I actually think are quite important to my overall interest in this work'.

This condition of the 'marginal man' is similar to that recommended by Rex as necessary for the doing of sociology:

> 'only a displaced person is capable of doing real sociology'[34]

Like sociologists, consultants have to be

> 'capable of standing outside the limited perspectives of their own culture.'[35]

The style of consultancy employed by externals is also often like that proposed by Rex for the sociologist - to

look at the supposed "charters" under which institutions, societies, and systems like organisations, operate and to critically examine whether these structures are functioning according to their supposed "real purposes". When a consultant directs attention to disjunctions between mission, organisational structure, and management style (or 'philosophy, structure, and style, as a commercial consultant put it), he is doing something very similar:

> 'Everywhere there are contradictions between official morality and operating morality'
>
> 'it's a question of bringing an institution into line with the values it's propogating'

The external consultant thus puts his alienation at the service of others, so that they can better realize their goals and achieve the behaviour and structures appropriate to these. Role distance replicates that condition by which the child achieves awareness, 'becoming an object to himself', which Mead saw as generating language, and for which language is, in turn, the medium through which awareness is generated.[36]

The comparison between sociologists and those consultants adopting a 'normative-re-educative' approach to change can be taken a stage further. Nisbet argues[37] that sociology originated (in the post-French Revolution era) in a desire to rediscover some basis for social order, and that the first sociologists (of which Comte was the exemplar) sought to lay out a new model for society, a new over- arching definition of reality. This motivation is just as strong in our day, after the dislocations in ideology in the C20th, and O.D. has its strongly normative side.

'One might even try to relate the rise of these self-conscious and explicit attempts to map society and its workings, which we call the social sciences, to the increasingly diverse, abstract, massive and complicated nature of the social world'.[38]

Many social scientists, including organisational consultants, have come to see the problem initially as comprehending this new complexity - not making a new definitive map, but understanding the maps in use:

'The mental map of the social world is largely about other people's mental maps.'[39]

In a large pluralistic society, of competing values, goals, and perceptions,there arises a lack of coordination between the 'maps' of different people (and between people's 'maps' and the world as it really is).[40] It becomes necessary, therefore, to check out one's mental maps against those of other people, in order to act 'realistically', and to develop coherent integrated maps for systems like organisations to function. Published accounts of their practice by Mant,[41] and Margerison[42], show them actually going through mapping processes with their clients, whilst a small number here do likewise using graphic mapping procedures - what one termed "normative mapping". In reflecting' reality and presenting alternative realities in 'discussions', however, they are doing it all the time - it's a question of

'working alongside an experienced practitioner to help him comprehend the latent structure of his existing judgements and experiences'[43]

But also using their privileged position as externals to present

'the kind of model that best serves the raising of awareness .. that which presents a continuing tension with the reality to which it relates'[44]

They believe with the semanticists[45] that to describe more accurately, to communicate more adequately, and to reason more effectively - to develop 'communicative competence' - a realistic basis for action and for making changes will be laid, and moral understanding will be increased by freeing symbolic or 'practical' reason from its absorption in systems of instrumental behaviour, that is, from the dominance of production interests.[46] Thus, Habermas, who offered psychoanalytic practice as a model for developing 'communicative competence', 'developmental' consultants draw in some measure upon their own background in therapeutically-oriented psychology for a model for organisational consulting.

The point, however, is that "capitalising on the alienation natural to one's state of an intelligence in a material world" (p.441) - the consultant's own freedom from domination by "systems of instrumental behaviour" - is made possible and sustained in the case of the academic consultant by a position of economic detachment. Whilst the status of a 'marginal man' favours the perspective and practices generically termed the 'negotiative 'paradigm', the paradigm (in its intellectual form) may be bound to such role conditions, just as particular examples of it in practice, for instance contracting, are made requisite by specific role circumstances. As Rex says of the sociologists:

> 'The danger, however, is that their counter -culture will trap them'[47]

10.3iii The Systems Paradigm

Systems thinking is so widespread in the social and behavioural sciences, its features so well known, and consultants (with the exception of a few developmentally-oriented academics) are so taken over by it, that there is less need to give it as detailed treatment as the negotiative paradigm, which is less well recognised. The prestige of systems thinking in the physical sciences and in the creation of modern industrial technology, allied with that of empirically-based scientific methods, have encouraged imitation in the social sciences. In Britain the social sciences were boosted by the war-time application of systems thinking and empirical methods in Operational Research,[48] and there was an expectation that the social sciences could be applied with equal success to other areas such as social policy and the management of people in industry. The situation in America in the 1950's was similar and an example, with systems thinking receiving strong endorsement from success in managing great modern enterprises:

> 'With the models of the Manhattan project and NASA's great project, the broad concept of 'systems' has tended to penetrate areas of civilian concern. In the private sector, companies like IBM, Westinghouse, and General Electric have increasingly tended to define their business around systems notions. IBM's redefinition of itself as being in the 'information system business' rather than in the business of providing office equipment has become famous. Westinghouse and General Electric Kaiser Aluminum and Sunset Petroleum, have begun to see themselves as in the business of developing and managing cities. Many other firms have addressed themselves to 'educational systems' and to the systems of transportation, pollution control, manpower, and others in the lengthening laundry list of concerns.

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'Partly the shifts have been due to the success and visibility of the systems efforts of our defense and aerospace organisations; partly they are due to increasing national attention given to areas of public sector need; partly they are due to the revitalisation of New Deal programs under the administrations of Kennedy and Johnson. Whatever their source, they have resulted in shifting upward the level of aggregation at which problems are defined.'[49]

Thus, deeply rooted in contemporary western society,

'there is an overriding tendency to look on society as a working system, which can be made to work better by rational-technical means'.[50]

The theory of 'planned organisational change' coming upon the scene at this point adopted therefore the ideal of rationally controlled social change within a perspective which pitched intervention at the level of the 'system', The consultant is enjoined to direct his efforts to the "group-systemic"[51] level from where problems arise and where they are solved. The assumption is, therefore, of a 'corporate client'. The problematic is phrased in terms of 'how shall the group (or organisation) survive in its environment?'[52], which initially requires organisational members to clarify their 'mission'[53], or to identify their 'primary task'.[54] As Eric Miller of the Tavistock put it:

'(the concept of the 'primary task') has the effect of mobilising the members of the enterprise with whom one is working into their work roles in the organisation and to grapple with its problems from that perspective'[55]

Consequently, applied social science, as Gouldner saw it twenty-five years ago, has become

'one of the planned functional substitutes for the spontaneous adaptive mechanisms by means of which the rational organisation responds to external threats, reduces internal disruptions, and controls various forms of social deviance'[56]

Thus, A.W.Clark writes of a project he was involved in as a member of the Tavistock Institute:

> 'It attempts to reverse the usual relations between ideology and practice. Typically practices are instituted and then beliefs developed to justify them. In the present approach, the ideology is consciously thought through, and practices follow. This extension of conscious control fits the usual definition of an organisation as a rationally controlled achievement of a particular goal'[57]

And, similarly, although it proceeded by different means, Roeber saw the behavioural science-based programme of change at ICI as

> 'a step towards a Popperian ideal of an organisation built around the process of problem-solving .. (characterised by) rationality, logic, and the scientific approach'[58]

However, systems thinking is not confined among consultants to its association with the rational model of change, where the method is premissed on a rational goal-oriented system structured to specific ends. There is not one systems model alone.

Gouldner, for example, distinguished between the "rational" model of organisation and the "natural system" model.[59] This is a useful point of departure because it identifies the essential contribution of systems thinking. The "rational" model is the conventional bureaucratic or 'machine' model which depicts the organisation as a goal-directed and rationally changeable entity:

> 'the rational model implies a "mechanical" model, in that it views the organisation as a structure of manipulable parts, each of which is separately modifiable with a view to enhancing the efficiency of the whole'[60]

Although not strictly a systems model at all, advocates of systems thinking often appear to proceed in the belief that

change can be fully managed without unanticipated consequences. The pretensions of Organisation Development in its early days were built on this.[61] By contrast, the "natural system" model sees an organisation as an emergent structure "spontaneously and homeostatically maintained", with a stress on the interdependence of parts:

> 'Organisations .. become ends in themselves and possess their own distinctive needs which have to be satisfied'[62]

Any planned change, therefore, has to cope with both the interdependence of parts and the fact that parts (which may not be readily identifiable or recognised sub-systems) develop goals of their own outside the narrow definition of purely instrumental organisational goals:

> 'Planned changes are therefore expected to have ramifying consequences for the whole organisational system'[63]

Gouldner recognises two further characteristics of the "natural system" model, though it has been left to others to develop their analytical differences. First, there is a stress on the equilibrial aspect of systems:

> 'The focus is not on deviations from rationality but, rather on disruptions of organisational equilibrium, and particularly on the mechanisms by which equilibrium is homeoststically maintained.'[64]

Second, there is the idea of the organisation as a naturally growing entity:

> 'Natural-system theorists tend to regard the organisation as a whole as organically "growing", with a "natural history" of its own which is planfully modifiable - only at great peril, if at all'[65]

Other observers develop these distinctions in emphasis. For example Barrington Moore sees theories of society in the C19th and C20th in terms of "equilibrium theory" and

"process theory"[66], whilst Chin, rather confusingly (but in a valuable discussion) terms these a "system" model and a "developmental" model.[67] We shall set out the essential characteristics of these models since they are relevant in looking for any patterns in the types of models favoured by different consultants.

The "system model" defined by Chin sees an organisation in an environment, receiving inputs, converting them, and creating outputs, across boundaries. It seeks, or exists in, an equilibrium state with the forces acting on it across its external boundaries, and within it between internal boundaries. Because it is itself a complex structure of parts, processes, and sub-systems, it is likely these are not perfectly integrated and therefore the internal state of the system is one of tension, stress, strain and conflict. Because of the transactions across boundaries, feedback mechanisms become important for self-monitoring and regulation. The extent of transactions is determined by how 'open' or 'closed' the system is, and relations to the environment are complicated by the fact that organisations deal with other organisations which are themselves fully-fledged systems having similar systemic properties (a point of particular relevance, notes Chin, to the consultant entering a client-system).[68] Chin sums up the utility of the "system model" as follows:-

> 'A "system" model emphasizes primarily the details of how stability is achieved, and only derivatively how change evolves out of the incompatibilities and conflicts in the system. A system model assumes that organisation, interdependency, and integration exist among its parts and that change is a derived consequence of how well the parts of the system fit together, or how well the system fits in with other surrounding and interacting systems. The source of change lies primarily in the structural

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stress and strain externally induced or internally created. The levers or handles available for manipulation are in the "inputs" to the system, especially the feedback mechanisms, and in the forces tending to restore a balance in the system'[69]

'Contingency theory' as developed by Lawrence and Lorsch[70] and at the Manchester Business School by Lupton[71], is therefore an example of this kind of model, with its notion of "best fit". As described, the "system model" has an analytical, diagnostic character and assumes the kind of outside 'expert' role to system change taken by our academic 'researcher/engineer/policy advisers'.

The parts, elements, processes, and sub-systems of the organisation can be defined in many different ways, depending on the observer's focus. Although Chin doesn't explore them, products of the "system model" way of looking at organisations are those models which particularly stress the interdependence of human and technological sub-systems. This is an area of particular concern of course to social and behavioural scientists. Examples of this are Leavitt's model[72] of the people, tasks, technology, and structure of the organisation, and the 'open socio-technical systems' concept developed at the Tavistock Institute by Trist.[73] The former model appears to be used as an ideological tool, particularly by internal consultants, to encourage greater attention to the social aspects of organisation by managers who are schooled primarily in the 'closed' system logics of the technical systems they manage. The 'socio-technical' concept, similarly, appears to be used in a loose way, by commercial consultants, for the same purpose, whilst specialists in the job design field

(primarily academics) use it more rigorously to develop new work structures, plotting the interactions and interdependencies between task and social systems.

By contrast, the "developmental model", according to Chin, has not been very sharply analysed by the pure theorist nor formally stated as an analytic model. It assumes constant change and development, and growth and decay of a system over time. Key concepts identified by Chin are development towards some goal, identifiable states or stages of development, forms of progression in terms of how change occurs, forces which produce or restrict change, and beliefs about the inherent potential of a system to develop and grow. Since the direction of the system is towards some goal, facilitating change and growth is seen as the removal of blockages in the way of natural forces immanent to the system. Chin notes that many practitioners have implicitly favoured developmental models in thinking about human affairs:

> 'The developmental model has tremendous advantages for the practitioner. It provides a set of expectations about the future of the client-system. By clarifying his thoughts and refining his observations about direction, states in the developmental process, forms of progression, and forces causing these events to occur over a period of time, the practitioner develops a time perspective which goes far beyond that of the here-and-now analysis of a system-model.'[74]

Their value to practitioners is thus predictive. They provide what Argyris commends as 'self-fulfilling prophecies' permitting psychological success.[75] The consultant can work on an assumption that things are moving in a certain direction or are in a certain state, and gears his efforts to that hypothesis. The concept of the 'life cycle' and 'the mid-life crisis' in organisational life is an example

of this which two or three external consultants make use of. Greiner's 'stages of growth' model[76] is another. 'Cultures and structures' analysis[77] is similar in providing normative models for states of a system, although by relating the contingency of one state (culture) to another (structure) it also draws on the "system model". Another form of this type of model are rule-of-thumb micro-models of the change process (for example, the 'unfreezing-change-freezing' model)[78] and of the forces in a system. (Lewin's characterisation of a system in terms of a force-field producing a 'quasi'-stationary equilibrium'[79] enables the 'change agent' to understand and analyse the forces which he needs to work on.) Both these again assume certain features of the "System model" (an organisation in a state of equilibrial tension), but like the normative models they are pragmatic, providing guide lines to action.

"Systems" "developmental", and "rational" models of organisation are themselves 'pure types'. As Gouldner noted:

> 'Sometimes both of these models are used in organisational analysis in an eclectric manner; one part of the organisation is analysed in terms of the rational model and another part in terms of the natural-system model'.[80]

Practitioners have developed their own particular fusion of elements from each, just as Chin recommended they needed to in the form of a 'model for changing'.

> 'It incorporates some elements of analyses from system models, along with some ideas from the developmental model, in a framework where direct attention is paid to the induced forces producing change. It studies stability in order to unfreeze and move some part of the system. The direction to be taken is not fixed or "determined", but remains in large measure a matter of "choice" for the client system.'[81]

Lewin's model is an obvious example of such a hybrid.

More generally, systems models of all kinds have been transformed by various attempts to fuse systems concepts with an interactionist (or social action) perspective, to overcome the abstractions of systems theory and to account for organisational action[82]. The Tavistock's model of interlocking individual, group, and organisational systems[83] has tended in this direction. Thus, Miller and Lawrence write of the 'primary task' concept that

> 'In order to understand what social action the participants subjectively believe themselves to be engaged in, the concept can be used to help them to articulate their perceptions ... The value of this formulation is that it provides a theoretical bridge between the individual and his organisation, a meeting-point between social system and social action perspectives. The individual brings to his organisation values, orientations and sentiments from the wider society that can influence his social action within it, in whatever way he consciously decides to deal with them. He can thus be seen as negotiating or managing his own sentiments and his definitions of the reality of the organisation - its social and political structure, technology, task and environment - in relation to others' definitions, so as to construct a shared reality .. the concept of primary task can be used in both an heuristic and maieutic fashion to bring forward into consciousness what the action is about.'[84]

Attempts like these to construct more satisfactory, more inclusive descriptions of behaviour and the working of organisations are the stuff of social and behavioural theory. As such, they are widely available. The theoretical outlines of the 'systems paradigm', as we noted, are well-known. There is not a consultant in the sample who can be unaware of these. The question, however, is as practitioners (rather than as describers or observers), 'do they adopt particular variants in any systematic way related to their role-situation?' This is the issue Chin

posed in a sense when he entitled his paper 'The Utility of System Models and Developmental Models for Practitioners'.

10.3.iv. Role and the System Paradigm

Some models are of general utility to both internals and externals (commercial and academic). For example, role-set analysis is fairly widely used in one form or another[85] as a means of identifying key individuals in one's personal system who exercise influence on one's actions. This can be used by consultants to guide their own tactics in building a change programme through key individuals or to develop a personal change strategy on a one-to-one basis with individual members of an organisation. The focus is on the individual's 'system' and an individual in an organisation has the same ontological relationship to the consultant whether he is internal or external to the organisation.

However, the organisation as a system has a different ontological status depending whether the consultant is a 'member' or 'not a member'. The role-relationship thus creates different perceptual-sets which can influence the choice and construction of theories. The use of system-models can therefore be related to the role situation of the consultant.

Some instances of preferences for models have already been cited and the relevance of systems-thinking generally for external consultants was discussed at some length in Chapter 8 on Commercials. The general point about systems

models is that they are heuristics which give a consultant some kind of a handle on a situation and thus facilitate both understanding and action (though 'developmental' academics are wary of the instrumental relationship this may create towards organisational members as 'subjects'). We can distinguish five forms the relationship between consultant role and the type of system model employed takes:

(1) Normative models (for example, of 'cultures and Structures' and of a 'mid-life crisis') give an intellectual handle on a situation. They are diagnostic to the extent that they can produce an 'ah! ah!' reaction - 'I've got it! that's the way it is!' But essentially they are 'myth-making'. They are therefore of particular use to externals for giving a rough grasp on reality, and perhaps to communicate the model to the client to clarify his own image and to indicate directions for change. This is the process of image-giving to increase awareness, writ large, which was described in Chapter 8 on commercials' 'mirroring'.

The utility of such models and the role of myth-making in consultancy was well recognised by the same commercial consultant who characterised an organisation in terms of a 'mid-life crisis' (see page 331):

'It's obvious he's aware of other things going on underneath and they will come out. But it's no point us saying, 'Of course, the real problem is .. and what you need to do is to sit down and ask yourself some very direct questions about what sort of business do you want to be', because he couldn't cope with that at the moment. That's not a criticism. I don't think any of us could

cope with it. We as a group of three trying to build a business couldn't cope with the question, 'What sort of a business are you going to be?' We have to maintain the illusion that we all have a common view. If we broke that illusion, we couldn't cope with that reality .. It's the same with him, we don't want to break his illusion. We want to massage that illusion into something more realistic, more effective.'

(commercial consultant)

As the same man also said, "my reality is tongue-in-cheek".

(2) Other system models however, may be treated by their proponents as phenomenologically 'real' insofar as they express something about the consultant's own role experience. The Tavistock (group-psychoanalytic) Model'[86] is of this kind. We hypothesize that its postulate that

- 'the work group's authority derives from their collective primary task'[87]

and that

- 'each role-holder is not only concerned with the management of himself in his role but is also having to hold the management of the work-group 'in his mind'.'[88]

are confirmed by the efforts of its adherents to institute these principles in their own work-group relations, and by the relative success which a small professional group can achieve in this direction. Since the model is discovered and confirmed in their own psychological experience (this is the 'proof' it rests on[89]) equally one could say that it is the projection of a wish-fulfilment. To recall the words of an associate of the Tavistock (page 410)

'I took for granted the 'representative model'. They couldn't work it .. They were so slotted into an individual vantage point, they had no conception of the individual constrained by an organisation, or gaining potential from membership.. no sense of themselves as an institution. I've been involved in several situations, where I've found people cannot take on board the anxiety, the responsibility, of thinking on behalf of the whole. Not everyone wants to, or is able to take that on. The more ancillary people you bring in, you undermine that. I wish now I had stuck to the professional staff.'
(academic consultant)

This does raise the question of the validity of knowledge - to what extent is it relative to a particular perspective? The organisation is portrayed as a collective reality, over and above the individual, in which the individual, nevertheless, is a participating member and bears some responsibility for the collective welfare. However commendable the participatory ethos it can be used to argue for, [90] to what extent is the theory erected upon the organisational experience of the few who actively participate in the control of organisations? To what extent is the small group experience which most people enjoy in specific settings converted into a relationship with the organisation as a whole? To what extent are both coloured by the small group and corporate organisational experience of the theorists themselves? Under certain intensive conditions, such as group relations training, individuals may experience themselves in the corporate body, ingest

the organisation as a system, and take responsibility for the whole. Trained in such experiences, the consultant may attempt to re-experience and reconstruct this as a form of projection onto a stranger group.

