An investigation into the practice of organization development and the consultancy process in four organizations.

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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To my parents and D.M.
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CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT?

1.1 The term OD

It is not entirely clear how or who initially coined the term "organization development" (OD). French and Bell (1984) in researching the early correspondence of Robert Blake, Herbert Shepard, Jane Mouton, Douglas McGregor and Richard Beckhard, suggest that the term OD, emerged more or less simultaneously amongst them. They discovered that the phrase "development group" was first used by Blake and Mouton in connection with a human relations training programme which was running at the University of Texas. The term was later adopted by Shepard and Blake in the Baton Rouge experiments. They referred to their programme of T groups as "organization development" to distinguish it from the complementary management development programmes. Quite separately, Beckhard wrote of his consulting with McGregor at General Mills as "organization development". This, he explained, was system-wide change effort, and to apply the terms management development and human relations training to it would be inaccurate. The programme he had devised intervened at more than the managerial level and it was concerned with more than just human relations training.

In spite of the uncertainty over who actually devised the term "OD" and when the term was first used, there is general agreement over the historical development of OD.
Several similar accounts of its history can be found. For example, it is suggested by French and Bell (1984) that OD has at least three historical roots. One root consists of the innovations in the application of laboratory training insights to complex organizations. A second root is the survey research and feedback methodology. Both are intertwined with a third, the emergence of action research. They also suggest that the development of the Tavistock socio-technical and socio-clinical approaches had a strong influence on OD. In another account, using Friedlander and Brown's (1974) terms, Porras and Berg (1978) describe the human-processual approaches which they consider to be group and intergroup development and survey feedback, as growing out of techniques developed in the early laboratory activities conducted at the National Training Laboratories, and the survey feedback techniques developed at about the same time at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. The techno-structural approaches, they suggest, have roots in the socio-technical approaches pioneered by the Tavistock Institute. This early work of the Tavistock Institute is well documented: accounts of the Longwall method are given by Trist and Bamforth (1951) and Emery and Trist (1960), while Rice (1958) describes the Indian weaving mill project, and Lawler (1969) and Conant and Kilbridge (1965) provide accounts of the job design and enlargement studies. In a similar fashion, Burke (1981) mentions three historical roots: sensitivity training or T group, socio-technical approaches and survey feedback, each of which he also suggests are associated with the already
mentioned institutions. Although the three roots differ, Burke asserts that they have at least one common property, that they are based on an action research model of change. Friedlander (1976) also describes two of the major components of OD's heritage, T groups and action research methodologies, as providing the 1950s birth of OD.

1.2 Definitions and classifications

Twenty years ago, only a few of the larger organizations were involved in projects which they labelled "OD". According to French (1969) these were Union Carbide, Exxon, TRW Systems, Humble Oil and Weyerhauser in the United States, and in Britain, ICI. Thirteen years after French's survey, Michael (1982, p77) took a random sample of half of the "Fortune 500" companies which yielded 71 respondents, and discovered that 46% (33) of the companies were using OD techniques.

Published accounts of OD projects over the last decade, suggest that examples of the practice of OD can now be found in many countries. Consider just a few non-UK and non-US examples. There are accounts of OD projects in Japan (Hattori, 1985; Shani and Basuray, 1988), the Netherlands (Hofstede, 1980; Langstraat and Roggema, 1985), Norway and Sweden (Gjemdal, 1985), Denmark (Borum, 1980), Finland (Santalainen and Hunt, 1988), France (Desreumaux, 1985; 1986; Faucheux, Amado and Laurent, 1982), Poland (Maslyk-Musial, 1989), other Eastern European countries (Smith, 1990), Canada
(Halpern, 1985), India (Brown, 1991; Hayes and Prakasam, 1989; Tandon and Brown, 1981) and Singapore (Santhanaraj, 1990). This geographical spread is to some extent linked to the international nature of some of the larger oil, pharmaceutical and electronics companies. Brakel (1985) provides a collection of international case studies which describe OD programmes, all carried out under the auspices of one large multi-national.

Not only is the practice of OD geographically well dispersed in the private sector, covering many countries and a wide range of industries, there are also well documented cases of OD conducted in the public sector: school and community systems (Schmuck and Miles, 1971; Pullan and Miles, 1978; Kobrak, 1991; Garcia, Merrifield and Senge, 1991), social welfare and health care organizations (Watson, 1967; Storey, 1988; Iles and Auluck, 1988; Boss, Boss, Dundon and Johnson, 1989; Bradshaw-Cambell, 1989; Edmondstone, 1989; Gummer, 1990), government departments and the armed forces (Umstot, 1980; Harrison, 1985; Kendall, 1987; Hamilton, 1988; Moore, 1989; Chisholm and Munzenrider, 1989; Dahl and Glassman, 1991).

Within the UK at present, the Directory of the OD Network and attendance at the Network Conferences '87 and '88 suggest that interest in OD and OD style interventions is far from flagging. Members of the Network include individuals from large industrial corporations (for instance, ICI, Shell, Esso, General Motors, British Leyland), government
sectors and various social services departments, non-business organizations, academics and independent consultants. Many of the larger organizations would have more than one representative member at the Network.

The growing interest in OD practice has been reflected, since the late 1960s, by the increase in the number of academic programmes and courses emerging under the label of organization development, a recent example being the OD programme at Western Michigan University described by Kobrak (1991), and also by the surge of books on OD, a notable example being the still running Addison-Wesley series which in its inaugural year published some of the most widely acknowledged OD texts (for example Beckhard, 1969; Bennis, 1969; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1969; Schein, 1969).

While some key components of the OD movement, for example, sensitivity training can be traced back to the 1940s, the term OD itself was probably not used, as suggested previously, until the late 1950s. However, within the last twenty years, much broader connotations have been associated with OD. Even in 1974, Kahn (1974, p491) reached a conclusion from an examination of OD literature that "the term 'Organization Development' itself remains scientifically undefined and hence primarily a convenient label for a variety of activities". A literature search using the ABI Inform abstracts for the period January 1988 to January 1992 uncovered 561 journal and periodical titles or abstracts which referred to the term "organization development". On
Closer examination, it became obvious that the term "organization development" is being used with laxity, and has become such a catch-all that an increasing number of activities is being subsumed under the label. It seems to be the vogue to include all people-oriented activities, from communications skills to assertiveness training in the OD bag, perhaps as Pfeiffer and Jones (1972) suggest because of the desire on the part of practitioners to "professionalize" their endeavours with the label of OD.

However, it is accepted that the term covers on one hand, the "traditional" activities such as sensitivity training and confrontation laboratories and, on the other, activities targeted at the structural aspects of the organization, such as job design and job satisfaction (French and Bell, 1984; Robey and Altman, 1982). The OD umbrella now includes a diverse range of activities such as MBO, transactional analysis and gestalt approaches, with more "tools" being added continuously (for recent examples of OD techniques, consult Woodman & Pasmore, 1989; Massarik, 1990).

The fact that the term is loosely applied underlines the problems which OD has in its definition: an examination of OD literature shows that as a term, OD is widely used without one particular accepted and adopted definition. There have been many attempts to provide definitions of OD, and the following are some of the "better known" examples.

Perhaps one of the most often quoted is Beckhard's
(1969, p9) definition: OD is "an effort (1) planned, (2) organization-wide, and (3) managed from the top, to (4) increase organization effectiveness and health, through (5) planned interventions in the organization's processes, using behavioural science knowledge." Another definition is Bennis's (1966, p10): OD is "a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values and structure of organizations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself." The first definition is illustrative of the genre of early definitions which reflect the NTL interests in the human processual content of OD interventions, while the second makes some attempt to acknowledge the structural aspects of the organization although Bennis (1969, p12) still stresses that "the main concern is with people and the processes that make them cohere and fragment, a belief that improved interpersonal and group relationships still ultimately lead to better organizational performance."

Some of the later attempts by major OD figures at defining OD will now be reviewed. What is apparent is that the definitions themselves are not value-free. The variations in the definitions reflect the value differences which each author holds. While some still emphasize the human concern, other definitions have become more generalized. Burke (1981, p187) in commenting on the differences, refers to the "normative versus contingency controversy", the former contains distinct humanistic values while the latter
advocates that the direction of change depends, or is contingent, on a variety of factors, especially the outside environment. He cites himself as an example of the first, and Schein and Lorsch as examples of the second. That differences in values have accounted for the variations in the definitions of OD, is also a view which is inherent in White and Mitchell's (1976) conclusion. They also state that the type of activities proposed to management depends ultimately upon the conceptualizations of OD held by a particular change agent. It can also be said that both types of definitions, that is the humanistic and the more generalized, are indicative of OD's developing state, that is the parameters of OD cannot be concretely defined yet because there are still activities being assumed under the label.

In addition, the definitions of OD in "organizational behaviour" textbooks should not be ignored. Although they are based upon "secondary" sources, often citing the work of key OD figures, they serve firstly, as useful indicators of the value placed on OD in the wider field of "business schools" and management theory, and secondly, remain accurate reflections of the sentiments expressed by the leading OD figures.

Of the "humanistic" type, Friedlander and Brown (1977, p53) define OD as "(1) a set of humanistic, democratic, scientific and economic values in combination with (2) a set of intervention technologies which (3) are implemented through a set of collaborative relationships and processes
between change agent and organization toward (4) the objectives of greater personal and organizational exploration and growth". Alderfer (1977, p197) writes, "the practice of organization development is aimed toward improving the quality of life for members of human systems and increasing the institutional effectiveness of those systems. The scholarly investigation of organization development seeks to understand planned change processes, to assess the effects of efforts to promote social change, and to evolve better theories of change processes". More recently and in a similar vein, Fagenson and Burke (1990, p285) write, "the purpose of OD is to improve the effectiveness of organizations and enhance the welfare of organization members through planned interventions. The activities that OD professionals engage in to achieve these ends are driven by a core set of humane values. The underlying principles and methods of OD are rooted in the social and behavioural sciences".

In the more generalized category, Margulies and Raia (1972, pp2-4) define OD as a body of concepts, tools and techniques used to improve the organizational effectiveness and the ability to cope with change, consisting of "data gathering, organizational diagnosis and action interventions". Schein (1980, p247) views OD as "all the activities engaged in by managers, employers and helpers which are directed toward building and maintaining the health of the organization as a total system". Similarly, Lorsch (1978, p2) says organization development is "any steps taken
by managers to improve the effective and efficient functioning of the organization". Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) had also described OD in terms of activities at three interfaces: organization and environment, group to group and individual in relation to the organization. Argyris's (1970) definition like the others, emphasizes the "health" of the organization, considering OD as a means of increasing those valued characteristics by increasing the capacity of the organization to generate and utilize valid information about itself. Some more recent definitions are equally broad. Consider statements by Shea and Berg (1987, p315) "OD seeks to enable the organization to solve both current and future organizational problems both now and in the future", and Porras and Silvers (1991, p54) "OD concentrates on work-setting changes that either help an organization better adapt to its current environment or improve its fit into expected future environments".

Finally, consider some of the definitions of OD which can be found in recent organizational behaviour (OB) texts. Again these definitions appear to have differing emphases. Some texts, such as Daft (1989, p289) uphold the human concern, "a primary focus of organizational development is people change... its goal is to improve organizational performance by creating a positive human resource climate in which employees can be better performers. Organization development attempts to break down traditional authoritarian organizational habits to encourage power sharing, decentralization of decision making, openness and trust."
Individual growth and interpersonal competence within the organization are important targets of OD. Other texts have a joint emphasis. For example, Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman (1989, p555) in their definition of OD write, "it (OD) comprises a set of actions undertaken to improve both organizational effectiveness and employee well-being", and similarly Hodgetts (1991, p457) writes "it (OD) is an action program in which the needs of both the organization and the personnel are examined, and the steps are developed for getting both to work in harmony toward the goals they feel are in their best collective interests". It should be mentioned that in examining "general texts", it is discovered that some general management texts tend to provide much broader definitions of OD than the OB texts. For example, consider the definition provided by Baird, Post and Mahon (1990, p267), "organization development is an approach to planned change that applies knowledge in a continuing effort to improve the organization's ability to cope with change in its external environment and increase its internal problem solving capabilities".

To summarize, from an examination of the various definitions of OD which can be found in literature, it seems firstly, that there are different values inherent in the various definitions, and secondly, some definitions are more generalized. It appears that different writers have different emphases. Some emphasize the welfare of the human element in the organization, others emphasize the needs of the organization, and some have a joint emphasis. Therefore, in
considering the subject of organization development, it is
important to remember that a definition of OD is basically
only a statement which reflects one particular author's or
one practitioner's values and that the practice of OD is
itself "value-full". That some of these definitions also
remain very generalized, has perhaps been explained by Kahn's
(1974) reasoning. Because OD was a term which was already
being widely used to cover a broad spectrum of activities, it
could not be considered a concept, at least not in the
scientific sense of the word, which implied a reducibility to
specific, uniform and observable behaviours or actions. If
this line of thought is assumed, then it is not surprising
that some definitions have tended to be not too specific.
However, it can also be argued that there is a
self-fulfilling element in this. Although OD is a developing
field, and a definition of OD cannot be too specific, the
inclusiveness of some definitions of OD, has encouraged the
label of OD to be used for an even wider array of activities.
If definitions of OD are based on what is labelled OD, it can
only lead to even less specific definitions.

Many of these definitions of OD, have included attempts
to provide taxonomies and classification systems of the
various activities in OD. Many of these can be found within
OD literature and the following are some of the better known
eamples of classifications which use a two dimensional or
three dimensional, that is cube-style, format. They provide a
more specific account than just a "descriptive" definition,
of what activities a particular writer considers to be OD.
Of the two dimensional classification systems, a convenient if somewhat overworked basis of classification is the distinction between structure and process, for example Eoyang's (1980) structural approaches and process methods, and Friedlander and Brown's (1974) techno-structural and human-processual dimensions.

The general purpose of structural approaches is to clarify, strengthen and elaborate the formal expectations that bind people together in organizations. Examples of structural approaches include role analysis technique (Dyal and Thomas, 1964), role negotiations (Harrison, 1970), responsibility charting (Galbraith, 1973), creation of temporary task forces (Beer, 1976), and revising structures and roles (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1969). In addition, the rapidly growing area of job design (Beer, 1976) can be regarded as essentially structural in nature, since it is concerned with changing the task characteristics and demands of various work roles. Another related set of structural interventions focuses upon personnel policies. Examples here include changing the pay and compensation policies, such as the Scanlon Plan (Lesieur, 1958), revising the staffing and hiring policies (Alfred, 1967), and experimenting with human asset accounting (Brummet, 1969). What all these have in common are an emphasis on the relatively formal aspects of organizations, and a belief that the structural changes may be enduring if they become institutionalized.

In contrast, process interventions tend to focus on the
more informal aspects of the organization, that is the social and interpersonal dimensions of human relationships. These are more difficult to institutionalize, since it is almost impossible to legislate for the personal motivation and commitment which is required for the continued success of the organization. Examples of popular process interventions are counselling, such as gestalt (Herman, 1972) and transactional analysis (Rush and McGrath, 1973) approaches, process consultation (Schein, 1969), third party consultation (Walton, 1969), interpersonal laboratories (Argyris, 1962), team building (Dyer, 1977), goal setting (Beckhard, 1969) and facilitating group meetings (Schein, 1969). More extensive process interventions such as grid development (Likert, 1967) attempt to improve processes on a larger scale by directing attention towards the social climate of organizations.

Other two dimensional classification systems differentiate between intervention categories with relation to their "depth" or "covertness", for example Harrison (1970) and Selfridge and Sokolik (1982).

Harrison's (1970) categories form a continuum of emotional involvement. The greater the depth of intervention, the more the focus of change is toward areas of the personality or self; the lesser the depth of intervention, the more the focus of change is toward areas external to the person, that is the more formal and public aspects of one's role. According to Harrison, there are two criteria in the choice of an intervention. He states that
the consultant should (1) intervene at a level no deeper than that required to produce enduring solutions to the problems at hand, and (2) only up to the level at which the client is prepared to commit energy and resources to problem solving and to change.

Selfridge and Sokolik (1982) use a similar format to Harrison, an "iceberg" metaphor, to state that usually only "overt" issues are taken into account, such as objectives, structure and resources, while "covert" elements of the organization, for example, the relationships and sentiments are ignored. At one end of a continuum are the strategies which deal with the very visible structural issues: tasks, structure, policies, practices and performance, and at the other end, strategies which deal with less visible elements of behaviour: attitudes, beliefs, inter- and intra-group relationships.

Another popular form of classification makes use of a three dimensional format: the "cube". Often the three dimensions are: the problem, the target and the mode of intervention. For example, the problem might be communication, the target is the team and the mode of intervention is confrontation. The three terms used by Schmuck and Miles (1971) in their classification are: diagnosed problems (such as goals, communication, leadership role definition), focus of attention (for example person, dyad, team, intergroup, total organization), and mode of intervention (for example training, process consultation,
confrontation, techno-structural activity). Blake and Mouton's (1976) "Consulcube" is similar but uses the terms: the "focal issues" which can be social or psychological, the "kinds of interventions" which can range from acceptant to prescriptive, and the "theory and principles" which provide advice and direction to the client. Bowers, Franklin and Pecorella (1975) also use a cube, the dimensions being: precursor conditions (problem causes), problem behaviours (symptoms), impingement modes (types of interventions), as do Lippitt and Lippitt (1978): client (individual to total system), change agent (from "reflector" to "advocate") and intervention phase (from entry to action taking).

In conclusion, this review of the various attempts to define OD and to classify OD activities highlights the amorphous and evolving state of OD. Because many definitions of OD exist, a diversity of conceptualizations of what constitutes OD in both theory and practice has been made possible. To better understand "what is OD?", it will be useful to also examine the semantics behind the term OD, that is its "meaning" and "values", and to list some of the common characteristics of OD as described by some of OD's leading figures.

1.3 Values and characteristics

Although it is believed that some key values and characteristics of OD can be identified, the point should be stressed that the aim is not to demonstrate that OD is or
should be considered a distinct or unified discipline, but to provide a greater understanding of the aims of what is generally considered OD.

First, it is perhaps worth briefly indicating that in an examination of OD literature, several arguments have been encountered against considering OD a distinct field. Miles (1974) suggests that there has been little response to the criticism of OD being essentially an amalgamation of earlier concepts and some variations on existing training schemes. Fifteen years later, the same criticism is made: Wooten and White (1989), and Porras and Hoffer (1986) are still concerned that OD lacks a unified theory of change. Raia and Margulies (1985) too suggest that in terms of theory, there is no clearly identifiable and systemic body of knowledge as there is in other respectable disciplines. And in addition, in an echo of earlier critics (Pfeiffer and Jones, 1977; Burke, 1976; Harvey, 1974; Warwick and Kelman, 1973; Walton and Warwick, 1973) they point out that in terms of practice, the status, expertise, self-discipline and ethical codes that exist in other professions, such as medicine and law, do not exist in OD. There is no certifying agency and there are no standards for the training and development of OD practitioners.

Although these critics are not wholly unjustified in their claims, within the bounds of this thesis, OD will be accepted as an "umbrella" concept under which behavioural and social scientists and practitioners work to increase
organizational effectiveness, whilst realizing certain values. It is also noticed that within literature, there are differences in the values adopted by the main OD figures. While some stick to the values of "early" OD, others have begun to diverge from them. An examination of literature also reveals some characteristics which are considered by some OD writers as key features of an OD intervention.

Admittedly oversimplifying somewhat, it can be said that many of the values of OD originate from the early days of the 1950s and 1960s. The values of this period, perhaps most emphasized in the work of Tannenbaum and Davis (1969), can be summarized as valuing openness, authenticity and feelings, developing trust and personal growth, paying attention to "human processes" and a willingness to take risk. This period is perhaps best summed up by their own statement, "ultimately, what we stand for can make a better world, and we deeply know that this is what keeps us going" (Tannenbaum and Davis, 1969, p85).

These are also values which are confirmed by French (1969) who identified some basic assumptions underlying OD programmes of that period. Firstly, it is assumed that most individuals have drives toward personal growth and development, and desire and are capable of making a much higher level of contribution to the attainment of organization goals. Secondly, people in groups wish to be accepted and will interact cooperatively with at least one reference group. The work group plays an important
psychological role and group members are capable of assisting each other to optimize group effectiveness. Thirdly, several assumptions are made about people in organizational systems. The nature of organizations is such that it is characterized by interdependent workgroups, and their effect on each other. The culture of the organization has to be developed so that suppressed feelings which adversely affect problem solving, personal growth and job satisfaction, can be expressed. The level of interpersonal trust, support and cooperation must be high. Finally, the organization must be viewed as a system and any improved performance needs to be sustained by some appropriate change in the rest of the organization because what happens in one subsystem affects and influences other parts of the organization.

To summarize, the basic objectives of early OD programmes as identified in a statement by the National Training Laboratory (NTL) Institute on OD (NTL, 1968), aim to increase: the level of trust, the confrontation of problems, the openness of communications, the level of personal enthusiasm and satisfaction, the level of self and group responsibility and to find synergistic solutions. To a extent these "humanist" objectives have remained at the heart of "traditional OD", and in the aims of some OD figures.

Consider the review by Friedlander and Brown (1974) which examines, amongst others, the work of Beckhard (1969), Fordyce and Weil (1971), Burke and Hornstein (1972), and French and Bell (1973) on survey feedback, group development
and intergroup development. Consider also some more recent writings, for instance, Burke (1987), Sashkin and Burke (1987) Margulies and Raia (1990), and Fagenson and Burke (1990). Some common assumptions can be identified amongst all these figures which are congruent with the objectives stated by the NTL in 1968. They are all concerned with improving the human state: improving communication and sharing information, enhancing collaboration by confronting and working through differences among people who must work together, and encouraging participation in decision making.

As noted from the differences in the definitions examined earlier, other OD figures which were identified in the previous section, emphasize less the "humanistic" value of OD. However, in an examination of literature, it is discovered that not all writers on OD have accepted that there is a division of sorts within OD. It is worth summarizing some of these different views.

Krell (1981, 1982) proposes that a split has occurred between "traditional OD" and "mainline OD", traditional being based on a humanistic philosophy of management, while mainline focuses upon organizational change and organizational effectiveness leading to efficiency. Krell (1981, p315) suggests that humanistic values, though still professed, are not as easily discernable in the latter, and concludes that no longer are practitioners concerned with converting organizations to a "better" form of social system, but in the interest of making a living, are interested in
perpetuating the existing social system. He also argues that traditional OD is in decline because the humanist values it incorporates are no longer recognized by the vast majority of companies as fully realizing the need for organizational effectiveness. On the other hand, Alderfer (1981), casts doubts on Krell's analysis, arguing that it is not so much a traditional and mainline distinction, but an issue of commercial versus professional values. However similar sentiments to Krell's are expressed by Wardell (1989) who identifies the lack of humane concern and an undermining of organized labour, that is of the trade unions, as a general theme of recent OD practice. In particular, he questions Frame, Neilsen and Pate's (1989) account of an intervention in which many of the functions traditionally associated with unions are replaced by organization-run schemes. This, in his view, makes the individual worker more vulnerable. In the same article, he is also critical of some approaches to delegation and "high involvement" techniques, such as those described by Lawler (1986). He believes that "an insidious dimension to the paternalism within OD management" occurs in the "delegated" laying-off of workers, which only serves to pit worker against worker while coercing loyalty to top management (Wardell, 1989, p110).

To summarize, some key values and assumptions which underlie OD have been presented. On the other hand, it should be noted that in spite of the humanist values which are still very much in evidence in the writings of some major OD figures, other writers have maintained that these values
as encompassed in traditional OD, are in decline. On the other hand, in terms of the descriptions of the basic features of an OD intervention, there appears to be some degree of coherence. For instance, consider French (1969, pp 389-391), Burke (1981, pp215-217) Porras and Hoffer (1986, pp478-479), Shea and Berg (1987, pp315-316), Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman (1989, p555), Hodgetts (1991, p459) and Porras and Silvers (1991, p54). Although these publications span over twenty years, there appears to have been little change in what is considered, at least in literature, of the characteristics of OD interventions. In these articles, six characteristics are noted. First, OD involves the use of behavioural science theories. Second, there is an emphasis on both the solution of immediate problems and the development of an adaptive organization. Third, the need for this change should be identified and self-directed by the members who will be affected by it. Therefore there is a collaborative process in data collection, diagnosis, action planning and implementation. Fourth, the principles of action research are fundamental to the OD process. Fifth, the external change agent works with and helps develop an internal resource. Sixth, any change should be part of a system-wide effort. One part of an organization cannot be changed without changing some other part of the organization.

These are considered by the authors of the mentioned articles to be some of the key features of an OD intervention. All these features can be related to OD's historical association with action research, its interests in
developing organizations which are better tuned to the changing environment, loosely termed "systems management", and OD's interests in conflict management. These features will be discussed in greater detail with reference to specific OD theorist-practitioners and OD techniques, in the following chapter. Within the wide realm of literature covering OD, it will always be possible to find some authors who will disagree with these features as identified. An attempt will be made to note and to discuss any disagreement and any specific criticism which has been made in reference to a particular feature of OD.
2.1 The process of intervention

The case for action research as a powerful strategy to advance both science and practice has been strongly put by Whyte (1989), Whyte, Greenwood and Lazes (1989), Argyris and Schon (1989), and Shani and Basuray (1988). The popularity of this approach at the practical level, remains undiminished as exemplified by the many accounts of the application of action research principles. For examples which illustrate the use of action research principles in strategies employed by large companies consider the recent projects described by Pace and Argona (1989), Costanza (1989), Santos (1989), and Walton and Gaffney (1989). For a step-by-step guide to using action research principles see Bennett and Oliver (1988). They take over an entire issue of the Leadership and Organization Development Journal, describing the relative merits of action research as well as providing a workbook which helps the user put into practice the principles of action research, to initially select data collection methods and then to develop a plan of action.

The use of action research can be seen as an attempt to understand and explain the social world from the point of view of the actors, with the aim of taking action. The premise is that in dealing with complex organizational phenomena, it is impossible to reproduce under laboratory
conditions, the multitude of interdependent factors which comprise the organizational problem context. Social phenomena can only be researched not objectively, that is by transferring them into cause and effect, but by studying the subjective norms and values which give meaning to action and determine behaviour. Therefore, Rapoport (1970) argues, the consultant has to adopt the role of a participant. This will provide him with a learning opportunity that contributes to both the practical concerns of people in the problem situation and to the improvement in the functioning of the organization, to the practice of consulting and to the body of relevant knowledge. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on collaboration which serves to develop the "self-help competencies" of people so that they can tackle the recurring problems which they face. In this manner, the action research approach can be considered future oriented. Susman (1981) also states that the action research approach encourages participation and seeks out the common values which underlies the different interests, and encourages a greater commitment to solving jointly defined problems.

That action research is a primary process used in most OD programmes has been notably argued by French (1969), and also in many of his later publications for example French and Bell (1984), and by Prohman, Sashkin and Kavanagh (1976). It is now considered by many, such as Burke (1981, p193), Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman (1989, p555) and Hodgetts (1991, p459) as one of the chief characteristics of OD. That this attribute is still very much in evidence can be seen
from recent accounts of the application of action research principles in the design and implementation of organization development interventions. For instance, McKenna and Yeider (1991) describe the application of the action research model to the design and implementation of a developmental programme for managers in an organization which was undergoing rapid environmental change; Lawrie (1989) discusses the causes of failure and success in an intervention which uses action learning principles in the involvement of two top management groups; Santalainen and Hunt (1988) describe a results-oriented, action research OD change effort by the largest banking group in Finland; and Mirabile (1988) uses action research to design a career development programme with the senior managers of a large insurance company. All these reports suggest some common characteristics. It can be said of action research that it involves not a preplanned, prescribed, package, but aims to develop specific actions as a result of specific research to solve specific problems. There is an emphasis on diagnosis and on the development of new behavioural science knowledge. Within the OD context, action research is very much associated with Lewin's (1951) three notions of unfreezing, changing and refreezing and Lippitt, Watson and Westley's (1958) seven stage process: scouting, entry, diagnosis, planning, action, stabilization and evaluation, and termination.

The first step is to identify if intervention is actually required. If it is, the problem is only identified after entry into the organization. The initial stages of
action research comprise of data collection, data feedback and diagnosis (Frohman et al, 1976). These stages are considered integral to the success of any future action. Information is collected on organizational variables and processes, and the data returned to the client system for discussion and diagnosis. Schein (1969; 1980) specifically suggests that data should be gathered on the organizational relationships and the perceptions of organizational members on the processes which affect the overall organizational effectiveness. The aim is to have a greater understanding of the problem and the problem situation. Brown (1983a; 1983b) also suggests that past history and on-going interactions should be assessed in order to determine the relevant problem areas and to gather data, and Filley (1975) for the early stages of his "Integrative Decision Making", proposes that initially a review and adjustment of relational conditions, perceptions and attitudes is necessary, that is, to make an assessment of "what is going on", followed by problem definition, that is a definition of "what is needed".

Planning and implementation are generally considered the intermediary stages of action research. They involve the development of specific action plans and their implementation. The action plan must identify who does what, when and should incorporate a devise for continual monitoring. The content of the implementation is wide in range. The possible action to take will depend on the situation and the nature of the problems diagnosed. Generally in a search for alternative solutions, as many solutions as
possible are initially generated without evaluation. Many of the models developed by OD theorist-practitioners have specific "search" and "consensus achieving" stages, for example, incorporated in Schein's process consultation framework is a model for group problem solving (Schein, 1969, pp48-57). Specifically, stages 4 and 5, generate alternatives, and then focus on a desired future which helps to bring about a state of consensus. These features, which will be examined in detail in section 2.3, are also apparent in Filley's (1975, pp108-125) "intergrative decision making" process, and Van de Ven's (1982) "group decision making".

The final stage of action research is evaluation. It is a research phase which determines the effects and effectiveness of the action taken, and leads to further efforts or to termination. Frohman et al (1976, p33) states that for effective planned change, an intervention method must include this phase. Some theorist-practitioners emphasize the humanist element, for example, for Schein (1969; 1980) evaluation is an opportunity to measure the shift in concern for humans, while for others, evaluation remains in rather more general terms. For instance, Filley (1975) suggests that evaluation should assess the level of satisfaction, as experienced by the various parties involved, over the level of consensus in the intervention. If a satisfactory consensus has not been reached then the process of problem definition, search and consensus is re-iterated, and perceptions and attitudes should be accordingly reviewed and adjusted.

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Implicit in the evaluation process itself, is the view that planned change involves a learning activity. There is an emphasis on learning from applied research. Firstly, it is assumed that learning from taking action is the only way to deepen the understanding of a complex problem situation. Secondly, the consultant improves on his skills through taking action, and learns more about "how to manage change". And thirdly, the intervention process is considered an on-going activity in an evolving and complex environment. In such a context, problems will recur and therefore, the most important skill for the client system to possess is the ability to diagnose and work on its own problems.

Accordingly, many of the theorist-practitioners in OD, such as French (1969), Schein (1969), Frohman et al (1976) and Burke (1987), emphasize that in any OD intervention, there is a focus on "process-development". They perceive the role of the OD consultant as that of process helper and also trainer. He teaches the skills and processes necessary to deal with the problems in the organization. There is an emphasis on teaching the organization to problem-solve for itself, to impart the skills of "self-help" (see for example, Schein 1969, p6; Filley, 1975, p135). Additionally, the importance of establishing a collaborative relationship early on in the intervention process is stressed. The need for collaborative work, not expert advice, is clearly spelt out by Schein in his definition of process consultation (Schein, 1969, p9) and in his statement of the underlying assumptions and description of the relationship between consultant and
client. To paraphrase, collaboration will enhance the chances of a more accurate diagnosis, improve on the opportunities for the client system to learn "on-the-job" and hopefully increase the target's feelings of ownership for the change (Schein, 1969, pp5-8).

Because it appears from an examination of literature that many theorist-practitioners in OD have argued that action research is a primary process used in most OD programmes, within Chapters Four to Seven, sections will be devoted to examining how much of this is actually put into practice by the OD consultants in four organizations. It will also be possible to examine how closely the OD process, as illustrated by the practice of these consultants, resemble the descriptions which can be commonly found in literature.

Many of the descriptions or models of the OD process found in literature are based on the action research process. As such their authors incorporate the characteristics of action research into their models or descriptions of the OD process and these models often bear a close resemblance to one another. Apart from the action research characteristics described earlier, these models often show the change process as being sequential and cyclical. Usually seven to nine stages are described. Commonly these are labelled data gathering, diagnosis, planning, action implementation and evaluation. Progress takes place sequentially, although it is expected that a number of stages will be re-iterated. The overall process is perceived as cyclical. These models are
discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight, when comparisons can be drawn between the actual OD practice as illustrated by the accounts provided by OD consultants and the descriptions or models of the organization development process found in literature. The individual features of particular models will then be pointed out. Appendix Two contains a collection of the diagrams or models which relate to the organization development process. Some are adaptations of original diagrams while others are facsimilies.

2.2 Systems management aspects in OD literature

An examination of organization development literature reveals that in many publications there is acknowledgement of systems theory and principles, and widespread usage of systems terminology. However, Lundberg (1980) suggests that contemporary OD texts tend to insert only a rudimentary discussion of systems theory, leaving it unrelated to any models of change or development. He also states that seldom is systems theory used beyond its analogic potential, and he specifically draws attention to the work of Huse (1975) and French and Bell (1973) to illustrate his criticism. Similarly, Eoyang (1980) declares that many of these references to systems concepts and the use of systems terminology are metaphorical or illusionary rather than clear statements of logical propositions. As evidence, Eoyang (1980, p224) refers to publications by Drucker (1967) and Dale (1972) to support his claims that OD often fails to identify the appropriate system for intervention and
intervenes "microscopically", that is with little heed to the wider, more relevant dimensions of the organizational system.

However, a detailed examination of more recent literature than those cited by Lundberg (1980) and Eoyang (1980), reveals many OD publications which contradict their accusations. Certainly, the later edition of the French and Bell text (1984) is more specific in its reference to systems concepts than the 1973 edition which was cited by Lundberg (1980): the specific subsystems of an organization which can be influenced by OD efforts are identified (p57), systems principles are applied to diagnosis (p59) and the effects of the environment on the organization discussed in detail (p60). Many other texts also provide a systems perspective to organization development. These appear to be of three types. Firstly, there are publications which discuss the implications of a systems perspective for OD, for example Burke (1980), Evered (1980), Connolly and Pondy (1980), Beer (1980), Beer and Huse (1972). Then secondly, there are texts which explicitly argue that one of the objectives of OD is to improve on an organization's ability to survive, to use Ackoff's (1981) terms, in "a Systems Age", for example Porras and Silvers (1991), Beer and Walton (1987), Sashkin and Burke (1987). Finally, a review of OD literature shows that many theorist-practitioners possess a high awareness of systems principles as exhibited by their use of particular techniques in the interventions which they describe, such as Filley (1975), Kotter (1978), Berrien (1976), Starbuck (1976), Brown (1980), Schein (1980), Kaplan (1982).
According to Ackoff (1981) we are not faced with separable problems but inter-related systems. A system is a set of elements connected together to form a whole, which exhibits the properties of the whole and not its parts. The basic concept suggests: problems cannot be reduced, a cause is not sufficient for the effect, the surrounding conditions must be included and problems must be examined teleologically. Furthermore, highly complex problems will pose particular difficulties. Firstly, any analysis can only be partial. Secondly, any action implemented needs evaluation and corrective feedback to counter the effects of a turbulent environment. Also, a higher level of control is required to equal the turbulence. For a more detailed discussion of these implications see Ackoff (1981, pp19-23), and for a more comprehensive description of the assumptions, concepts and principles behind systems theory, some useful systems texts to consult include Mason and Mitroff (1981), Ackoff (1981; 1983), Beer (1967; 1979) and Checkland (1981).

The implications of a systems perspective on organizational functioning appear to be well understood by many OD theorist-practitioners and are described for example by Burke (1980, p212) who identifies five dimensions of systems theory which help him understand the practice of OD more thoroughly: the concept of openness, the need for a continual diagnosis and learning, a focus on relationships and interconnections that is, to consider an event as a series and not a singular outcome or specific point, a need to counter entropy, and to help integrate the various parts
of an organization. It is also stressed by Evered (1980) that there is the need to facilitate a definition of the situation as experienced by each organizational member because this can best reflect the complexity of the organization. He also believes that there are immense costs to adopting a rational approach, that is, causal thinking to organizational problem solving and instead, he emphasizes the multi- and mutual-causality process. Other OD figures who have described the implications of working with complex systems include Connolly and Pondy (1980, p20) and Beer and Huse (1972). The latter (ibid., pp83-91) outlines a systems model of an organization and the basic characteristics "of the complex interactive nature of systems variables" (ibid., p83) which must be understood, while the former (Connolly and Pondy, 1980, p22) describes the interconnected nature of intervening at different levels in order to influence outcomes at a desired particular level.

It is also argued that one of the aims of OD is to improve on an organization's flexibility and its learning capabilities, both of which contribute to its ability to survive in an uncertain and changing environment. For example, Porras and Silvers (1991, p54), and Beer and Walton (1987, p340) in their definitions of OD, explicitly state this aim. Adaptive organizations are created by a combination of means. It involves the bringing together of multi-disciplinary teams, and the devolution of authority so that those directly involved in the change are in control. As Schon (1983) observes, there is an emphasis on participation
which in turn aids the process of self-corrective learning. The latter is an example of the use of the negative feedback which Lundberg (1980) considers essential to any change and development in organizations. In addition, the latter encourages the use of positive feedback. Beer and Walton (1987, p351) also state that the development of flexibility with regard to roles, decision making and communication is an important component in the design of innovative organizations.

The implications of systems complexity and the need to adapt to a changing environment will now be considered in greater detail. The work of OD theorist-practitioners is discussed with reference to how the particular systems-related difficulties are tackled as part of the intervention process and also in the design of "coping" organizations.

In ill-defined situations, it has been observed by some OD theorist-practitioners that the point of entry itself becomes a problem. Several observations emerged from a series of empirical investigations by Rubin et al (1974) into large complex organizations with ill-defined structures. The organizations examined were mainly large public health care systems. They noticed firstly, that the task of gaining entry is more difficult in organizations which lacked well-defined lines of authority. To "start at the top" became an impossibility. Secondly, the client was often not aware of his needs. In an ambiguous situation, he may not know if there is anything "wrong", and if there is, he did not know
where the cause lay, nor how to improve the situation nor how to obtain the extra resources to do this. Rubin found that "role-innovation", a term coined by Schein (1971), was necessary in such a situation in order to initiate the contact, to communicate with the client and to help him identify his needs, before any further work could take place. Similarly, Kaplan (1982) in an empirical study into a "loosely organized system" notes the difficulties of entry. He uses Brown's (1980) idea of "convening" a group of representatives from the system concerned. For example, while a bureaucratic organization will have a naturally convened group consisting of the departmental heads and the general manager, a loosely organized system will lack such a group. Kaplan found that as a prerequisite to entry and to further progress, it was necessary to bring together a group which was capable of galvanizing support for the intervention and capable of wielding effective control within the organization.

Once entry has been gained, during data gathering and diagnosis, further difficulties are experienced. One of the first tasks facing the process consultant as described by Schein (1980, p188) is to ensure that the participants become aware of the sources of complexity in an organizational system: the uncertain boundaries, the multiple influences and the rapid changes in the environment. To achieve this, he recommends the use of lecture programs and awareness and training sessions. A consequence of the uncertainty and complexity is that an initial diagnosis tends to be
incomplete and distorted. With this in mind, Brown (1983a, 1983b) adopts a teleological perspective, advising that a greater understanding of the situation can only be achieved as a consequence of action and from an examination of the effect and not the presumed cause. He also criticizes the use of reductionist thought by social scientists, condemning the "notoriously unsuccessful application of 'natural' logic to complex social phenomena" (Brown, 1983a). The task of data collection cannot be reduced to collecting from just one system. To understand under-organized systems, information must be collected from all relevant systems and subsystems. Therefore, also according to Brown, an important part of the consultant's job is to expand the boundaries of the problem to include all the relevant systems.

The use of systems concepts in diagnosis is also reflected in Kotter's (1978) version of "organizational dynamics". This is an example of the use of modelling to depict the organization in systems terms as a tool for diagnosis. Development as defined by Kotter (1978, p11) "involves diagnosing the state of the important processes. This state can only be determined by tracing the flow of matter or energy and information into, through, and out of an organization". Kotter's model views the organization as a complex adaptive system, made up of seven elements: (1) a cultural "process" element comprising of the key organizational processes: informational gathering, communication, decision making, matter/energy transporting and matter/energy conversion; and six "structural" elements, that
is (2) the external environment, (3) the employees and other tangible assets, (4) the formal organizational arrangement, (5) the internal social system, (6) the organization's technology and (7) the dominant coalition. Relevant questions are asked to determine the present state of each element and to highlight the interaction between these elements. The model helps both managers and consultants diagnose an organization's level of effectiveness by examining the current efficiency and effectiveness of information-flow and matter/energy processes, the relationships among the six structural elements and the level of adaptability in the structural elements. A highly effective organization is one in which the key processes are in an efficient and effective state, while the six structural elements are coaligned and are in highly adaptive states.

Within OD, it appears that many theorist-practitioners are also aware of the simultaneous needs of designing interventions which are viable in complex organizational settings, and at the same time, developing the capability of the organizations to survive in a turbulent environment. Often a combination of different cybernetic concepts are employed, for instance, the use of feedback loops and the manipulation of points which exert maximum control and leverage. Because situations change, and the organization must learn to guide itself, they also insist on developing multi-disciplinary skills and place a premium on participation and learning.
Because organizations are complex, open, adaptive systems in a shifting environment, feedback is required firstly, to guide the system and its components and secondly, to help the system achieve more of its goals and to better adjust itself to the environment. There is positive and negative feedback. The former is a system's innate ability to reinforce existing patterns of activity. Lundberg (1980) suggests that in planning change it is possible to make use of this morphogenetic characteristic to amplify and cascade a desired feature. He argues that the use of positive feedback is associated with development, that is to move into unanticipated new environments or states, or to better design negative feedback. How OD becomes part of an organization's culture may be understood this way. To paraphrase his example, in an admittedly simplified manner, a consultant is employed, he trains staff, and multiple projects are initiated. These members become legitimized as members, and facilitate more projects, change management becomes part of all training, and change flourishes and OD eventually becomes a feature of the firm's culture (Lundberg, 1980, p252-253). Negative feedback, corrective in nature and countering deviation, is also considered by Lundberg. He analyses five OD activities in terms of their incorporation of negative feedback loops: the confrontation meeting, the family group diagnostic meeting, the job expectation technique, the managerial grid and open systems planning, and concludes that these interventions all establish negative feedback loops. The feedback of information and re-iteration of the process, that is further self diagnosis, the generation of revised
issues, followed by action planning and so on, are key features of these organization development activities (Lundberg, 1980, p260-262).

The use of feedback to effectively cope with complexity, is also apparent in the work of Brown (1983a) and Filley (1975). The underlying concept in Brown's flowchart for conflict management is double-loop learning (Brown, 1983a, p294). Negative feedback loops are present at each stage in his analysis of the complex interfaces. Such loops denote a constant monitoring before and after implementation which take into account any changes in the situation after the analysis. At the terminal stage there is a loop signifying feedback to the analysis phase, representing the possibility of a complete re-direction of the intervention. In this way, planned change becomes an on-going process. Brown firmly believes that continuous diagnosis is required to keep up with the rapid change at complex interfaces in the environment. Take another example, Filley's "integrative decision-making" model (Filley, 1975, p94), which also possesses a corrective loop for the review and adjustment of perceptions. When faced with a contextual disturbance which may in turn cause a change in perceptions, a new consensus has to be re-negotiated.

However, several difficulties which can arise in the use of double loop feedback have been noted in literature. Although this form of feedback can be effectively employed by a system faced with a shifting environment, Ashforth (1991,
points out that the "embeddedness" of the system, people and events within other systems, that is the deep-rooted assumptions and mutually reinforcing behaviours and emotions, will prevent any form of correction and result in "closed loops". Similarly, Argyris and Schon (1978) proposed that denial, habit, and defensive action such as scapegoating and projection, often inhibit double-loop learning. Therefore, the normal process based on the rationale of generating more information and feeding it back to members for discussion, from which corrective action can be identified, becomes ineffective because the rational arguments themselves are not accepted. Morgan (1986) instead suggests that double-loop learning can only be promoted in conjunction with interventions that encourage openness and reflection, the exploration of different viewpoints and inconsistencies, participation and constructive conflict, and the probing of values and assumptions.

This concern with reducing or strengthening the reinforcing pattern of behaviours, is also apparent in the work of L.D. Brown. He emphasizes the cybernetic effect and self-reinforcing quality of conflict dynamics. For example, he finds that the problem of too much or too little conflict can be reinforced by the interactions which occur between converging interfaces, such as between departments or at organizational boundaries (Brown, 1983a, p281). Internal disputes can be escalated unintentionally by the involvement of biased parties. To overcome this problem, he suggests that the target group participate in an analysis of, firstly, the
history of the interface situation, and secondly, the effect of historical and current contextual forces. This provides the consultant with clues about the impact which different strategies would have in that particular organizational context and how to best avoid any undesired reinforcement. It also helps to identify the effective points of leverage which are not so easily identified by persons outside the organizational system. In particular, he specifically discusses several strategies for severing the "vicious circle" of escalating conflict. These include changing the parties' interactions by altering perceptions, improving communications and changing behaviour. In addition, it may be necessary to change the interface itself. Third party negotiators can be brought in, social units changed by rotating the members, and the organizational context itself amended, for instance, by the redesign of the organizational structure and the reward system.

Although the use of negative and positive feedback is one way for coping with the complex nature of the organization and with the shifting environment, there are other qualities too which a consultant will seek to develop if his aim is to improve the organization's ability to cope with change itself. This is perhaps most clear in Schein's model of a 5 step "adaptive coping cycle" which enables the organization to achieve an adaptive dynamic equilibrium (Schein, 1980, p233). This prepares an organization for successfully coping with change and uncertainty by developing four attributes: (1) the ability to take in and communicate
information reliably and validly; (2) the internal flexibility and creativity; (3) increasing integration and commitment; and (4) developing an organizational ability to continuously re-design itself in a changing environment. Schein believes that there are possible contributions which OD techniques can make, as a means of enhancing the organization's ability to perform each step of this coping cycle more effectively. For example, techniques based on sensitivity training, encounter groups and confrontation meetings all help to break down barriers between individuals and groups, while other OD activities such as brainstorming sessions, nominal processes, delphi groups and group problem solving techniques are all geared towards improving the quality of the "solutions" generated and improving the overall problem solving capabilities of the organization.