(3) On the surface a very similar model of the organisation, in terms of its having objectives, tasks to be carried out, and people in roles, is that implicit to internals when they work with groups on 'task-oriented team development'.[91] They are effectively drawing a permeable boundary round the group in the same way (that is, representing it as a system). However, they draw on their intimate perception of the organisation as a series of interlocking roles, work-flows, and related objectives (which MbO experiences have perhaps reinforced). As such, theirs is a relatively 'low-level' model, 'continuous' (in Van de Vall's words)[92] with the experience and models of other managers, without the psycho-analytic dimension by which the Tavistock (external academic) consultants apprehend the group and organisation as entities and construct 'myths' around group-level phenomena.

(4) Other systems models give the external a similar direct practical handle on a situation - by identifying points of entry and leverage points for breaking into a situation where there is a linked series of problems. This is pragmatically useful to an external, as was described in the chapter on commercials.

(5) Finally, there are those purely diagnostic systems models which are appropriate to the consultant's conception of science, his training as a 'scientist', and his preferred role as an expert diagnostician. Thus, socio-technical and contingency models are favoured by 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser' academics (although, as we noted, these are also used more loosely by other consultants to counteract an excessive preoccupation with the technical aspects of work).

10.4. The Impact of Role on Theories : Summary

In this chapter we have sought to answer Merton's question, 'How are mental productions related to their existential basis?', in order to establish the grounds for a sociology of knowledge perspective on the theories and practices adopted by social and behavioural science consultants. The evidence of Chapters 7 - 9 points to the accentuation of particular features of role in the form of practices and styles of consultancy. In this chapter we have explored the theoretical frameworks or paradigms which in different degrees are common to and underlie these, and we have shown how particular aspects of these are related to particular aspects of consultants' different roles. Role, we suggest, has an impact in three possible ways:

(1) role occasions the <u>selection</u> of theory and its associated practices for their utility in helping the consultant to manage his role. This is true of externals in their accentuation of negotiative practices, and in their use of different kinds of systems models.

(2) role conditions the <u>construction</u> of theories by

determining a certain perceptual-set and by providing evidence of the theory's validity through the experience of working from that particular role. This is arguably the case in respect of the group-psychoanalytic systems model associated with the Tavistock Institute, and of the 'developmental' academics accentuation of negotiative practices. Admittedly, the distinction between (1) and (2) is tenuous in practice, because we cannot easily know what the processes of selection and construction were, or readily distinguish them. A theory's utility tends to confirm its validity for the practitioner, whatever its genesis.

(3) role affects the scope of what a consultant can legitimately do. Therefore, in the selection of activities considered by others to be appropriate to the role, certain theories and practices have an 'elective affinity' for the consultant. This is especially so for internals, who tend heavily towards 'task-oriented team development' activities, towards the 'low-level' systems theory which underpins this, and towards negotiative practices of a kind 'normally' practised inside organisations (in the allocation and clarification of tasks and roles, and in organisational politics).

It could be argued that consultants acquire theories before they take up roles, and that the selection of roles is therefore a function of education and training. Undoubtedly

this is so, but the utility of theories is only proven by practice, and in the case of the internal we have seen the type and degree of training is a product of the role it is envisaged he will take up. In any case, role, theories, and practices are mutually adapted, and it is the particular configurations of these we would first wish to draw attention to.

The agency of the consultant as an interpreter of his experience and the mediator of the theories he constructs is not in doubt. But roles present experience in certain ways which make theories both functional for him (that is, they enable him to manage his role), and a function of role by creating perceptual sets. The processes at work are not of one kind alone.

Role, however, also exercises a functional influence in the way clients present issues to the consultant and call up the role of the consultant. Theories and practices are not therefore just phenomenologically constructed - a way of helping the consultant get by and a source of truth to him. Nor is education and training a sufficient 'determinant' of a role. The role of consultant is the product of wider organisational and societal processes. The contention of the thesis set out in Chapter 1 was that consultants ideas and practices ('theories') need to be phenomenologically sound for their proponents, as well as meeting the requirements of clients, to enable them to act more effectively and so secure their own material interests. We therefore turn our attention in the remaining chapters to

this issue, to answer the question how consultants' ideas and practice (characterised in the negotiative and systems paradigms) were functional for clients and the extent to which they can be called 'ideological'.

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    This view of 'truth' is ststed nowhere more forcefully than by the Pragmatists:
    "(Truth means) nothing but this, that ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true just insofar as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience" (W.James, Pragmatism, New York, Longmans, 1907, p.58)

    And:
    "Mental life is primarily teleological; that is to say, that our various ways of feeling and thinking have grown to be what they are because of their utility in shaping our relations on the outer world"
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CHAPTER 11

THE WIDER SETTING: PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATION (1960-79) AND HOW CONSULTANTS HELPED

11.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to sketch the economic, the organisational, and the industrial relations landscape of the 1960's and '70s in which consultants operated. In this period, the distinctive profession of social and behavioural science consultant first emerged in any sort of numbers. Management consulting, which had grown out of the 'work measurement' movement,[1] considerably diversified in the period from the mid-1960's to the early 1980's. Growth in personnel management-related work, to 20% of all assignments undertaken by consultancy firms belonging to the Management Consultants Association,[2] was one of the beneficiaries. Although much of this growth was in personnel selection (dominated by P.A. Management Consultants), Organisation Development was a growth area, as measured by the membership of the OD Network.[3] In the expectation that the development of consultancy in new functional areas will be largely determined by specific conditions existing at the time,[4] we seek to show in this chapter and the next that those models and perspectives favoured by consultants, as outlined in Chapter 10, had particular relevance to the problems organisations faced in the era 1960-79.

First, we identify the problems organisations were facing and the material contribution social and behavioural science consultants made towards remedying these - in other words, the 'interests' served. Then in Chapter 12 we draw out those elements of the models and practices of consultants which were germane to these problems and their resolution. In this way, we endeavour to show in what sense negotiative and systems paradigms could be considered 'ideological'.

The social sciences were enlisted after the 2nd World War into helping with the drive for greater productivity from industry. This crystallised in the 1960's into a direct input by social and behavioural science consultants into the productivity bargaining movement. To recall the role which they played, we review three large programmes which had as one of their goals improved productivity, and then look at the wider post-war context and the social science contribution.

It is not sufficient, however, to say merely, on this level of generality, that the social and behavioural sciences made a contribution towards a certain economic 'interest', characterised as better productivity and improved social order in industrial affairs. We need to be clearer about the point of impact, just who was influenced and how. 'Ideology', as we said in Chapter 10, is typically seen as ideas aiding one group to dominate a subordinate one. On the contrary, we argue that in the first instance, social and behavioural science consultancy has been directed more at management, to improve management's

organisational and ideological coherence, and thereby management's ability to respond to the workforce and to direct the terms of the management-workforce relationship. In the long-run, and indirectly, the effect may be to secure the 'interests' of one group over another. But the immediate impact is not, as the 'dominant ideology thesis' suggests, to secure the compliance and consent of a subordinate group by some process of mystification. In this Abercrombie and Turner's view is more satisfactory:

> 'We suggest that the dominant ideology is best seen as securing the coherence of the dominant class.'[5]

This is not necessarily always the case. Some parts of an ideology may, indeed, directly underpin unequal relationships. But in this case, it was the integration and control of the burgeoning class of managers which was as much in question as the integration and pacification of the manual workforce. Other more direct strategies were available to manage that interface. 'Ideology' is seen here, then, in terms nearer to Althusser's conception, as a 'social cement' indispensable to all groups as a source of social cohesion. Ideology enables each group "to respond to the exigencies of(its) existence":[6] systems and negotiative paradigms do this for consultants themselves, and they do it for management generally.

When in turn, however, a group projects its own sense of relations onto others through ideas, practices, and the structures it creates, ideology takes on a new dimension. How far the ideas being propagated and applied in the management and industrial relations setting pervaded other settings extends the issue of ideology, then, towards the

characterisation of a 'dominant ideology'. In Chapter 12 we go on to consider how the specific paradigms we have found consultants to be embracing prevailed elsewhere, and how therefore the 'theories' of social and behavioural science consultants can be said to constitute an 'ideology', and the consultants themselves be called ideological agents or "carriers".[7] This chapter, however, provides first the essential economic, organisational, and industrial relations background in which social and behavioural science consulting operated.

The period from 1960[8] was marked by a growing crisis. It began in efforts, in Britain, to improve the productivity and efficiency of industry. This involved the State in efforts to formulate a new relationship with capital and labour (through various tripartite arrangements for economic management); and it forced managers in organisations of all kinds to seek a new understanding with employees, as a basis for the maintenance of order in industry, which was felt to be essential to improving performance and productivity.[9] The period witnessed what Claus Offe has described as a crisis on two fronts: a crisis in the national management of the economy, and a crisis of legitimacy in which old authority relations were found no longer to work[10] - a crisis not confined by any means to Britain.[11] According to Habermas[12], the one precipitated the other as a result of the State intervening to preserve the capitalist economy - remedying growing gaps in the functioning of the market, especially in the provision of 'social' goods, and holding down incomes to

offset the tendential fall in the rate of profit. In this way, the State took on an increased burden of management and raised expectations, which it was ultimately unable to fulfil. At the same time the State generated new pressures upon the capitalist economy, through its need for finance, by taxation, to sustain its activities, which translated into further inflationary pressures on private industry. (In the process, other commentators argue, the State also pre-empted investment resources which slowed the growth of the more 'productive' sectors of the economy[13].)
The period ends with a radical attempt to restore market capitalism - the withdrawal of the State from economic management; a reduction in the taxation burden on firms; private enterprise being given greater scope to supply private <u>and</u> public consumption requirements; and attempts through the revoking of legislation, the strengthening of traditional symbols, and the use of unemployment, to bring about a reversion to former authority relations.

Reform of British industry, like the State's management of the economy, involved two interrelated problems - (a) improving productivity and efficiency, and (b) developing new authority relations to make possible and to legitimise improvements in efficiency. The achievement of one was dependent on achievement of the other. These improvements were pursued under the guise of what came to be known, after Allan Flanders had coined the term,[14] as 'productivity bargaining'. Behavioural science programmes involving

'participation', 'job enrichment', 'O.D.', 'Management by Objectives', were all of them spawned by, or taken up in this movement, so that in Britain applied social and behavioural science and the role of consultants received crucial impetus from Productivity Bargaining.

The tendency has been to regard O.D., for example, as a "fad" - a product of affluence in which companies indulged while spare resources were available:

> 'Like psychoanalysis, O.D. may be the plaything of the wealthy; and like other luxuries, the O.D.business is highly dependent on the business cycle.'[15]

Such a view is not incompatible with rising expectations and impending crisis, but it is to overlook that O.D. and similar programmes are doing something for somebody. However detached from productivity bargaining they subsequently have become, the character of such work may be illuminated by understanding its historical context. Nichols and Beynon's view may be nearer the mark:

> 'given an international capitalist economy ... when a corporation's profits come under threat it will tighten management control; and, depending on its particular situation, including the 'industrial relations' situation, will resort to explicitly coercive measures, like redundancy, and/or more 'progressive' ones like 'job enlargement', 'enrichment', and 'participation' in order to more effectively harness productive labour to capital. That is why it is no cause for surprise that Chemco, a firm famous for its human relations policies, should have shed 15 per cent of its national labour force in the early 1970's.'[16]

It is salutary, therefore, to recall how social and behavioural science was taken up in a number of major programmes whose object was to improve productivity and to note how, right from the beginning, behavioural science

Background experience to behavioural science consultancy	Internals	Commercials	Academics	Total
Direct involvement in Productivity bargaining and efficiency-related programmes.	12	4	3	19
Other Line Management (incl.Personnel Administration)	3*	3	2	9
Education, training, management development, and job satisfaction.	3	4+	11	17
Total	18	11	16	

* all ICI trained in O.D.
\+ including one ICI trained in O.D.

Table 7 Sources of involvement in behavioural science consultancy.

in Britain was involved in fostering normative integration as the basis for efficiency improvements. When in due course we shall consider the specific experience of the consultants surveyed in this study, we should recall that a great many of them entered the field as a direct result of these particular programmes,[17] either from an internal consultancy role being created in these firms or through the training programmes they generated. Table 7 summarizes.

11.2. Three Major Change Programmes

Three well-documented cases illustrate these links and their nature.

(a) The first of these, at Shell (UK), we are reminded by a consultant who was there at the time as a line manager, was the culmination of a long series of attempts to improve productivity.

> 'There have been various attempts over the years to improve the overall performance of the refinery (Shell Haven). Prior to 1965 these tended to be directed separately to improving technical performance or improving manpower efficiency. Some of the manpower programmes, which were preceded by a visitation from a Head Office team, led to significant reduction in numbers. A locally initiated programme in 1964 was a Management by Objectives (MbO) package directed to improving supervisor performance in selected departments.
>
> In the middle Sixties a more integrated approach to improvement emerged which is fully described by Paul Hill.'[18]

At this point a number of interrelated problems had become identified - a problem, first and foremost, of motivation among operatives, and a loss of management and supervisory control over pay, demarcation, and manning

levels, with a consequent lowering of management morale. Such were the classic ingredients of the 'productivity problem' of British firms as Flanders[19], among others, defined it in the 1960's. A study by the Employee Relations Planning Unit set up in 1963 to look at these problems, concluded, however, that

> 'there are definite limitations to the amount of progress we can hope to make in the future in achieving greater productivity by more effective use of manpower through conventional bargaining tactics, given the present climate of relationships'[20]

In this situation, the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was engaged to develop a two-pronged attack on the problem. Changing managerial attitudes by the propogation of a 'new philosophy of management' was to be accompanied by productivity bargaining through joint working parties operating in a problem-solving (rather than exclusively 'distributive') mode, after the manner pioneered in the Fawley (Esso) productivity agreement (with consultancy help it should be noted);[21] and, in addition, by projects to redesign jobs according to advanced socio-technical principles (as if to attest the good faith of management in the new philosophy). The inter-relationship of these activities is well-displayed in Figure 6.

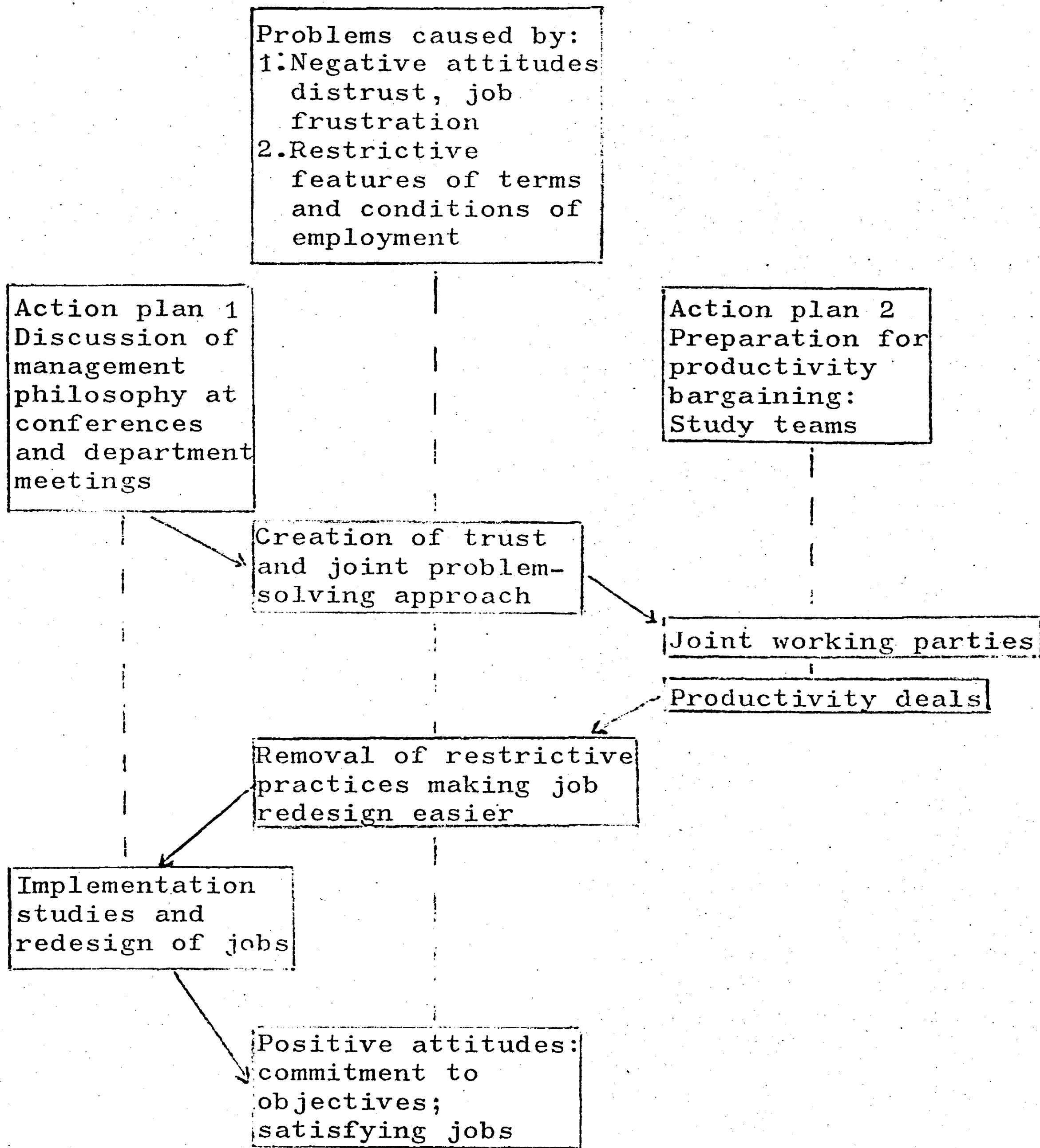

Figure 6: The inter-relationship of problems and the action programme of Shell (UK) [22]

As Eric Trist, the leading member of the Tavistock team saw it, the value of promulgating a statement of a new management philosophy was that

> 'in this situation an organisation would only retain its cohesion and move in an appropriate direction if the majority of its members subscribed to a common set of values'[23]

The philosophy underpinned and was a prerequisite for orderly change.

> 'To what extent the success achieved in the bargaining depended on the effects of the philosophy dissemination programme is not possible to measure exactly. Certainly it was the opinion of the managements concerned that the one could not have been achieved without the other'.[24]

This view has its subsequent detractors[25]. As someone who chaired conferences designed to propogate the philosophy saw it:

> 'we had not really gained from 'the philosophy' nor from the MbO principles of the 1964 exercise. We certainly had not absorbed these principles into the managerial system'[26]

Despite the unusual big bang 'cascade' approach which has not been generally repeated in other documented behavioural science programmes,[27] this example does, however, illustrate the role that was being created for, and by, behavioural science consultants. As Blackler and Brown put it:

> 'the Tavistock group as authors in search of a character and the members of ERP (at Shell) in search of an author came together with a shared sense of urgency.'[28]

(b) In the second example, described by Roeber, at I.C.I., economic problems were again prominent among a complex of factors. In particular, the company perceived it was

vulnerable in the area of labour costs, compared with its competitors.[29] The programme of change subsequently embarked upon arose out of a study of I.C.I.'s wages structure, which concluded:

> 'We expect that, if I.C.I. make no move in this direction (to reform its wages structure), it will be faced with demands from men and unions and be forced ultimately to make concessions. The Panel recommends that I.C.I. should take the initiative and try to bring such changes on its own conditions and at its own speed.'[30]

Apart from such financial and economic issues, I.C.I.'s standing as a progressive employer was under some threat - from the pioneering productivity scheme Esso had concluded at Fawley in 1960, but more particularly from the building by Shell, on Teeside, of a new plant incorporating the job enrichment principles being developed there by the Tavistock Institute's consultants. Shell threatened to displace I.C.I. (at its Wilton and Billingham works) as the N.E. region's premium employer.

Although attitude and motivation problems were only one part of the whole problem, and the behavioural sciences initially after their introduction, in 1963, were "without influence", understanding and changing the former by means of the latter was crucial to the eventual success of the negotiations which culminated, first, in the 'Manpower Utilisation and Payment Structure' (MUPS) in 1965, and more especially in the Weekly Staff Agreement (WSA) thereafter. The behavioural sciences

> ' in time came to dominate the whole exercise. They offered the answers raised by the other four (sets of problems). Improvements in productivity were the goal; massively complex and pervasive changes in the design

'of jobs, wages structure and the basic contract between workers and the company were the means of attaining it. The behavioural sciences provided an understanding of what the changes involved, why they were at first rejected and, finally, the means for introducing them' [31]

As with Shell (UK), experiments were carried out in job enrichment[32], courses were provided for 'climate setters' among managers, and behavioural science provided a theoretical model for carrying out change.

'But none of this would have been as influential if the behavioural science theories (of Herzberg,McGregor, Maslow) had not also performed the unexpected function of intellectual legitimation'. [33]

- for the abandonment of work measurement and incentive schemes, in favour of methods based in trust and psychological motivation. Thus,

'Ideas derived from the behavioural sciences - about job satisfaction, participation, motivation, and management style - assumed increasing importance during the introduction of ICI's agreements. It is not belittling the intrinsic strength of these ideas to suggest that growth reflected, as much as anything else, their legitimatory role. For they provided intellectually respectable reasons for a move from well-tried and familiar methods of control into less familiar territory.' [34]

Specifically, we may note, they reconstituted the basis of authority relations, by providing a justification for a more indirect form of control through intrinsic job motivation and ownership of results:

'A manager may (as Allan Flanders has pointed out) have to give up elements of his power in order to be able to manage. But it is not a one-way process: by cooperating in 'managerial decisions' the worker became involved in the structure of authority from which, by tradition, he had been excluded. He acquired, potentially anyway, some ownership of the resulting decisions and a commitment to the system that made them.' [35]

At the same time, arising from and supporting the change programme, there was the development, of a considerable

number of managers to become the O.D.consultants of the next decade, in I.C.I. and elsewhere in large advanced companies.

> 'With that programme had to go another of resource development,'so that when the managers returned to their works, with their attitudes unfrozen they would be able to call on expert resources to help them'. This meant that internal O.D.consultants had to be trained within the company. I.C.I. therefore set up and ran two six-week courses of its own in 1969 and 1970 (the 'Eastbourne Conferences'). A number of other companies (Shell and Unilever among them) took part, making it a cooperative effort, and some 50 consultants were trained, to staff O.D. departments in the divisions.'[36]

Although they may have been too late to make an impact on the productivity programme, the true role of these internal consultants at I.C.I. would appear to have been to move alongside other managers to encourage the adoption and spread of behavioural techniques "into the familiar armoury of management tools".[37] In other words, as the internal consultants in this study put it, to act as "resources", an additional arm of management, or a new 'tool' in tackling more diverse problems and situations than productivity programmes <u>per se</u>.

> 'The provision of the internal OD consultant was a longer term investment. In effect, it moved some of the OD push out to the divisions - where there is still a carry-on in the form, for example, of team-building activity as a preliminary to commissioning a new plant or of bringing in outside consultants as a fairly routine check on the functioning of management groups, and some division boards'.[38]

(c) The third example, at Pilkington Brothers (the St.Helens glass firm), neatly captures the origins of a behavioural science presence, in a productivity programme.

> 'Early in 1969, the wage structure committee asked Tom Lupton to join in one of its discussion meetings. Out of that meeting grew what was known first as the 'Productivity Programme' and, later, the 'Organisation Development Programme'.[39]

Once again a single problem relating to productivity, encapsulated in the wages structure and bonus system, comprised a complex of factors - economic, political, technological, and social-psychological - which had to be tackled simultaneously. The shock of the strike of 1970, over a wages dispute[40], to the established order of things (its paternalistic ethos was legendary) gave added impetus to the OD approach to these problems. And as at ICI a sizable group of new consultants (8 - 10) were born.

11.3. Productivity, Industrial Relations, and the Social Sciences: The Wider Background

In these three examples we see a productivity problem being redefined in a much broader context. As one consultant with 20 years experience of productivity, pay, and I.R.Problems, put it when interviewed: "productivity disputes became wider". Participatory methods and ideological changes on the part of management became seen as essential accompaniments to the achievement of specific efficiency goals. This feature of productivity bargaining in its classic first phase in the 1960's is commented on by Nightingale:

> 'it was characteristic of many agreements in this period, that the notions of 'joint regulation', 'involvement' and 'participation' were seen as constituting an integral aspect of productivity bargaining. If control was to be regained a whole new approach had to be adopted - a 'new philosophy'. This had been the major lesson of Fawley, and was recognised as such by the prophets of productivity bargaining'.[41]

Thus, North and Buckingham argued:

> 'To be successful and continuously effective, a productivity agreement should restructure the total industrial relations situation in any plant'.[42]

In this way the concept of productivity bargaining encompassed the two major points of crisis in British capitalism: (a) the need to improve the productivity and efficiency of industry, (b) the need to develop new, authority relations to enable, legitimise, and maintain improvements in efficiency. Indeed, it often appeared that (b) was prior to (a), or was a worthy goal in its own right. Thus, North and Buckingham, accepting Flanders' definition of the core problem, as being

> 'a progressive loss of control over pay and work systems at the place of work, and a growing abnegation by management of its responsibility to manage'.[43]

announced that

> 'We are concerned primarily with the restructuring of industrial relations and suggest that, at this point in time, productivity bargaining is a useful vehicle'[44]

Observers concluded, therefore, that productivity bargaining had more to do with the scope for changing work practices than with productivity as such.[45]

At Shell (UK) and I.C.I. particularly, the contribution of behavioural science was precisely in this latter area - in equipping management with a viable philosophy of work relations which could be made acceptable to the workforce and thereby help restore effective control to management. Thus, Nightingale, echoing Hill, writes:

> 'The concept of productivity bargaining was the product of a 'new philosophy' - a particular stream of managerial ideology whose origins were to be found in

pluralism .. the basic tenets of pluralism were certainly widely accepted by the industrial relations prophets of productivity bargaining and there was a commitment to this 'new philosophy' on the part of many managers. In the face of the economic crisis there was indeed a recognition, by capital, the State, and to a large extent the trade unions, that a new pluralistic style of management had become appropriate'[46]

The burgeoning of behavioural science out of the productivity and industrial management issues of the 1960's, it should be recalled, was not an isolated phenomenon. The period immediately after World War II and the early 1950's, was another one where pressures for raising manpower productivity, technological modernisation, and large-scale industrial and social reorganisation combined (with the egalitarian impetus the War gave) to create problems of normative readjustment. In this situation, we find similar sorts of response to that in the 1960's, and a similar-stimulus to social science.

The idea of increasing worker involvement (through channels controlled by management) was as prevalent; if not more so, than in the 1960's and '70's.

'The spread of joint consultation was rapid and very extensive. Two studies at the very end of the 1940's (NIIP 1952; Brown and Howell-Everson 1950) confirmed that around three-quarters of all companies (and over 90 per cent in engineering) had such councils. But if the scope of their cycle is so often conveniently forgotten today, so too is the speed of its decline.'[47]

Pressure for radical redistribution of economic power through nationalisation was contained by the establishment of consultative and advisory bodies in the new nationalised industries. But,

'Meantime, the threat of an economic crisis like that after the First World War haunted government and many employers, and when the situation worsened in 1947

'there emerged a rapidly revived interest in joint consultation in the private sector also'.[48]

Managers had learnt, from their experience with the wartime Joint Production Committees, how to channel workers' demands and enthusiasm into consultative bodies, and under pressure were willing to concede such devices.

As Ramsey concludes,

> 'Participation has, then, attracted management attention on a large scale at particular periods of time, particularly when they have experienced a challenge to their authority from below, this usually coinciding with a crisis in the need for motivation of labour effort.'[49]

As a footnote, in the 1970's, we may note ambitious schemes for worker representation in the nationalised industries (watched over and assisted by social scientists) were similarly established, and as quickly abandonned.[50] Coinciding with this vogue for joint consultation in the late 1940's, was the setting up of the Glacier project, in 1948, involving the Tavistock Institute and, later in an independent capacity, Eliot Jaques - initially to investigate joint consultation and make it more effective[51] and subsequently to consider the problem of 'equitable payment'. As Kelly notes,

> 'A curious symbiotic relationship exists between these two institutions (the Glacier Metal Company and the Tavistock Institute) which has produced correlated theoretical changes in both'.[52]

A second focus of concern for managers has been securing worker commitment to their tasks, as distinct from securing enterprise loyalty. Again, the Tavistock Institute was in at the inception of this as a practical and research issue, in 1947. Significantly focusing their attention on the strategically vital and reorganised coal industry, and at that time still one of the largest

employers in the U.K., Trist and Bamforth and then, Wilson, and Higgin, Murray and Pollock, studied the forms of social organisation under differing technological conditions in mining, to derive the concept of the 'joint optimisation' of social and technical systems, which (translated into systems of 'composite working') could be shown to reduce absenteeism - in the Durham example, from levels of 20%[53] The applied pay-off from this work, however, did not come to fruition until the period 1960 - 79. Back in the late 1940's, the Tavistock Institute was still building its reputation on problems, which managers knew and recognised, of labour turnover and absenteeism.[54]

Meanwhile, out of the conditions of the late 1940's and early '50's, the State promoted the social sciences as an instrument for fostering industrial productivity and to resolve related problems of social organisation - particularly through the channeling of funds through the 'Schuster Panel' and the committees which succeeded it. Out of such State support emerged early classics of British sociology and management studies - works by Lupton on output norms, Scott et al on joint consultation, Marriott on financial incentives, Stewart on management succession, and Burns and Stalker on technical change, studies on ergonomics, strikes, and job enlargement, and the work of Woodward and Klein.[55]

The late 1940's and early '50's, like the 1960's and '70's reveal a combination of economic and social problems besetting industry, with a State ideology of rational

ameliorative change, which together aided the development of social and behavioural science. As Cherns observed:

> 'Over and over again we find that the development of the discipline is made possible by its sanctioning as an area of enquiry, by the recognition of problems as coming within its scope.' [56]

Social and behavioural science, and problems of productivity, thus went hand in hand - as the title of the book, 'Productivity and Social Organisation' by the influential one-time Director of the Tavistock Institute [57] made abundantly clear.

11.4. The Organisation of Management as a Problem

However, the problem of social order in the workplace accompanying that of shopfloor productivity was not the only issue. Whilst productivity bargaining was directed at shopfloor workers, it involved also, as Flanders argued, the will and competence of management to lead and to control labour. Greater order in terms of coherent goals, and the coordination of activities through which these were expressed, required a reform of management itself. It is usual to treat the loss of direction by management in terms of an erosion of the will to manage, the decay of systems and procedures, and encroachments from below on managerial authority. However, there is another side of the story which explains how the social organisation of management came to be a problem. Simply, firms got bigger and more complex. Private firms (and public services) expanded, either under conditions of favourable demand or to achieve units of viable size

(as, for example, with those industries reorganised under the auspices of the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation, 1966 - 1971), in order to gain economies of scale. Thus industrial concentration in Britain had reached the point where, by 1970, in twenty of the twenty-two major industrial sectors an average of only three firms controlled half or more of the market,[58] and half of total manufacturing output was produced by 100 companies by the early 1970's.[59] Employment, too, had become increasingly concentrated, that in manufacturing plants with over 1000 employees having increased from 34.5% in 1961[60] to 41% in 1979.[61]

Whether growth came from mergers, diversification, sheer increases in scale through successfully satisfying demand, or from the centralisation of services in the public sector (as, for example, in the reorganisations of local government, the water boards, and the National Health Service), such growth brought increases in complexity.

Whereas the process of concentration, in terms both of output and employment had been going on since 1935 at least[62] the character of this changed in the 1960's. In his study of the comparative structures of the 100 largest British companies (as measured by sales in 1969 - 70), Channon found that the predominant organisation form in 1950 was the functional structure, with the multi divisional form almost unknown; by 1960 multidivisional structures constituted still only 30% of the sample, with holding companies having become the most common form (at over 40%);

but by 1970 the multidivisional structure was the dominant organisational form, being found in 71% of the corporations surveyed.[63] The significance of this change lay in the greater integration in corporate activity required - in the strategy formulation process and in the role of the general manager under the new administrative arrangements created. If these changes (which were in many cases being made with the assistance of management consultants, especially McKinsey and Company who first came to Britain in 1959), in response to sudden decline in financial results,[64] were not to be attended by similar failures due to a new set of management problems thus created, then, clearly, there was a lot of follow up work necessary within the ranks of management.

At one level therefore, 'merger mania' and other sources of growth occasioned restructuring of organisations:

> 'Between 1961 and 1968, mergers reduced the number of manufacturing companies of assets of £500,000 and over by nearly one-third. Major restructuring of organisations was the order of the day and management consultants were frequently called in to help'[65]

At another level, for managers to be able to cope, within a multi-product, multi-divisional structure which required them to compete across divisions for resources in order to grasp commercial opportunities externally, and yet not lose sight of the firm as a whole,

> 'clearly the divisional managers must think and operate in terms of 'open systems', those which are designed within the corporate structure together with those responsive to environmental changes.'[66]

The sort of situation now facing managers in this new complex internal company environment is well illustrated

by the comments of a consultant on the change by which the joint marketing arrangement in the UK between Shell-Mex (as was) and BP was disbanded and Shell (UK) formed.

"In 1973 after many run-ups to the event it was decided to disband and set up fully competitive organisations in the U.K. .. It meant in the U.K. we were to have, for the first time, a fully integrated oil company. The organisation is very young, and we had a massive O.D. problem (though we didn't know or say that). The people who disbanded Shell-Mex thought, 'thank God that's over'. The people at the top however, with 30 years in a single function suddenly found themselves in a 'business', so they quickly developed the concept of 'MSM' everything must be judged on 'Manufacturing - Supply-Marketing' .. the reality, though was that people would still do things in the light of their functional orientation"

(Internal Consultant)

In the public sector, meanwhile, growth and concentration assumed, according to John Child, the dimensions of a crisis:

'The background to the organisational crisis is that administrative units are growing in size and becoming more concentrated, often through amalgamation. This growth is justified on grounds of increasing efficiency, providing a better integration of services and so forth. However, the bigger units are more complex and so correspondingly is their management'.[67]

Thus, asked what are the problems they deal with, O.D. consultants in the NHS reply they are to deal with things like

"How a particular hospital relates to the district -

problems related to corporate groups, such as relations between hospital management teams in providing services to other areas - sideways problems - arising from the upheaval in the NHS five years ago"

(Internal consultant)

The subsequent elimination of a tier of the NHS is testimony to the unmanageable complexity and remoteness created.

A glance at Table 1 Chapter 7 will show that the internal consultants interviewed are from just such large multi-divisional (multinational) or public service organisations, experiencing problems of size, complexity, and integration, and the list of clients of commercial and academic consultants would extend this roll-call of major British organisations.

These changes placed extra demands upon managers - in the coordination of activities, but equally in the coordination of persons who with different functional perspectives and interests posed problems of integration to corporate goals. For the natural accompaniment of an increase in size and in the complexity of the external environment is an increase in internal specialisation[68]. The problem is, therefore, twofold and lies not just in rational processes of task allocation and coordination, but in the social organisation of management;

> 'Problems of integration generated by the allocation of different objectives and targets to departments are reinforced by differences in outlook among personnel themselves.'[69]

The proliferation of different ranks within enlarged structures and of professional groupings laterally undermined whatever homogeneous occupational identity there was among managers[70]. Consequently, political behaviour expressed in terms of resource-competition, whether for departmental purposes or to further individual career ends, had in the late 1960's assumed, according to Brooke and Remmers, the dimensions of a major problem in multinational corporations.[71]

Thus, as one consultant put it:

> "The trough is not between management and union .. its between management and management, and union and union, and between representatives and their constituents .. I've become a bit depressed by what I would call the 'corporate commitment' of organisations - I don't find that going on"
>
> (Internal Consultant)

As Crichton noted:

> 'the most important problem for personnel management today is the management of scientific, professional, technical, and managerial manpower.'[72]

Thus, we find the behavioural sciences, in the guise of consultancy being increasingly directed, not at the work-force, but at managers to overcome the 'decomposition'[73] wrought by specialisation on management:

> 'Blake and other consultants are almost entirely occupied with an approach directed at managers rather than at manual employees ... The problem to which we are asked to turn our attention is, in fact, the subordinate manager rather than the assembly-line worker. Argyris' approach is part of a shift in the focus of managerial concern, from workers to staff'.[74]

And on a broader front,

'The consequential withdrawal of managerial concern with labour and the redirection of the ideological appeal towards its own ranks is beginning to find some expression in managerial personnel policies.'[75]

We see social and behavioural science consulting, therefore as aiding in the integration of management. This is achieved directly through the problems worked on, but also indirectly as a result of the processes of communication which a consultancy project sets up:

'Like most management innovations of the 1970's, the growing use of internal consultants can be attributed to fast-paced environmental and technological changes. These changes have necessitated more flexible organisational designs. Increased flexibility, however, produces cracks in the system, such as lack of co-ordination among decentralised departments. Traditionally, executives have relied on external consultants to patch these cracks. However, as the need for patching has increased companies have turned to internal consultants. As implementors (of changes), internal consultants also increase organisational cohesion. When they regularly cross organisational lines to solve problems, internal consultants reinforce the perception that the organisation is an integrated system rather than a fractionated collection of departments. The internal consultant is also in a position to further cohesion by serving as a line of communication among departmental managers'.[76]

O.D.consultants frequently regard improvements in communication among organisational members as an important hidden agenda when working on problems (see, for example Page270-1). The idea of improving 'organisational competence' and introducing ways of 'learning how to learn' is not just a quirk of the O.D. philosophy, but meets a very real need of the fractionated organisation.

In addition, a topic O.D.consultants and Tavistock-oriented consultants address both directly as a 'problem' and indirectly through the processes they set up is that of 'leadership'. In doing so they make an obvious

contribution to organisational and managerial cohesion. The remainder of this chapter considers the way social and behavioural consultancy addressed this problem.

11.5. The Contribution of Social and Behavioural Science to Management's Leadership Problem

Management, as Child has noted, has a 'technical' and a 'legitimatory' function.[77] We have argued that both these increasingly posed problems for managers. In the technical sense there was the problem of coordinating the activities of numbers of specialists and knowing the work of the whole business, whilst being able to relate externally to the outside environment and to 'manage' that. This is, at the same time, overlain with a legitimatory problem which arises from managing people and manipulating social symbols.

In a very real sense, consultants are always concerned with 'leadership'. Their own is an issue, certainly, in terms of the authority, credibility and sources of influence they bring to a situation. But more especially, since they are taken on by persons who, by definition, have the 'authority' to do so, they are presented with issues defined as 'problems' by those same 'authorities' or 'leaders'. Inevitably, therefore, the consultant finds himself at some point addressing the leader's role in the problem, or subordinates' role in the leader's problem. (Either way, same situation is involved). For some internal consultants, whom we have termed 'resources-to-the (boss) - manager', identification with powerful

figures (or sponsors) in the organisation quite explicitly defines this engagement in terms of 'leadership' role and power.

Explication of the leadership function (and Child's distinction between 'technical' and 'legitimatory' aspects) owes much to Selznick and to those writers on business, from business, like Barnard through to Drucker (a debt, incidentally, which, as Peters and Waterman note,[78] that has been greatly underestimated). For Drucker, indeed, problems of organisation resolved themselves into problems of leadership, and "managing managers" was the neglected dimension of a manager's work.[79] For these writers organisation was not simply a rational administrative structure, but had "motivational" characteristics. Thus, for Selznick an organisation was not just an "economy", but also a "social structure".[80] By virtue of the time spent in organisations and their cooperative endeavours, people develop some 'sentience' about their colleagues and their social relations with them. Such sentience extends in turn to, and is coloured by, the wider setting beyond primary group relationships and in this way an 'organisation' becomes an 'institution'.[81]

Given this dimension in organisational life, a key function of leadership, then, is to provide 'institutional leadership'.[82] Selznick cited four relevant tasks here: (1) definition of mission and role, (2) institutional embodiment of purpose, (3) defence of institutional integrity, and (4) ordering of internal conflict. These

tasks are carried out by what would be seen as instrumental acts of management - including the formulation of strategies and policies in relation to the external environment and to the organisation internally - but at the same time as these provide task leadership they have expressive significance. Thus, in performing "a role of system integration"[83] by behaviour directed towards immediate practical ends, a manager equally affirms or changes patterns of social relations and his own authority within these (whether measured in terms of personal respect or organisational rights). The integrative function of the leader therefore always has a normative aspect which embraces the legitimacy of authority relations.