Clark and Krone (1972) and Jayaram (1976) can also be considered pioneers in developing the concept of "coping" organizations. Their "open systems planning" (O.S.P.), as the term suggests, focuses on the organization-environment interface. Clark and Krone (1972, p284) speak of effective OD as the "development of attitudes and processes which allow integration proactively with its (the organization's) environment." Sets of problems are identified at the individual level: individual-group, individual-world, individual-turbulence. The individual must communicate with his "group". His needs and his views must be made aware to the groups which he has dealings with. This may be accomplished through management development laboratories,
group team meetings and the use of Blake and Mouton Grids. The individual must understand the world he is a part of: this implies understanding the different views, values and appreciative systems which abound. The individual must cope with turbulence in his environment. The individual suffers from disorientation when he is unable to predict his own or another's action. To cope with this turbulence, Clark and Krone suggest the development of new appreciative systems which allow a rapid adaptation of the members and the organization to the changing environment. Their use of the term "appreciative system" appears to be in accordance with Vickers's. Vickers (1973, p122) defines an appreciative system as "the interconnected set of largely tacit standards of judgement by which we both order and value our experience". The environment is so complex it becomes impossible to regulate because it changes faster than plans can be developed or action taken. This is caused by a slowness, not so much in exploding technology, but in the limitations of human communication which prevent the generation of sufficient agreement over the picture of the situation. Effective communication means making the individual more appreciative: "vertically" to appreciate the constraints of the environment, and "horizontally" to appreciate the needs of product development, technology and integration.

Jayaram (1976) aims to provide with O.S.P., a means firstly, to understand the internal and external environment, and secondly, for achieving a dynamic equilibrium. There are five steps to O.S.P.. Firstly, there is the creation of the
present scenario. Data is collected to reflect: (1) a picture of the expectations of, and interactions with the environment; and (2) a picture of the system: its identity, the expectations of its members and the system, and the interaction between the two; and (3) the present transactions between the environment and the system. Secondly, realistic future scenarios are created: what would the future be like if the system continued in its present state. Thirdly, there is the creation of the idealistic future scenarios (I.F.S.): what alternative futures are possible taking into consideration the possible changes which can be made to the system. The I.F.S. are created by separate groups. These groups then are brought back together to share their vision of an I.F.S.. The fourth step involves asking what would be achieved by an implementation of each I.F.S., and how can this implementation be actualised, that is, what necessary changes must be made. It is necessary at this step to identify the constraints of taking action: areas of broad concurrence, areas of uncertainty and areas of intense disagreement. The final step is temporal planning. This involves concrete planning, further research and the uncovering of the causes of disagreements. Plans are made for the immediate future, beginning the following day, for six months and for the long term (two years). These plans are constantly revised with a re-iteration of the five steps. The on-going process of corrective action can be seen in the establishment and use of negative feedback loops. Jayaram's O.S.P. can be summarized as goal or standard setting in face of conflicting expectations. It tests present and possible
actions against the desired goals. Information is collected and processed in such a manner as to keep an organization tuned to changes in the environment.

Finally, the possession by organizations of multi-disciplinary skills or to have them available, is increasingly recognized by most OD figures, as important attributes to develop in client or target systems. Many OD interventions have a techno-structural flavour (Friedlander and Brown, 1974), and descriptions of job-rotation, job-enlargement and multi-skills training are not uncommon (French and Bell, 1984; Cross, 1989). Members are provided with an alternative perspective to one another's jobs, and their flexibility is also increased by the multi-training they receive. It is recognized by most consultants that they do not possess the skills or knowledge to deal with several systems, nor will the consultant have all the relevant information. Instead, he promotes participation and attempts to also bring together people who possess the relevant skills. For example, Schein's (1969) process consultant does not give expert advice. Instead he promotes collaboration with all the relevant systems, bringing together diverse areas of expertise because complex problems are multi-faceted, requiring interdisciplinary approaches. Kaplan (1982) found that this ability of "reticular competence", that is the ability of the consultant to advise on how to tap into a network of experts and where to obtain various skills, was a crucial element in the successful practice of process consultation.
In summary, there appears to be attempts in OD to recognize the implications of a systems age. There is clearly an awareness of the problems of entry into complex ill-defined organizations and of the need to help a client define the situation with which he is faced. Data is collected which reflects the complexity of the organization as a system, and the complexity of the environment surrounding it. The theorist-practitioners examined have accepted the teleological implications for diagnosis and are critical of a reductionist approach. Furthermore, their concept of planning, aims to design interventions and organizations so that they remain viable in a shifting environment. There is a concern for the cybernetic effect and reinforcing qualities of conflict dynamics. Cybernetic concepts such as points of leverage and feedback loops are used. Importance appears to be attached to improving the organizational ability to adapt, and to increasing the level of multidisciplinary skills available to the organization.

2.3 Conflict management in OD literature

First of all, it should be made clear that while "different views" and "conflict" have the same roots, the former is considered beneficial, for instance in problem solving situations and in providing overall, a richer picture of the organization, and the latter is considered a negative aspect of organizational life because of its disruptive and costly effects. Because a discussion of conflict can span many disciplines, especially as many of the concepts
introduced in this section may have originated from disciplines "outside" of organization development, an attempt will be made to limit it to OD. Various explanations of conflict have been proposed by OD figures. For example, Schein (1969) views conflict as rooted in the complex nature of human systems. Each person has his or her own hierarchy of needs and motives which is determined by prior learning. This hierarchy evolves with each new experience and may differ substantially from one person to the next. Similarly, Filley (1975) explains that conflict arises from the "freedom", as in Boulding's (1956) use of the term, which each individual experiences. Freedom refers to the capacity of humans to plan accordingly to some picture of the future which they want. One person's picture can be in conflict with another's because each is fashioned by the individual's own value system. For Brown (1985), conflict is caused by the different values held by the different (sub)systems making up an organization, for example, the different departments, the different levels of a department or the different groupings within an organization. Conflict can take place whenever an interface occurs between different systems.

The common explanation for organizational conflict appears to be that it is caused by the many different value systems which exist within one system: the different views held by an individual, and the differences in what they perceive as being their own needs. There is a possibility for conflict to take place wherever a diverse range of individuals interact. It has been suggested by Filley (1975,
that particular circumstances can hold an even greater potential for conflict if certain antecedent conditions are fulfilled. These are identified as: ambiguity or lack of definition, weak jurisdiction, a dependence of one party on another, the existence of coalitions, and a differentiation of roles and objectives.

Writers in OD have identified several types of conflict. Walton distinguishes three. Conflict relating to (1) substantive issues: the differences in goals and means, competition and in-house fighting over scarce resources (Walton, 1969); (2) emotional issues: negative feelings between parties (Walton, 1969); and (3) instrumental and expressive stakes: the identity feelings of one person or group which can be substantially different to another's (Walton, 1972). Other writers, for example, Morris and Sashkin (1976) identify conflict based on: (1) breakdowns in communication; and (2) emotions and values, while Robbins (1974) suggests that conflict can arise from: (1) poor communication; (2) contradictory goals; and (3) clashing personalities.

These different types of conflict when taking place within an organizational context, usually fall into three broad categories: unintentional conflict, intentionally pursued conflict, or unrecognized conflict. Firstly, "unintentional conflict" or "perceived" conflict can take place, where one party does not understand another, and conflict occurs because of the limited or distorted
information or a faulty communication network. Secondly, certain conditions, as described previously, will allow individuals to "intentionally" pursue and protect their own interests which can lead to conflict. In Brown's words "conflict is incompatible behaviour between parties whose interests differ", where "interests refer to recognized and unrecognized stakes", and "incompatible behaviour refers to the actions by one party intended to oppose or frustrate the other party" (Brown, 1983a, p4). The parties involved in this form of conflict are often conscious of it, even though the actions taken may be overt or covert. Finally, it has been argued by some writers that conflict can occur which operates at an underground level, made possible by a differential in the power distribution among the various members (Brown, 1977; Tandon and Brown, 1981; Gricar and Brown, 1981). This form of conflict is often unrecognized because there is a high level of unawareness among the less powerful parties who are involved in the conflict.

It can be argued that OD has long been concerned with tackling the malfunctions of conflict as it exists within organizations. There are many examples of OD techniques which are geared to diffusing situations of conflict. For example, consider some of the documented studies of interventions dealing with situations of conflict which arise from: the allocation of scarce resources (Fisher and Ury, 1981; Scott, 1981), value based differences (Walton, 1969), and emotionally charged situations (Johnson, 1967; Johnson and Dustin, 1970). Many OD techniques can also be applied to
the common situations of conflict which may be encountered during the intervention process itself, such as during data gathering and diagnosis, planning or implementation.

Firstly, at the data gathering stage, based on the belief that part of the root of conflict lies in the different views and perceptions and the often contradictory values held by individuals, a step towards managing the conflict involves taking these differences into account and to make clear, even though the consultant may be engaged by one nominal client, that all views are equally important to him. Therefore, data is not gathered from just one source, but from all involved in the problem.

Secondly, there is a need to achieve some form of consensus from this multiplicity of views, to form a basis on which action can be planned. Consensus is achieved through visualizing a desired future, for example, as epitomised in Jayaram's (1976) open systems planning which was described in the previous section. Plans can then be made to achieve this future.

A characteristic of many OD interventions is the encouragement and development of different views at the planning stage. After defining the basic issues and needs, a search process is embarked upon. As many alternative solutions as possible are generated without evaluation. All opinions are sought. OD techniques such as nominal groups, delphi techniques, encounter groups, and brainstorming
sessions all help in increasing the level of participation from all members of the organization. Underlying these techniques is a belief in cooperation and in everyone being of equal value, an acceptance that the views of others are legitimate statements of their position, and a belief that differences of opinion are helpful.

After these solutions are generated, they are evaluated for example, using the criteria of quality and acceptability (Filley, 1978). "Quality" refers to the effectiveness of the solution in fulfilling the basic needs of the organization or in overcoming the fundamental issues of the problem. "Acceptability" refers to the willingness of the target to implement the decision and their concern as to its fairness. Finally, there is implementation of the actions which have been decided. An occurrence of conflict is not uncommon at the implementation stage because the actions taken may involve the introduction of new personnel into new or existing structures and teams.

Some of these issues will now be discussed in greater detail: the use of techniques which encourage participation in diagnosis and planning such as the group problem solving techniques, ways for making attitudes and perceptions explicit such as "reality testing", methods to ensure the representation of views throughout the organization for instance the confrontation meeting, and the use of team-building in the introduction of new personnel. Finally, it is pointed out that in situations of power, team building
and consciousness raising may be necessary amongst the less powerful.

The use of the nominal and Delphi processes in group problem solving is described, for instance, by Delbecq (1967) and Van de Ven (1982). The nominal group process is the silent generation of ideas in writing. These ideas are summarized on a flip chart, discussed, evaluated and silently voted for priorities. The Delphi process is similar except it involves physically dispersed groups: the user body, comprising of the individuals who expect some results from the exercise; the design and monitor team; and the respondent group which is chosen to answer the questionnaire. A process, known as the RAND process, is then utilized to determine and develop a range of possible alternatives, to explore and expose the underlying assumptions and to seek out information which may generate a consensus. The group process model used by Delbecq and Van de Ven for problem identification and programme planning has five steps. Summarily, the nominal group process is used first to help focus attention on client needs and to vote on the top five priorities in "problem exploration". Experts are then brought in to develop solutions in "knowledge exploration". The solutions are focused on priorities. Resource controllers and key administrators are encouraged to express their views and any protests they have in the third step. The programme is then developed, followed by implementation and evaluation by client and staff. The group problem solving methods provide the consultant with a structured means to involve the various
stakeholders and to reach an agreement over the necessary action to take. They also ensure that as many views as possible are generated by using nominal and Delphi groups.

Schein (1980; 1969) also describes group problem solving sessions. He similarly elucidates all the different views by encouraging participation. Where there is disagreement over the possible action to take, "group problem solving" techniques are advised. A model developed by Wallen is elaborated upon (Schein, 1969, p47). This model proposes that alternative ideas are produced without evaluation. Premature evaluation not only threatens a given idea but the person who proposed it. When this stage is exhausted, all ideas are evaluated and considered against various criteria developed from personal experience, expert opinion, surveys and planned tests or research. This testing enables a consensus to be achieved out of disagreement. It also increases the support for, and commitment to the best possible solution.

Another intervention which has also been used to great effect at the diagnosis and planning stage is the "confrontation meeting" as epitomised in Beckhard's (1967) classic account. A confrontation meeting is a system-wide intervention designed for the entire management of an organization to assess their own organization's health. The meeting involves a series of steps: climate setting by the top manager, sub-groups composed of managers from different functional areas then meet to list obstacles that exist, as
well as the desired conditions, reporters from each sub-group then report to the entire meeting, and this information is circulated. Following this, the functional sub-groups will identify issues from the overall list which concern their area, order these by priority from the organization's point of view, and design action steps to communicate the results of the confrontation meeting to their subordinates. Top management then meets to plan a follow-up meeting and later, there is a group progress review session. The confrontation meeting contributes to tackling conflict by providing a step-by-step approach which enables different individuals or groups to express their differences of opinion in a constructive manner. It ensures that many different views are collected, and importantly provides a method through which these views can be represented to a wider audience, including top management. The confrontation meeting can also be seen to represent a modification of information flow in that it sets up a series of sessions which enhances the interdepartmental flow of communication.

Quite apart from encouraging the expression of different opinions and ensuring that these are noticed, it has also been suggested that the basis for these differences in attitudes must be uncovered and made explicit if effective problem solving can take place. Filley (1975) devised a form of "reality-testing" which determines the extent to which individuals or groups hold differences in perceptions. It focuses on the origins, the reasons and the actions which cause certain feelings. It appears that reality-testing can
be most effective when used at the exploratory stage, prior to diagnosis because the test "clears up the air, attitudes are uncovered which prevent problem solving, a better climate is created for problem definition", and ensures that the information gathered is more reliable (Filley, 1975). Pruitt (1983) also points out that using Filley's reality-testing will help to increase the choice of strategies which are acceptable for negotiation because it helps the opposing parties recognize that it is feasible to work together to advance their mutual interests. Similarly, Kindler (1983) supports its use in helping managers to recognize that out of habit, they often adopt one particular style of problem solving or management which precludes all other perceptions, and that this is often the cause of opposition.

After some level of agreement has been reached over what action to take, implementation occurs which may involve introducing new organizational processes and structures. Some OD techniques which can be particularly useful at this stage are team and intergroup building programmes. These programmes are helpful when new teams are set up. The aim of team building is to create an open participatory climate where team effort is emphasized. As a result there is often improved communication and problem solving, and according to Kimberly and Neilsen (1975), team building will also favourably affect the attitudes and perceptions of the members of the team. Other studies which report on the positive impact of team building include Porras and Berg (1978a) who found that 45 percent of the thirty-five examples
of team building which they examined, showed substantial positive change, and Nicholas (1982) who reviewed four team building studies and found that there was a fifty percent overall impact on the workforce. A variation on team building has also been described by Huse (1975) which seems particularly appropriate in helping to overcome the problems encountered during the implementation stage. He calls it, "job expectation technique", and it is used to develop a new team, to reduce role conflict and ambiguity in an established team, and to bring a new member into a team quickly. Each member lists their perceived job duties and responsibilities, while the other members comment until an agreed job definition is reached and the whole team develops an understanding and agreement of each member's perceived and discretionary role space. This process will open the channels of information about the jobs and inform the focal person of how other members believe he should and should not behave. Norms or standards for performance can then be very quickly established.

Finally, it has been suggested by Brown (1976; 1977) that where there is a discrepancy of power or to a larger extent when a subordinate party is totally powerless, a straightforward appeal for participation will not bring out the different views held by the different stakeholders, nor ensure their collaboration. To involve all parties in the problem definition poses a particular difficulty when the parties involved are not of equal power and denomination. In underbounded systems, that is "when groups are not already
embedded in a clearly defined supersystem that establishes interdependence and a structure of legitimate power relations" (Brown, 1977 p213), the power disparities which are a feature of the organization, will inhibit cooperation. The powerless are pressured towards apathy and passivity, or are forced to adopt "hard power" confrontation tactics which escalate into open conflict. A correct atmosphere for problem solving must be created if all stakeholders are to participate. This is achieved through workshops held before the actual defining of the problem, in order to build up the interpersonal strength of the powerless and to tackle the effect of social and occupational subordination. In an intervention conducted in India, problem solving by poor farmers involved first challenging the power base. A first step was consciousness raising to create an awareness of the situation. This was followed by a development of information gathering and processing skills and a building up of group cohesiveness (Tandon and Brown, 1981).

Brown (1980) also suggests that in an attempt to control conflict, four possible strategies can be employed to reframe the perspectives of the individuals or the parties involved: issues are reconceptualized, party interests are reformulated, barriers reduced and the quality and quantity of communication improved. However, he also believes that processual change alone is inadequate to either promote or reduce conflict effectively. Structural strategies are required to re-align the forces underlying conflict: boundaries are redefined, new interfaces created and the
authority structure revised. This use of structural strategies to control conflict by Brown can also be seen as an attempt by at least one OD theorist-practitioner to deal with the need to redress the inequalities which may exist in particular situations. There are common situations where considerable differentials in power exist. This is recognized as an area of concern for OD, however it was not possible to pursue this theme empirically as the consultants interviewed were reluctant to discuss in much detail this topic. The issue of power and some of the possible strategies to deal with power-filled situations, as described in literature, will instead be discussed in Appendix One.

To summarize, it appears that an inherent property of OD is its ability to tackle conflict. Even though this discussion is limited to an examination of OD related literature, it was possible to find various explanations for conflict provided by the many OD figures. Conflict is recognized in OD to be an integral part of organizational life. Certain OD techniques or "workshops" can be used as part of an overall intervention, to tackle specific situations of perceived conflict, that is conflict occurring through misunderstandings or poor communication, and value based conflict. In data collection and planning, some OD techniques have been used to encourage participation and to help ensure that the views of stakeholders are represented. During implementation, some typical OD techniques help in the establishment of new teams and the setting up of new structures. However, it is also pointed out that the
successful management of conflict may involve more than just processual change, that is changing the perceptions of the participants engaged in conflict. In some cases structural changes are necessary.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH

3.1 Research aims

Because it has not been uncommon to view OD as "ill-defined" (Kahn, 1974), "amorphous" (Eoyang, 1980) and "still evolving" (Sashkin and Burke, 1987), it has been necessary to review what was, and what is, the current picture of OD in literature. Chapter One therefore examined a number of "classic" and current definitions of OD, the values and assumptions which are an undeniable aspect of OD, and also attempted to identify some of its common characteristics.

In addition to the definitions and assumptions about OD, three other statements were also made, and these were explored in greater detail in Chapter Two. Firstly, action research forms an important contribution to the theory of intervention in OD. Secondly, OD is concerned with the implications of organizations as systems. Thirdly, conflict management is very much a part of OD. To an extent, it can be said that these statements have been justified by the literature reviewed in the previous chapter. However, the question which remains unanswered, is of course, how these three statements relate to the actual practice of OD. Firstly, because these are statements which have been derived solely from literature, they need to be justified with empirical data, and secondly, because much of the literature
examined is American in origin, these statements need to be examined from the perspective of the UK. Therefore, there are three areas on which data needs to be collected.

Firstly, how does the action research format relate to the actual process of OD as experienced by practising OD consultants in the UK? How does the intervention process in practice compare with that described in literature?

Secondly, in practice, how aware are consultants of the implications of organizations as systems, and how are the particular problems posed by a complex organization and evolving environment tackled within the context of an OD intervention?

Thirdly, how do the consultants deal with the particular problems of the organization as a human system: the differences in values, in perceptions and the inevitable occurrence of conflict.

In addition, the examination of literature suggested that there are differences of values amongst the main OD figures. "Traditional" OD brings about organizational effectiveness through changes in the human processes, such as the use of sensitivity training and T groups, in particular during the 1950s and the early 1960s. Although, by the 1970s, OD included some techno-structural interventions such as the socio-technical approaches, the rationale behind organization development work remained the same: greater organizational
effectiveness was brought about through a greater appreciation and a valuing of the human element. Now, some OD figures tend to emphasize less the "human welfare" element, concentrating instead on bringing about effectiveness, conceivably sometimes at the expense of the workforce. "Development" need not necessarily mean improving the human condition in order to achieve a higher level of organizational effectiveness. In addition to the areas already identified, this also needs to be examined in the context of organization development practice. How are these differences reflected in the actual activities carried out by the OD consultant?

3.2 Qualitative or quantitative?

Early in the development of the research methodology, a choice had to be made between a quantitative or a qualitative approach. Although a qualitative approach was eventually decided upon, this decision was not reached without taking into consideration the relative merits of a quantitative approach. For example, it was recognized that the use of a questionnaire-survey would enable firstly, a larger sample to be taken which would be more representative, and secondly, it would circumvent the practical problem of access in terms of distance, to consultants in the United Kingdom and abroad. Bearing in mind the American orientation of published material, the incorporation of empirical research based on questionnaires administered in both the United States and the United Kingdom, would strengthen the research. Although the
questionnaire-survey approach would be adequate in terms of providing a general overview of the background information on the consultant, for example education, past employment, length of service and other data of a quantifiable nature, quantitative data on its own could not fulfil the stated research aims. As noted by Mintzberg (1983), firstly, although larger samples can be employed in questionnaire-surveys, the quantitative data obtained is often superficial and of less superior quality to in-depth, qualitative data taken from a small sample, and secondly, he argues that quantitative methods are more suited to "the checking out of what we think we already know". To fulfil the particular aims of this research, requires the consultant being interviewed and the interviewer to discuss, to elaborate and to explore issues, as they arise during the course of the interview. It was felt that only through the use of a qualitative methodology, would the complexity and subtleties of the consultancy process be reflected, and the necessary information, generated in enough depth.

There are however at least one serious flaw and in addition, many practical problems to adopting a qualitative approach for the purposes of this research. The most serious flaw of the qualitative approach lies in the need to limit the sample size to a manageable number of interviewees. For the purposes of this research, a sample size of six was adopted and this arguably, can be conceived as not being truly representative. It can however also be pointed out that there are several redeeming features. Firstly, the
consultants and their employing organizations were randomly chosen, taking into consideration some of the constraints described in the next section. Secondly, the sample represents both external and internal consultants, and the employing organizations include a wide range of both private and public sector industry. Thirdly, the transcripts of the interviews were analysed in conjunction with many other published case-studies and private accounts of interventions conducted by either the consultants interviewed or their colleagues. The search for central themes was guided by both transcripts and other material. There is no reason therefore to suggest that any conclusions produced from this research would not hold good when tested on a larger sample.

Qualitative fieldwork is traditionally demanding, and more so for the lone fieldworker. The practical problems encountered during the course of this research included the actual processes of data collection and analysis. Data collection was itself a highly labour-intensive operation: extensive travelling was required and the transcription process was tedious and involved long hours. The analysis of the data posed altogether different problems. A vast volume of notes had been produced, and there was no clear method for analysis. Firstly, unlike quantitative data, where there are clear conventions which the researcher can use, the methods of analysis for qualitative data are not well-formulated (Miles, 1983). Secondly, there are few guidelines for protection against the self-delusion which can arise from the self-imposed value judgements on the part of the researcher.
in his search, let alone the presentation of unreliable conclusions which may be drawn from the inaccurate data
arising from the self-imposed value judgements on the part
of the source, that is the consultant who is being
interviewed, or inaccuracies caused by any other means.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to
describing in greater detail the methodology used in the
research, the difficulties encountered in the research
process, and the attempts, where possible, which were made
to address these difficulties.