What different brands of social and behavioural consultancy had in common (whether associated with O.D. or with the Tavistock Institute) was a reaction to the overly rational model of organisation which Selznick repudiated. They refocused attention onto the system integrative aspects of organisation, either indirectly in terms of the 'culture' of an organisation, or more directly in terms of the manager's role and the norms and values embodied in his behaviour. Behavioural scientists' major contribution was the awareness that there is always, to task performance in groups,[84] in consultancy,[85] and throughout the change process,[86] socio-emotional processes that have also to be managed. Thus:

> 'many of the deadlocks we have observed only seem capable of being understood if the normative level, as well as the operational, is taken into account.'[87]

Normative activity, to do with "the maintenance, restoration, and change of values and norms", needs to be addressed as well as the operational (or Technical) level to do with "goals, roles, and rules."[88]

In the process of drawing O.D. into a coherent philosophy Bennis and his associates were consistent in rejecting an over-rational model of organisation. This entailed (a) rejecting bureaucratic forms of organisation, (b) rejecting scientific management conceptions of work and worker motivation, and (c) espousing 'normative - re-educative' strategies of change in preference to 'rational-empirical strategies.[89] At the same time as this entailed recognition of socio-emotional needs and phenomena, it involved also rejection of the assumption that the existence of hierarchy and reliance on 'imperative coordination' (implicit in bureaucracy[90]) are sufficient to achieve cooperation, harmony of parts, and institutional purpose.

Partly this embodiment of a Theory Y philosophy in O.D. was occasioned by changing socio-political realities, partly by the fact that an autocratic style of management is not conducive to sensitivity to social processes. In either case, changing structures and changing managerial tasks necessitated a change in management style. What behavioural science consultants came to do in assisting managers in their technical tasks of coordinating activities and helping them to deal more effectively with external realities, was to oblige them to address the

social arrangements through which, as managers, they performed. Where arrangements had become inadequate, uncertain, or contested (as bureaucratic structures, traditional forms of job design, and employment relations came under challenge) the role of the behavioural science consultant was to help renew or reconstruct these, and in the process to help redefine the authority relations on which these rested. In the period in question, the changing social climate affecting organisations frequently meant that managers' leadership role had become less certain, and this furnished the starting-point for many an organisation's involvement with O.D.

> 'The traditional style has been 'paternalistic' - the idea that 'we've got a job to get done and managers are all about taking decisions and getting things done .. and, OK, in the process, you're nice to people because that pays off in business terms' .. That's what being a benevolent autocrat is all about. Now some 5 or 6 years ago people got terribly hung up on this human thing: 'You can't push people around, and tell them what to do.' They believed you couldn't take decisions any more (in fact, you could). An awful lot of people were saying, and still say, 'I feel scared .. tell me what to do'. They'd lost a sense of direction. Because there was a lot of employment legislation around, people were saying, 'you can't discipline, you can't get rid of people'. A misunderstanding of the situation - you can.
> (I: As a relative newcomer, H....., is that your perception?)

'I think so. One of the main things seems to be a lack of contact with what's going on outside. It's maybe a result of having a monopoly. You defined the rules of the game, you were in control... There is a certain resentment about the changes that are going on. Managers say, 'It's just making our job more difficult'. There's a lot of throwing up of hands in horror: 'We can't do anything anymore .. because of the law .. or, because of the way people are now' .. rather than getting down to 'what does the law actually say? What can we do? What can't we do? It's too strong to say it's ignorance .. a certain lack of knowledge.'

(Internal consultant)

The practical contribution of social and behavioural consultancy was therefore to develop managers' appreciation of their own power, the limitations upon it, and the means by which leadership power actually works. This was the key to unlocking situations so that change in task-related areas could occur.

Leadership is, of course, a relational concept, and as such is therefore intimately bound up with behavioural science consultants' primary orientation towards working with groups. Stogdill defined leadership as the structuring of activities and expectations,[91] whilst Selznick's characterisation of institutional leadership suggests leaders must structure both the internal environment of the organisation (or of sub-units) and defend it against its external environment (or a sub-unit

against other sub-units). Defining leadership in this way is to define it first, in relation to the group that is led. In its time, this represented a shift of focus from an individualistic, 'great man' or 'trait' theory of leadership,[92] and was a recognition of the countervailing influence of the led upon the leader and their ability to construct group expectations. Secondly, the organisation exists in relation to other organisations, and the group exists in a relationship with other groups. The leader's role is therefore one of boundary-management and linkage, protecting and connecting the organisation or sub-unit. The 'open systems' model thus opens up questions about the role and style of leadership.

We find therefore that O.D. and Tavistock consultants are also alike in treating the group as the unit to work with and in taking an open systems view of leadership. Thus, in O.D., Likert's 'link-pin' concept of leadership[93] provides a useful statement for some consultants interviewed of what is necessary for achieving, in a large complex company, proper awareness among managers of their interdependence:

> 'I've also fostered and pushed Likert's 'link-pin' idea .. the role of a line manager is formally seen as manager of his unit, any issues at the boundary are resolved by delegation upwards. There are several roles there - (1) managing his unit .. that's the easy bit, he has authority to do that, (2) integrate with his colleagues, (3) he's a member of the upper echelon of

which he's a junior member. It's moving towards, not the formality of MbO, but the same conceptual approach. The reason is, there's no such thing as individual objectives, only group objectives... this place is so integrated and interdependent'.

(Internal consultant)

Similarly at the Tavistock Institute, since 1957, and at the related Grubb Institute, since 1963, leadership has been experienced and studied through conferences and courses in terms of 'boundary management' activity.[94]

In addition to projecting frameworks for understanding (and stimulating) the relatedness of groups to one another, O.D. and Tavistock consultants both have used the 'training (t) -group' for exploring concepts of leadership, the capacity of members to exercise leadership, and member relations to one another.[95]

> 'The focus of these conferences is on the exercise of responsibility and authority, and therefore of leadership and followership, in interpersonal and group settings..My postulate is that group relations training is about exploring the responsibility and authority of the individual in relation to his social environment: the choices the individual has to face if he wants to feel in, of, with, for, or against his social groups and the institutions of his society. I think this comes down to the meaning he places on his relatedness to institutions.'[96]

Intense introspective activity of this kind, revaluing the basis of personal identity, personal relationships, and authority structures, has been sometimes regarded as a necessary accompaniment to team-building and inter-group work.[97] But even without this in-depth methodology similar aims have underlain the work of social and behavioural consultants with organisations and made it

uniquely relevant to the kinds of problems being encountered by managers.

Both the Tavistock approach and O.D. have been criticised however, for having fundamentally conservative tendencies, rather than effecting any radical restructuring of authority relations.[98] The value underlying their systems model is the achievement of a state of equilibrium, and in practice the over-focus on personality dynamics at the expense of exploring objective differences of interest is seen as sustaining the authority of existing powers. Certainly where the conceptualisation of a problem, as at Glacier Metal, is made in terms of the leadership authority of the executive system,[99] the result is likely to be merely a better-defended, more deeply rooted authority system. But an open systems model of group relations tends anyway to direct attention towards the achievement of stable linkages, and provides the framework for that. The Likert and Tavistock models (and the MbO process) tend towards the same end - the generation of consistent normative patterns within and between groups. What large-scale O.D. training programmes, like Blake's grid, did was not necessarily to change norms (though that might be a stated goal), but to develop coherence of norms (whether old or new). The use of groups at all favours increased conformity,[100] and both Tavistock conferences and team-building meetings are vehicles for articulating expectations and exploring and developing patterns of behaviour within a framework which defines organisational structures normatively.

Similarly, another widely favoured model, the Tannenbaum and Schmidt,[101] suggests a range of styles compatible with different circumstances. This can be used to develop coherent norms adapted to a changed situation, as managers are made to examine the possibilities for action in new situations they find themselves having to operate in; or, typically, it may be used normatively to encourage the development of less autocratic leadership styles:

> 'The Tannenbaum and Schmidt is saying, here is a range of styles, they're all appropriate. The centre of gravity round which these styles tend to settle is tending to move to the right of the continuum .. and that is very much influenced by you, the leader, and your values and inclinations and what you think is appropriate .. is very much influenced by your subordinates, and what they think .. and also, of course, by the situation'.
>
> (Internal consultant)

The fact that social and behavioural consultancy could acquire a reputation as conservative at the same time as others saw it as subversive (see Chapter 2) is due, of course, to what organisations needed from it and wanted to get from it, and how far they met up with exponents who were proselytisers for values and methodologies that challenged norms too deeply. Part of the challenge, the "attempt (in Peters and Waterman's words) to start revolutions via the training department",[102] may in any case be related to a simple power play by a little regarded group latching onto fashionable ideas.[103]

On the premiss that managers took from consultants what they needed, there was a place in times of relative uncertainty and change for consultancy which caused a revaluation of ways of doing things. Equally, in circumstances of renewed confidence managers could dispense with it.

> 'I believe organisations exist to exert power. Therefore, if you're in the organisation business, you are in the power-dealing business .. to be effective in organisations you've got to be in the power game.. There's a spectrum of consultants, from being entirely in the power business to being entirely counter-dependent on power. It's interesting that the spectacularly successful group that had got set up .. assembled .. were comprised of people who, in my view, were counter-dependent on power. They wanted nothing to do with it at all. That capacity at that stage of the business was extraordinarily valuable for managers .. They had no interest in influencing managers to do anything .. Just providing data, perspectives, relationships. At that stage when everything was going wrong and more and more power was being exerted and not having any effect, that was very powerful. But, it was perceptible that as the organisation got more successful you needed a different brand of politics.'
>
> (Internal consultant)

The corollary, of course, is that those who then continue to reject organisational values about the use of power will not long survive thereafter, as Pettigrew and

Bumstead note about the same situation being described:

> 'the conflict between individual and business values was more resolvable for most Group members (one or two found they could not resolve this and left the division)' 104

The circumstances of the 1960's and '70's were reasonably propitious in terms of available resources and pressures on organisations for revaluing ways of doing things. Consultants could then aspire to change norms:

> 'We have organisations which reflect past values. We inherit a structure which might have been appropriate then, but not for 1979, and certainly not for 1989. There's a process of recreation going on.. What I'm about is to try to help that process take place. I'm doing it at a personal level in myself, and encouraging organisations I work with to do the same thing.'
>
> (Internal consultant.)

But tightened circumstances strengthening management's hand, could also be a source of renewed confidence to management. If social and behavioural consultants were to retain a share of more limited resources available for engaging such as themselves, they would have to go along with a swing of the pendulum towards more traditional assessments of managerial roles and leadership.

> 'Good autocratic leadership is very clear. Some situations demand it. I believe myself in style flexibility. There can be too much pussy-footing around and endless debate, in situations that really demand someone make up their mind and go for it. I don't think people value or welcome a participative approach all the time.'
>
> (Commercial consultant)

To summarize, we have argued in this chapter that social and behavioural science consultancy was boosted by the concern with productivity, but that its major concern has been with normative problems besetting management. Part of this arose as a result of pressures from below, but part from the increased complexity of management itself. The different environment in the USA and the UK itself gave different emphasis to the work of consultants. Ad Pichierri argues[105] 'responsible autonomy' strategies in America were more the result of managements having to react to turbulent environments (that is, market and product life-cycle problems, governmental regulations, and changing cultural expectations among employees), whereas, in Europe, the explicit demands of organised workers added to these factors as a spur to 'enlightened' managerial practice. Thus job enrichment at the level of the shop (or office) floor was a natural counterpart of more 'organic' administrative structures achieved through processes of organisational development. The emphasis of social and behavioural consultancy however, it is argued, was in aiding the better integration of management.

The next chapter considers more specifically how the working models and practices of consultants, which we have characterised in terms of systems and negotiative paradigms, helped with the problems of management in the period 1960-79, and how in the process they participated in a general set of ideas that we can therefore call an 'ideology'.

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21. As P. Tisdall, op.cit., notes:
"The Fawley agreement still stands not only as a landmark in industrial relations history, but also provides a classic illustration of management consultancy in operation." The consultants (an American firm, Emerson's) impressed Esso as "Management consultants in the fullest sense, not merely method study engineers".

22. Reproduced from C.P.Hill, op.cit., p.47

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CHAPTER 12

THE IDEOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

12.1 Introduction

We have argued that the application of social and behavioural science in organisations gained a powerful and distinctive impetus from the productivity bargaining programme of the 1960's. Effective solutions to industry's efficiency problems depended on tackling the culture of firms, which otherwise impeded the effective use of labour, reform of payment systems, and technical innovation. A feature of early productivity bargaining was, therefore, the attempt to approach efficiency changes through a process of 'cultural change'.[1] Advocates of productivity bargaining, like Flanders, stressed the importance of overhauling the symbolic structures of the firm - its culture, its managerial ideology, and the industrial relations structures which embodied these.

Although the character of productivity bargaining changed after 1966, with a narrowing in scope,[2] social and behavioural consultants carried the 'new philosophy' to management in other areas, through other sets of problems. Whatever the specific problem areas in which consultants subsequently worked (and they operated in both distinctively managerial and manual contexts, the latter through the 'Quality of Working Life' movement), their activities need to be understood in the larger historical context in order to

realize their common thrust. Chapter 11 presented this in terms of pressures within the economy and changes in organisations, and suggested where behavioural science consultants made a direct material contribution towards these problems.

However, there is also the wider context of values and ideas. In this chapter we attempt to show what those ideas and practices we have termed 'systems' and 'negotiative paradigms' offered management, and at the same time how these connected with a wider set of ideas and values. By tracing the "mutual articulation"[3] between consultants' ideas and those expressed in other fields, we develop the notion of a 'dominant ideology' of which consultants were 'carriers'.

Thus, in industrial relations, in political philosophy, in economics, and in social psychology, a common set of ideas recurs. We would be entitled to call this an ideology simply in terms of its pervasiveness. However its ideological character goes beyond this if and insofar as these ideas sustain or promote a particular social order (and therefore, by definition, the position and advantages of those who benefit from it).

We proceed, then, to examine perspectives within industrial relations, politics, economics and social psychology and relate to these the paradigms of the systems model and negotiation which we have found to be deeply embedded in the thinking and practices of social and behavioural consultants. In the process we explore what sort of social order these underpin and the extent to which consultants' ideas and

practices could be said to constitute an ideology, in the more precise sense of favouring dominant social groups.

However, it has to be recognised that ideas and the intentions of those who propound them are open to alternative interpretations. Ideology-critique inevitably falls outside the domain of a purely empirical science, and belongs within the realm of political and philisophical controversy. To this extent, ideology-critique proceeds in the same manner to elucidate formal connections between practices and spheres of meaning, as hermeneusis does in revealing relationships between language usages or between behavioural practices. The relationship is a 'logical' or 'meaningful' one, rather than a 'causal' one.[4]

Thus, it would be presumptious to categorically assign all those ideas and practices which I have subsumed within the 'negotiative paradigm' to a single intent - just as one cannot predict what the outcomes might be from projects where consultants draw on this paradigm. What we attempt therefore is to trace the logical connection between consultants' ideas and practices, and wider manifestations of these ideas, nevertheless noting ambiguities which require a suspension of judgement.

12.2. Industrial Relations

The cornerstone of the 'new philosophy of management', as articulated by Allan Flanders, was the recognition that

> 'management - whether it admits this or not - is constantly engaged in a multilateral bargaining process ... As Neil Chamberlain has pointed out: 'each party is dependent on the other, and can - as a matter of fact - achieve its objectives more effectively if it wins the support of the other'.'[5]

A conception of organisational life as a bargaining, or 'negotiating' process is sustained by a belief in a basic equality or balance of power between the bargaining parties. Flanders conceded that

> 'any idea that in market economies employers and employees enter into relationships on a basis of freedom and equality cannot be sustained'.[6]

But it had become customary to argue that

> 'the balance of power between employers and employees has shifted very much more in the latter's favour'[7]

Thus, Flanders adopted a view of organisational life as a bargaining arena. But he placed this within a systems frame of reference - both for analysing the industrial relations structure and for strengthening it (as typified in his call for "more planning from above and more democracy from below"[8]). Together these frames of reference are perfectly compatible, indeed they complement one another though this did involve a modification of traditional systems or 'structural-functionalist', assumptions. The latter assumed shared values and norms, whereas the 'negotiative' or bargaining model assumes that 'shared understandings' have to be worked at and thrashed out. Nevertheless, the central value in each was the need for there to exist agreement over purposes and means: 'negotiation' makes this possible in the absence of established normative consensus. Thus participative practices represented an attempt to restore or to find a new basis of legitimation:

> 'Once the unquestionableness of tradition has been destroyed, the stabilizing effect offered by claims to validity can be achieved only through discussions'[9]

Consequently, systems thinking manifested itself in industrial relations analyses, and in social and behavioural consultancy, in two forms - a 'strong' traditional form (which tended to play down or not attend to 'negotiative' processes), and a 'weak' modern form (accompanied by pluralist sentiments and the use of 'negotiative' practices to attain similar consenual ends). This latter was typified by Flanders: pluralist sentiments within a systems frame, plurality based on underlying consensus:

> 'Why is there an identifiable national system? The answer is no different for industrial relations than for economics or politics, or the law. There are national systems of each because the nation itself is an entity. The unity in this diversity is to be found in certain underlying principles expressing value judgements, which are broadly accepted throughout the nation'.[10]

The aim of 'discussions' is to articulate these values, to restate them (for example, by appeals to mutual national and organisational interest), or to reinterpret them (by, for example, refocusing at the level of personal obligations to one another) - in order to renew that "common ideology" and "shared understandings",[11] without which "the system would lose its coherence and stability".[12]

The starting-point for Flanders' pluralism is a fundamental optimism and an harmonious conception of industrial life, in which

> 'the real barrier to an agreement on divergent interests which would make cooperation possible is (simply) a fear of cooperation itself'[13]

As Fox put it,

> 'The industrial enterprise is viewed as a coalition of interests, a miniature democratic state composed of sectional groups with divergent interests'. [14]

in which

> 'divergences between the parties are not so fundamental or so wide as to be unbridgeable by compromises or new syntheses which enable collaboration to continue.' [15]

As critics have noted, this conception of differences of interest which are to be bargained over is typically limited in two ways:

(1) by narrowly defining the legitimate interests of different parties, so that there is no conflict with the basic priorities of the enterprise (its goals). Thus, consultants put a strong value on the individual's responsibility to other individuals (as politicians do to 'the general public' or to 'the consumer') - an appeal to moral obligations which contrives to circumscribe personal or sectional demands;

and

(2) by defining the structure of interests in narrowly sectional terms - that is, in terms of the individual or of certain kinds of group only. American O.D., for example, in its written manifestations, stops short of any characterisation of groups in terms of the sociological categories of 'class' or 'occupation'. Instead, it addresses 'departmental interests' and 'organisational cultures'. Management (as Hyman notes)

> 'is thus treated as merely one of many sectional interests, mediating the competing claims of suppliers, customers, shareholders, community interests, and different employee groups'. [16]

Systems level concepts thus circumscribe the negotiating process by putting management (and others) in mind of their role in the organisation, not as one self-serving group among others, but as managing the enterprise for the common good. 'Class' and 'property' become "lost categories".[17]

Observers such as Hyman were not slow, therefore, to attribute an incorporative intent to the 'new philosophy' of management, no different in its effects to an older, solidary ideology, though subtler in its exercise:

> 'It may be that we are seeing the emergence of a new aspect of corporatism - a type of integration ideology based on a recognition of different interests. This is different to the old 'unitary' frame of reference approach in which managers would argue that we are all part of the same team/family. The failure of that school of thought was inevitable. The new approach is more sophisticated. It relies on a combination of increased worker participation, new forms of work organisation, recognition of unions as collectives of workers and increased technological innovation. All those modes of operation are designed to more closely integrate and align work-force interests to the production process.'[18]

Participative ideas were bedded into an unchanging set of organisational priorities. Thus, Nightingale, observed of productivity bargaining, that

> 'particular agreements contained elements of other more traditional managerial ideologies and in some respects pluralism itself was based upon some very 'traditional' theoretical assumptions.'[19]

Despite the recognition of discrepant interests and competing perspectives, what the 'new philosophy' offered was the prospect of stronger leadership. Sharing more powers with the trade unions would increase their control over their members and lead to more orderly workplace industrial

relations; placing more responsibility on the workforce would ensure they controlled themselves more for management:

> 'The paradox, whose truth managements have found it so difficult to accept, is that they can only regain control by sharing it.'[20]

This was the underlying truth management discovered through productivity bargaining. Far from constituting a dispersal of authority, it represented an advance in corporate development. As Nichols and Beynon put it, in relation to the 'New Working Agreement' (for which read, I.C.I.'s 'Weekly Staff Agreement'):

> 'NWA masked the quintessence of corporate rationality: with it, Chemco, having rationalised its own management structures, set about rationalising the structure of trade unionism.'[21]

'Cooperation' could be "engineered" by adaptations in work organisation and by direct negotiation with work-groups, so that pluralism represented

> 'no more, no less, than enlightened managerialism.'[22]

One may question, however, at whom these ideas were effectively addressed. Despite the attraction of seeing social and behavioural consultancy as highly instrumental in this process, it is questionable how far it contributed directly to engineering cooperation and to increasing the integration of the workforce to corporate aims. The visibility of schemes oriented to the workforce - job enrichment and new consultative structures - and the claims made by behavioural scientists on behalf of these, have tended to give a biased view of the profession's activities and to inflate both expectations and criticism. The number of schemes to enrich

jobs in Europe and the USA, for example, is severely limited.[23] The work of consultants interviewed in this sample was not significantly oriented in this direction. Quite the contrary, the evidence suggests they were far more deeply involved with the problems of management and with the practical and normative integration of management itself.

Even where a project could be classified as a job enrichment scheme with a manual or clerical group, the habit among consultants of seeing things in the round, in systemic terms, tended to shift the focus onto management as part of the problem and require working with management on control and style issues:

> 'People say to me, 'Are you doing an O.D. job with Company XY ?' ... 'No, I'm working with Company XY about the work of the punchcard operators' ... 'Ah, it's a work design project?' ... 'No, it's working with the Company about the punchcard operators' ... 'But is it O.D. anyway?'... 'Yes, it is in a sense, because we're doing a lot of work with them about the structure of the organisation, and the nature of its functioning, its style of management, but as a result of the problem .. We're working with our feet on the ground in the day to day practice of the organisation .. and going from that practice outwards into the things that are surrounding it.'
>
> (an academic consultant)

This illustrates the difficulty of categorising the work of consultants (and why this was not systematically attempted). But equally it suggests that the contribution of social and behavioural consultancy to securing integration, if at all, was an indirect one, working as much through the education of managers, through furnishing new ideas and outlooks supportive of new structures of behaviour, as it was in devising new structures and jobs to make the workforce more cooperative.

It is naive to believe that a workforce can be taken in by structural changes without changes in managerial attitudes and role, or that such changes could work. Institutional mechanisms to foster 'incorporation', without goodwill or without commitments, are inevitably shortlived. They need continual renewal. A profit-sharing scheme becomes accepted and taken for granted, part of 'normal' expectations. Its ability to secure 'enterprise consciousness' falls down at the first test of a real conflict of interests.[24] Consultative committees become ritualistic and despised.[25] Job-enrichment either disappoints because it attracted too high hopes, or the advances gained in work interest become taken for granted and raise expectations further (with the risk that it ends up fuelling the challenge to management).[26] Workers' attention turns from these concessions to other issues, such as pay. Equally management's own interest in participative schemes wanes as they find other means for pursuing their objectives.[27] All these are visible mechanisms which therefore can attract explicit attention, critism and resistance, or offer a lever for further advances.

Ideas, however, are more insidious. New Ideas are a necessary accompaniment to new relationships, or to cement old ones under changing circumstances. The ideas propounded by Flanders and propagated by social and behavioural consultants constituted an ideology in the sense favoured by Althusser. They provided images of support to social relationships, and therefore, a 'social cement' to them.[28] Primarily, and in the first place, this was to the lived

relationships of managerial and other white-collar workers - to their experience of organisational roles. Only secondly can one argue they captured the experience of a wider workforce. And then it becomes a matter of the extent to which these ideas blinded either dominant or subordinate group to some part of reality whether these were part of a 'dominant ideology'.

Whilst systems frames of reference, for example, laid stress upon the task interdependence of persons and of departmental functions, the 'negotiative' frame of reference and its accompanying practices facilitated practical cooperation by the stress on personal interdependence and shared responsibility for constructing social organisation. Whilst systems models developed habits of thinking about the relatedness of activities, of problems, and of the organisation to its wider environment, 'negotiative' practices developed the necessary responsiveness towards other persons in these settings. Systems and 'negotiative' models complemented one another in these ways by sharing the operational concepts of 'interaction' and 'fit': the organisation adapted to its environment, the interacting parts to the whole, people accommodating to one another.

As Habermas has argued, the experience of modern production systems and of the relatedness of departmental functions sustains beliefs in interdependence and in the organisation as a supra-human entity. That is, the experience of 'objective integration' justifies a certain set of ideas, which give pre-eminence to the 'organisation'

and to technocratic interpretations of, and solutions to, organisational problems.[29]

Whilst the extent of workforce integration through the type of production system, and the consequences of this have been the subject of some debate,[30] it is arguably much more the case that managerial, technical and professional white-collar staff have undergone 'incorporation' or 'objective integration'. In spite of the thesis of the 'new working class', and increases in white-collar unionisation these groups still apparently retain their traditional psychological allegiance to the employing organisation.[31] They are likely to have a more favourable attitude towards the productive power of the organisation, as principal beneficiaries, and to be bound to it by mechanisms of incorporation, such as assured career prospects, incremental salaries, and the possession and exercise of managerial rights. By contrast, the institutional mechanisms for increasing participation and identification among lower organisational levels are inventions designed to repair breakdowns in social control.

Thus, in the industrial relations (or 'organisational management') context, systems and 'negotiative' models are frames of reference which fit more appropriately the relationship of white-collar groups to the organisation and with one another. They underpin and develop existing experience and frames of reference. For example, the experience of coordinating activities, and bargaining with one another over the allocation of resources and the

development of plans, makes systems and negotiative models intellectually appealing and practically relevant.

But at the same time as habits of thinking and behaviour based on these become ingrained with managers and they develop a more unified managerial ideology and a clearer sense of direction, it provides them, in turn, with the means to influence others, through the propogation of these perspectives to their subordinates. In this way, the proliferating structures of management are given renewed coherence and unity.

Habermas has been particularly concerned that science and technocratic reasoning infiltrate and pervade perceptions generally. It affects not just those at the 'receiving' end, as it were, of technology, but conditions the frames of reference of all. The power of technology, to deliver the goods justifies the relations of production ('managers are necessary to manage complex production, and social systems'), with the undesirable result, according to Habermas, that the question of property relations is obscured.[32] The consequence is a diminution of areas of political contest. Ideas have become subservient to forces of production that have assumed unprecendented power. Experience of modern production systems thus breeds ideas which merely put a legitimatory gloss on the relationships created by these systems. In this way, aspects of systems thinking, particularly, as managerially relevant ideology, extend or potentially can be extended to the wider workforce.

More generally systems and 'negotiative' frameworks applied in the work-setting are continuous with 'what we know', 'believe', and 'desire' about everyday existence - that people depend on one another, derive satisfaction from cooperation, and are more successful from doing so. These values and wishes support equivalent frames of reference in the workplace. Thus, the attachment of systems models to ideas of 'organisational health' is well known. Much O.D. literature presents organisational goals in these terms.[33] 'Health' is a lack of tension which distracts from productive work, and as a state is widely valued. But in this context goals tend to get defined in terms of output, rather than of distribution. Similarly, the 'negotiative' model builds upon "the rule of mutuality as the basis of social organisation"[34] This happens also to be the principle of exchange relationships on which economic life is based. Social relationships are thus open to similar representation, and the 'Negotiative' model in effect transposes commercial exchange norms into psycho-social relationships.

As ways of construing organisational relationships and purpose such ideas are relatively inaccessible to scrutiny because they are part of what is taken for granted. They function as ideology because, like history, they operate "behind men's backs." [35]

In addition to questioning the impact of the ideas we are describing we must also recognise that consultants do not all sing the same tune. Systems and negotiative frameworks may be complementary for management, but social and

behavioural consultants do not all combine them in the same way, and may appear not to do so at all. Differences of emphasis here exactly reflect ambiguities within the pluralist orthodoxy of industrial relations, where systems assumptions intrude to a greater or lesser degree. Many in O.D., for example, have been strongly influenced by the ideal expressed by Argyris of making organisations less like organisations and more like communities in which individuals can find themselves in more satisfactory work and less controlling bureaucracies.[36] Such an ideal, to others, has looked like a restatement of the unitary philosophy of Mayo which effectively put the organisation in psychological ascendancy over the individual. The superficial retreat from organisational values which this entails is illustrated by the following exchange with a commercial consultant:

(I: Isn't it a feature of organisations that people are put in positions, roles. The organisation says, 'these are the organisation's goals and you are here to do this, and you are here to do that ... and anything else you do, person to person, is in your own time' - the formal organisation .. you're up against that. What are your feelings about organisations and what they do to people?')

'That picture is certainly a realistic picture. I used to express it by saying to myself and others, 'the people I meet at work are not the same people I meet outside'. That can't be right. The reason has everything to do with what you've just said. Somehow the climate

and structure of our organisations inhibits the human qualities, even the nasty ones and the less constructive ones, and people cannot be themselves. But that I think is a truism, and we won't get any marks for saying that again...............

When the O.D.practitioner wakes up, he'll find he's in the healing business. Most of them haven't woken up to that. When they realize, they'll realize how much money gets in the way.

(I: 'A lot of them are in the money business')

'You can't heal with that value. You may help, but you won't heal. You won't heal yourself, you won't heal the people you're helping, you won't heal the social situation.'

(a commercial consultant)

Despite the ostensible rejection of 'organisation' as the leading institution, the rejection of politics and even the market, the true import of such sentiments is in the way they defend organisational and managerial legitimacy, as is shown by the further comment, by the same consultant:

'What the project has essentially done is to help them be more human.. because they've become more aware of one another and of how the human makes the procedures and cost-controls work, profitably for Ford.'

Where O.D.is built upon ideals of 'health', in terms of mutually respecting individuals and less tense operating systems, it is clearly open to the charge that it functions as ideology by promoting deceptions which legitimise the status quo. As Mannheim put it:

'the collective unconcious of certain groups obscures the real condition of society both to itself and to others and thereby stabilizes it.'[37]

On the other hand, many in this study actively rejected the integrationist features of O.D. as totalitarian, together with the instrumentism to which it lent itself.

> 'I react to what it's associated with - a set body of something called 'O.D. practices' .. a finite body that you can apply and that's it. The more you integrate the individual and the organisation, the more you disintegrate the individual and the community. The idea that you can make the organisation a place in which he gets turned on is peculiar to O.D. . O.D. has had some model that there's some 'good work role' which people can achieve. But specifying an enriched work role is as totalitarian as screwing somebody down and giving them no work-role at all. The organisation becomes a society in its own right. The creation of an organisation as a good society to be in is a curious feature in America.'
>
> (an academic consultant)

Or as Anthony trenchantly says of the belief in integrating the individual and the organisation:

> 'What we arrive at as the result of (Argyris') analysis, largely in psychological terms, is one of the most total statements of a managerial ideology yet advanced. It is designed not only to 'increase the amount of psychological energy available for work' (Argyris 1964,p89), to induce cooperative attitudes among workers; it also provides an ethical foundation for the legitimation of managerial authority in work.. (Namely,) that those who are in a controlling position in work are the only ones able to provide psychological well-being for their subordinates, the workers. Management thus comes to be presented as controlling the allocation, not only of material comfort, but of sanity. This is surely the strongest bid for legitimate control that has ever been made.'[38]

Reaction to this is expressed frequently by academic consultants, particularly those labelled 'developmental academics'. Thus:

'Every organisation wants to become a life-purpose to its members ...'[39]

'In advanced organisations people are just taken over by the organisation and it's maybe better to have a gap, to create some space for oneself, rather than be totally integrated '

O.D. assists this process through its own co-optation:

'What happens is co-optation .. The forces that want to maintain a hierarchical type of society and organisation are simply co-opting these techniques to keep control of people and maintain their own position'

The consultants who make these criticisms are clearly coming out of a different tradition of 'developmental humanism', which they see, not in terms of satisfaction through achievement and a superficial autonomy in work, but in working out the "moral conflicts" consequent upon working in organisations, whether as consultants or as employees. Thus organisations are

'(the) grounds for experiments and acting out of these conflicts for freedom and democracy'

The problem is more one of integrating organisations to society and exploring

'how power changes and how ideas are reproduced .. a question of politics in society',

rather than trying to create mini-organisational societies, complete unto themselves. The basis for their critique of O.D. and of modern organisation is the fragmentation produced in society:

'There's little real sense of the 'collective' .. there's persons, and aggregates of persons, and particular persons are almost synonomous with the organisation, because they hold all the cards. We've almost lost the capacity to conduct a public life'

(Alistair Mant was making a similar point when he argued that the English lack a conception of the state and lack a suitable morality in organisational life, adopting as their ideal the greedy, amoral entrepreneurial type, typified by Drake) [40]

Such sentiments connect with contemporary political ideas on the limits and operation of the corporatist state. We can further our understanding of the tension between integrationist and liberationist values consultants' express (and of the systems and 'negotiative' models which embody these), whilst developing the interpretation of consultants' frames of reference as ideology, by turning to this background of political ideas.

12.3. Political Theory

In a different context, political theorists were conducting a similar debate about the proper relationship between the individual, the organisation, and the community, which impacted considerably on organisational consultants. On the one hand there were those writers such as Bell, Halsey and Crick [41] who looked to an extension of the kind of moral and affective ties characteristic of families, closely knit work groups and residential communities, to the regulation of society on a much wider scale. This was signified by their

notion of the "public household". On the other hand, to get away from the idealistic assumption of common interests, the notion of the "public household" could be given a pluralistic slant:

> 'the public household in the twentieth century is not a community but an arena, in which there are no normative rules (other than bargaining) to define the common good and indicate conflicting claims on the basis of rights'[42]

The point of departure in each case was a dissatisfaction with economic liberalism, under which there was no institution for expressing public purpose - allocation of resources being through purely market mechanisms. At the same time, there was a wariness about the encroaching limits of the State's role as regulator of the terms upon which private parties engaged with one another. In the 1960's, the State sought increasingly, through incomes policies, to define public purpose (the 'national interest') and to influence the allocation of resources in a more explicit way than heretofore in peacetime.

The 'new philosophy of management', with its stress on the moral duties of enlightened management, on social justice and equity in the workplace, involved a tacit rejection of economic liberalism. At the same time, it remained true to voluntaristic notions that employers, through management, and representatives of the workforce, should manage their own affairs. Indeed, productivity bargaining can be seen as an attempt by firms to develop their own solutions, without state assistance (although with the State's encouragement, via, for example, the National Board for Prices and Incomes). In some cases,it later became, in fact,

a means devised between management and unions, to get round Government incomes policies. Productivity bargaining was, therefore, a process to supplement the market mechanism, by breaking through localised rigidities that had developed in it, at the same time as it was one process (among others) for creating new institutional (and, therefore, public) norms of conduct. The 'new philosophy' was, therefore, a way of steering between the extremes of regulation by State political interests and regulation by the market. As Fox said of its intellectual parent:

> 'pluralism is a philosophy which rejects both the classical liberal tradition, in which the legalisms of 'free and equal contract' between atomistic individuals facilitated exploitation by masking gross disparities of power, and the 'social integration' of totalitarian (unitary) societies, in which an imposed 'common' ideology and set of values are used to mask manipulation and coercion by a dominant ruling group.'[43]

But whilst the 'new philosophy' steered between the two and had elements of each, it was still, nevertheless, firmly wedded to the idea of the market - of more responsive organisations, whose

> 'success in solving the economic problems of industrial development has generated choice which has been used to create areas of self-determination within the organisation'[44]

The further development of choice and new social forms would, Roeber believed, be pioneered by these increasingly successful and flexible organisations (which would by implication be privately owned, private property being a necessary underpinning of the 'open society'). Roeber thus saw social change at I.C.I. as building towards a "voluntary society", productivity bargaining towards a

new social contract, and behavioural science-based programmes of change contributing to

> 'a dispersion of decision-making in the organisation.. towards a Popperian ideal, an organisation built around the process of problem-solving'. [45]

Roeber's vision of a more open society was one man's view of trends in society and of the character of behavioural science-based programmes of change. Others were far more concerned that the dominant trend was towards forms of corporatism,[46] which they equated with a more regulated, less free society. At the macro-level the State could be seen as advancing in this direction through the use of incomes policies (which curtailed intra-organisational bargaining processes), and reforms which "enmeshed the trade unions in the legal apparatus of the State". [47]

However, what Roeber described as a dispersion of decision-making was not incompatible with a certain variant of coporatism which social-democratic societies of the period (notably Sweden) were developing. It can be seen as the organisational dimension of the "delegated enforcement" [48] which, Winkler argued, the corporatist State was sponsoring throughout the institutions of society, and which effectively increased the State's power by allowing it to exercise more powerful <u>strategic</u> control. Thus, incomes policies and productivity bargaining, characterised respectively as representing corporalist and pluralist tendencies, complemented one another:

> 'It is the advent of incomes policies which first brings the parties into intimate contact, which sustains the momentum for planning and cooperation, (and) creates habits of mutuality and accommodation'.[49]

Modern corporatism thus ends up operating through complex pervasive bargaining systems and is, therefore, more properly defined as "bargained corporatism" - a kind of "half-way house between outright corporatism (of the fascist type) and liberal collectivism".[50] It is not opposed to pluralism, but

> 'is a formalisation of interest-group politics: an institutionalisation of pluralism'[51]

The 'new philosophy of management', as the framework encompassing systems and negotiative perspectives, occupied this terrain insofar as it professed a taming of pure capitalism, by the creation of a new contract that gave the individual ownership of the decisions affecting his life and recognised the new realities of power in the workplace. But, as in the example by Roeber, spokesman for the I.C.I. experience with the 'new philosophy', it remained irredemiably committed to key elements of the liberal tradition - to private, voluntaristic control, rather than public control, and to the primacy of the individual over the collective. Thus, Roeber's argument for a new social contract was significantly couched in individualistic terms:

> 'as individual choice - which is to say discretion, or power in decision-making - becomes increasingly available, industrialised society must move towards a 'voluntary society'. The defining characteristic of such a society would be the ownership by an individual of the decisions affecting his life'.[52]

The alternative forms of organisation favoured by social and behavioural science consultants - networks, matrix structures, associations, cooperatives - represent precisely a defence of the individual against big organisations .

and State bureaucratic control, by bringing individuals into more satisfactory personal relations with one another. Thus, as Fox saw it, these forms of self-organisation represented

> 'a system of self-managed enterprises within a market economy duly structured and 'corrected' by government action'[53]

Such organisations, characterised by "grass-roots democracy and group self-determination" thereby acted as a defence against the "drift towards corporatist domination".

12.4 Economic Liberalism

In the debate over what type of society we should be moving towards - to what extent corporatist or liberal-pluralist - and in the way these tendencies were being reconciled, we see reflected ambiguities within social and behavioural consultancy itself. There were indeed competing tendencies in consultancy, both within its idea-set and through its application. Thus, despite the 'new philosophy' championing individual rights and freedoms, it could form part of a programme to secure closer integration by the manner of its introduction and application. Consultancy has its tradition of technocratic engineered change, and its ideal of 'better managed systems', typified by the standpoint of the academic 'researcher/engineer/policy adviser' (see Chapter 9). Put this approach to change to work as at Shell (U.K.), and the result was that whilst the 'new philosophy' was proclaiming that the organisation did not own people as resources in the old way, it got promoted as a normative imposition (through a cascade of discussions, or 'conferences') which foreclosed genuine discussion.

A philosophy which was ostensibly liberal and pluralist was used (unsuccessfully) to secure corporate cohesion.