3.3 Qualitative data collection

Three basic methods for data collection were used for
this research: observation, the use of documentation and
interviews. There are justifiable concerns with the
reliability and validity of such methods, namely the
value-laden perspectives of the researcher and of the source.
These concerns may to some extent be allayed by clearly
acknowledging them now. Firstly, the research process itself
poses a value-filled context which inevitably becomes an
influencing factor in the collection of data and in the
process of analysis. Because the search process has itself
been influenced by the aims of the research, these aims have
been clearly stated in section 3.1. Secondly, it is
acknowledged that there are possible motives behind the
participation of the consultants in the interviews. These
motives are discussed in section 3.5. Chapters Four to Seven
draw together both documentation and interview data under common headings. The process of "pattern matching" or looking for "revealing repetition" is conducted using both forms of texts (Geertz, 1973). The use of collective sources of data ensures that a greater degree of veracity can be established (Kets de Vries and Miller, 1987). Also, it is possible to note that many of the conclusions drawn from the data collected from the interviews which had been conducted with more than one consultant, remain consistent with one another.

Of the three sources of data collection employed in this research, observation was the least used. Whyte (1982) broadly defines observation as the purposeful and selective looking at, counting of, or listening to "objects" or "phenomena". Observation becomes essential, in fact it may be the only feasible method, when documents do not exist and when accurate and full information cannot be obtained through interviewing. Observation can also serve as a check on the accuracy of interview responses. However, for the purposes of this research, it was only used in the preparation stage, as a precursor to interviewing. All the potential interviewees were at the Network Conference '86 where they were "observed" as they participated in workshops, seminars and lecture programmes. With a list of the consultants attending the conference and the "background information" obtained through observation, the researcher was able to identify some potential interviewees. Fifteen consultants who were involved in OD activities were identified as potential interviewees.
Contact was established with twelve, with preliminary interviews conducted at the conference with ten of them. Nine agreed to participate in in-depth interviews at a later date.

Various types of printed material were used as another data source. These documented the experiences of the consultants who were interviewed and the experiences of other consultants who were not interviewed but nonetheless were involved in the employing organization. These were: firstly, published items available to the general public, such as journals, periodicals, books and newspapers, secondly, items only available on request from the consultants, such as publicity material, and thirdly, unpublished documents which were either not intended for public consultation or not yet publicly available such as written reports and working papers. There were four purposes to the use of the material: (1) to gain a deeper understanding of the research area, (2) to identify particular consultants for interviewing, (3) to develop the questions for the interview, and (4) to supplement and verify the data collected from the interviews. The use of documented accounts was important for the additional reason that it provided the means whereby the researcher was able to traverse both time and distance. In an interview, a consultant may only be able to provide a narrow account of a particular project which only relates to his or her own limited involvement at a particular point of a project. Documentation may provide a better sense of historical perspective and geographical space to an organization or to a project than an account provided by one
particular consultant whose experience may be limited by geographical location or length of employment.

The third method of data collection used in the research was interviewing. The interview method is far more versatile than either of the methods described and also possesses the advantages of allowing the researcher to seek out hidden meanings and where necessary, to ask a respondent to clarify a particular point. In an interview the researcher is able to check his own interpretation of the data against that of the respondents. There are two categories of interview: the standardized and non-standardized (Whyte, 1982). While the non-standardized method may be used to explore an area which is of particular interest to the researcher, no attempt is made to obtain the same classes of information from each respondent. The interviewer instead encourages the respondent to talk, treating each individual respondent as a "one-off".

On the other hand, the standardized interview is used when predominantly the same classes of information is to be collected from each respondent (Richardson et al, 1965). There is the standardized "schedule" interview in which the wording and the sequence of questions are determined in advance and the questions are asked in an inflexible manner to all the respondents in exactly the same way. There is also the standardized "non-schedule" interview where the wording and sequence of the questions are varied for maximum effectiveness. This flexibility makes this type of interview
more useful when sensitive areas are being broached. Questions can be rephrased or put aside temporarily whenever discomfort or resistance is encountered. For these reasons, it was decided that this type of interview would be more suited to the needs of the research. Using a standardized non-schedule interview, it was possible to continue with a topic longer than intended by rewording questions in an open-ended manner, thus the researcher was able to take advantage of some unexpected revelations which were made during the course of an interview. The non-schedule style of interviewing also enabled the researcher to continually encourage the respondent to discuss his experiences in a natural and free manner while ensuring that the interview remained relevant to the area of research.

3.4 The interview

Contact with potential respondents was initiated by the researcher at the OD Network Conference '86. The conference was considered an apt forum from which a sample of respondents could be taken because it brought together a broad spectrum of consultants. In particular, the sample aimed to represent both the independent, that is the "external" consultancy, and the non-independent, that is the "internal" OD function. The latter can be found within many of the larger organizations, while the former ranged from small consultancies of one or two members who offered particular OD specialities to the large consultancy in which OD activities are only one of several other categories on
offer which typically included market research, accountancy, and selection and recruitment. If it were possible, another aim was to ensure that the sample be reflective of the wide industrial arena in which OD consultants operated for example in the different sectors of engineering, manufacturing, petro/agro-chemicals, pharmaceuticals and telecommunications.

Although these aims may seem overly optimistic, for one lone and inexperienced fieldworker, it was expected from the outset that the choice and number of consultants to be interviewed would ultimately be determined by a number of extraneous factors which would not be under the control of the researcher. These included (1) the consultant's friendliness; (2) the consultant's willingness to be interviewed; (3) the availability of the consultant in terms of his or her own "away-jobs"; (4) the amount of travel involved in reaching an appropriate venue for an in-depth interview to take place; (5) the amount and availability of printed material on the employing organization.

It was possible with the help of a list of the consultants attending the conference and their job titles, to ascertain after a brief "chat", whether a particular consultant would be a suitable and interested candidate for an in-depth interview. Fifteen possible participants were identified in this manner early on at the conference. A preliminary interview was conducted with ten of these consultants during the course of the two day conference. The aim of this initial session was to obtain a quick profile of
a particular consultant; his or her experience of OD, their recent involvement in OD projects or related activities, and their areas of interest. It also provided a further opportunity for the researcher to make clear his own area of interest, and to discuss in more detail the setting up of an in-depth interview at a later date. Nine consultants agreed to be interviewed.

The setting up of the interviews was a prolonged process which was very much dependent on the availability of the consultant. With two of the consultants, although a convivial relationship was developed at the conference, re-establishing contact was problematic. Another consultant, when re-contacted had changed her mind, and declined to be interviewed. By this process of elimination, in-depth interviews were only conducted with six consultants, from the following organizations, at four to twelve months after making the initial contact at the conference.

Price-Waterhouse: "Paul", a senior Organization Development consultant from the OD team based at the Urwick Management Centre, Slough.


Shell UK: "Anna", an Organization Development consultant from the OD unit based at Shell-Mex House, London.
Chemicals and Polymers Division (ICI): "Mike", a senior figure with a long involvement with much of the OD work on the Billingham site.

KSR Associates: "Jeff", a senior partner in a small independent consultancy based in Liverpool.

URCHIN (Unit for Research into Changing Institutions): "Alan", a senior consultant in a small independent firm based in London.

With the exception of the interviews with Anna and Jeff, which were conducted off-site, the interviews took place at the consultant's "parent" organization. Several points should be made concerning the confidentiality aspect. Firstly, the consultants were assured that they would not be mentioned by name, and that only pseudonyms would be used in the writing up of the research. Secondly, it was explained that there would be little point in disguising the identity of their "parent" organizations because in the writing up of the research, references will be made to published articles. In many cases, especially with the larger multi-nationals and the newly privatized organizations, the real names would feature in the articles which will be referred to. There were no objections from the consultants to the formal identification, within the covers of the thesis, of the parent organizations which the consultants belonged to. However it was agreed that any published reference made to their participation in the research or to their "parent" organizations which they were
at that time associated with, would be disguised. Thirdly, some consultants preferred the transcript of their interview to be kept confidential. Therefore, an assurance was provided that the transcripts of the interviews and in addition, as a goodwill gesture, the thesis too, would both be kept confidential for five years after submission. Finally, concerning the clients of the "external" consultants who were interviewed (Paul, Jeff and Alan), it was agreed that there was no harm in mentioning their clients by name in the thesis, provided that the thesis is to be classified as confidential for five years from the date of submission. However it was agreed that there should be no "naming of names" outside of the thesis, that is the name of clients and individuals must be disguised in any publication which takes place as a result of this research.

There were three stages in the interview process. Firstly, there was the initial stage which has already been described in some detail. Initial contact was established at a conference with potential respondents, with the aim of discovering and matching the experiences, present concerns and interests of the consultant with the researcher's interests. Given a match and rapport, future meetings were possible.

The second stage involved making an exhaustive preliminary literature search on the consultant's parent or client organization. This background information provided a more detailed picture of the common interests between a
particular consultant and the researcher. When contact was re-established with a consultant, the conclusions drawn from this literature search was used to stimulate his or her interest in the research which was being conducted. If enough interest was shown by the consultant in participating in an in-depth interview, a meeting was then arranged.

The third stage was the conduct of the interviews. It was decided that some form of rough working frame needed to be in place at the beginning of the fieldwork. As suggested in section 3.1, data was to be collected from three areas. This is not to say that the research ignores the cautions of Glaser and Strauss (1967), that "being open to what the site has to tell us", and that to slowly evolve a coherent framework rather than to impose one from the start, are crucial elements in theory-building. However, bearing in mind that there would be a limit to what a single fieldworker can manage on his own, it instead seemed prudent, that the researcher first developed some clear ideas about the type of data he wanted to collect which was relevant to the particular aims of the research before embarking on the interviews. After all the framework could always be revised, and as Miles (1983) warns, without some clear ideas, a solitary researcher with not much support and dealing with qualitative data can firstly, be easily seduced by the sheer variety and opportunity, into collecting meaningless and irrelevant data, and secondly, be confused by the tendency of the data to appear incoherent. This is a view which is also supported by Mintzberg (1983). He suggests that to carry out
systematic research involves a defined focus, and the secret of successful qualitative research lies in the selective but not random limitation of data collection.

The need for a focused approach encouraged the adoption of a framework of four not mutually exclusive sets of variables, to guide the collection of data. These were:

- consultant and employing organization
- aspects of OD interventions related to the systems nature of organizations
- the role of conflict management in OD
- the intervention process adopted in OD projects

The framework was not rigid and questions were reviewed and appropriate rewording occurred during the course of an interview, so that a better match between each question and the individual personality of a consultant could be achieved, and also to make the most of new or unexpected data which emerged as the interview developed. Questions were asked in an open ended manner. Often their sole purpose was to act as a prompt to guide the direction of the interview. For instance, some questions were of a "devil's advocate" in nature: implicit in the wording of the question would be a sentiment or view which directly opposed or contradicted that expressed in a reply just given by the consultant. The aim was to galvanize him or her into giving a more definite or more clearly stated answer. Burgess (1982) believes that this expression of "dialectic disbelief" encourages a
respondent to reveal his truer position. Hypothetical questions were also asked to find out what a consultant might do under particular circumstances. It is possible in this way to discover what a consultant considers as ideal positions, situations and conditions. During the course of an interview, the interviewer also attempted to rephrase and reflect back to the consultant, his understanding of what the consultant had been trying to express, and to summarize the data that he had so far recorded. The impromptu interpretation by the interviewer of the data often acted as a means of stirring a consultant into confirming his replies in greater depth or to respond with counter-information and so start another line of enquiry.

The first category of questions concerned the consultant and employing organization. The aim was to possess an overall picture of the three-way relationship between:

(1) the consultant's job/role
(2) OD
(3) the needs of the organization.

A typical question which would begin an interview would be: "Tell me about yourself and the job you see yourself as doing." There would be prompts to find out:

-the differences between what the consultant does, what he would like to do, and what the organization expects of him.
- the consultant's position and stature in the organization: historical, present, formal and informal
- his personal background: education, previous jobs, training and interests.
- general information on the parent organization

The second category of questions aimed at identifying:

(1) Some organizations which the consultant had been or was currently involved with. What did that consultant consider were the implications of intervening in these particular organizations, bearing in mind the nature of organizations as complex systems and the changeability of the organizational environment?
(2) If and how he was influenced by these implications in the application of OD techniques or in devising OD strategies.

A typical starting-off question in this category would be: "What have been the major effects of the changes in the environment?" Many of the questions were derived from secondary sources, such as recent periodical articles on the employing organization of the consultant. There would be questions which would be of specific interest to that consultant, for example, on changes in the supply of raw materials, falling demand for that particular organization's products, and the effects of social and organizational change. As the interview developed, the aim was to encourage the consultant into spelling out the relationship, if there is one, of these changes to the particular problems which the
organization was experiencing, and the role which OD could play in solving these problems.

The interview was then directed at a third area, that of the conflict management role of OD. The opening question to this category was often as generalized as: "How would you describe the 'human' problems in this organization?" An initial aim was to let the consultant define "human". More specific questions included:

What particular problems relating to the human processes can you identify?
What are the causes?
How can OD help?

Finally, the intention of the fourth category of questions was to examine the intervention process as adopted by the consultants. There were two aims. Firstly, to draw together the first three categories of:

(1) the background
(2) the implications of the organization as a complex system and of the changes in the environment
(3) the "human" element,

and relate these to actual examples of interventions. Secondly, an additional aim, as proposed in section 3.1, was to identify how closely the OD process, in practice, actually matched the action research principles which are so commonly accepted, as described in sections 1.3 and 2.1, as
one of the chief components of OD. Descriptions were obtained of the consultant's experiences and his or her involvement with projects past, current and future. Frohman et al's (1976) description of the action research process was used as a guide. The "check list" of questions covered:

**contact:** (1) initiating contact with a potential client; (2) the client-consultant relationship; (3) expectancies; (4) contractual issues; (5) ethics.

**data gathering:** (1) common methods of data gathering used by the consultant in OD projects; (2) the targets for data gathering activities; (3) the type of data gathered; (4) the reliability of the data gathered and the associated problems of withholding and conscious distortion of information.

**diagnosis:** (1) identification of problems and the issue of collaboration in problem definition; (2) the difficulties of dealing with ill-defined problems: the lack of awareness, that is consciousness, of the existence of a problem, the issue of support from the upper levels of the organization and from trade unions, the third party role for consultants in problem definition.

**planning:** (1) how is participation encouraged or ensured; (2) the search process, the generation of alternatives; (3) developing a consensus, decision making, evaluation of alternatives.
intervention: (1) the types of actions taken: (2) the involvement of the organization, its sub-systems and its members.

evaluation: (1) the need for evaluation (2) the criteria employed (3) the participative element and the learning element in evaluation

All the interviews were brought to a close with a discussion of the contribution and the future of OD within that organization.

3.5 Participant motives

It must be remembered that a consultant may have possible motives for appearing to take part in the interviews as freely as he or she apparently did. The researcher must ask himself why a consultant should give freely of his time, thought and energy, sometimes involving himself in uncomfortable moments of self-revelation and embarrassment. Because "hidden" motives may have affected the information provided by the consultant, and consequently the overall validity of the research, it is important to reflect on some of the possible motives.

One common motive is the altruistic desire to help their fellow-man. At the one-to-one level, the consultant's altruistic tendencies may encourage him or her to give information freely simply because he or she has it and the
researcher needs it. More specifically of the consultants interviewed, at least two were able to empathize with the difficulties of research: Anna had completed a Master of Philosophy degree based on in-depth qualitative data collected using a standardized non-schedule style of interviewing, and Paul was registered for a Ph.D. Both had first-hand experience of the difficulties which can be encountered in the collection of the empirical data for research purposes leading to a higher degree, and could empathize with the researcher's need for cooperative practitioners. At a more general level, a consultant can identify with his fellow-man, that is society in general, or with a specific group, the latter being other consultants. In contributing to the research, knowledge may emerge that will be of benefit to the group which he or she identifies with, that is OD practitioners.

A consultant may also derive personal and emotional satisfaction from participating in the research. The interview process provides an opportunity for a consultant to express his or her opinions to an understanding listener who appears to be interested in, and to care about the consultant and his work. That people can derive an enjoyment from this, is made use of by Paul in his own data-gathering activities (line 324-326). Anna who was in the process of leaving her employers, said that the interview had been a "therapeutic" experience for her. In addition, the fact that the responses would be put to serious and productive use, or the idea of cooperating with or in academic research, or of having been
selected as a participant in such research could be strongly gratifying.

Finally, it should be remembered that for a consultant, in particular for the "external", a direct benefit in terms of free publicity, may be derived from the research. If the research is published, it may reflect favourably on the consultant or parent organization. At the very least, the research would be examined in the academic sense, and the consultant will have made some impact within a narrow circle of academics. However, in setting-up the interviews, it was noticed that firstly, some consultants were adverse to the possibility of publicity, and secondly, while university affiliation may enhance the researcher in the eyes of a potential respondent, it also acted as a hinderance. The researcher had the impression from some of the consultants who declined to be interviewed that in the "practical" world of OD there was little time or place for "theorizing" academic research.

3.6 Other possible factors which can affect data accuracy

In the interpretation of qualitative data, it should be borne in mind that its accuracy can be affected by any number of factors. Unlike a controlled situation within a laboratory environment, the researcher is faced with a subject, that is the respondent, who has the task of recollection while under the day-to-day influences and pressures of the organization he works in and his personal
Firstly, the act of recalling the events, attitudes and feelings of the past, is in itself a problem. Memory being subjective and selective, produces recollections which may fit more comfortably with the consultant's present values. In other words, "what should have been" may easily be recalled as "what had happened". The use of archival material juxtaposed with empirical data may to an extent overcome the problem. Where possible, published material has been used in conjunction with the interviews, although invariably such documentation is often generalized with a focus on organization-wide activity and less on the roles of the particular consultant being interviewed. An additional precaution which was taken, was to return during the course of an interview, to key questions which were then re-worded in a different manner. This allowed a configuration of answers to develop for certain questions, against which earlier answers could be checked.

The culture of the organization can also affect the overall accuracy of the picture that a consultant provides. The consultant may wish not to provide data which can be interpreted in a manner which is critical of his parent organization or client. For example, loyalty was a characteristic which was notably strong in Mike. His employing organization had a reputation for imposing a culture which encouraged its employees to view the organization with gratitude and respect. The extent to which
restraint is exercised not only bars spontaneity, but affects the overall accuracy of the data. The researcher can only provide his respondent with assurance that the data will be confidential and handled with care, and remain non-attributal and anonymous. What was obvious were the distinct differences between the different consultants in different organizations. The interview with Anna, a consultant who was in the process of leaving an organization, unsurprisingly had the highest content of criticism which was directed at her colleagues. She was also the most outspoken. John, who had the longest term of employment in an organization, an organization which had a reputation for looking after its employees and in return expected loyalty, expressed the least criticism of organizational policies. John, a consultant in an organization which is considered by many to be traditionally bureaucratic, had the most publicity-orientated approach. His use of videos and printed literature can be considered an attempt perhaps at advertising the change which his organization is undergoing, or perhaps to draw attention to his unit in a vast bureaucratic organization.

The presence of "idiosyncratic" factors may also affect the quality of the data obtained during an interview. For example, secretaries and telephones can be distracting interruptions. As the important part of the data collection process was not observational, it was preferable to conduct the interviews off-site. Of the interviews conducted, the off-site meetings scored distinctly higher on intimacy and lower on disruption.
Finally, an interview may be "coloured" by recent events in the life of a consultant. These could be of a personal nature, and unfathomable to the researcher. However, if the researcher knows of a possible factor which may have caused or allowed a bias to occur in the data, he should make it clear. Of all the consultants interviewed, it was only with Anna, that such a factor was conceivable. Although it has already been mentioned, perhaps it should be stressed again that she was in the process of leaving her parent organization at the time that the interview was conducted. While this event should not in itself affect the accuracy of what she has to say about OD in general, it should be borne in mind when some of her other comments, in particular those about her colleagues, are considered.

3.7 Recording, transcription and analysis

In deciding on a method for recording the interview, two factors had to be considered. Firstly, the aim was to record the interview in as accurate a manner as possible. One of the advantages of adopting the standardized non-scheduled method of interview is that is allows the respondent to elaborate on his answers and to provide complex explanations, even unexpected responses. Therefore, it was important that what was to be recorded remained as close as possible to what was being said. Secondly, the method of recording should not interfere with the ability of the interviewer to reflect on what was being said by the consultant, and on his ability to provide encouraging comments, or to re-phrase a question when
necessary. Bearing in mind these factors, there are two possible methods for recording the interview. Firstly, to make brief notes during the interview, and after the interview, on the basis of these notes, to write up a full report. Secondly, to tape record the interview, and to later transcribe the recording. The latter, the preferred method, was adopted. To take notes during the interview would interfere with the flow of the interview and distract the interviewer from what the consultant is trying to say. Because the notes would necessarily have to be brief and the interviews long, it would be impossible to achieve a verbatim report of the interview from memory and from the notes made.

There is however one drawback to using tape-recording. Where there was a strong rapport between the researcher and the consultant being interviewed, it was accepted with little show of consternation. In practice, although all the consultants interviewed had first hand experience of tape-recording interviews, they were seldom at the receiving-end and some were initially wary of what they said. This inevitably contributed to the awkwardness of the situation and inhibited the flow of the interview.

After recording the interview, the researcher was faced with the not insubstantial task of processing the data, that is transcription and analysis. To obtain a verbatim transcription, even for an experienced stenographer, is exceedingly time-consuming. From the interviews, a voluminous amount of data was generated, each C90 cassette.
yielding approximately twenty-five sides of A4.

After transcription, the researcher was faced with the problems of indexing. To an extent, these problems have been diminished because the interviewer had some idea prior to the interview, of the different categories of data which he wished to collect. By being able to provide some form of initial framework to the interviews, much of what a consultant said, was already emerging during the course of the interview under certain categories. However, two problems soon became apparent. Firstly, it became necessary to create new categories as the researcher uncovered unexpected data. Secondly, there was a need to devise a system whereby it was possible to cross-reference the data from the different interviews. At first, instinctively a particular point could be found in a transcript, but as the transcripts accumulated, it became an increasingly difficult task.

In a literature-search on research methodology, little advice could be uncovered on the problems of analysing qualitative data. While some writers, such as Richardson et al (1965), Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Whyte (1982), discuss many of the methodological issues in the collection of qualitative data, such as gaining access, "breadth versus depth" of sampling, the interview process and the ensuring of a representative sample size, they provide little advice on the practical difficulties of dealing with the sheer volume of data. There appeared to be no accepted method for indexing the long and convoluted transcripts, and because of
the nature of qualitative data, there are few mutually exclusive categories of data. A system for sub-indexing and cross-referencing was required. While there are numerous statistical methods for storing, retrieving and analysing quantitative data, there is no commonly accepted method for qualitative data. It was decided that there was no easy way for doing this. The only effective manner was the long process of typing up the transcripts themselves, followed by a numbering of the lines. By this slow process, eventually an index was built whereby it was possible to effectively locate and cross-reference a topic at a particular point in one transcript with another from a different transcript.