> 'all strategic choices had already been taken once the philosophy had been formulated by the Tavistock and E.R.P. and then approved as policy. The extent of the choice open to managers asked now to be 'change agents' was to take or leave the package on offer'.[54]

In this guise, social and behavioural consultancy was doing at the level of the firm what policy makers were doing through the economic and political institutions of the State - creating patterns of "bargained corporatism" - and indeed consultants at the level of the firm complemented the effects of policy nationally. Freedoms could be created at the interpersonal level yet constrained within corporate guidelines, strategies, and philosophies, to secure a better working system (whether organisational or national) - to achieve Flanders' goal of "more planning from above and more democracy from below".[55]

The nagging question still remains, however, whether a purely 'negotiative' approach which we have associated most strongly with developmental academics is ideological in the same sense or to the same degree, as one which was more explicitly integrationist and more firmly wedded to systems frames of reference. Are more genuinely 'negotiative' approaches than the Shell (UK) example which may indeed promote genuine bargaining and grass-roots participation equally ideological, in the sense for example in which Mannheim defines it:

> 'the collective unconcious of certain groups obscures the real condition of society both to itself and to others and thereby stabilizes it'[56]

We must bear in mind, for example, that those consultants who challenge conventional organisational values may effectively secure different ends, since organisations may use consultants for different purposes according to how they are tied into the system of capitalism and the State,[57] smaller owner-managed firms, for example, having different priorities and requirements from large multi-national corporations (not to mention voluntary agencies, associations, trade unions with whom consultants also occasionally work). Elevating a belief in personal relations, in community, and in family against a purely work ethic residing in organisations appears to involve a rejection of economic liberalism, an association of the values of 'gemeinschaft' (personal relations based on ethical standards and sentiment) over those of 'gesellschaft' (impersonal and instrumental relations, governed by principles of economic calculation, order and rationality). Community values are pitted against the notion of 'equivalence exchange' (the trading of men for money, as for commodities under economic liberalism),[58] and public consciousness is set above competitive individualism.

It may be that in these attitudes some consultants reflect a general turning away from economic values in the affluent '60's and '70's, even a peculiarly British devaluation of industrial striving and a preference for traditional values[59] (such as one might expect from social scientists anyway). On the other hand, organisations which have a fuller institutional life are more effective organisations.[60]

But in other ways the negotiative approach which accompanies these sentiments as their professional 'modus vivendi' represents a reassertion of values which are peculiarly

associated with economic liberalism. Commercial and academic consultants (who particularly express this style) after all, as freelance operators, are exemplars of the working of a free enterprise system. Where, in their professional activities, they set themselves to promote flexibility, openness, and learning, and thereby increase organisational responsiveness to the environment, they are effectively improving the self-regulating capabilities of the market economy. Nevertheless, it is not here in the market responsiveness of organisations where the idea of the market is most strongly seen, as in the concept of the relationship between free individuals, making contracts. Market values, though in abeyance in some respects, continue to pervade thinking.

The consultant as intermediary, catalyst, critic, engaging others through 'negotiative' practices, repairs shortcomings in the interpersonal transactions within the internal market of the organisations. In a perceptive linking of economic, intellectual and interpersonal activities, Nicholas Stacey described this type of consulting role as follows:-

> 'The broker operates in an imperfect market and whether he deals in merchandise or in metaphysics, in companies or in concepts, his sole task is to establish rapport between the negotiating parties'[61]

Negotiation pushes the parties towards clarification of interests, goals and means, in order to find common ground or to test the strength of their positions to determine agreements based upon the real balance of power. As such,

it expresses that turn of mind and type of behaviour which Weber termed 'rational calculation' and identified with the specifically modern economy and society. Negotiation manifests the ideal of a competitive pressure-group, open democratic society, a society animated by

> 'mutual adjustment, the art of the possible, self-centred tough-minded bargaining, and jockeying for favoured position'.[62]

This version of negotiation may seem remote from the motives and practices ordinarily associated with social and behavioural consultants - more to do with distributive power-bargaining, the striking of hard-headed formal agreements, backroom informal deals, and organisational politicking, than with the integrative problem-solving humanistic goals O.D. consultants typically espouse. It is worth recalling, however, what the underlying sentiment of 'humanism' in O.D. has been. We suggested in Chapter 2 that Maslow's 'heirarchy of needs' mirrored economic marginal utility theory. But it has another aspect, too, which evokes the exploitative nature of human behaviour through unregulated markets. 'Self-actualisation' encourages a view of people as exploiting each other and their environments in a hedonistic quest for satisfaction.[63] It is as individualistic a conception as anything in utilitarian economic theory.

Also overlooked is that confrontation is a prime O.D.value. Better solutions are said to come from getting out conflicts and exploring differences.[64] The consultant works by clarifying differences, disjunctions and contradictions, by

mirroring and feedback processes to bring them out into the open, and by questioning the limits of personal freedom in role increases confidence to confront differences, etc. The goal is improved articulation of perceptions and of roles, better compatibility of structures to tasks, and organisation philosophy and management style to people. Moreover, when consultants specifically lend their help to redressing imbalances of power between people, they encourage precisely a kind of "self-centred tough-minded bargaining."

'I try to empower people by asking questions like "how much of what you say is real? how much do you want to change the situation?if you do, how far are you prepared to go? are you prepared to fight or do you want a soft life? what methods are you prepared to use .. formal or underhand?" I recognise that managers do use underhand methods'

(an internal consultant)

'to make people conscious where the power is .. and develop ways of using that power'

(an academic consultant)

Consultants help people to realize their personal goals, but in the belief that this contributes to a more stable social system - to livelier, more responsive social-democratic institutions:

'If social structure is to be stable, individuals must be successful in achieving personal purposes'.[65]

Whether correcting imbalances or neutrally facilitating free exchanges between participants, there is at the heart of social and behavioural consultancy a belief in the method of working things out through negotiation methods. It relies

on the free flow of information ('good communication' and "valid data"),[66] which in turn rests on a faith in interpersonal influence processes. It thus mirrors the western cultural ideal of the democratic state and dynamic markets, and embodies the pluralist conception of a rough balance of power between protagonists - free citizens participating in and consenting to their government, free buyers and sellers.

These values in O.D. were crystallised early on by Warren Bennis[67] and represent the 'normal' condition of social interaction in a complex society. In the words of Wrong,

> 'People exercise mutual influence and control over one another's behaviour in all social interaction - in fact, that is what we mean by social interaction. Power relations are assymmetrical in that the power-holder exercises greater control over the behaviour of the power subject than the reverse, but reciprocity of influence - the defining criterion of the social relationship - is never entirely destroyed'[68]

The notion of 'power equalisation' which O.D. then developed was based on the premiss that increments of power to one party can optimise the total available influence to both parties and thereby enable each party to achieve its own goals more fully (and advance superordinate goals).[69] The 'non-zero-sum' notion of power displayed in O.D. was also, of course, the point argued by Flanders that managements can regain control by sharing it.

It is here in the mutual articulation of social and behavioural science and political orthodoxy, and of both in projecting a view of economic relationships, that the

ideological character of the 'negotiative' paradigm is to be seen. A political theory of power and a social-psychologica theory of personal relations are developed which are co-extensive with capitalist economic theory (or at least with a certain myth of the capitalist economy). Poole's characterisation of the 'non-zero-sum' position neatly captures the link between these social philosophies and the economic system in his 'money' metaphor:

> 'The principal case of non-zero-sum theorists is that power can be best understood as a 'circulating medium', similar to money in the economic system, which can have major social and economic benefits. In particular, it facilitates the co-ordination and integration of the capacities, talents, and work of a very large number of people and, in so doing, gives those societies, institutions, and groups which are prepared to maximize this potential, immense evolutionary advantages in the struggle between different orders and social systems'.[70]

Social transactions, of course, accompany economic exchange,[71] and the ease with which these take place is seen as a source of psycho-social and economic enrichment, to the extent that one is equated with the other, and each with cpen influence porcesses:

> 'The state of the art of negotiation is in consonance with the extent of the material and psychological freedom enjoyed in society. The adherents of dirigism are usually bad at negotiation. Dirigistes have limited faith in it.. the devotees of democratic freedom, the supporters of the market economy, are invariably good at it'.[72]

So the market system of economic relationships is justified and the forms of modern democracy are seen to arise from and depend on a free enterprise economic system.[73] Then the workings of the democratic process can be reduced to an 'economic theory of democracy':

'Our main thesis is that parties in democratic politics are analogous to entrepreneurs in a profit-seeking economy. So as to attain their private ends, they formulate whatever policies they believe will gain the most votes, just as entrepreneurs produce whatever products they believe will gain the most profits for the same reasons'.[74]

Classical economics and political pluralism are thus based on a common set of assumptions and look like one another:

'Pluralism is the political equivalent of the presuppositions of utilitarian economics: just as the market is assumed to mediate neutrally between the interests of the various economic actors, so the political process is assumed to generate a 'negotiated order' which accords tolerably with the interests of all. Utilitarian economics and political pluralism both admit the existence of conflicting aims and preferences on the part of the members of society; but both are predicated, explicitly or implicitly, on the existence of an underlying balance of power and interests.'[75]

The extension of this to the Industrial Relations arena has already been noted:

' 'Pluralism' in Industrial Relations parallels the dominant approach in recent political theory: the assumption that contemporary society, and political relations within that society, are characterised by the competition of numerous sectional groups of which none possesses a disproportionate concentration of power'.[76]

12.5 Social Psychology

In turn, social psychology reflects these presuppositions of utilitarian economics and political pluralism in certain of its own theoretical structures - primarily in symbolic interactionism which Chapter 10 identified as the conceptual underpinning of consultants' negotiative practices. Its principal advocate as a model for

consultancy, Iain Mangham, explicitly relates symbolic interactionism to political pluralism:

> 'It stresses that there are likely to be competing definitions of the situation, competing needs and competing repetoires. It assumes, that is, pluralism rather than unitarism'.[77]

The assumption of competing definitions is a sound principle for directing social practice. It is an egalitarian principle for sociological enquiry to grant that everyone has a point of view, even the 'underdog'. But the consequence of this individualistic perspective is often to arrest analysis at the heterogeneous and the development of order within restricted milieux and in small-scale interaction. Similarly, with consultancy. More radical constructions upon situations are missing. Thus society, in Symbolic Interactionism, tends to be treated as a loose arrangement of heterogeneous groupings, with no fundamental grouping like 'class'. The working of society consists of the interplay of these heterogeneous groupings, characteristically through competition whereby some acquire a measure of predominance and take advantageous positions within processes of social control, organisation and communication. As Cuff and Payne see it, Symbolic Interactionists content themselves with the thought that because of the flux in society, there is no reason to expect any one particular group to assume and monopolize dominant positions.[78] It is just a function of present market factors and a society's valuation of non-market characteristics. The important point is that societies at a micro- and macro-level achieve a state of "negotiated

order". To its critics, however, this

> 'overplays the significance of ethnic, religious, and similar divisions at the expense of those arising from social stratification'[79]

Hence,

> 'the Symbolic Interactionist approach is closely allied with the liberal-pluralist view of society; it neglects the extent to which society is a system - and a class-system at that'[80]

Its social stratification model (if it has one) is a status, rather than class, one. Once the differences between persons are acknowledged to derive from a variety of factors, and not just the economic, and given the possibility of mobility between groups a number of theoretical, perceptual, and practical consequences follow, which reduce the possibility of a class analysis:

(1) the number of statuses can be endlessly multiplied

(2) the basis for distinction can become lateral rather than only hierarchical, and

(3) ultimately the distinction between persons comes to reside in personalities (in 'persons' rather than in 'origins')

The social system becomes then, like power, a "circulating medium" of infinite small transactions, in which people too are circulating units. Thus, both political pluralism and (symbolic) interactionism incline towards the dissolution of social collectivities, and provide support for one another - as the following quotation illustrates:

> 'Democracy is the institutional recognition that each individual has a unique value system, capable of creative variation at any moment. Democracy is thus the only mode of social organisation that reflects consistently the metaphysical-ethical concept of a person'[81]

The evident overstatement of individual uniqueness and the fluidity of values is indicative of a continuing tendency deriving from utilitarian economics towards an atomistic conception of the individual which discounts social groups and structured experience and values. It is always individuals interacting as individuals, not as groups of individuals.

Summary

In such ways as these, the negotiative paradigm participates in a set of ideas, within the domains of social psychology, politics, economics and industrial relations, which reproduces a view of relationships in the market economy which is essentially individualistic. However, in what sense does this constitute 'ideology'? It is not enough, though it is a useful starting point, to demonstrate that

> 'there has been a powerful common meaning in our civilisation around a certain vision of the free society in which bargaining has a central place. This has helped to entrench the social practice of negotiation'[82]

The final chapter draws together the theme of ideology in order to answer the question how the "social practice of negotiation", as performed by organisational consultants, can be considered ideological.

References and Notes to CHAPTER 12.

1. See M. Nightingale, UK Productivity Dealing in the 1960's, in T.Nichols (ed.), Capital and Labour, Fontana, 1980.

2. In August 1969, the National Board for Prices and Incomes extended its criteria for productivity bargains to incorporate what it termed 'efficiency agreements' and thus shifted emphasis onto the quantitative techniques associated with productivity bargaining rather than the practices of 'joint regulation' and 'participation' which had been popular in earlier deals. (ibid.pp.325-6)

3. See S.Hall, The Hinterland of Science: Ideology and the "Sociology of Knowledge", in W.Schwarz (ed.), On Ideology, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p.29 on Bourdieu's intent to establish "mutual articulations" between "symbolic systems".

4. Although Weber argued that social science should attempt explanations that are both "subjectively meaningful" and "causally adequate", commentators have had considerable difficulty in reconciling these. Thus Winch argued that Weber was right in emphasizing that human action is usually 'predictable' but wrong in supposing that its explanation can assume a causal form which is logically, if not in content, the same as that characteristic of natural science. The Language philosophy of Wittgenstein suggested a radical severing of these goals. 'Conceptual', or 'language', analysts having sought to reveal the 'rule'- structures operating within language, sociologists and anthropologists adopted this enterprise (or simply its mode of justification) to reveal the rules implicit in symbolic systems generally and in symbolically-guided behaviour (viz.human action). Consequently,

   "if social relations between men exist only in and through their ideas ... since the relations between ideas are internal relations, social relations must be a species of internal relation too."

   (P.Winch, The Idea of a Social Science, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958, p.123.

   The relationship between ideas, or between actions, requires therefore logical rather than causal elucidation, in relation to the structure or context of which it is part:

   "the understanding of an action in terms of its intention and its context is a logical elucidation, and not an assertion of causal sequence"

   (M.Roche, Phenomenology, Language and the Social Sciences, London and Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, p.253)

   As a manifesto for the understanding of action there

are weaknesses in Winch's formulation (see A.Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method, London, Hutchinson, 1976, pp.47-51), as there are in ethnomethodology which were alluded to in Chapter 5. Fortunately, what I am proposing here is not to elucidate action as such, but to relate systems of ideas against a background of action, and vice versa. This depends upon a process of 'hermeneusis,' establishing meaningful connections and is open to alternative interpretations. The nature of the relationship itself (the origin of ideology in action and experience, and the impact of ideology on behaviour) is a question of a different order.

5. A.Flanders, Industrial Relations: What is Wrong with the System? (1965), in Management and Unions: The Theory and Reform of Industrial Relations, London, Faber, 1970, pp.124-5

6. Ibid., p.133, The Internal Social Responsibilities of Industry, (1966)

7. Ibid, p.134

8. Ibid, p.113, in Industrial Relations: What is Wrong with the System? (1965)

9. J.Habermas, Problems of Legitimation in Late Capitalism, in P.Connerton (ed.), Critical Sociology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, p.378. Similarly, Pareto: "the sense of social purpose can be sustained by debate as well as agreement"
(Quoted in C.Madge, Society in the Mind, Faber, 1964, p.104)

10. A. Flanders, op.cit., p.93, in Industrial Relations: What is Wrong with the System? (1965)

11. See J.T.Dunlop, Industrial Relations Systems, Holt, 1958, pp.16-18

12. A. Flanders, op.cit., p.93

13. Ibid., p.125, quoting N.W.Chamberlain, Collective Bargaining, McGraw-Hill, 1951, p.451.

14. A. Fox, Industrial Sociology and Industrial Relations, Research Paper 3, Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, HMSO, 1966, p.2.

15. A. Fox, Industrial Relations: A Critique of Pluralist Ideology, in J.Child (ed), Man and Organisation, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1973, pp.195-6. Similarly, Hyman comments:
"the divisions of interest are relatively superficial when contrasted with the common interest and commitment ... Hence order in industrial relations derives from an underlying consensus."
(R.Hyman, Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction, London, Macmillan, 1975, p.196)

16. Ibid, p.196. Thus, the Donovan Commission report opens with the words:
"The running of large businesses is in the hands of professional managers .. While in the long-term shareholders, employees and customers all stand to benefit if a concern flourishes, the immediate interests of these groups often conflict. Directors and managers have to balance these conflicting interests, and in practice they generally seek to strike for whatever balance will best promote the welfare of the enterprise as such"
(Lord Donovan, (Chairman), Report of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations HMSO, 1968, p.1.)

17. J.Habermas, op.cit., p.363

18. D. Hull, The Shop Stewards' Guide to Work Organisation, Spokesman, 1978, pp.47-8

19. M. Nightingale, op.cit., p.318

20. A. Flanders, op.cit., p.172, in Collective Bargaining: Prescription for Change, (1967), A.L.Friedman, Industry and Labour, London Macmillan, 1977, terms the resulting control strategy, "responsible autonomy".

21. T.Nichols and H.Beyon, Living with Capitalism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p.113.

22. A. Fox, op.cit., 1973, p.213

23. J. Child, Organisation: A Guide to Problems and Practice, Harper & Row, 1977, p.37 estimated that there were at that time no more than 40 schemes in Europe that enriched jobs significantly, and those mostly in Scandinavia.

24. See E.Bristow, Profit-sharing, socialism and labour unrest, in K.D. Brown (ed) Essays in Anti-Labour History, London, Macmillan, 1974.

25. See D.Chadwick, Participation through Joint Consultation, Employee Relations, Vol.1, No.3, 1979.

26. See S. Mallet, La Nouvelle Classe Ouvriere, in A. Andrieux and J.Lignon (eds), L'ouvrier d'aujour'hui, Paris, 1960; and M.Bosquet, Participation: The Meaning of 'Job Enrichment', in T.Nichols (ed.), op.cit.

27. See H.Ramsey, Participation: the Pattern and its Significance, in T.Nichols, (ed.), op.cit.

28. L.Althusser, For Marx, London, Allen Lane, 1969. See the discussion in A. Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory, London, Macmillan, 1979, p.179 ff.

29. See J. Habermas, Theory and Practice, London, Heinemann, 1974.

30. See D.Gallie, In Search of the New Working Class: Automation and social integration within the capitalist enterprise, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978, pp.8-25 for the positions taken on this issue by Blauner, Woodward, Maller and Naville.

31. See A. Giddens, The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies, London, Hutchinson, 1973, Chapter 10.

32. J.Habermas, op.cit.,1974

33. See for example, G.Lippitt, Organisational Renewal, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969; and the debate between T.Barr Greenfield, Organisations as Social Interventions: Rethinking Assumptions about Change, Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, Vol.9, No.5, 1973 pp.551-574, and E.H.Schein, Can One Change Organisations, or Only People in Organisations? Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, Vol.9, No.6, 1973,pp.780-785

34. L.Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism: Vol.3: The Breakdown, Oxford University Press, 1978, p.390. paraphrasing J.Habermas, op.cit., 1974.

35. See K.Marx and F.Engels, The German Ideology, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1965.

36. C.Argyris, Integrating the Individual and the Organisation, New York, Wiley, 1964.

37. K.Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936, p.36

38. P.D.Anthony, The Ideology of Work, London Tavistock, 1977 pp.239-240

39. Consultant quoting L.A.Cos r, Greedy Institutions, New York, Free Press, 1974.

40. A. Mant, The Rise and Fall of the British Manager, London, Macmillan, 1977, p.123ff.

41. See D. Bell, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, London, Heinemann, 1976; A.H.Halsey, Change in British Society since 1900, Oxford Univ. Press, 1978; B.Crick, Fraternity: The Forgotten Value, in C.Crouch and F. Inglis (eds.), Morality and the Left, special issue of New Universities Quarterly, Vol.32,No.2,1978.

42. C. Crouch, (ed), State and Economy in Contemporary Capitalism, Crook Helm, 1979, p.50

43. A. Fox, op.cit., 1973, p.198

44. J.Roeber, Social Change at Work, London, Duckworth, 1975, p.300

45. Ibid, p.314. See also p.xii:
"it seems obvious that the industrial troubles we are experiencing in some form throughout the Western world derive, as much as anything else, from the fact that the new realities of power have not been reflected in the terms of the social contact at work. The worker may now have the power but he is not being given the opportunity to exercise choice within the system. It is not surprising that he should therefore choose to exercise it, disruptively outside ... A new contract is needed, based on the principle of an individual's owning the decisions affecting his life. It is my view that the development of productivity bargaining has compromised a step towards that new contract"

46. See, for example, O.Newman, The Challenge of Corporatism, London, Macmillan, 1981, especially Chapters 6 and 11, where the values of corporatism are defined as depoliticisation, harmonisation, organic cohesion, and collective collaboration.