Because in the analysis of the interview transcripts, a system had been devised whereby desired portions of the text can be easily located, it was decided that the numbered transcripts of the in-depth interviews be included as reference material, to be used in conjunction with the main body of the thesis. Therefore, the references made within the text of the thesis to a particular topic discussed by a consultant during an interview, will be followed by the line numbers which denotes the corresponding location of that topic in the interview transcript. So that there will be no confusion over the actual text of the thesis and the transcript material, and also for convenient use, the latter is bound as a separate volume (Volume Two). It is stressed that the intention is not for the transcript to be "read", but to be consulted. Several reasons are suggested for the inclusion of the transcripts.
The first concern is over accuracy and values. Pethia (1967) argues that a researcher introduces his own values to the research through the selection process, for example in selecting which variables to measure. It can similarly be argued that when a researcher uses interview material, he also encounters the same problem. In a review of literature, including non-published theses, it was common to find statements or points of views made by a person interviewed by a researcher, and then incorporated into a body of text, in order to illustrate or support an argument put forth by that researcher. These statements or views are often not quoted in their entirety, indeed it would not be possible to do so. Paraphrasing and the quoting only of "key" sections are commonly encountered. Consider two different approaches. The first approach incorporates selected quotes or paraphrased material, for example Ganesh (1978), Loveday (1984) and Pettigrew (1985). The second approach places an emphasis on the interview itself, letting the interview "speak for itself", for example, Tichy (1974a), Reilly (1977) and Luthans (1989). Comparing the two ways that interview-material can be used immediately highlights the main problem of the first approach, that is, the selection process will inadvertently ascribe non-original values to the quoted or paraphrased material. This occurs when it is necessary to paraphrase, or to select as a quote, a key portion of a reply to a question and then to portray this as a summary of the original which is often too long to include in its entirety. Firstly, the paraphrasing and choice of quotation may neither reflect the actual complexity nor the
value of the answer given by the person interviewed. By necessity it will be abbreviated or summarized, and may often reflect the values of the researcher. Secondly, the selected parts of the transcript is provided with extra significance when it is lifted out of the context of the rest of the transcript because the selection process itself highlights the statement, thereby providing it with added value. It is suggested that the true value, that is the value as ascribed to it by the respondent, and not by the researcher, is only apparent when it is considered in conjunction with the rest of the response to the question. Therefore, it is argued that if it is possible, where extensive use is made of interview material, the transcripts should be made available for consultation. This allows the reader, when he so desires, to ascertain the true value of a quoted statement.

Secondly, it is argued that in the interests of providing a richer and fuller picture, the transcripts should be made available. This allows a reader to check on the context in which a particular statement had been made. For example, what was the question which provoked that statement? Or, how does that statement relate to the rest of the answer? The reader is given the opportunity and choice to follow the data through. It is also argued that the transcripts be made easily accessible in the sense that the intention is not for a reader to study the entire length of a transcript, but when his interest is aroused by a particular point being made, he can easily and accurately locate the source. With this in mind, the transcripts have been numbered by line.
Thirdly, the inclusion of the transcripts allows the research to make a fuller contribution to the body of knowledge that encourages future theory-building. Firstly, the complete transcripts provide a richer picture. Secondly, verbatim transcripts are the only means of encapsulating the sentiment with which certain views or statements were expressed by a respondent. After all, it has been argued by Glaser and Strauss (1967) that in order to reap the full potential of qualitative data, the researcher must be open to the data in all its complexity, and only then can the effective building of grounded theory occur.

Fourthly, the referral to particular lines in a transcript, rather than the extensive use of quoted or paraphrased material, provides the only means by which a researcher can incorporate evidence from the interviews without having to break up the line of reasoning. This may not be so much of a problem in Chapters Five to Eight, each chapter being relevant to one organization, but in Chapters Nine and Ten, where the data collected from the different consultants is drawn together, any interspacing of the text with quotations or paraphrases would necessarily be lengthy, thus breaking up the coherence and continuity of the text.

Finally, with reference to the transcripts, some other questions need to be answered: (1) How much of the actual interview has been tape recorded? (2) How much of this was transcribed? (3) How much of the transcripts have been included? (4) If they have not all been included, which
transcripts are used, and on what basis was the choice made? (5) What other documented accounts of OD practice have been used in conjunction with the transcripts? These questions will now be answered.

(1) While the bona fide in-depth interview with each consultant was tape-recorded in as complete a manner as possible, the recording did not cover all the time spent with the consultant: tape-recordings were not made of the initial meeting nor of the entire period of subsequent meetings. While it was simple to decide when an interview starts, it was less easy to decide on when to turn off the tape-recorder. It was accepted that the rest of a meeting with a consultant, before and after an interview, will contribute greatly to a better understanding of what was discussed during an interview, but that it would not be practical, nor courteous, to have a tape-recorder running continuously.

(2) The recordings of the interviews have been transcribed in as verbatim a manner as possible.

(3) Direct reference has not been made in the thesis to all the transcripts. Only the transcripts containing the quotations used, or containing the original material which has been paraphrased in the thesis, are included. These are the transcripts of the interviews with Paul, John, Anna and Mike. This is not to say that the transcripts of interviews with Jeff and Alan, have not been put to good use in the research. The information collected from the interviews with
them has contributed to a greater understanding of the issues discussed in the other interviews, particularly those which relate to the "external" consultant.

(4) With clarity as an objective, in the writing-up of the research, the thesis draws together the data which is related to one organization. For instance, the data collected in the interview with Paul and the other material relating to interventions carried out by Price-Waterhouse, by Paul, or his colleagues, are presented as one chapter on Price-Waterhouse, similarly, John and related material to the Civil Service as a chapter on the Job Satisfaction Team, and so on. In this manner, four "case-studies" are provided. A close examination of the URCHIN and KSR data did not reveal any additional themes to those which can be identified from the other four, nor can any inconsistencies be discovered. Furthermore, it was not possible to obtain other accounts of interventions, published or otherwise, from KSR Associates, hence it would not have been possible to "validate" the data in the same manner as with Paul, John. Anna and Mike, and if a chapter had been produced, it could not be of the same richness. The four case studies and the four transcripts have provided an amount of material which is of enough depth and scope to draw forth many consistent and coherent themes. Because the research can be substantiated despite the omission of the KSR and URCHIN data, it was decided that it was possible that the overall length of the thesis be shortened by making the writing up of the research less prolix by limiting it to just the four case-studies and the
four transcripts.

(5) The overall research is based on the combined use of documented material relating to the parent or client organizations of the consultants interviewed and the data collected from the interviews. A total of thirty-eight documented accounts of the practice of organization development were examined and analysed using the same framework as for the transcribed interviews. These were accounts provided by either the consultants or the senior staff involved in interventions in or by one of the four organizations which Paul, John, Anna and Mike belonged to. Of these, twenty-three were published accounts taken from journals, periodicals and books, and the rest were a mixture of records, reports and working papers, some printed for distribution internally, others prepared with the intention for publication at a later date. Table One lists the documented material used.
Table 1
The documented material examined

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4.1 Background

The work of the OD unit examined in this chapter is carried out by the management consultancy division of Price Waterhouse. The unit is located at the Urwick Management Centre, near Slough. It is a commercial consultancy practice and, at the time of interview, the OD unit was involved with the Grampian Health Authority. It had just completed a project for British Telecommunications (B.T.). Organization development as defined by one of the members of the Price-Waterhouse team:

"(OD) is concerned with the behaviour response of individuals and groups to changes initiated by an external force; for example increased market competition, a slowing of consumer demand, changing consumer expectations or the development of new technology; OD hinges around the ability to describe and communicate new organizational responses and behaviours whilst, at the same time, selecting appropriate action to facilitate and drive the change." (Standish, 1986, p1)

4.2 The process of intervention

Diagnosis

The diagnostic phase described by Paul comprises of data-
gathering activities, data feedback and data analysis. It appears that there is no one favoured method for gathering data. Often the gathering of data is a combination of different activities. The choice is contingent on a number of factors, such as the size of the organization and the geographical lay-out of the division. These factors may pose restrictions on extensive one-to-one interviewing. Both managerial and non-managerial staff are involved in the interpretation and analysis of the data. Typically, this process involves an examination of the current state of the organization and the development of a vision of the desired state.

With regard to an intervention involving the Grampian Health Authority described by Paul (lines 170-260, 549-560), the aim of the data-gathering stage was to help the management identify a five year change-plan. One-to-one interviews were conducted with top management and group interviews with the rest of the organization to establish primary themes. The questions asked related to four areas: (1) what is it like now? the tasks, relationships, the current direction; (2) what should it be like in the future? (3) what strategy will help us move from now to the future? (4) what are you prepared to do? Hypotheses, based on the data, were developed with the senior management and verified and tested for reliability through an extensive questionnaire survey. The results of the survey were statistically analysed and correlated with these hypotheses. A thousand people across different professions, levels and locations throughout the organization were sampled. This allowed the
consultants to take into account the multiplicity of views which existed across the organization.

In another intervention which involved a division of British Telecommunications (B.T.), data was collected on the expectations which the different power groups in the environment had of the organization (Price, 1986). These were the customers, shareholders, government, the community, stock market analysts, competitors and suppliers. The questions which needed to be answered were: (1) what level of service do customers demand? (2) what dividend will keep the shareholders happy? (3) what kind of behaviour does the Government expect? In addition, data was collected from within B.T. on the processes involved in the daily running of the organization. The assessment tool which was used in this intervention is described in detail by Price (1986). Figure One is a diagram, reproduced from Price (1986, p4), which summarizes the structure adopted in the individual and group interviews conducted with the management and staff. Data providing a picture of the present situation (the "now" column) is collected. This includes the tasks performed, the relationships currently operating within the organization, and the ways of working or procedures. The "future" column indicates where the organization should be in order to respond successfully to its environment. A comparison of the "now" and "future" columns will reveal the degree to which change is necessary within that division. The "strategy" column represents the collection of ideas on how to move the organization from the "now" to the "future" column. Overlaid
Figure 1 The diagnostic cube
(source: reproduced from Price, 1986, p4)
on this grid are the "Think, Feel and Do" dimensions: What do you think of the proposed changes? How do you feel about the progress made so far? What are you willing to do to facilitate the changes? These questions aim to explore and define the boundaries of what is acceptable to those involved in the change programme. The answers to these questions will provide a picture of what Price calls the "psychological reality" of the situation. This is an important factor which ultimately determines the feasible changes.

In the B.T. project, analysis on the data was performed with the "leaders" of the organization. It was important to include in this group both top-management and union representatives. Data was feedback to forty-eight persons in a four day workshop of which twenty-five were non-management employees (lines 460-470). The process was similar to that adopted in the Grampian example. The main issues were summarized, with a causal analysis of the underlying factors and the key dynamics of the situation. The senior managers, with the help of the consultants, designed an ideal future climate, including within it their ideas on the dimensions of the culture which needed to be modified and developed if the organization is to fulfil its potential.

Strategy development and implementation

Paul was asked to describe the process by which a strategy is developed (lines 499-540, 764-770). Referring to the intervention involving the Grampian Health Authority, he
summarized the process as taking "the present situation in terms of causal factors and the future vision. We then asked what causal factors need to exist in the future in order for the organization to achieve the future vision and how is the present situation different" (lines 492-495).

In this example, a first step in the strategy development process involved a brainstorming session (lines 499-525). There were seventeen problem or mini-vision statements, and using a flip chart for each, "a shopping list of good ideas" for achieving each vision was generated.

A second step involved developing an overall strategy which coordinated these ideas. Paul described two general components to a strategy: the action taken and the resources used. The action taken involves "hard" and "soft" changes to the organizational system (lines 615-635). His terms seem to be analogous to Friedlander and Brown's (1974): the "hard" element corresponding to "techno-structure" such as budgetary policies and information systems, and the "soft" to "human-processes" such as managerial and decision-making processes and team-briefing. The second component involves the provision and deployment of resources to manage the transition. From experience, Paul felt that often resources are under-allocated in terms of funds and personnel for training. He argued that a high level of resources must be provided for training because one of the criteria of a successful project is the development of an internal OD resource which is able to operate effectively in the process
There is a close relationship between the "hard" and "soft" components in an overall OD strategy which is illustrated for example, by the two projects described by Standish (1986). Both examples illustrate that structural and processual changes play mutually supportive roles in the overall change strategy. However, Standish also points out that the change programme may be process-led or structure-led.

The first example involved a manufacturer of photographic equipment. A more competitive market increased the need for tighter quality and cost controls. This meant changes in the management of internal projects and a firmer management of internal resources from the initial negotiation of project objectives through execution to commissioning. In this particular example, there was an informal culture of management: the organization was driven by the personality and skills of its members. There was little in the way of uniform control to either financial or work processes. The strategy for change was process-led in that it first involved the managers in education and training programmes. These programmes focused on the need of the organization to change its system of control when faced with a more competitive environment, and provided the specific training to achieve this. As a result, recommendations were made by the managers for structural changes in control and planning. Therefore, management development and training provoked a greater
discipline in thinking and managing, which in turn led to the development of tighter management systems which reflected and supported the behaviour change which had been achieved.

The second example involved a major support division which was concerned with the provision of computing and related services within a large financial institution. The need for change emanated from changes in the external and internal environment. Increased external competition gave rise to a tighter operating climate. This, combined with an increased internal competition for funds meant that the service division was required to take a more disciplined approach to project management, to improve its negotiation techniques for resources, and to adopt a closer control over the resources utilized. However, the decision-making in this institution was fairly centralized with little in the way of delegation; in all matters, the divisional management expected a clear lead from above, to be followed by written guidance for the action to be taken. Because of these characteristics, the change programme in this example was structure-led. Project management systems, and new financial and accounting systems and procedures, were developed for implementation by divisional management. The desired behavioural change, that is a more disciplined approach to management and a closer control of resource utilization, only occurred after the development and implementation of the structural changes. It was only possible to change behaviour by first developing and implementing changes to the structure.

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Some related issues were discussed in greater detail in the interview with Paul.

During the course of an intervention, it was not uncommon for specific skills training to occur because often managers were unable to formulate a coherent strategy for change (lines 670-680). Paul admitted that often the actual skills for strategy formulation were lacking amongst the members of the organization, and the consultants involved with a project will first develop a strategy, and then only at a later stage involve the managers in its correction and update (lines 485-491). Although Paul believed that he had a role as process helper (lines 410-430, 766-770), the process of strategy development which he describes seems at odds with Schein's (1969) definition. Paul implied in his account that a process consultant, may in practice, have to circumvent the convention of collaboration at certain points of his relationship with his client, as in the early stages of strategy development.

Where behavioural changes were desired, there was often the problem of reversion if the existing structures were left unchanged. Behavioural changes, as opposed to specific skills training, needed the support of new structures to endure in the work-place because firstly, the existing structures supported the old patterns of behaviour, and secondly, to paraphrase, "the pain of implementing new structures often wiped out the behavioural gains" (lines 625-645).
While it was pointed out by Paul that he believed in participation, in practice, he found that it was not always possible to include all the ideas which had been put forward by those involved in the change programme, into the overall strategy for change (line 585). However, he believed that it was still possible for everyone's ideas to be acted upon or at least recognized (lines 528-540, 560-585). The ideas not included in the strategy were instead included in a "non-strategic" list of activities which still needed to be carried out. Of the "non-actioned" ideas, the Managing Director or the General Manager would reason with their owners, explaining why their ideas had not been acted upon. It was important that all the ideas were in this way accounted for, to ensure that the members involved with the planning activities remained satisfied with the participative process. Only then could their support, continuing participation and commitment to the strategy be counted upon.

Feedback and Evaluation

Paul clearly made the point, when asked about evaluation, that feedback and evaluation were not necessarily the same (line 800). Feedback is validation, that is knowing if there is a desired effect. Evaluation is concerned with more than validation. It seeks also to find out how effective were the consultants, and how efficient were the processes which the consultants implemented in order to guide the members of the organization through the early to the end
stages of the project. For instance, how effective was the consultant in encouraging participation during diagnosis? How effective was the strategy formulation process? (lines 800-840)

The interview with Paul revealed that little evaluation of consultant effectiveness took place in practice, although there was "a lot of effort in feedback and project management" (line 802-803). For example, in the Grampian project, it was pointed out that there would be specific dates when a consultant met with the Director and the General Manager, for instance, for two half days a month for the following eighteen months to review the effectiveness of the whole intervention (lines 805-810). Criteria would be developed to measure the effectiveness of the intervention. For example, at B.T. performance indicators were used to measure the performance of managers (lines 690-707).

Two reasons were identified for the lack of evaluation of the issues relating to consultant effectiveness. Firstly, clients in general were not sympathetic to the need for evaluation. "Clients feel that they are in touch with the organization and can evaluate from just line-management gut feel" (lines 835-836). They were reluctant to put any energy into evaluation. "You know you're doing a good job consultant, because I keep employing you" was a common attitude adopted by a client (lines 844-845). This problem is compounded by a lack of objective criteria for evaluating the work of the consultant. "Senior management judge on very
personal criteria. Whether their meetings are better, whether the things they hear said over board meetings or lunch about the consultants are good things or bad things. It's that kind of criteria that they use. Line managers aren't trained to look backwards. Their whole focus is on the present and if you're lucky on the future." (lines 901-908).

A second reason is the expense incurred by evaluation. For example, at B.T., Paul wanted to conduct an evaluative study of the intervention process. He felt that the whole process, after an initial period of success, had begun to flounder as the division started to develop an interest in other areas. Neither Price Waterhouse, nor B.T. were prepared to fund the evaluation. Price Waterhouse's attitude was "if you have a feeling you made a mistake, do it differently next time" (lines 886-887). B.T. on the other hand was disinclined to review the project and to accept any form of evaluation, once the resources in terms of time, personnel and money had been committed and utilized (lines 875-885). Paul found that the only way around this problem, to ensure that funds were available and that there would be access at a later date to an organization after the completion of a project, was to write these conditions into the contract. It was also important to include the cost of evaluation into the overall cost of an intervention (lines 875-893).
Summary

To summarize briefly, the following are some of the characteristics of the intervention process adopted in the projects described by Paul and the other consultants who are also a part of the Price Waterhouse team. Data is collected on the current state of an organization and analysed, and a vision of a desired future state is developed. Ideas are then generated by those involved in the organization for moving the organization towards the future vision. These ideas are assembled into an overall change plan. The content of this plan is in many respects contingent upon the culture and the particular characteristics of the organization. It contains both "hard" and "soft" elements, and training in processual skills is a key component. An intervention may be either systems-led or process-led, or a combination of both. However, contrary to what has been suggested in literature, in practice the evidence points to there being little evaluation of consultant effectiveness.

The practice of OD as described by these consultants appears to incorporate many of the principles of action research as described section 2.1. Paul's description of his approach emphasizes that a data-based diagnosis is made which is aimed at solving specific problems; specific actions are developed on the basis of the specific problems, that is a non-prescriptive approach is adopted. During the course of an intervention, one of the aims is to improve and provide problem solving skills to the client organization through
learning on-the-job and training; there is feedback of results as a basis for further diagnosis, planning and action.

There are some incongruities between what literature describes and what actually occurs in practice. Firstly, bearing in mind that much has been made of the action research element in OD, and, as suggested, for example by Frohman et al (1976), that evaluation is one of the principal "research" phases in action research, it is surprising that there is in practice little or no evaluation of the effectiveness of the actual processes of the intervention. Secondly, while it appears that participation and collaboration are highly valued qualities, in practice, these are not characteristics which are constantly displayed throughout the duration of the intervention.

5.3 Systems management

Proposed in section 2.2, is the view that in the development and implementation of strategies for change, consultants have to take into account the complex nature of the target of intervention. To briefly re-cap, the following implications had been identified.

Firstly, the diagnosis and the action taken have to adequately reflect the complex nature of the target. Secondly, the organization must be developed as a "learning" system. This is because the only way of obtaining a more accurate
picture of the organization is through using feedback and to learn from taking action. Thirdly, one way of sustaining the change programme in the turbulent environment which many of today's organizations face is to train the organization in self-help. During the course on an intervention specific training for this must occur. Finally, a key to managing change in an uncertain environment is to develop the flexibility of the organization to respond to change. This may involve cultural change.

Diagnosis and planning

There are at least two reasons for the consultant to ensure that information is collected from as many sources as possible. Firstly, the data collected must reflect all the different points of view so as to match the variety and multiplicity which exists within the organization. Secondly, the data on the organizational processes and structural arrangements must be comprehensive, allowing for all possibilities because there is little direction from a client as to what is "wrong". More often a client has in mind a solution, and not the problem (lines 152-163, 368-375).

Paul describes the use of one-to-one interviews with senior managers (line 176) and at less senior levels, group interviews horizontally across the breadth of the organization (lines 190-200). Because there are natural limits to extensive interviewing throughout a large organization, representatives are used (lines 549-560) and
questionnaire surveys are also conducted (line 176). Although
the use of questionnaire surveys may not provide data which
is as rich as the data obtained through personal interviews,
they provide a means for the consultant to cover a large and
widely-dispersed organization. Data is collected from the
different levels of the organization, from management and
non-managerial staff, and from as many parts of the
organization as possible.

Although on the whole, a holistic approach is apparent
in the analysis of the data and in the planning processes,
this is not always reflected in the overall strategy which is
developed. Contrary to what is suggested in literature
(section 2.2), it can be induced, so far, from the projects
examined that organization development programmes are not
always system-wide, in terms of "developing" the overall
organization. A programme will instead often be specific,
designed to tackle specific problem areas. Take for example
Standish's (1986) account of the two projects described in
the previous section. Although he concludes that specific
processual or structural levers can be used to initiate
change, and that the overall strategy will contain both
structural and processual elements, there is no evidence that
the change programme is targeted at an organization-wide
level. It can therefore be argued that the aim was to help
each organization overcome the particular difficulties which
it faced, and that intervention in an organization-wide
manner was not recognized to be the answer.
Another example, an intervention into British Telecom London Western District (B.T.L.W.D.), is described in a working paper jointly written by the OD manager from B.T.L.W.D. and a senior OD consultant from the Price Waterhouse unit (Murphy and Price, 1987). The radical changes which the division has been subjected to include: privatization, liberalization and deregulation, increased competition from Mercury, and significant technological advances. It is "in response to these changes in the external environment, (that) British Telecom has realized the need, and grasped the opportunity to change its own internal environment." (Murphy and Price, 1987, p1). Change programmes have been initiated company-wide to improve for example the quality of service, customer response time and management control of costs. The fundamental characteristics of the organization which needed alteration were examined and a comprehensive strategy initiated which focused on the attitudes, perceptions, skills and core behaviour of the staff. Seven main activity areas were described which helped to move the organization from "where we are now" to "where we want to be": (1) team building; (2) objective setting; (3) communication programmes; (4) skill development; (5) employee involvement programme; (6) inter-divisional problem solving forums; (7) regular climate surveys.

In this example, the particular organizational context and the aim of changing the internal environment made it necessary to implement organization-wide changes. Firstly, because of the size of the organization, the consultants
could not rely on a natural top-down cascade (Murphy & Price, 1987, p6). Changes in attitudes and behaviour in management did not permeate down through the different levels to the workforce. Individual programmes had to be initiated in the different parts of the organization. Secondly, the intervention would necessarily have to be multi-stranded to reflect the multiple aims which were to achieve changes in attitudes, perceptions, skills and core behaviour. Thirdly, to achieve these aims involved a complex strategy which simultaneously acted on several different systems. The strategy had to recognize the interdependent nature of the target systems and the need to implement multiple programmes in a organization-wide manner.