47. L.Panitch, Trade Unions and the Capitalist State, New Left Review, 125,Jan.-Feb.1981, pp.21-43

48. J.T.Winkler, The Corporatist Economy: Theory and Administration, in R.Scase (ed) Industrial Society: Class, Cleavage and Control, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1977,p.52.

49. O.Newman, op.cit., p.219, In the later phase of productivity bargaining, by 1968, State strategic control became exercised via the NBPI, in turn upon and through the CBI and TUC, in the negotiation of industry-wide or 'framework', productivity agreements.

50. C.Crouch, Class Conflict and the Industrial Relations Crisis, London, Heinemann, 1977.

51. J.T.Winkler, op.cit., p.54

52. J. Roeber, op.cit., p.xii

53. A. Fox, Socialism and Shopfloor Power, London, Fabian Research Pamphlets, 1978.

54. F.H.M.Blackler and C.A.Brown, A New Philosophy of Management: Shell Revisited, Personnel Review,Vol.10, No.1, 1981,pp.15-22; See also A.W.Clark, Sanction: A Critical Element in Action Research, Journal of

Applied Behavioural Science, Vol.8,No.6, 1972, pp. 713,731 (quoted in Chapter 10,p.447) for an example of ideology promoted first, for practices to then follow, in line with the conception of an organisation as a "rationally controlled achievement of a particular goal"

55. A. Flanders, op.cit., 1970, p.113.

56. K. Mannheim, op.cit. p.36.

57. See D.Strinati, *Capitalism, the State, and Industrial Relations*, in C.Crouch (ed.), 1979.

58. Marx defines "equivalence exchange" as follows:
"each enters into relations with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent"
(K.Marx, *Capital: Vol.1*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1959, p.176.

59. See M.J.Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* Cambridge Univ.Press, 1981.

60. See T.J.Peters and R.H.Waterman, *In Search of Excellence*, New York, Harper and Row, 1982.

61. N.Stacey, Jubilee Lecture, Edinburgh University, reprinted in 'The Guardian', Dec.31,1980, p.13.

62. O.Newman, op.cit., p.203.

63. See F.H.M.Blackler and C.A.Brown, *Organisational Psychology: Good Intentions and False Promises*, Human Relations, Vol.31, No.4, 1978

64. See, for example, J.F.Fordyce and R.Weil, *Managing With People: A Manager's Handbook of Organisation Development Methods*, Reading, Mass.,Addison-Wesley, 1971, pp.11-14

65. I.L.Mangham, *Interactions, Organisations and Interventions: A Dramaturgical Perspective on Organisation Development*, London, Wiley, 1978,p.26.

66. See C.Argyris, *Intervention Theory and Method*, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1970. Similarly, Chin says in relation to the feedback-processes occuring in consultancy:
"the single most important improvement the change agent can help a client system to achieve is to increase its diagnostic sensitivity to the effects of its own actions upon others"
(R.Chin, *The Utility of Systems Models and Developmental*

Models for Practitioners, in W.G.Bennis et al (eds.), The Planning of Change, New York, Holt,Rinehart and Winston, 1961, p.206)

67. See, for example, W.G.Bennis, Organisation Development: Its Nature,Origins, and Prospects, Reading, Mass, Addison-Wesley, 1969

68. D.H.Wrong, Some Problems in defining social power, American Journal of Sociology, 73, 1968,pp.67

69. See, for example, A. Tannenbaum, Control in Organisations, McGraw-Hill, 1968.

70. M.Poole, Workers' Participation in Industry, London and Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p.12.

71. Perceiving this link, Homans artlessly depicted all social exchanges in economic bargaining terms (see G,C,Homans, The Human Group, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1950.

72. N.Stacey, op.cit.,

73. See, for example, J.A.Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, Allen and Unwin, 1950

74. O.Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, New York, Harper & Row, 1957. A more accurate presentation might be of political parties holding a monopoly of political power and controlling effective access to channels for articulating interests, analogous to the oligopolistic nature of modern capitalist economies (and in alliance with and representing those oligopolistic economic forces). See also G.A.Almond and G.B.Powell, Comparative Politics in a Developmental Approach, Boston and Toronto, Little, Brown, 1966, on secular political culture and the development of "open bargaining attitudes".

75. R.Hyman and I.Brough, Social Values and Industrial Relations, Oxford, Blackwell,1975,p.164

76. Ibid, pp.163-4

77. I.Mangham, op.cit., p.132

78. E.C.Cuff and G.C.F.Payne (eds.), Perspectives in Sociology, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1979, pp.108-110

79. Ibid, p.119.

80. Ibid. p.119

81. R.Abelson,Persons: A Study in Philosophical Psychology, London, Macmillan, 1977

82. C.Taylor, Interpretation and the Science of Man, Review of Metaphysics, Vol.25,No.3,1971,reprinted in P.Connerton (ed.),op.cit., p.181.

CHAPTER 13

THE NEGOTIATIVE PARADIGM AS AN IDEOLOGICAL 'PRACTICE'

13.1 Introduction

This chapter inverts the procedure which has governed the writing of the thesis. It takes first the question of ideology, summarizes the particular character of consultants' ideas, and relates these to a structure of material interests. The argument is that the "social practice of negotiation"[1] (or the 'negotiative paradigm') is ideological in that it expresses relations of production within the economic system. It provides imagery and a set of practices which consolidate the functioning of the economic system, and thereby preserves the basic structure of ownership and distribution within it. Secondly, the chapter relates this ideology back to consultants' own market situation, thus restating the question that preoccupies a sociology of knowledge, of how mental productions are related to their existential basis.[2] Thus consultants as a group are brought within the economic framework they serve, by their own social class situation. In this way, we suggest that the ideology has an ontological relationship with the underlying forces of production by virtue of the common production and functionality of ideas in the specific and general setting. Such a proposition requires far more detailed elaboration of theory and wider empirical support than we can possibly give it at this juncture. We limit ourself instead to a final discussion of the theoretical problem we have tried to address in the

course of the thesis - namely, the mutual status and relationship of the phenomenological and the structural in social analysis.

13.2 Ideas and 'Interests'

The previous chapter attempted to show that there existed a complex of political, economic and social ideas which were co-extensive with one another and which found expression in social and behavioural consultancy. Within the period 1960-79, however, there were differing interpretations as to what the trends in politico-economic structures were, and commentators found the hand of different ideologies legitimating the trends which they saw as uppermost.

Taken separately, for example, systems and negotiative paradigms can be conceived as ideological concomitants of quite divergent tendencies.

Some, like Habermas (and also Marcuse), feared more the processes of modern production systems allied to the power of science to bring about 'objective integration' of people into work organisations and a society dedicated to material rather than ethical and humanist goals. For them, the scientistic image of a society rationally orderable by instrumental, scientific means had become the dominant legitimatory system of advanced industrial society, and this had replaced the ideology of 'equivalence exchange' that legitimated early industrial capitalism and which Marx had critiqued,[3] whereby individuals enter into exchange

relations on a free basis, to exchange goods, services, and their labour power. Their concern was that modern production systems and society were put beyond critical reach, choice, and control, in some form of totalitarianism. The process of incorporation in organisations was furthered by personnel practices such as 'job enrichment', whilst the ideological accompaniment to the experience of supra-human systems included systems-thinking itself.

Integrationist tendencies of this kind have been a ready target for attack.[4] Critics have tended, however, to neglect sources of 'recalcitrance' within the labour force towards technological and managerial control systems,[5] and to see the impact of the ideology specifically on the lower ranks of the labour force when a stronger case could be made out for its having impact on managerial ranks.

An alternative view, to that of Habermas, which we favour, is to see integrationism underpinned by a liberal-democratic ideology, having its roots in an older interpretation of the working of the economic system. The operation of the economy as a system and the management of complex organisations is made possible by intricate processes of bargaining and negotiation. Negotiation makes possible the development of solidary relationships and the articulation of ends, not by identification through sameness but arising out of increased individuation within the division of labour. Co-operation is interactively negotiated among persons divided by their different roles and tasks in the production and managerial process.

This is, of course, the condition of 'organic', as opposed to 'mechanical', solidarity envisaged by Durkheim [6] and echoed in Burns and Stalker's typology of traditional and 'modern' organisational systems.[7] There is, in the negotiative paradigm that high value placed upon contractual relationships, that Durkheim saw as necessary to a state of solidarity in an industrialised society and Flanders saw as the only realistic basis to normative order in industrial relations.[8] The division of labour is not, therefore, exclusively an economic production, but has social and moral aspects.[9] Thus it is not surprising that social and behavioural consultants should seem to be asserting the personal, social, and moral aspects in negotiation. This is not a denial of the economic character of relationships, but a measure of how deeply embedded in modern society is the conception of 'free men', contracting to sell and to exchange their special skills, and of how consultants, in tune with this presumption, were dealing with the epiphenomena of economic relationships.

It is possible, however, as we noted in Chapter 12, to see within the broad reaches of the negotiative paradigm a difference of emphasis between what is an essentially individualistic, atomistic and economistic conception of negotiating individuals, and something more akin to the radical humanism of a Habermas where negotiation is posited upon a dyadic interactionism, with the dyad the basic social unit. This has implications for whether the negotiative paradigm constitutes a 'dominant value system'

or a 'radical value system', to use Parkin's terms[10] - or whether, to recall Mannheim, their ideas are "utopian" (aiming to transform) rather than "ideological".[11]

There are elements within the negotiative paradigm which have the character of a 'radical value system', offering an alternative moral framework for society by challenging what is seen as the dominant individualistic, economistic and atomistic ideology and culture.

This is epitomised in the cry, "Is man just homoeconomicus or something more maybe?"[12], and in the judgement echoed by a number of academic consultants that "we have lost the capacity for a public life". The concept of negotiation here is infused by a vision of society in terms of human association and interaction whereby the atoms of society come together. Such a view seems to owe much to Simmel's perception of the individual having become

> 'a mere cog in an enormous organisation of things and and powers which tear from his hands all progress, spirituality, and value."[13]

Yet the reaction to this alienated state is tempered by the equally Simmelonian belief that the individual is bound, within a context of interaction, to be in a state of conflict with his surrounds, and that, as Burrell and Morgan put it,

> 'a measure of alienation was an essential ingredient of man's awareness of himself as a person.'[14]

Thus, consultants advocate, not rejection of the forms of organisation that exist, but working through these experimentally, because

> 'being conscious is moral conflicts'
>
> (an academic consultant)

Self-assertion, then, through negotiation takes on the form, not of mere self-seeking behaviour, but has the positive quality which Coser attributed to conflict, of bringing out "dignity and self esteem through self-assertion" and potentially leading to "new ties among the participants, strengthening their existing bonds or establishing new ones."[15]

The quality of this as a challenge to the conventional dominant value system is underlined by the sense that those 'developmental' academic consultants who espouse it are following 'personal projects', in the Sartrean sense of 'finding themselves' - and by their professed mission to help others to do so.

The slightest shift of emphasis here, however, towards the obligations the individual owes others in the construction of forms of association and the development of a "public life", and the negotiative paradigm takes on more the character of a 'dominant value system'. It contributes to the 'ideological hegemony' of a ruling class insofar as it forms part of "a belief system which stresses the need for order, authority and discipline."[16] Negotiation becomes part of such a belief system when allied with systems thinking, as in the writings of the Tavistock Group. Thus it offers a different mode of achieving order, preserving authority, and instilling discipline - by a stress on self-discipline, finding authority within oneself for accepting leadership and followership roles, and taking (responsible) action according to the requirements of the situation.[17]

Behind the processes of joint construction of organisational relations lurks the old 'law of (the) situation',[18] the rule of 'functional imperatives'. Autonomy then means

> 'building people who could be managed by the situation rather than the boss .. who had a willingness to think about the business as a whole'
>
> (a commercial consultant)

And, of course, negotiation offers a mode of order creation which is very closely tied to a 'dominant value system' when it is simply an expression of what Taylor calls "the structures of this civilisation,interdependent work, bargaining, mutual adjustment of individual ends"[19]- in other words, when it is the acting out of mutual exchange relations by economistic individuals. All that has changed is the belief that the power to participate has been extended.

The problem in terms of a 'dominant value system' is the extent to which the negotiative paradigm is merely restating old forms of mutual exchange, is softening these, or is a radical attempt to recover shared meanings and sociability in a new form of intersubjectivity that goes beyond the utilitarian culture of competitive individualism.

If we recast the issue in terms of 'ideology', however, we can see that ideology is not a unidirectional concept - that, in fact, the function of ideology, in securing domination, can be achieved by the existence of dominant, radical, and also subordinate value systems. The value systems we have described can be accommodated within different meanings of ideology.

(a) The first meaning of ideology suggests that ideas function

as ideology in the sense of reinforcing practices and relations upon which the economic (or some other) system depends:

> 'The suggestion would be that a mode of production has ideological requirements which must be met for it to continue in existence. The capitalist mode of production, for example, requires economic exchanges to be made between formally free and equal individuals. In that ideology may provide a means by which people are constituted as individuals of this kind, it functions to support the mode of production.'[20]

We argued in Chapter 11 that negotiative and systems ideas were practically relevant to some of the problems faced by management - the achievement of order in the workplace, but equally coping with the social organisation of management arising from increased size and complexity. Moreover, these ideas functioned not just as ideology, legitimating arrangements, but to an extent instrumentally, insofar as they contributed directly to certain practices and programmes of action. The nature of ideas was to reinforce necessary practices and relations.

At the same time, negotiative and systems ideas are isomorphic to the mode of production. They embody a modified utilitarianism (reflecting changes in the economic system) and thus reach back to an older form of the dominant ideology. People are seen as joining together to maximise utilities by asserting their own needs in negotiation (the corollary of this is of course to see others as instrumental to one's own needs). The model-of ends and means that can be consensually established and of relationships that can be ordered - is thus very much the same market model that utilitarianism was built on. In the

organisational context, it is only an up-to-date way of constructing bureaucratic orderliness. Negotiation, especially when set within the aegis of systems thinking, is then only an appropriate ideology to the managed market economy, just as Weber's image of bureaucracy was the social scientific representation of individuals linked in rational calculation appropriate to an earlier stage of the economy.

Unlike the older version of the dominant ideology, however, the focus is less on the structure of property relations and individuals' relationships to the institution of property, as on the system of authority relations. (Other bits of extant ideology may nevertheless continue to uphold the sanctity of property itself and the rights of managerial prerogative which are the public expression of this).[21] It has of course been argued that, in late capitalism where the role of a class of owners has become somewhat attenuated, the coherence of a class of controllers becomes relatively more important to the functioning of the economic system. But that is not to say, as Abercrombie and Turner go on to argue that "there is relatively less need for a dominant ideology in monopoly capitalism",[22] or to imply that what dominant ideology there exists has somehow become more detached from property relations as a force in the capitalist economy. (To an extent the ideology of property in any case pre-dates the era of industrial capitalism and is not coterminous with the ideology of the market) Current ideas may be less aggressive in defence of overt symbols, such as the rights of property

(and managerial prerogative), which underpinned earlier forms of capitalism. But the dominant ideology may continue to operate at a less overt level, in the expression of values about social relations and economic responsibilities and rights. It is at such a less overt level that "ideological crystallisation" (for example around traditional values) may, as Rootes points out,[23] be the more complete and effective - as in the marriage of practice and ideas in consultancy.

Thus ideology may work by directly reinforcing behaviour - setting out patterns of behaviour and relationships, and approving and legitimating these.

(b) But also ideology (its second meaning) may throw a gloss over and mystify the actual working out of relationships and societal arrangements, and thereby make less likely behaviour which threatens these. People carry on behaving in accordance with how they (wrongly) believe things to be.

The two processes of ideology may work simultaneously, and through the one structure of ideas. Thus the negotiative paradigm, by representing relations as co-equally formed, through the joint construction of reality (parallelling the idea of the labour contract as a free mutual exchange) may make managers better co-ordinators and leaders by giving them a more viable outlook, whilst it conceals the real asymmetry of power and influence from other personnel.

We also call that 'ideology', then, which conceals real material practices, arrangements, and rewards.[24] The charge against the negotiative paradigm in its radical value

system guise is that it exaggerates the idea of 'free men', overemphasising individualism through the capacity to form dyadic relations, to the neglect of collective relations in the exercise of social power by the socially dominant. The power of the socially dominant disappears from view.

Thus, the criticism would be that social and behavioural consultants propagate a myth of self-development and realisation through mutual influence, which is not realistic for most people, within organisational structures that do not permit the degree of detachment which consultants, for example, and the professional classes themselves enjoy. The negotiation of intersubjective meaning distracts from material relations by an inherent tendency to overengage with the 'meaning'world', and to treat the source of action as internal to the individual. As Skidmore puts it,

> 'in exchange theory, the inducement to individual social acts is external to the acting individuals, whereas in symbolic interactionist theory, it is internal'.[25]

Or as Hall says of phenomenology, to which symbolic interactionism owes part of its lineage,

> 'phenomenology was a radical retreat into mentalism'[26]

Those things which are epiphenomenal, such as the construction of meaning, are overplayed; those things which are fundamental to social relations such as power resources, are underplayed. The weakness of negotiative practices which focus upon changing awareness ("by perceptual and conceptual reorganisation through the clarification of language")[27] is that

> 'The meaningfulness or understanding of the social world is not achieved purely through language, interpretation, or consciousness but also through material transformation of the natural or physical environment.'[28]

One might even say this is the fundamental weakness of any purely social science.

The same broad criticism - that it conceals real material practices, and is therefore ideological - can be levelled at the negotiative paradigm generally. As it has evolved the critique of social and behavioural consultancy is no longer that it purveys a simplistic integrationist ideology, as did the 'neo-human relationists' of the 1960's and the first wave of O.D. practitioners. The advocacy by Mangham in 1978[29] that, because the humanist and systems models were outmoded, what was needed to take their place because it comprised features of both was an interactionist model, was already a statement of what was actually the case than a manifesto. McLean etal survey[30] which followed this, showing the greater attention to politics and the revision of humanistic prescriptions, bore this out. Instead the critique is directed at the assumptions and consequences of the interactionist philosophy itself and the philosophy of pluralism with which it is married:

> 'it is not difficult to argue that such an ideology represents, in the context of modern business, a high point in enlightened 'managerialism', in the sense that it serves managerial interests and goals whether pluralists themselves identify with those interests and goals or not. Admittedly it urges the full acceptance by managers of rival focuses of authority, leadership, and claims to subordinate loyalty. It recommends the limited sharing of some rule-making and decision taking. It deprives managers of all theoretical justification for asserting or claiming prerogative. Yet the outcome of these concessions is visualized, not as the weakening of managerial rule as we now understand it, but its strengthening and consolidation'[31]

Negotiation offers more flexibile arrangements, more involvement in constructing consensual definitions, on an

individualized basis, within a structure which these modes of action do not touch. Though organisational life is a constant process of

> 'negotiation and interpretation through which participants with differential resources and discrepant interests construct organised social realities'

this occurs

> 'under the jurisdiction of organisational priorities and programmes'[32]

By themselves, negotiative practices fall short of tackling organisational, and even more so, societal priorities and programmes. They function ideologically by encouraging people to utilize the rules of the game and to participate in the 'system' in the (mistaken) belief that they can thereby secure improvements within it. Where negotiative practices are set within a system paradigm, existing priorities and programmes are especially liable to exercise a hegemonic influence upon the processes of negotiation. By ostensibly addressing the system of authority relations in the workplace (or even only 'personal relations'), the wider systems of society in which authority is embedded, namely the institution of property and class relations, are screened off:

> 'Pluralism, pointing to the 'social miracle' of the interplay of self-balancing multiple self-interests - be they individualised or expressed within interest groups - with the State doing little more than 'holding the ring', by all logical inference disallows the concept of the dominant ruling class'[33]

The same effect is secured by detaching authority from its material sources and uses:[34]

> 'The images of the policeman, the courthouse, and the prison cell are almost inseparable from the idea of property. But these images tend to recede when authority displaces property as the leading idea because it does so often appear that industrial and other bureaucracies are self-regulating. It is only on those dramatic occasions that organisations themselves cannot handle that the wholly derivative nature of managerial authority is revealed through the intervention of external powers dedicated to the enforcement of property rights.'[35]

To summarize, ideas can work ideologically in one or both of two ways - providing imagery[36] to reinforce practices and relations upon which a system depends, or by distracting attention from aspects of a system. In the second instance the impact of ideology would likely be on non-dominant groups. In the first case it may embrace dominant groups and non-dominant ones equally.