While the data gathering and planning processes in the OD projects described by the OD consultants in Price Waterhouse, conform to the "holistic" notions in literature, the actual strategies developed are not always organization-wide. Many "traditional" definitions of OD, some of which have been quoted in section 1.2, emphasize that OD is an organization-wide approach. Indeed, it is one of the characteristics of OD (as identified by Beckhard, 1969; see section 1.3). However, comparing some of the interventions described illustrates that, in practice, not all the projects intervene at the organization-wide level. Instead, it appears that the "breadth" of intervention is determined by the context and the specific needs of the organization. In some cases, this may involve organization-wide intervention, in others, only specific systems are targeted.
The use of feedback

There is clear evidence of feedback, project management and validation in the accounts provided of the interventions. For instance, there are specific feedback sessions with clients (lines 800-810), performance indicators are used (lines 690-707), validation measures specific to an organization are developed, for example in B.T., validation measures include sampling customer perception, the quantity of telephones fitted over a certain period and the resources used (lines 730-740), and validation measures specific to an intervention are used, for example "evaluative measures" to test the cascade process in team-briefing (lines 810-821).

These measures are used for re-adjustment (line 818). The objective is to move an organization towards the desired future state which had been envisaged in the diagnosis. Corrections are made to the strategy in response to the feedback. A long-term change programme is rarely of a permanent design because the desired state itself, must be responsive to the changes in the environment.

Training

The development of the organization as a learning system implies also the training of organizational members to manage the change plan, to monitor and to deal with corrective feedback. Any developments in the organization involves training the members of the organization. "Our approach is a
participative one where we give people the skills and process help to formulate the strategy so when the environment changes, they still have the skills to respond to it." (lines 765-770).

From experience, Paul finds that the level of retention of processual skills is low amongst line and senior managers. It is unrealistic to expect a busy general manager to retain enough processual skills to be able to continue or to adapt an intervention on his own, and at the same time to continue with his daily tasks (lines 770-780). In his view, participation in, for example, strategy formulation, is on its own insufficient to provide the level of skills needed to manage an on-going style of intervention. Therefore instead, he advocates the training of specific individuals who show an aptitude for the process role (lines 780-792). An aim in the Grampian project was to gradually hand over responsibilities to the internal helper (lines 439-443). Specific individuals were chosen, "who will gain experience and confidence with us, and provide support to the rest of the organization." To train them for OD work, in the Grampian example, some members worked at least nine months full-time with the consultancy team and then attended the "Internal Consultant Development Programme" ran by Price Waterhouse. (lines 346-361).

Culture

One of the consultants with Price Waterhouse stated that "the organization exists within an environment (and) the
purpose of an organization as being that of interacting successfully with the environment" (Price, 1986, p1). He argued, if the organization is to successfully interact with the environment, there must be a predisposition in the culture of the organization towards change. He argued that this is because often the culture of the organization is the prohibitive factor in an organization's ability to respond to changes in the environment.

Culture, Price (1986) suggests, affects the functioning of the organization in the following way. The culture which is at the core of the organization has four main components: (1) the beliefs about the way the world is and will be; (2) values about the place of the organization in the world; (3) the norms of accepted behaviour; and (4) the style of operation. He suggests that it is the culture of the organization which lies behind the five mechanisms through which the culture flows to affect behaviour at the organization-environment interface. The mechanisms are (1) rewards, (2) systems, (3) structures, (4) skills and (5) attitudes. Boundary behaviour is the experience that primary power groups within the environment have of the organization. These groups are varied and include customers, shareholders, governments, the community, analysts, competitors and suppliers. The mechanisms can affect boundary behaviour in many ways. For instance, whether rewards are geared to quantity or quality, whether the systems encourage integration or separatism, whether the structure facilitates or prevents flexibility, and whether the attitudes are
positive or negative.

If changes are to take place at the organization-environment interface, that is changes in boundary behaviour, so as to provide a better match between the organization and the environment, the mechanisms described must be altered. The degree to which this alteration is effective is determined by the culture of the organization. A successful change strategy has to first examine the four aspects of the organization's culture: beliefs, values, norms and style. Unless the culture itself changes, there can be little effective manipulation of the mechanisms through which the desired changes at the organization-environment interface will occur. The main guideline on managing and enabling cultural change is to work through top management (Price, 1986, pp5-6). Because the beliefs, values, norms and style of top management pervade the organization, cultural change must begin at the top. As a starting point managers have to be seen to change their own behaviour. In addition to change at the top, cultural change can be facilitated by managing the mechanisms of the organization such as the reward system, organization structure and operating procedures so that the new patterns of management behaviour are reinforced. The ultimate aim is "to make the whole culture of the organization more change responsive, so that even if all the senior management team left, and a new team moves in, the culture would be so pervasive that they would continue to manage the change." (lines 935-945).
5.4 Conflict management

Conflict in the diagnosis and planning stages of the intervention process

Transactions between the organization and the environment concern not just resources such as raw materials and end products but people with their individual backgrounds and their own expectations and interpretations of events. Therefore, before any action can take place, a level of agreement must exist amongst the members of an organization and amongst the different primary power groups within the environment (Price, 1986). One of the causes of conflict during the course of an intervention lies in this multiplicity of views and can be approached in various ways.

Firstly, there can be conflict occurring because of the differences of opinion which are caused by a lack of information or are based on inaccurate premises. If this is the case, then there is a clear need to improve the quantity or the quality of the data gathered. "If it is conflict over what the situation is or the reality of it, we would find out the reality. We try and help by collecting and providing data to reduce uncertainty." (lines 979-981). The importance of comprehensive and accurate data gathering to the overall success of the intervention is stressed by Paul in his interview.

Secondly, conflict can arise because the different
stakeholders have differing expectations of the outcome. A consensus must first be developed before any plans can be made. This involves focusing on a "future vision". When a future vision is agreed upon, it will then be possible to decide on the causal factors to achieve this future. This powerful mechanism for generating consensus is not unlike that used by Systems figures, such as Ackoff. For example, some of the features of the cube (Figure 1, p100), described earlier, are reminiscent of certain concepts used by Ackoff (1981) in his "interactive planning". Like Ackoff's "ends-planning", the early steps of the intervention process involve asking questions such as: "where we should be headed" and "where do we want to be". This produces, in Ackoff's terms, an "idealized design" for the organizational system. Then, like Ackoff's "means-planning", a strategy is devised for moving the organization towards the desired state.

The success with which the conflict at the early phase and at the planning stage of an intervention can be controlled, also depends on the effectiveness of the participative process. Initially, as many views as possible must be reflected in the data gathered and as many stakeholders as possible involved in developing the plans. Participation has been described by Ackoff (1981) as one of the three "operative principles" in interactive planning. The "participative principle" calls for the involvement of as many as possible of the members and stakeholders who are affected by the intervention and the use of professional advisers to help people to plan for themselves. There is a
belief that participation will produce decisions of greater validity and generate a stronger commitment to both the decisions and the action taken. This principle of participation can be seen in action, in the stress laid on comprehensive data collection and on encouraging participation in the planning activities, as illustrated by the accounts of OD activities provided by Paul. It is also firmly established in the consultant's role as process helper that the aim is to help members of the client's organization help themselves (lines 410-430, 766-770). "The plain fact is that success is only likely to result if the desired future state of the organization is visualized with sufficient clarity and the hard work of getting closer to it is done each working day by the members and staff who are committed to a shared vision of the future." (Murphy & Price, 1987, p1).

Organizational conflict

Apart from the conflict experienced during the course of an intervention, there is conflict which is the result of the day-to-day activities within the organization. Paul described two forms of general conflict which he encountered.

Within an organizational context, people of different backgrounds who hold different views are brought together. It is therefore not unusual to find "value based conflict", that is members of an organization not seeing eye-to-eye because they function to different value systems. An individual will
have a subjective view of the world which can often spill over into how he perceives and reacts to another person. This can have negative consequences within the organization by inhibiting cooperation and preventing decisions from being made. Paul proposes that it is possible to introduce a greater degree of objectivity to this type of conflict-filled situation through confrontation. Using a confrontation technique, not unlike that described by Beckhard (1969), the false assumptions that one member or one group may have of another can be cleared. "We would try to provide a forum in which the conflict can be acted out. For example, last week I was at a board meeting of a company whose main areas of business comprise of insurance and financial asset management. There was tremendous conflict between the two boards. We split the group into two, to swop perceptions: how I see myself, how I see you, and how I think you see me."

The two groups are then brought together, to confront each other with their differences. The false assumptions which one group has of the other can be dispelled in this manner.

However, confrontation is not always successful and conflict can persevere. Often this is because of a reluctance on the part of a particular individual, to participate in a genuine manner with the aim of resolving the conflict. Paul admits that there is little that he can do when an individual’s intent is to be "difficult", when the situation is characterised by the "I understand you, but I still don’t like you" attitude (lines 995-996). It is also
possible that this situation is a characteristic of a different type of conflict, a power struggle. Because there is a lot more at stake, the individuals involved will become less inclined to resolve their differences. Paul suggests that the only way of dealing with intentional conflict of this kind, is to make this conflict clear to the top management, because it can only be dealt with through the normal managerial processes of "shifting people, bonding them with systems and procedures so that conflict cannot emerge or moving them out of the department. I think in this case the role of the consultant can only be to make conscious what is happening." However in doing so, he points out that he also risks destroying the relationship of trust which he had built with the other members of the organization. (lines 998-1003)

Paul also identifies "organizational dynamics" as the cause of another type of conflict. The term "organizational dynamics" refers to the processes and procedures for the performance of the tasks which are necessary to the daily functioning of the organization. He believes that the dynamics surrounding a particular situation of conflict can be sometimes perceived differently, therefore making its resolution an easier task. He found that much of the conflict is related to the way in which resources are shared. Instead the attitude is fostered that "It's never a zero-sum game, there are always things to be traded." (lines 1010-1011) Sometimes this change of perception is all that is required. At other times, it is insufficient as the conflict may be rooted in the formal organizational procedures, such as
inadequate systems or contradictory policies. An organizational system which is often the culprit is the budgetary system. Paul found that too often budgets operate on a punitive principle which causes contradictions. For example, savings in one year will often mean a reduced budget in the next.

Summary

Several conclusions can be drawn from the examination of the accounts of the practice of OD provided by Price Waterhouse. Firstly, even though much is made in literature of the application of action research principles in the practice of OD, at least two inconsistencies can be pointed out from the evidence collected. Collaboration is not always a feature and there is little evaluation of the consultant's activities. Secondly, an examination of literature (section 2.2) establishes that an objective of organization development is to leave the organization more able to cope with the changes in the environment. The practice of OD as illustrated by the consultants examined, reflects this objective. Changes in the organizational culture are an interest area. In the view of the consultant interviewed, Paul, achieving cultural changes provides the key to flexibility in an organization. It is also important to ensure that the relevant skills are transferred to the organization. Some individuals are trained in "organization development" skills as well as specific "job related" skills. A "holistic" approach in diagnosis and planning is favoured,
although the overall organization development strategy itself is not necessarily organization-wide. Thirdly, the management of conflict is another feature of many OD projects. A consultant will have to tackle conflict at specific stages of the intervention process, often at the diagnosis and planning stages. A key feature in the development of consensus is the visualization of a future which is desirable to all the parties involved in the conflict. Confrontation sessions often help in value based conflict. Some forms of conflict are caused by contradictory procedures and systems.
CHAPTER FIVE
THE CIVIL SERVICE: THE JOB SATISFACTION TEAM

5.1 Background

The Civil Service is a vast, complex organization performing a diverse range of functions through a wide network of offices which employs a broad spectrum of staff. Reports prepared by the Management and Personnel Office (M.P.O.) highlight three main areas of concern (M.P.O., 1985a; 1985b; 1986a).

Firstly, the organization of the Civil Service departments is of a centralized and hierarchical nature with a network of local offices. There are one or more middle tiers of administration between the local offices serving the public and the departmental headquarters which make the decisions. Lateral and vertical communication is slow and often ineffective, and there is little autonomy for local office management and their staff. There is a tendency to refer all matters upwards with an emphasis on structure, grade distinction and grade boundaries. Although the staff at the lower end of the hierarchy have to take responsibility for carrying out their jobs effectively, they are not allowed to make decisions. The authority for this remains at departmental headquarters.

Secondly, the design and implementation of mainframe computers in the Civil Service has tended to accentuate the
characteristics of what is already largely a clerical complex (M.P.O., 1986b). The individual clerk and junior manager are prevented from experiencing and understanding the context and purpose of any whole operation. Tasks are fragmented, jobs repetitive and functions small, separate and specialist. Little attention is paid to training and to ensuring that staff can adapt to changes in their work place. There is an inevitable climate of low morale.

Finally, the state of dissatisfaction within the Civil Service can also be attributed to the changing cultural environment and the changing attitudes of new recruits. The level of job satisfaction is determined not just by structural or technical factors, but also to a large extent by social changes in the environment. For example, there is an increasing proportion of female clerical staff with different demands on a job that has traditionally been designed for males by males. Also the better-educated staff today have different expectations and requirements. The educational culture in the UK has been highly dynamic, particularly in the last twenty years. Changes in educational styles and a greater access to higher education have altered people's expectations of the quality of their working life. Schools are emphasizing participative learning and a more imaginative approach to tasks is encouraged. The educational experience is often in stark contrast to the nature of jobs which are available to many of those leaving secondary education. In the Civil Service, although the minimum qualification for direct entrants to the executive
officer grade, that is the first level of management, is two GCE "A" level passes, over half the direct entrants are graduates (M.P.O., 1983). It is therefore not surprising to see a greater desire for a sense of identity, purpose and worth at work.

As a result of the inadequacies in the hierarchical and centralized structure of the Civil Service combined with a culture which encourages a conformity to rules and procedures, many of the lower echelons of the Civil Service have become characterized by a prescriptive approach to work. Together with the emphasis on a piecemeal approach to jobs and the changes in social factors, a low level of job satisfaction is common in many Civil Service departments. Against this backdrop, the Job Satisfaction Team operates.

Within the Civil Service in the late 1960s, there was considerable concern about the conflicts and ambiguities created by the changing aspirations of the staff on one hand, and the reality of the jobs provided on the other. In the early 1970s, a small team of civil servants, the Job Satisfaction Team (J.S.T.), was set up to run projects to illustrate the scope for improving job satisfaction, and the effects of re-designing jobs so that staff gained more responsibilities and a greater sense of achievement and effectiveness. The Team was originally part of the Civil Service Department and is now under the umbrella of the Cabinet Office. It includes both permanent Cabinet Office staff and staff of other Government Departments on
The first projects in job satisfaction in 1971 arose out of a concern for the quality of jobs at the bottom rungs of the Service's massive operations. Consultants were engaged to apply Herzberg's ideas to the Civil Service. Herzberg (1966) maintained that human beings have psychological needs for autonomy, responsibility and development which have to be satisfied in work. Although the outcomes were inconclusive, it was agreed at departmental headquarters that there was a potential benefit to be reaped from involving local staff in coming up with useful ideas for improving their work (Hodgson, 1985).

Deteriorating staff attitudes remained a concern as the Civil Service underwent major changes. By 1973, the range of central government functions had increased dramatically. There were more complex social security provisions, the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) and new employment services. The need for a speedy implementation of the new practices and a rapid information processing system had led to the introduction of more mechanistic solutions. The detailed instructions to carry out tasks, the reduction of discretion in local offices and the repetitive jobs in large batch-processing centres were alienating a better educated and more articulate workforce. The concern expressed by senior officials over the dwindling level of job satisfaction in departments led to more work for the J.S.T. (Shaw, 1985).
The J.S.T. started with an interest in investigating the potential of job redesign as a means of improving job satisfaction. Now the work of the J.S.T. clearly has wider aims. It has gradually evolved to include a much wider range of concerns. Job satisfaction projects now tackle the wider issues of helping local units be more responsive to customers' needs, helping staff become more involved in the making of decisions which affect them, implementing participative styles of management, and helping to bring about a less autocratic culture (M.P.O., 1984, p2). One of the consultants from the J.S.T. clearly states that the objectives are "to establish a work culture which has an openness to new ideas and possibilities, which supports flexibility rather than rigidity, which promotes creativity in staff and managers and which is responsive to its customers needs." (Shaw, 1985, p5)

Projects included work with the data processing staff in Customs and Excise, in local offices in the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Department of Employment, in the Office of Population Census and Surveys Computer Division, and in the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre at Swansea. Recently, a more flexible approach to fieldwork, coupled with a campaign to raise the awareness of the main Civil Service departments to the J.S.T. has led to fresh work in nine other government departments. These include the Department of Education and Science, the Inland Revenue, the Department of Health and Social Security and the British Library at Boston Spa. Typically, local office networks and
large single-site facilities are involved, but work is also going on in central administration. The grades of staff who are involved range from clerical assistant to Under-Secretary.

5.2 The process of intervention

Interest, response and preparation

A first step in starting any project, is to arouse the interest of the management, the staff and, or the local trade union officers in improving the level of job satisfaction. If positive interest is expressed, the next step is to explain the job satisfaction concept to those who will be participating in the project. This will involve a large-scale, organization-wide dissemination of information, through, for example, individual or group discussions, presentations and seminars. It is also important to achieve at an early stage, a good mix of resource options, that is helpers. These can be outside consultants, departmental and M.P.O. practitioners, managers and trade unionists who have some experience of the job satisfaction approach.

Preparing for the project includes "leadership foundation". This is described in the Guidelines for Job Satisfaction Practitioners (M.P.O., 1984, p36). The practitioner must build-up support for the project among top management and trade union people and ensure that their support is visible to the rest of the organization. There
must be a joint management and trade union agreement to pursue a clearly described job satisfaction approach and a process agreed for the joint steering of the intervention process between the two. The steering committee, or the coordinating or the planning committee as it is also called, is on occasions a sub-committee of the local Whitley Council. Its role is to guide the progress of the project and to ensure that there is a supportive internal environment for it. The members of the committee must therefore have a clear understanding of the job satisfaction approach. "Their main role is to enable staff involvement groups to solve problems, develop their skills and grow in competence." (M.P.O., 1984, p37) A goal of the consultant therefore is to ensure that the committee is able to carry out these roles.

The Guidelines for Job Satisfaction Practitioners, (M.P.O., 1984, p40) describe in general terms the early stage of a project. This involves data collection, data analysis and diagnosis. In data collection the practitioner aims to discover the strengths as well as the concerns of the staff at all levels of the organization. A balanced picture must be provided which identifies the relationship between individuals and between groups, as well as the general unit or departmental culture. The most commonly used methods of data collection are the questionnaire and the interview. Data analysis involves the categorization of information and an examination of the frequency with which an item of concern occurs. Possible causes and symptoms are examined. The issues of concern which are identified are grouped into
manageable proportions. The most frequently raised issues are given the highest priority. The results of the diagnosis is fed back to the contributors, to the Steering Committee and to the rest of the members of the organization in order to confirm its accuracy and acceptability. This ensures the credibility of the future activity.

There are other descriptions of the early stages of an intervention, provided by John, the consultant from the J.S.T. who was interviewed and also obtainable in the reports on job satisfaction projects prepared by the Management and Personnel Office. John's descriptions and the reports on the job satisfaction projects from the M.P.O. suggest that data is gathered to provide a "balance sheet" which reflects the positive and negative factors of the organization. The members involved often appear to have "ill-defined" thoughts about what they want (lines 1380-1386). There is therefore a need to talk to a wide cross-section of staff, including management and trade-union representatives, with the aim of finding out: (1) what the members of that organization would like to see changed; (2) what brings them to work; (3) what problems are they encountering; and (4) what factors stand in the way of an intervention (lines 1147-1157). The actual methods used to gather this information appear to vary with the context of each project. A wide range of issues linked to job satisfaction were identified. These issues were jointly identified with the in-house resource and the staff representatives, and feedback to the rest of the organization. Work groups were set up for involving the staff in the
analysis of the data (lines 1172-1198, 1470-1485). The following are some examples.

In the Southend project (Rowley, 1984), data gathering took the form of confidential interviews with individual staff members and with groups. Four issues of concern were identified: the work itself, the need for training and career development, a problem of communications and a dissatisfaction with environmental conditions. At Southport, (N.H.S.C.R., 1986), the J.S.T. interviewed individually about two hundred staff of all grades, that is approximately a third of the office members. The staff raised about seventy issues which were categorized under the headings of services, work procedure, training, work organization, personnel management and management style. In an intervention involving the County Courts (M.P.O., 1985b), a questionnaire was used to tap the experience of the clerical staff. At the Paymaster General's Office at Crawley (M.P.O., 1986b) a structured interview was used initially with headings such as line management communication and job satisfaction aspects to identify the main issues in order to effectively design a questionnaire for distribution to all staff. At the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre, Swansea (M.P.O., 1985a), a "methodology was evolved which included a number of basic elements: an initial approach to staff explaining the broad outline and purpose of job satisfaction, individual interviews with staff and feedback of concerns and issues to them as a branch, tackling selected topics through joint action, experimentation and evaluation." The first
project was in the Vehicle Enquiry Unit where about 240 staff dealt with telephone and written enquiries. Interviews with staff led to the involvement of all grades in a review of the working methods at the branch.

Planning and implementation

In the accounts of the projects conducted by the J.S.T., planning appears to be an on-going process which involves the planning in a general sense for the project, as well as to plan for some specific action. The Guidelines for Job Satisfaction Practitioners (M.P.O., 1984, p51) suggest that planning objectives should include: increasing trust, listening and openness of communication; clarifying goals for individual sections and branches; increasing the understanding of each other's goals; creating group goals when individual ones conflict; improving and developing members' skills in communication, and in seeking and accepting feedback to ensure that those involved in planning activities know what is really happening and to remove confusion about targets.

Early planning involves the Steering Committee examining the available sources of help and to make a choice from the different sources. These may include outside consultants, in-house practitioners, departmental trainees, and of course, the J.S.T.. Other issues requiring consideration are the possible effects of the proposed project on non-project areas; the timing, order, levels and
types of seminars or presentations; to agree on who will do them; and to identify the different needs of each audience, so that a presentation will emphasize only the aspects relevant to that audience.

The work group is the main mechanism for encouraging participation and is a common feature in the planning process (lines 1477-1518; M.P.O., 1984, pp20-21). More than one work group is set up to reflect the different grades and functions within the organization. A group may represent a vertical, horizontal or diagonal slice of the organization, although John found that groups of mixed grades are not as effective as single grade groups because the presence of more senior staff tended to inhibit and suppress the creativity of the more junior members. The groups are encouraged to identify problems and to develop and test out solutions for themselves. "The whole emphasis is on getting them to do things themselves" (line 1486). Specific skills training relating to the participation of staff in work groups may be necessary because "a lot of the people who volunteer, particularly with junior staff, have never taken part in meetings or committee work and may not have any idea of what it is about" (lines 1481-1484). The following are some descriptions of the use of work groups in job satisfaction projects.

At Customs and Excise, Southend (Rowley, 1984; M.P.O., 1986a), the Joint Steering Committee agreed that two clerical working groups should be set up to look at the two themes
identified in diagnosis: the quality of work and training, and career development. The objective was to examine and discuss in greater detail these themes, and to come up with some proposals of possible action. Initially there were three one day seminars, each seminar taking on one third of all branch executive officers. The aim was for the participants to consider and to discuss their changing role in the light of increasing staff involvement, to look at current issues of concern relating to that role and to find ways of starting a process to resolve them. Three months later, six working groups were formed, each comprising of six staff members from different grades. Each group was allocated about ten issues with the aim of finding ways to resolve them. By the end of the following month, working groups were meeting once every week for about one hour. Most groups had reached the stage of drafting recommendations on specific issues. The programme is still in progress although the M.P.O. presence is reduced. The effect so far, is much more openness between all levels of staff, with each member taking part in the process of deciding how the branch might operate more effectively.

At Swansea (M.P.O., 1985a), in the Clerical Drivers Branch, some 400 staff worked on a flow line principle. The handling of applications for driving licences was broken down into stages, and the operations of post opening, coding, checking and batching were all done by separate individuals. Experimental teams were set up which devised ways of combining tasks so that each clerk would do all the work on a particular item of mail.
At the National Health Service Central Register, Southport (N.H.S.C.R., 1986), the work groups consisted mainly of clerical staff. Their role was to tackle three of the six categories of problems which had been identified: services, work procedure and training. The remaining issues were tackled in seminars which were held concurrently for the different levels of management: work organization, personnel management and management styles. Individual progress varied, but when the situation was reviewed after twelve months an appreciable change in atmosphere had taken place. There was a general awareness of a need for improving the communication system and of the benefits of planned experimentation. It was then decided to bring together the disparate activities of the different levels and to tackle some of the fundamental issues which concerned management, staff and unions. There were experiments into "whole job" team working as an alternative to the existing production-line method with its fragmented tasks. The experiment started in October 1983 and was extended in February 1984. A successful model was produced and adopted throughout the office from February 1985. Other results included the implementation of the recommendations of a multi-grade working party for a more customer-orientated alternative to the existing National Health Service Central Register organization structure, job training guidelines prepared by a clerical group were adopted system-wide, and a Higher Executive Officer group devised and implemented a new policy for staff movement within the office.
Examining all the different accounts of the planning and implementation process in the various projects, it became apparent that implementation, that is in general terms taking action, can occur at intermittent intervals throughout an intervention. This is generally true of the more procedurally inclined activities and of course also in training related activities. For example, John found that management had to receive counselling before a more participative approach to problem solving could be introduced because management felt threatened by the participation of more junior staff in what they had perceived to be traditionally management functions (lines 1797-1803). It was also not uncommon for short periods of specific skills training to occur at intervals during the course of the overall intervention. The training can occur for example, at the simple level of helping staff participate in the intervention process by providing them with help in conducting meetings, in articulating their opinions, in communication, consultation and group working, or at the job level, for instance, specific job related skills training to help staff cope better with a newly introduced work system (N.H.S.C.R., 1986).

**Evaluation and the longer term**

The steering committee, the J.S.T and the staff involved in the change programme all have a part to play in the overall evaluation of a project.

The steering committees "from time to time at their
meetings discuss what they've got out of this, where have we got to and where do we go from here" (lines 1715-1720). There is also an examination of their own role as a group and what their achievements have been. At Swansea (M.P.O., 1985a), job satisfaction activities are overseen by the Driver Vehicle Licensing Centre (D.V.L.C.) Joint Steering Group which consisted of management, unions and J.S.T. representatives, with each branch having its own steering group.

There are three distinct elements to the evaluative role played by the J.S.T. as described by John (lines 1730-1760). Firstly, the effectiveness of the intervention process must be considered. For example, at Swansea it was generally felt that the intervention process was less effective because it failed to sufficiently involve management in the early stages of the project. By concentrating mainly on the views of the clerical staff, managerial resistance was encountered at the implementation stage (lines 1769-1775). Secondly, to consider the success of the project as defined by the client's criteria. Finally, to consider the effect of the project in terms of its contribution to increasing the credibility of the job satisfaction approach.

The managers involved in the change programme also play an important part in evaluation. The continuation of the project as an on-going intervention will depend on it being sanctioned by the managers. Therefore the managers themselves have to evaluate the project as it progresses, to take note of the positive effects and to feel that it is a worthy
project to pursue. For example, the J.S.T. encouraged the managers at Southend (M.P.O., 1986a) to make inspections. Executive Officers were provided with control folders to help them carry out checks on the changes occurring at the different levels of the organization, at either daily, weekly or monthly intervals. Working practices and the performance of work groups were scrutinized formally and in-depth by Higher Executive Officers annually and half-yearly.

Both quantitative and qualitative changes are evaluated (lines 1490-1500, 1749-1760). Quantitative changes are easily measured, and include differentials in productivity, backlogs, workloads, absences and turnover. Changes in people's perceptions is one way of evaluating qualitative changes. The qualitative differences are the changes in climate, relationships, morale, enthusiasm, the effectiveness of team working, and changes in management styles, for example at one level, amongst the management, a different attitude to the relinquishing of control, and on another level, the taking on and acceptance of greater responsibilities by the staff.

An objective is to pass on the ownership of the intervention to the organization, and to ensure that the process of improving job satisfaction will continue after the JST has ceased to be closely involved (M.P.O., 1984, p51). General evalulative activities play a part in helping managers and staff decide on the worthiness of continuing the project and in persuading the members of the organization to take
ownership. To achieve success in this is considered an important criterion in evaluating the overall success of the intervention. The successful adoption of ownership involves specific training sessions in addition to the staff participation in the project. For instance, specific training may involve the introduction of a middle-management developmental seminar to reinforce the learning from the project to help middle-managers develop their skills to handle change. Members of the organization are trained in processual skills (lines 1465-1477), and encouraged to set up their own training systems (lines 1550-1670). Also, the training and expansion of multigrade working groups will have the positive effect of accelerating the need for the line-manager to adopt active leadership and ownership roles.

The establishment of an "in-house support service" which can be used to maintain the development of the organization is an objective in the longer term. Its function is the provision of support and help to the staff who are involved in making further developments to the project, and to help new personnel adjust to the changes that the organization is undergoing. Once the support service is established, it becomes possible for the J.S.T. to become less involved.

Finally, a practical problem faced by the J.S.T. is the turnover of staff, in particular, the changes at the managerial level. One of the roles which a steering group must be encouraged to adopt, is to take responsibility for the reception and integration of new managers into the local
system which may be undergoing a fair amount of change. When the steering group begins to feel and to accept responsibility both for the new personnel and for the project, it may be the indication that the J.S.T. can begin to provide less directive help. It will take some time to reach this stage. For example, at Southport (N.H.S.C.R., 1986) taking ownership was a slow gradual process which involved greater participation by the staff in decision making, followed by an evaluation and assessment by staff and managers of the project and of the job satisfaction approach. When senior managers began regular meetings with Senior Executive Officers to keep themselves informed of what was being done to continue the developments in the new approach and had enough understanding and confidence to resolve the remaining problems, it was agreed mutually to reduce M.P.O. support to "care and maintenance".

5.3 Systems management

There are several aspects of the job satisfaction projects which illustrate how the J.S.T. copes with some of the problems of intervening in a complex system, and also show how the action taken can help the members of the organization face the changes in the environment. The projects adopt a "total organization concept", emphasize the importance of participation, seek to improve the communication process, and incorporate a belief in treating the intervention as an on-going process.
Total organization concept

There are two aspects to the "total organization" concept used in the job satisfaction projects. The target of intervention is treated in a holistic manner. The belief that whole job working is a better way of structuring jobs is an underlying principle of job satisfaction. There is also an understanding that an intervention in one system can have an effect on other systems. The members of the organization who are involved on the project are trained by the J.S.T. to take a holistic approach.

Whole job working

In the majority of the organizations where job satisfaction projects have taken place, the design of jobs within these organizations have been traditionally based upon specialization, and the simplification of tasks. An application of "scientific management" principles to jobs has resulted in the breakdown of tasks into small, routine operations, performed under rigid regulations and placed within a flow-line system. Studies by members of the J.S.T. found that alienation and dissatisfaction were widespread among lower and middle grade civil servants (Pennington, 1986; Shaw, 1985). It was also noted that few individuals understood the end-purpose of their job, there was little or no communication between groups performing inter-related tasks, and a high degree of inflexibility.

Faced with these problems, the J.S.T. began projects
which incorporated job enrichment principles. "Whole" jobs were performed rather than a single repetitive task with the staff actively participating in decisions which affected their jobs. Consequently, they had a greater interest in their work, and the levels of satisfaction, efficiency and productivity were noticeably improved. Increasing their levels of autonomy and self-direction were also objectives. To illustrate, consider two accounts of interventions involving the whole job concept. The first account is by a senior manager at the National Health Service Central Register (N.H.S.C.R.), and the second, by a member of the J.S.T.

Pennington's (1986) account describes how within the NHS Central Register, there was restructuring. Groups were developed to take on a responsibility for whole jobs. Some managers took a less directive role so that their subordinates could experiment with their preferred method of organising their work. Many of those who had been previously restricted to one very specific function in the organization were trained in a complete range of activities.

In another example, involving the Cumbernauld office of the Inland Revenue (M.P.O., 1986b), a new work system was designed which split the staff into twelve "integrated processing" teams of twenty persons. Each team handled a multitude of tasks, instead of just one, operated interdependently and developed a total control over the tasks that used to be done by three separate groups of people.
In both examples, the staff involved in the changes developed a better understanding of how their jobs fitted into the rest of their organization. As they learnt to communicate more readily and more openly, and handled their own planning, they began to develop a growing awareness of the need to keep in close touch with other teams whose work boundaries adjoined their's, so that common issues and workload flows could be tackled jointly. The J.S.T. found that when these developments occurred, the quality of the work that was produced improved because the different teams now had a better understanding of each others' needs, and the throughput was being handled more effectively (Shaw, 1985, p20).

Developing the flexibility and autonomy in both cases also enabled each system to be more responsive to the demands of the environment, and to be more sensitive to customer needs. For example, the work at Cumbernauld was of a seasonal nature, and the senior executive officers reported that the improved flexibility and autonomy were more suited to this (M.P.O., 1986b, p3). In addition, greater autonomy and self-regulation meant that the managers and supervisors were free to pursue their more important role of boundary management.

**Intervention in a "holistic" manner**

It is apparent that the job satisfaction projects adopt a "holistic" approach: its consultants are aware that an intervention can have an effect on other parts of the
organization, and that interventions should be directed as widely as possible at the other parts of the organization, and should tackle both structure and process.

Early projects by the J.S.T. rapidly established that job satisfaction work could not occur without taking into account the structural and processual components of the organization. In addition, many components such as structure, technology and management styles vary from one office to another. The way that an intervention was conducted and the action taken have to be developed individually so as to be relevant to the particular context of each project.

Taking action in one part of the organization must take into account the impact that this might have on other parts. The effect is more obvious, for instance with regard to changes in workflow which can affect the throughput into other parts of the system. Less obvious are the "psychological" problems which can be created by the limitation of an intervention to a specific section of an organization. For example, a member of the J.S.T. described how the attention paid to the project area can produce feelings of suspicion, hostility and envy in other sectors of the organization (Shaw, 1985). These feelings can grow until they produce uncooperative relationships within the project area, and encourage the attachment of blame to the job satisfaction activity for unrelated problems which occur in the organization. To limit this problem, the J.S.T. finds that it has to broaden its activity to include more sites for

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project work in the organization or, where possible, to develop project activity which applies to the organization as a whole.

An additional benefit of whole job working is the increased awareness and understanding which it creates amongst the members of the organization, of how the inter-related systems function as a whole. A consultant with the J.S.T. reports that this provides the individual with greater satisfaction and motivation, and an increased identification with the organizational objectives and the end-products of his work (Shaw, 1985, p20). An understanding of how one system relates to another also helps the members of the different systems understand each others' needs. There is improved decision making and as a result through-put is handled more effectively.

Participation

The description of the process of intervention in section 5.2 suggests that participation is an integral part of a project. The J.S. projects are based on the belief that the ability and expertise to deal with the many problems in a department already exists within the organization itself (lines 1300-1310). The members of the J.S.T. therefore see themselves as "facilitators" (lines 1265-1280). Several explanations have been provided which elaborate on this theme.
Firstly, clients are often vague about what the "problem" is. If a problem exists, it is often ill-defined (lines 1380-1340). Therefore to complete the diagnosis and to identify the problem, it is necessary to work with the client and the target system. Collaboration and employee participation is a condition of work in a complex, ill-defined situation.

Secondly, a consultant with the J.S.T. notes that often in an authoritarian organization, like the Civil Service, it is forgotten that the people doing a particular job know more about it than anybody else (Shaw, 1985, p4). A core concept of job satisfaction work is to tap into that wealth of ideas and to provide the opportunity for members of that organization to make a positive contribution to the improvement of their jobs and their organization. The consultant's job is to help people help themselves. He provides the process help which is required by the members to help them identify and analyse their problems, to find solutions and to put those solutions into practice.

Thirdly, only by involving the members of the organization will the consultant be able to judge the feasibility of a project and to anticipate the difficulties which might arise. This is because only those with a first-hand experience of the political arena in which the target of change operates will have an awareness of the identities of the influential figures and the parties with vested interests, whose views the consultant must take into account.
Also, the Guidelines for Job Satisfaction Practitioners (M.P.O., 1984, p46), suggest that only the members of the organization who operate under the everyday constraints of organizational and departmental "quirks and policies" will have a good understanding of them. Involving them will ensure that the intervention will have a greater chance of success.

It is important to identify and to involve the key figures in the different levels of the organization. From the top level, that is at departmental headquarters, it becomes critical that some senior executives are involved who will sanction many of the initial changes which are made during the early phase of an intervention. Until greater autonomy is developed, this being one of the aims of job satisfaction projects, early on in a project, the local manager will not yet have the authority to make many of the decisions. A key factor which is noticed in the successful projects was the presence of at least one senior executive on the steering committee, with sufficient status and "clout", who believed strongly in the proposed changes, who not only sanctioned those changes, but was also able to act as a significant driving force behind the changes. At middle levels, the site area regional managers must be personally interested and involved because, in effect, they are the "client" and the overall development of an intervention will depend on their needs and intentions. At the local level, branch managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of the branch, they determine the shop floor atmosphere, and will be the ones who are most involved in implementing the changes which
Finally, participation is part of the process by which the staff learn to solve problems for themselves and to learn new skills. In participating their level of enthusiasm is raised and there is generally a greater commitment to the project. The accounts provided of the projects suggest that there must be strong commitment from the management, the other employees and the trade unions, to the intervention. The people who are affected by the project must be consulted early on in the project.

For there to be effective participation and commitment to an intervention, some issues have first to be tackled. Although employees and unions may recognize and fully accept that the prime motivation for change is the need for technical efficiency, reduced costs or expanded capacity, if they are to cooperate wholeheartedly and without fear in the project, they must also be able to feel secure faced with what are mainly economic considerations. Therefore, it is likely that unions will seek assurances that their members will not be worse off. It is for this reason that guarantees for employment security and guaranteed earnings are commonly demanded and provided during the course of an intervention (M.P.O., 1985a; 1986b). Also, it must be made clear to the unions that the use of problem-solving groups and steering committees will not detract from the importance of the traditional functions of the trade union.
Another aim of the job satisfaction projects is to improve both upward and lateral communications. In creating effective channels of communication two purposes are served. Firstly, early and systematic communication improves the chances of a successful intervention. The J.S.T. found that, in many of the projects, early notification of the longer-term intentions by management to introduce changes, and the early involvement of employees and their representatives have tended to reduce their resistance to change (Shaw, 1985). Secondly, effective and early communication allows sufficient time for the decisions which are to be made to be properly evaluated in terms of the required resources and the effects which the project will have on employees. Time is needed so that the new concepts being introduced can be assimilated by everyone concerned, for all the options to be explored fully, and for negotiations to take place. There also has to be enough time for the required technical and processual training to take place. This will only happen if there is full and open communication at all stages of the change process. In a number of instances, managers described effective communication with employees and trade unions as the vital factor, with a full and honest disclosure of all their aims, if they wanted high levels of involvement and cooperation (Work Research Unit, 1982a). Regular, detailed and systematic communication at all levels can be achieved through the existing channels, or by the setting up of new systems to cope with the specific change programmes.
The channels of communication developed to dispense information and to involve the members of the organization, can also be used for evaluative feedback and monitoring purposes. The devices used are often quite simple: for example, Hodgson (1985) describes clerks meeting regularly with supervisors, supervisors with middle managers and middle managers with the top managers. These meetings have become a practical forum for generating ideas for problem solving, to share information and for planning the implementation of solutions. Other channels described by John, include work groups (lines 1172-1198), regular trade union and management meetings (lines 1410-1450), regular presentations, staff newspapers, circulars and newsletters (lines 1690-1710). Improving the channels of communication also has implications for the longer term survival of the organization. It is a critical component which affects the organization's ability to be flexible and adaptable, to be self-corrective and to process the information signals sent from a changing environment.

Change as an on-going process

Because of the complex nature of the target system and the unpredictable changes in the environment, the job satisfaction projects emphasize the need to develop local ownership. The change process is perceived as an on-going commitment undertaken by the members of the organization who continue with the necessary development and amendments after the J.S.T. becomes less involved.
One of the conclusions which Shaw (1985, p19) draws from a study of four job satisfaction projects is that the changes made are only experimental in nature due to the uncertain nature of the target and the unpredictable nature of the future. Experimentation is "learning by doing" rather than planning to perfection. Additional changes are often necessary to create the desired effect. New initiatives in one aspect of management needed to be reinforced by change in another (Hodgson, 1985). Also corrections have had to be made to a project for it to remain in tune with the unpredictable future. Therefore, taking action can only be considered an experimental means of testing and discovering outcomes, and amendments have to be continually made to the project.

In addition, there is the issue of "problem" recurrence brought about by factors which might not be under the control of the practitioner. A system is not in isolation as illustrated by John's analogy. He likened the hierarchical nature of the Civil Service to a geological force which will re-assert itself continually (lines 1630-1643). This is one reason why he advocates the training of some local staff in the skills which can "keep the process going." (lines 1465-1477)

The suggestion that a change programme should be on-going, implies that there is not only a need to persuade the members of the organization to assume ownership of the project, but to ensure that there is an effective
transference of processual and job-related skills to the target organization. Processual skills are the skills needed to carry on the change programme (lines 1630-1655) and job related skills involves the specific skills required to do a job which has altered as a result of the changes that the organization has undergone. John describes examples of projects in which potential candidates for an in-house resource are identified, developed and trained in processual skills (lines 1465-1477, 1630-1655), and also the specific skills training which is necessary to help staff cope with their re-designed work (lines 1550-1670). The account of the events at Southport (N.H.S.C.R., 1986) also provide examples of such skill-transference. For example, in order to re-form as a permanent Employee Participation Group the Steering Committee needed to develop problem solving and evaluative skills. Hodgson (1985) described how background courses were designed to meet new work needs and to help staff gain a better understanding of how their jobs fitted into the work of the organization as a whole. There were also management and supervisor development workshops to help them recognize and assume their responsibilities for managing the on-going change. In addition, an in-house support service was established to help maintain the change programme.

Summary

In a complex system like the Civil Service the job satisfaction practitioner has to intervene in a holistic manner. A target of intervention is treated as an
interdependent subsystem. Consultants are aware that an intervention in one part of an organization can have an unexpected effect on other parts. An aim is to create a greater awareness and understanding of the inter-related nature of the organization through whole-job working. There is a focus on creating a more flexible organization which is more responsive to customer demands. Participation is encouraged and better communication channels are often developed in a project. Both these elements are considered to play important roles in the intervention process: in providing more accurate information, to generate commitment, to provide a learning experience and to explore and discuss plans for implementing solutions. Finally, change is itself considered an on-going process. A project is closely monitored and corrections made. The unpredictable future and the recurring nature of problems in a complex system requires an effective transference of skills. Staff involved in the project are trained in specific technical skills to cope with the wider range of tasks which they have undertaken. Managers are trained in a series of management workshops to re-examine their roles as managers and helped to implement a more participative culture. Some local branches have acquired the authority to make their own decisions, albeit in a limited fashion, and have also taken on greater responsibilities. An aim is for a steering group to take responsibility for the project.
Section 2.3 suggested that one of the roots of conflict within an organization lies in the multiplicity of views which exists amongst its members. J.S. work appears to focus on related problems. A concept which is inherent in the work of the J.S.T., is the satisfaction of the diverse needs of the individual members of the organization. These needs, highlighted in section 5.1, may arise from a plurality of causes which exist in the environment, for instance, from the different social groups from which the Civil Service recruits, or from the different expectations which new members have of their jobs compared with the expectations of the longer serving staff. Although the term job satisfaction has been adopted by the J.S.T., its work is not limited to just increasing job satisfaction. Its work involves tackling many of the wider but related issues. Some of its end-concerns include achieving long term changes in the bureaucratic culture of the Civil Service, personnel development, developing a more responsible attitude to work, implementing participative and less autocratic management and improving the channels of communication.

Job satisfaction provides a broader perspective than traditional job design. It promotes a greater understanding of how work can be made more satisfying and productive, given that individuals are different. Scientific management, as described by Taylor (1911) and Gilbreth (1912), focuses almost completely on the task, with little attention paid to
the social or personal needs of the individual. Job satisfaction, on the other hand, is a behaviour-oriented approach and includes theoretical models which specify the inter-relationships between people, jobs and organizations (Porter, Lawer and Hackman, 1975). The social and personal requirements of the job holder must be satisfied (Davis, 1966). These requirements are in part determined by the social blueprint of each individual: their reference groups, their sex and their educational background. The consultant interviewed also believes that social changes have made the hierarchical culture of the Civil Service anachronistic. Developments in education, with an emphasis on innovation and creativity, are at odds with the regimented and hierarchical culture of the Civil Service. The staff now have very different expectations from what they had twenty years ago (lines 1609-1629).

So the J.S.T. was established. "Job satisfaction is the formal attempt by the Civil Service to recognize these human needs and to do something about them. This is not out of some selfless desire to be charitable, rather it stems from a logic that the more interested, more responsible and more involved staff are in their work, the more effectively will it be done and the more satisfaction will each person get as a result" (Rowley, 1984, p1). To do this effectively, the J.S.T. has had to recognize that there are many different needs waiting to be fulfilled, and that this poses a situation which can be potentially full of conflict. The long-term objectives of the practitioner are to "clarify
goals for individuals, sections and branches, to increase the understanding of other's goals, to ensure all goals are directed towards the same objectives, to create group goals when individual ones conflict, and to remove confusion about targets." (M.P.O., 1984, p51)

From the accounts of projects provided by the J.S.T., it appears that any potential situations of conflict within the Civil Service have been tackled resulting in little outward demonstration of conflict. John suggests that the aim is to prevent feelings from escalating to the point where confrontation occurs. At the organization-wide level there is the operation of the Whitley system and strong unionization. At a project level clear mechanisms are developed for participation so that any action taken will take into consideration all the different views. There is also evidence that counselling helps to prevent conflict.

Members of the organization, management and unions are provided with clear mechanisms to involve them in many aspects of decision-making. Furthermore, one of the chief characteristics of the Civil Service is the strong unionization of the work force. The overall impression is that the strong unionization and the operation of the Whitley system, where there is strong trade union representation, have contributed to the smooth operation of the Civil Service. John feels that the culture of the Civil Service produces a working environment where agreement and consensus generally prevails (lines 1820-1840). John finds that in his
experience the unions are realistic and that there is a high level of trust and cooperation between management and unions (lines 1427-1450).