In the last resort it is not the intentions of its proponents which determine whether ideas and practices are ideological, but the impact these have on the recipients of consultancy. Ideas may appear to be functional for social integration and to underwrite a particular economic and political system. But they may not be effectively so. Other ideas may be far more so - norms of obedience and loyal service, to monarch and employer, discipline and the work ethic , may be far more significant in practice. 'Negotiation' is just one part of the total ideology deployed in society. Furthermore, negotiative practices may evoke different responses than the consultant intends: action to stimulate consensual definitions may, instead, encourage power bargaining, whilst action intended to raise awareness, through group training, may foster greater conformity to group norms. Ideology may be considered 'functional',

but action can have 'unintended consequences'.[37]

The character of this study in respect of the 'ideological' dimension of consultants' ideas is to elucidate 'logical' rather than 'causal' connections and therefore precludes a definitiveness on this. It is 'probabilistic' regarding the tendency of ideas and practices, rather than 'positive' about intentions and consequences. Ideology-critique is an essentially political and dialectical process, not an exclusively empirical one. Dependent to a large degree on subjective assessments, it contributes to debate but cannot close it. The aim of a critical sociology is to bring into focus what lies unexamined. Thus:

> 'The interdependent and negotiating society has been recognised by political science, but not as one structure of intersubjective meaning among others, rather as the inescapable background of social action as such. In this guise it no longer need be an object of study. Rather it retreats to the middle distance, where its general outline takes the role of universal framework'.[38]

13.3 Ideas and the Material 'Base'

In this thesis we have set out the analysis in two stages - first, to make a contribution to the sociology of knowledge, representing consultants' ideas as "arising out of (their) life-conditions";[39] second, to consider the ideological character of consultants' ideas, as contributing to processes of domination. Management Consultants present us with an instance of a group whose mental productions , at one and the same time, enable it "to respond to the exigencies of its (own) existence"[40] whilst functioning as part of a dominant ideology. Is

there however, any necessary connection between the dual function which these ideas possess? If so, in what does it lie?

We have argued that work-role has an homogenising influence: the institutional setting creates certain perceptual- sets which influence the choice and construction of theories. At one level consultants share a common occupational role. They have a role, invoked from time to time by management clients, as social and behavioural consultants, and in this occupational capacity they operate certain common paradigms. At another level, however, they operate within more narrowly defined specific work-roles, as internals, commercials, and academics, in which they stand in different role-relationships to clients. Hence, the common paradigms have different salience for them, to the extent that the more autonomous they are from the consultancy role as a source of income, the freer they are to enact personal theories, interests, and values.

At each level the consultant is located within an economic relationship. He has an economic relationship with clients, whether as salaried internal or fee-receiving external. At the same time, management consultants are part of the wider system in the division of labour. Their role is to improve the functioning of organisations engaged in the direct production of goods and public services. It is therefore instrumental in an economic system, from which it derives its 'raison d'etre'.

If we say, then, that consultants' ideas and practices are

a function of role, the suggestion is that these are at the same time a function of the economic relations in which their role is embedded. Consultants' experience of a privileged position in a system of material relations becomes the medium through which ideas are refracted. Not surprisingly, therefore, their ideas are likely to reflect also the experience of others who share similar privileges' in the same system. In this way what is meaningful to the consultant for getting by in his own situation becomes ideological to the interests of a wider group or class, whether in securing the coherence of that group or providing an instrument to mould the images of other groups in accordance with its own experience.

To illustrate, it was argued in Chapter 10 that external consultants' attachment to a negotiative ideology reflects their own experience of high discretion roles and an absence of existing contractual ties with clients, which have to be established 'ab initio'. It also reflects their own market position. Whether viewed as entrepreneurs or as labour selling their abilities on the open market, their own position involves generally an individualised situation without institutional support, which requires them to enter into exchange-relationships and quickly form contractual relationships and work norms.

To an extent, too, negotiative ideology reflects the experience of senior personnel among their clients. Middle and junior ranks who have relatively low-discretion roles may have difficulty in working with the presumptions embodied in negotiative practices. It is precisely here

that difficulties in consulting may arise. Middle and junior personnel may fail to respond, or if they do they may encounter organisational blocks to their carrying over the same open participative style of working into normal organisational relationships.

The negotiative paradigm represents a particular market relationship and market experience, and it expresses a conception of personal powers which accords with that experience. It may therefore inadequately chart the form which economic and political relations take among other groups in the working population, for whom aggregations of capital, political power blocs, and social classes may be a more meaningful experience.

Although consultants enjoy greater autonomy than most employees, we have seen, however, that internals are acutely aware of their dependence on the organisation, which they express in the designation "resource". We took this to signify their financial dependence and incorporation within organisational role-systems. Their articulation of the negotiative paradigm is therefore muted. It has for them more specific exchange connotations, rather than joint meaning - construction. At the same time, internals are strongly attached to a 'low-level' (concrete) systems model which directs attention to the internal interdependencies within organisations. Their ideas and practices reflect their experience and respond to the experience of many within the organisation. But this is not the same as the experience of externals. On the face of it,

both commercials and academics have a high degree of professional autonomy. This conceals, nevertheless, the market dependency of both for obtaining work, and, in particular, the financial dependence of the commercial consultant for his livelihood. The commercial's equal attachment to negotiative and systems models can be seen as reflecting this ambiguity in his status, and the negotiative paradigm as expressing therefore his market relationship to the organisation whilst enabling him to manage it.

Academics present a difficult case. We accounted for the sharp differences in espoused models by saying that their freedom from the consultancy role as a source of income gave them more scope for expressing personal theories, interests, and values. The one maximises the personal, the other the situation. This would appear to render tenuous the proposition that ideas and practices are a function of role, and a function of economic relations in which role is embedded. The thinking of neither appears capable of reference to any narrow experience of economic or work relations. Certainly, their ideas arise out of their experience, as developmental consultants above all others testified, but they locate this in a much wider context than work-role. Their ideas appear detached from economic circumstances, truly 'autonomous'.

The concluding discussion therefore concerns this theoretical question of the relationship of the phenomenological or ideational to the structural and material.

13.4 Structure and Phenomenology

Efforts to relate the structural and phenomenological may crudely incline to one of two positions. 'Vulgar Marxism' treats ideas as mere epiphenomena or outgrowths, with no autonomy or capacity to induce change. Ideas are simply reflective of real underlying structural-economic processes. 'Vulgar functionalism' in American sociology has similar implications.[41] On the other hand, ideas may be conceived as the real motor of history, changing social structures that are founded on them as ideas themselves develop and change. Marxism itself, for instance, would stand as an example of an ideology which has transformed societies rather than being a product of societal relations. Between these positions many observers prefer to see the structural and ideational in a reciprocal, or dialectical, relationship, each possessing relative autonomy and each with the capacity at different times to hold causal primacy over the other.

Weber's notion of 'elective affinity' is such an attempt to represent ideas and material relations as relatively autonomous. It affirms the autonomy of both social-structural and ideational processes, yet says that, under certain social conditions, social groups and ideas 'seek each other out', so that social groups become carriers of ideas and ways of thinking which correspond to their own experience of social structure or which advance their interests in it.[42] In the sociology of knowledge, Weber thus aligns himself with Scheler rather than with Mannheim:

> 'Whereas Scheler argued that socio-economic conditions could determine the arrival of an idea at a particular time and place, but not the content of that idea, Mannheim claimed that socio-economic conditions determine content as well as arrival'.[43]

Weber's theory has to do specifically with the arrival of ideas, not with their origin and substance (and to that extent he inclines towards an idealist position).

Accordingly, one could point to the socio-economic conditions of the 1960's and '70's and the rise of productivity bargaining as creating a climate for a set of ideas and practices to take root and to develop. One might then argue either that negotiative ideas performed a role in sustaining the social structure, or in developing it. With a change in circumstances negotiative ideas do not go away completely, they just languish with diminished force.

The problem with this is that it doesn't deal with what happens in the meantime. Where do the ideas which people get by on meanwhile come from, and what is their relation, if any, to the structural base? The notion of 'elective affinity' is invariably applied only to the broad movement of ideas, as when a set of ideas comes into special prominence. It is therefore only of partial utility. Alternatively, if it is held to be applicable at all times it dissolves away as a useful concept and we may as well address the relationship between ideas and experience directly 'Elective affinity' is a notion of convenience which begs the question it purports to answer.

We allow more effectively for human agency in the creation of ideas if we consider the phenomenology of this process. Social scientific ideas can be seen as first arising through a process of attempting to interpret and express, or to change, prevailing relations, as these are seen objectively in society at large and subjectively in a person's own experience of social and politioo-economic relations. Experiences and perspectives differ, and when society is in a state of change interpretations are ambiguous, in flux and uncertain. Therefore in a period of change like the 1970's one finds, not surprisingly a variety and complexity of ideas, in which consultants share and which they give differing expression to. A casual observer would conclude, therefore, that these ideas are not a simple product of individual experience, but to some degree they originate outside the individual, and are refracted through individual experience into more or less viable syntheses. In a complex pluralistic society and culture, ideas also relate to distinctive domains, and experiences are discontinuous. Moreover, once ideas have been articulated in history they remain available for service, in the literate culture, when, with modification perhaps, they can be applied to some new set of circumstances. In these ways, therefore, ideas can be autonomous and become developed by some such process as their 'elective affinity' for individual experience, needs, and material interests.

However, ideas are in the first place never a simple product of individual experience. Individual experience is not purely individualised, but is a product of social relations. Equally, therefore, ideas can never be in a

simple sense the product of individual experience, but are themselves a product of social relations. They arise out of inter-subjective exchanges between persons.[44] It is inadequate to assume therefore

> 'that all the ideas and sentiments which motivate an individual have their origin in him alone, and can be adequately explained solely on the basis of his own life experiences'[45]

Knowing is fundamentally collective knowing:

> 'It is not men in general who think, or even isolated individuals .. but men in certain groups who have developed a particular style of thought in an endless series of responses to certain typical situations characterising their common positions'.[46]

Ideas representing the experience of men and women in group settings undergo objectification through language and achieve a 'factility' of their own. They can then appear to have a life of their own apart from individual minds and individual experience and to act back upon men, as if from an autonomous realm of ideas. But they remain the product of the experience of the group in general, interpreting, reflecting, and seemingly validating it:

> 'Thus significations come from man and from his project, but they are inscribed everywhere in things and in the order of things. Everything at every instant is always signifying, and significations reveal to us men and relations among men across the structures of our society'.[47]

The subjective and the objective thus penetrate one another, and understanding must endeavour to grasp the totality of the subjective and objective. A degree of abstraction from subjective experience is therefore in order:

> 'groups or individuals as 'people' cannot be the be-all and end-all of explanation..we can only understand their consiousness and their praxis via a detour that takes as its object the relations in which they stand'.[48]

Equally, it is not sufficient to simply refer an individual's ideas to his immediate experience, since the individual lives in the language as well as in concrete group relations. The totality embraces a variety of meaning - systems, parts of which are inevitably residual - sedimentations of experience and projected ideals - which exercise influence over contemporary actors in the interpretations they make of their own, and others', current experience, and in the ends they pursue within these relations. At the same time the totality embraces economic relations, political relations, religious groupings, national identities, and so on, which are subject to material change and to ongoing interpretation.

By such reasoning as this social theorists have attempted to marry up materialist and idealist positions. Marxists especially have come to allow greater prominence to the phenomenological in order to do justice to the 'openness' society often feels to have. As Johnson puts it:

> 'any sociology or concrete history that fails to come to terms with the subjective moment, with 'consciousness', will be fundamentally flawed.'[49]

Studies of class and class consciousness have therefore tried to give fuller representation to the development of consciousness within specific social structures.[50] These developments owe much to Gramsci who sought to transcend the classic antimonies of idealism-materialism, subjective-objective and voluntarism-determinism, by giving greater significance to belief systems and to the 'super-structural".[51] His view of the base-superstructure was moreover that the

normal state of this relation was one of "massive disjunctions and unevenness".[52] Althusser, similarly, underplays the role of the economic 'base' (although in his scheme the individual is also much more of a cipher, a mere agent within the mode of production):

> Althusser's 'structuralism' depends upon an understanding of the 'totality', not just as an assembly of parts to be only understood as a whole, but as something sharing and present within each part. The parts reflect the totality: not the totality the parts. Of these parts, Althusser recognises four 'practices' - the economic, the political, the ideological, and the theoretical (scientific). Although, in the final analysis, the economic 'practice' is seen as the most important, at given historical 'conjunctures' each of the 'practices' has relative independence, despite the possible domination of one 'practice' though not necessarily the economic) over the others'.[53]

The sort of formulations we arrive at here provide a get-out to account for the dichotomy of practice and ideas among academic consultants who on the face of it enjoy similar role relationships; and also to accommodate the possibility that their ideas are not in all cases ideological requirements of an economic system, but may be in advance of it and an attempt to organise economic practices themselves. The problem is, as Stuart Hall (citing Althusser) puts it:

> 'The necessity - and difficulty - of holding on to "both ends of the chain" at once: the relative autonomy of a region (e.g. ideology) and its "determination in the last instance" (i.e. the determinary of ideology by other instances, and, in the last instance,by the economic). It is the necessity to hold fast to the latter protocol which has, from time to time, sanctioned a tendency to <u>collapse</u> the levels of a special formation - especially to collapse "ideas" or ideology <u>into</u>"the base" (narrowly defined as "the economic"). On the other hand, it is the requirement to explore the difficult terrain of "relative autonomy" (of ideology) which has given the field of ideology its awkward openness'.[54]

Thus, one may account for the dichotomy of practice and ideas by saying that the projection of oneself as a powerful creative subject, by one group of academics, contrasting with another group's projection of the self as relatively constructed by situations and the all-powerful organisation, itself reflects the very ambivalence of experience in industrialised society, and consultants are merely mouthpieces for the generalised experience. Such an explanation thus errs towards a functional determinism.

The notion of "disjunctions" on the other hand allows that ideas are generated at different periods, and may cease to represent adequately the system of economic production and relations within it as these are evolving. There may be a 'lag': 'forces of production' and 'relations of production' may develop at a different rate. Ideas are then put to the task of reconciling conflicts within the system. Alternatively, ideas can generate conflicts within a system through being applied in settings different from that in which they arose. Thus, academics, enjoying a position in the 'superstructure' as it were, and benefitting from 'slack' in the system, develop and promote ideas which may be out of phase with the requirements of the material base - until more stringent times cause a readjustment. The single system becomes, for practical purposes, a number of different systems. Ideas compete to respond to different manifestations of the evolving complex of phenomena; ideas, having a different historical progenitive, may be inappropriately appropriated to do the task of understanding, explaining, and regulating relations at a particular point in time.

Thus the real state of affairs may have moved on. The ideas and practices of organisational consultants may represent an outmoded response. The accounts on which this analysis has been based were obtained in 1979-80. They appear to reflect ideals of the managed economy or "bargained corporation" at a point when in fact pure Keynesian economic management had begun to falter.[55] By 1979 economic management was about to take a decisive change of direction, and influential sections of British management were announcing the return of 'command' management, 'adversary' management, and the 'politics of confrontation', in place of 'negotiated order'.[56]

A reflection of these changes can already be glimpsed in the shift among consultants towards a more confident belief in the value of authority, a belief in themselves as 'authorities', and in the view that participation and negotiation are not after all a necessary and unmitigated blessing. Order can be promulgated by firm leadership:

> 'Good autocratic leadership is very clear .. and it implants a script. That is, people are told what to do, and if they don't like it, it's too bad .. It's a script nevertheless, a one-way story .. Some situations demand that. There can be too much pussy-footing around and endless debate in situations that really demand someone make up their mind and go for it. I don't think people value or welcome a participative approach, a joint story-writing approach, all the time.'
>
> (a commercial consultant)

A change of policy, or the return of a social-democratic government, could well herald a re-run of the 1960's and '70's, however, and the negotiative paradigm, at present in eclipse, could resume its ideological sway, leading to the fulfilment of Winkler's prediction of 1975:

> 'Corporatist institutions should be reasonably well established in Britain by around the end of the 1980's. The initial influx of North Sea oil revenues in the early 1980's could provide the wherewithal and euphoria for a temporary interruption in the corporatist trend .. a return to the traditional supportive interventions of liberal-mixed-managerial capitalism. But by the end of the decade the economy should have adjusted to the new resources. If by that time, Britain does not have, in substantial measure, the de facto institutionalisation of investment direction, national planning, state-organised cartels, price and wage control, etc., then one may consider the corporatist hypothesis invalidated. If such policies, however, are in operation, they would tend to confirm the present interpretation that Britain is evolving into a corporatist economy.'[57]

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"Social change starts from the individual considering his or her 'authority' for being in a role." (p.245); and the equally mystical
"the work group's authority derives from their collective primary task"
- that is, under the 'jurisdiction of organisational priorities and programmes.

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"'Laissez-faire' was only a highly developed case of a more general philosophy of existence, a belief system which characterised, explained and provided imagery and justification ...."(my emphasis)

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"We have an opportunity now that will last for two or three years .. so grab it now .. We have had a pounding and we are all fed up with it. I think it fair to say that it is almost vengeance."

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APPENDIX A

Letter of Introduction

Dear

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to be interviewed in connection with some research I am doing.

I am currently working for a Ph.D. at Sheffield City Polytechnic, having completed the M.Sc.course in 'Organisation Development' here two years ago.

My research is concerned with organisational consulting, and I am interested in the ideas, or 'theories' to do with organisation, people, and change which consultants hold, and how these relate to their methods.

What I would like to do is to talk to you about your consulting experience and, where appropriate, focus on those projects that are particularly fruitful in providing an account of your methods and 'theories'. Ideally, I hope you could spare between 1½ and 2 hours.

I realise you will have many other demands on your time and may occasionally receive similar requests to participate in research, but I hope the nature of the topic is of interest to you and perhaps of use (as an opportunity to reflect upon your assumptions, models, and methods) for you to be willing to take part.

I should want to record the interview on tape, but I can promise you this will remain confidential and that I will ensure anonymity in the use of it as data in my doctoral thesis. The degree is registered with the C.N.A.A. and my research supervisors are Dr. H.S.Gill and Dr.J.S.Smith of the Polytechnic's Department of Management Studies.

I will telephone you in a few days to know if you are agreeable to taking part, and if so, we can then discuss arrangements for me to visit you.

Yours sincerely,

C.Hendry.

APPENDIX B

The Framework for the Interviews

A. 1. Overview ... potted career history ... How came into this line of work ... when? Kind and variety of work engaged in ... kinds of organisations ... levels ... kind of problems ... patterns and changing patterns.
Put in context of other things you do.

2. 'Typical' examples of work do .. or an example of what felt most good about .. least good about ... an example of what captures what you'd like to be doing.
Do you have an explicit set of theories which guide you in what you do (regarding organisation, man, change)?
What do you attend to in a project? ... What features are essential to an understanding of that situation?
Personal action theory, techniques commonly use ("core technology"),and aims (as explored through examples) ... including evidence of attachment to particular theories, models, and practices described in the literature, and, in the case of Academics, in their own writings.

B. 3. Preferences as to kind of organisation and problems like to work with ... where think can be most effective
General aims in consulting ... what try to bring about ... what personally motivates you

4. What are problems in doing this kind of work?
What do clients value in you as a consultant ... what do you see yourself as having to offer?
Sources of influence.

5. What are particular problems facing this company (internals)/facing organisations that you work with?
What factors in contemporary society do you feel are relevant to thinking about organisational change?

6. How would you characterise your personal style and role ... skills you most value .. things have most difficulty doing.
What do you feel you are best thought our on .. least thought out on?
What ideas have been most helpful?
Changes in methods and thinking.

C.7. Sources of support .. other involvements ... political and community work.
Relationship between academic work (teaching and research) and consultancy .. any explicit action research goals (Academics).
Networks .. professional bodies belong to .. training receive(d) to keep up to date ... what have been the influences on you?
Who is like you in this kind of work?

8. How do you see your future (in this line of work)?

9. Anything you would like to add ... have I got the picture?