At the project level, the J.S.T. encountered little resistance. In potential areas where conflict was likely to occur, the J.S.T. favoured dealing with the root cause at an early stage through counselling or third party mediation. There were several areas for potential conflict at the project level.

One general area involved changes which affected managers and their roles. The setting up of teams which were given a reasonable degree of autonomy appeared to management to undermine their traditional prerogatives, and created an atmosphere in which conflict was likely to occur. Another, not unrelated area, was also identified. Managers had to cope with the changes made to their role, from one of exercising overall control to one of encouragement and support for the decisions made by their subordinates. John found that many of the managers were expressing a dissatisfaction with the new directions of work. "They've been brought up and trained to manage in a particular way and now they feel they're being asked to do something that they are not trained to do, that they have no experience of... particularly in areas where they feel that they've managed the organization in a way that does the job in a perfectly acceptable manner." (lines 1853-1862) In both examples management workshops and counselling sessions, which helped
managers to re-examine their roles and objectives, were important features of the intervention (M.P.O., 1985b; lines 1797-1803). The aim of the sessions with middle managers was to develop more creative leaders who would then be able "to make a different set of positive assumptions about the needs of their staff and encourage their subordinates to be self directing" (Shaw, 1985, p21).

Another area of potential conflict lay between management and union. The aim was to provide them with the opportunity to work together. Both management and trade-unions are represented in equal numbers on the steering committee. One objective is to include in addition to the senior site-manager and the trade-union chairperson, a representative from each level of management and from each trade-union. An ideal situation would involve the joint chairing of the committee by the senior manager and the trade-union chairperson, thus visibly demonstrating the partnership aspects of the initiative. It was important that all members of the steering committee recognize that this was not an alternative or substitute for the normal negotiating forum.

Furthermore, the J.S.T. plays an integrative role. By developing a sound working relationship with management, trade unions and the different groups of clerical staff on-site and at other branches, the consultant is able to introduce into the change programme a structure which links the work of one group with another. There is a closer identification with the work of other groups and this has an
integrative effect. Closer more direct identification is brought about through "process" help. "Process" is about how people handle "content" through relationships, where "content" includes the structures, technology, job design, management, support and procedural systems of the organization. The practitioner will help individuals understand "what people are saying" and to help them interpret responses accurately and sensitively (M.P.O., 1984, p44). The method is for practitioners to act as observers at the various study group meetings, to comment on the process and occasionally to become involved in the content of the discussion. Where other branches need to be consulted and their close involvement required, the J.S.T. acts as a third party in getting people together and to create a better climate for the mutual concerns to be resolved. For example, a practitioner helps management "sift" through conflicting proposals, by looking for positives, not negatives, by helping them concentrate on "real" objectives, and to identify "real" risks. The J.S.T. would also help set up regular meetings between supervisors and middle managers as a practical forum for joint working on ideas and solutions to problems.

Summary

The job satisfaction process is concerned with improving the basic relationships between the job, the person and the organization. Job re-design is only one aspect of the J.S. projects. A job satisfaction project offers the chance to
initiate other organizational changes and to alter managerial style. In the long run, the job satisfaction approach helps the organization re-humanize rather than dehumanize the people who work in them. The J.S.T. philosophy is one which aims "to reassure people that it is normally within their power to find the answer to their problems . . . to provide support as they work out the best solutions and to develop greater participation in decision making" (M.P.O., 1983, p2). One of the consultant roles is to teach problem-solving skills to the members of the target organization. "Learning through action" is a stated objective in job satisfaction projects (Shaw, 1985, p19). Testing out ideas and options through experimentation is a core feature which helps to further the growth experience of individuals. The practitioner encourages the individual to move from a state of dependency towards a state of increased autonomy. The J.S.T. helps the staff to learn to be more self-directive. Skill training is an important part of the consultant’s work. In "processual" terms there is a need for developing a greater competence in group working and decision making. "Direct inputs are given to ensure progress can be made by individuals and or groups who lack the necessary experience and skills" (M.P.O., 1984, p44). Staff may require training in basic committee and minute-taking skills, interpersonal and presentation skills, and managers may require interpersonal and leadership skills and better problem-solving and decision-making abilities. The successful implementation of action plans may also involve additional technical training. For example, in the J.S. project
project conducted at Southport, job training guidelines were prepared by a clerical group and adopted office wide (N.H.S.C.R., 1986; Shaw, 1985). Training in the project conducted at Southend, involved improving the method by which new entrants were introduced to their work and the implementation of job rotation schemes (Shaw, 1985).

The consultancy process as illustrated in the J.S.T. projects (Section 5.2), suggests that in practice, there is no clear pattern of activities. On closer examination, it becomes apparent that activities which relate to implementation are not limited to the "end" stages of a project. This is especially true of training related activities. For instance, it was not uncommon to find that training courses were conducted during the early stages of a project. The training could either intervene at the deeper end of the "human processual" spectrum, such as counselling and awareness-raising amongst the managers, or at the more shallow end, for example, specific technical skills training to help junior staff participate on committees.

Furthermore, the approach to intervention adopted by the J.S.T. illustrates many of the principles of action research as defined by, for instance, Frohman et al (1976). The J.S.T. helps to establish a participative process of problem solving. An important aspect of this process is to learn from taking action. The projects are perceived as on-going and the transferral of skills is high on the agenda.
In "systems management" (section 5.3) several features of job satisfaction projects are noted. A "total organization" concept is utilized. Participation is encouraged. Improved channels of communication are developed. Change is viewed as an on-going process.

In "conflict management" (section 5.4), the different parties are encouraged to work together. Various structures have been set up to involve staff from all levels of the organization to participate in problem solving and decision-making. For instance, problem solving groups at the work force level, natural work groups, management groups, multigrade groups and a steering committee. The latter is made up of representatives from both union and management. The trainer and facilitator roles are emphasized. Managers are encouraged to overcome their prejudices and to adopt new roles to support autonomous working practices. Process help is provided to solve problems in communication, consultation and group work. A collaborative change agent model is utilized. "The whole essence of our work is that of helping people to do things for themselves— not doing things to people." (Burden, 1976, p2)
CHAPTER SIX

SHELL: OD UNIT

6.1 Background

In a large multi-national like Shell, the task of management is made more difficult by the ever increasing complexity of the social, economic and organizational systems which make up the company. The unpredictability of the environment and the changing pressures which it exerts on the organization have contributed to the problems.

As early as 1965, social scientists were called in to help set up a special study group in Shell U.K. Refining Limited (Burden, 1975). The objective was to overcome the industrial relations problems which were plaguing the organization. There were long delays in meeting production datelines, high wastage of material and human resources and a leap-frogging pattern of wage claims. Burden (1975, p201) described the organizational climate as one of "daily demarcation disputes between unions (which) resulted in gross overmanning and a set of restrictive work practices (which) made the job of getting anything done tedious and boring."

The need to re-think the approach to management was again triggered in the 1970s. The turbulent environment brought on the first oil crisis in 1973. Cormack and Wallace (1985, pp83-85) describe how by the end of the decade, there was over-production, with demand remaining at 60% below
capacity, uneconomic plant utilization, falling prices and immense losses for oil companies. It was argued by Blackler and Brown (1980) that a change in the process of managing was necessary, for the environments in which organizations operate and exist are nowadays dynamic and turbulent to the extent that organizations are unable to predict the effects of their own policies.

A direct consequence of the study group in 1965 was the enlisting of help from the Tavistock Institute to reconsider Shell's role in society. A "statement of philosophy" was developed and disseminated through a series of conferences, and job re-design projects were launched. Shell's involvement with the Tavistock Institute will be described as it represents an important period in the organization's long history of employing social scientists, and in many ways, served as a precedent for future organization development activity.

The statement of philosophy was based on the two notions of "stewardship" and "joint optimization". Stewardship can be interpreted as a directive for a better fit between the organizational output and the needs of the environment, while joint optimization implied a consideration of both the technical and the social system and the best fit of the two together. These two notions are clearly expressed in the first two paragraphs of the draft statement.

"Shell Refining Co. is primarily concerned to maximize its
contribution to the long term profitability of the Shell Group in so far as this arises from the efficiency with which it uses the Group's resources of man, money and material. The resources to which it has legal rights of privileged access are nonetheless part of the total resources of society as a whole and are, in this sense, social resources; the company believes that they must be protected, developed and managed as such. It furthermore believes that its use of these resources must be such as to contribute to meeting society's requirements for products and services."

(Blackler and Brown, 1980, p170)

In the two years which followed the issue of the statement, a series of conferences were held to involve the managers in a discussion of the principles underlying the philosophy. Demonstration job-redesign projects such as the one involving a microwax department described by Burden (1975), were launched to help disseminate and implement the philosophy. In the example involving the micro wax department, as an initial step towards implementing a participative style of management, weekly departmental meetings were established to seek the commitment of all levels to problem-solving. Greater flexibility was also created within and across shift-teams by abolishing clocking and increasing the autonomy of senior operators. Other job-redesign projects have been described in detail by Hill (1971), Burden (1975) and Blackler and Brown (1980).

However the philosophy of management has been criticized
on several counts (Blacker and Brown, 1980). While fulfilling the psychological requirements of the job, and also conforming to the contemporary literature on social ecology (such as Emery, 1972), Blackler and Brown (1980) argue that many of the projects seem to be inherently manipulative in their short-term approach to settling a climate of industrial dispute. They also note that the projects tended to be ad hoc and lacked adequate back-up systems. In the final instance, they argue that as a change-process the "new philosophy" had failed to "permeate" by failing to take into account the objective limitations to change, such as the differential in power bases, the pressure exerted on decision-making bodies by outside interest groups and the logistic difficulties of intervening in an organization the size of Shell UK.

Having said that, one important impact of the "new philosophy" was that it set a highly visible precedent for calling in social scientists to help the organization cope with particular difficulties. It established a mode of intervention oriented to problem-solving. The Tavistock scientists helped with developing the "new philosophy", to generate and to disseminate a statement which would overcome that current spate of industrial relations problems. Other social scientists, namely the organization development personnel, were used to help the company cope more effectively with the new phase of expansion in the early 1970s (Cormack and Wallace, 1985). Their role was to support the planned investment programme with a major educational
strategy which focused on enhancing the managerial capabilities in developing and implementing the "new philosophy" and on fostering new employee relations. A more participative and open climate was to be encouraged so as to help the desired changes take place. With the first oil crisis in 1973, the OD consultants' role became that of helping local operating companies increase their flexibility to local market conditions, whilst ensuring that there was still overall coordination between the companies, with the least possible amount of internal conflict occurring.

It is not surprising that in Shell many of the interventions from the mid 1970s to the early 1980s showed a socio-technical bias because of the example set by the "new philosophy" and its associated projects, and the popularity of socio-technical principles among the then contemporary management theorists. For example, Greeve (1985) provides an account of the participative re-design of a work organization in which the overall strategy for change was based on socio-technical principles and a re-structuring of the work situation. Langstraat and Roggema's (1985) intervention involving the introduction of independent production units and the joint optimisation of operational, technical and maintenance departments also shows a strong socio-technical flavour. Similarly, another intervention concerning organizational change in a tanker company which involved decentralization, increased responsibilities for the managers and multiple skill training, aimed "to maximise the shipboard operations with due regard to what is possible from
technical, desirable from social and essential from economic points of view." (Roggema and Voors, p17, 1985) All these interventions therefore show a strong socio-technical bias. Perhaps it should be added that in Blackler and Brown's (1981) view, there are similarities in values between OD and the "new philosophy": both adopt a particularly optimistic model of man which assumes that people are basically good, trustworthy and collaborative.

6.2 The process of intervention

Exploration and problem definition

The initial phase involves establishing a collaborative relationship, collecting information on organizational variables and processes, and returning the data to the client for discussion and diagnosis.

Mungall (1985), an OD consultant with Shell, describes how he meets and talks with key individuals, then collects data on how each individual perceives his own situation and, from this, identifies some of the key factors which are proving to be problems. The consultant's role as Mungall sees it, is to capture each of these "as is" states and to represent them in a meaningful manner. By fitting each view into a simple model of the organization as an open system, he describes how he is able to produce an organizational diagnosis which reflects the views of all those concerned.
Roggema and Voors (1985, p21) emphasize participation from all departments, all levels and all staff in diagnosis. A workshop approach is used by these two consultants. They suggest that there is a need to monitor the proceedings to ensure that the following guidelines have been satisfied:

- Each point of view must be accepted for what it is, no point of view can be immediately rejected.
- Each individual must have an equal opportunity to speak and no individual should monopolize the discussion.
- The value of any point is assessed purely on its merits, not on the hierarchical position of the person proposing it.

Similarly, Anna, the consultant who was interviewed stressed that she does not contract immediately on what is presented by a potential client as a problem or interest area. She found that clients rarely have an idea of what their problem is (lines 2292-2303). Diagnosis involves participation from all members. Data is gathered from a wide range of the members of the organization, using one-to-one interviews or group work. A crucial aspect of her job is to build up a relationship which is based on trust with the clients and with the other members of that organization (lines 2330-2350). The objective of the data-gathering stage is to obtain a "current situation picture" which reveals to the client and to herself the pros, cons, strengths, weaknesses and constraints of the situation (lines 2318-2325). She adopts a socio-technical perspective in diagnosis which provides her with a useful approach in her
examination of the multiple systems of the organization (lines 2360-2390). She describes the use of brainstorming, one-to-one sessions with the top levels and focus groups with the rest of the organization to draw out the key issues (lines 2119-2160). These issues are then feedback to the various contributors, to generate a validating and "learning process" whereby she is able to assess their reaction to the identified issues (lines 2429-2445).

Furthermore, Gjemdal (1985) noted that to arrive at an accurate diagnosis, the interpersonal skills of the members of the organization, who are participating in the diagnosis, have to be first developed. A learning phase is incorporated into the early stages of an intervention which allows the participant to learn about himself and his own feelings, and to develop his appreciation of the reactions and feelings of other individuals. By being able to communicate better, to express themselves better and to interpret the meanings of others more correctly, the diagnosis will reflect more accurately the state of the organization. Without this "learning phase", Gjemdal argues that any initial diagnosis can only be superficial.

Therefore, there is a clear diagnostic stage in the work of these consultants. Their accounts of the projects, which they have been involved in, indicate a non-prescriptive approach. The participation of all the members and collaboration between client, consultant and target is encouraged. Together, their main concern at this stage is to
ensure that an accurate diagnosis is achieved from a full picture of the current state of the organization. It seems that for an effective diagnosis, the consultant should first tackle some of the "human processes". For instance, some of the consultants emphasized improving the level of interpersonal communication, participating in group work, and so on, to enable a more complete picture to be obtained. OD techniques such as brainstorming are used as effective aids in the process of problem definition. The consultant helps a participant to communicate more effectively his or her point of view, and to respect and take into account the views of the other participants.

Planning and implementation

The OD consultant adopts a role of process helper and trainer during the planning stage. The two stages of planning and implementation are not always distinctly separated. For example, in providing help in the planning process, the consultant will also inadvertently pass on some knowledge if not some planning skills. This outcome may be seen as part of the overall desired plan for implementation.

Roggema and Voors (1985) used a workshop approach to planning. Two discussion groups worked on two themes:

- What should the shipboard organization look like in twenty years time?
- What steps should be taken to achieve this desired change?
The consultants by developing a common basis for understanding the diagnosis, by encouraging a focus on a desirable future, were able to help the participants devise action plans. All those involved were surprised to find that both shore-staff and sea-staff, having assumed opposing stances, actually held similar views.

The consultants also propose that two conditions must be fulfilled if a change programme can be successfully implemented as an on-going process which is to be managed by the members of the organization. Firstly, participation must become an important aspect of the intervention. The analysis of problems and the designing of alternative "solutions" must take place in a participative manner, involving all sectors of the organization. This is necessary if there is to be shared objectives and shared ownership of the changes. Secondly, senior management must be involved in guiding the change process so that there is a continuous assessment of the wider implications of the changes for the company's policies. The intervention is conducted so as to fulfil these conditions, thereby ensuring that the change process can continue without the presence of the consultant.

In another intervention project, Mungall (1985) made use of the confrontation technique to help the technically-dominated and highly task-centred project personnel to increase their awareness of each other. Views from different members were collected and fed back to the contributors. The contributors were able to confront and clear up their
perceptions of each other at the personal and also at the collective level. The consultant was able to show that the same problem area was perceived differently by different people. Through confrontation, the different parties developed a better understanding of each other. It was possible in this manner to bring about a level of agreement, which enabled the members to work together to achieve the necessary changes.

An effective action plan according to Gjemdal (1985, p159), who describes an intervention conducted into A/S Norske Shell, should contain the following points: criteria for a good solution; procedures; relevant factors to be evaluated; alternative solutions; and advantages or disadvantages in the choice of the solution. Furthermore, implementation or taking action cannot be solely limited to the final stages of an intervention. A successful intervention, he believes, should include a transference of OD skills. An attempt must be made to formally train some of the members to conduct OD work. To do this, staff must be selected from line and personnel departments and involved from the very beginning of an intervention. Gjemdal found that the learning-from-experience needed to be reinforced by periods of formal OD training. This training has to be integrated into the daily work schedule of that particular member of staff.

Anna made the point that it was not uncommon, from her experience, to find that progression in a project can be hindered because the problem was deeply rooted in the culture
or leadership of an organization. Even though the client participates in the diagnostic process, he may not always accept the outcome. The prevailing culture of the organization prevents the acknowledgement of certain issues because these issues contradict to too great an extent the strongly established current values and norms. Often this culture is reinforced by the value system which is exemplified by the leadership. This "basic flaw" in the system cannot be corrected by any amount of activity on the part of the consultant. Anna feels that the consultant must be shrewd enough not to antagonize the client if there is a constant denial of a problem-situation despite information to the contrary (lines 2600-2628). The best action to take is either to retreat and hope to be invited back at a later date, or to work on the issues which are acceptable, in the hope that the leadership or climate might change for the better, so making it possible to re-introduce the unacknowledged problems (lines 2545-2553). If there is an agreed and acceptable diagnosis, her role is to provide the necessary processual help in planning. She stresses that the aim is to encourage the client and target systems to take the initiative in discussions and in the suggestion of ideas. It should also be the client who puts these ideas into practice. Like the other consultants, she finds it useful to use confrontation methods to overcome differences in perceptions and participative work units to workout action plans.

In the accounts of these projects conducted by the above consultants, there is evidence which points towards an
intervention process which is collaborative, participative and aimed at achieving consensus. The consultant uses his or her processual skills to ensure that firstly, ownership of the problem is passed on to the client system, secondly, the full potential from planning is realized and thirdly, there is an adequate transference of skills to the organization.

**Evaluation**

It is interesting that evaluation appears to be an important aspect of the intervention process as described in the published accounts of projects in Shell, but in an in-depth interview with Anna, she explained that, in her experience, "little of it actually went on" (lines 3000-3005). For example, in Roggema and Voors' (1985) account, senior management is involved in assessing the change process and the wider implications of the changes for the company's policies. Mungall's (1985) account of an organizational change project emphasizes the evaluation after the implementation by project staff. The Shell project manager and two top managers on the contractor side of the organization effectively acted as a steering group for guiding and monitoring the OD contribution. In Gjemdal's (1985) description of the OD process, evaluation is followed by new input. There is monitoring and corrective evaluation. There is also evaluation in terms of cost-benefit and consultant effectiveness. In Gjemdal's account, the Personnel Department performed a cost-benefit analysis of the OD activities, followed by a more thorough evaluation by the
Norwegian University of Business Administration using an interview and questionnaire method.

However, Anna explained that, with respect to her own experiences, there was little overall evaluation taking place after an intervention. During an intervention there is evaluation in terms of monitoring the progress of an intervention; "it was to mark points where the consultant and client reviewed and exchanged views." In her scheduling of a project she incorporated set points with the client to monitor, evaluate and review. Having had experience as both an "internal" and "external" consultant, she points out that, as an external, she tended to review at more frequent intervals than as an internal (lines 2992, 3012). The "worthiness" of the intervention in cost terms is assessed informally by the client as the intervention progresses. After the termination of a project, she admitted that there is little "formal and philosophical" evaluation (line 3004). Evaluation by the consultant in terms of her performance and contribution is costly and has little to do with a particular client. In addition there are two inherent problems which first need to be resolved. Who pays for the evaluation? And is a consultant able to be objective in evaluating his or her own performance? (lines 3013-3035).

Summary

This examination has used examples of the OD projects conducted in Shell to illustrate many of the key features of
the intervention process. For example, there is an emphasis on collaboration and participation. One of the consultant’s objectives is the transference of skills to the client and target system in order to improve the organization’s ability to conduct the intervention and to function effectively with less help from the consultant. Specific action is taken based on a diagnosis. These features incorporate many of the principles of action research, as for instance identified by Frohman et al (1976). According to these principles, action research

- "emphasizes a data-based diagnosis of system problems
- is aimed at solving system problems as a means of improving problem-solving skills of the client
- specific actions generally are developed on the basis of specific problems
- emphasizes training the client in effective problem-solving skills and processes
- generally involves evaluation of results as a basis for further diagnosis of problems, action-planning and action-implementation
- usually does result in new behavioural science knowledge." (Frohman et al, 1976 p132)

However with respect to the last two points, it seems that, although the consultant will gain experience and hopefully new knowledge from an intervention, there is little formal evaluation by any professional body, and little formal feedback into a "professional bank" of information for use by
other consultants. There is also evidence suggesting that there is little or no pattern to the intervention process: this will be discussed in greater detail in an overview of the case studies (Chapter Eight).

6.3 Systems management

OD was first introduced into the Shell Group to help the management cope with a new phase of expansion in the comparatively stable environment of the early 1970s. By the end of the decade, Shell was facing an increasingly turbulent environment with a greater need to plan for an uncertain future. A series of world oil crises and the increasing economic pressure led to various attempts by managers to respond directly to the respective environments of their companies, and not to the needs of the Group as a whole. This caused serious inconsistencies within the Group with little cohesion among the subunits. This difficult period provided a role for OD which was "the creation of the appropriate culture, skills and mechanisms required to achieve change... to survive and to respond rapidly." The overall aim was "with low growth prospects, operating companies should be freed to respond to the local market conditions whilst not threatening the optimization of Shell companies' business." (Cormack and Wallace, 1985, p94)

There are several implications for the practice of organization development. Firstly, the diagnosis stage of the intervention has to adequately reflect the increasing
complexity of the organization and the turbulence in the environment. Secondly, organizational learning must be emphasized. In dealing with complex situations, the consultant and the organization will discover more about the nature of the problem as the intervention progresses. Thirdly, as problems in complex situations recur, it is important that the organization is trained for self-help. During an intervention, a fair amount of skill transference is necessary.

In some cases, faced with systems complexity, OD consultants have made use of cybernetic theory. The cybernetic concept of requisite variety is identifiable in some OD interventions.

Finally it is recognized that organizational flexibility is an important attribute in helping the organization achieve a rapid response to an uncertain environment. Many of the OD interventions in Shell aim to increase this flexibility.

Diagnosis in a complex system

From the accounts of interventions into the Shell Group, it seems that diagnosis in a complex system implies at least three tasks for the consultant: to provide an objective perception of the organization, to spark-off unrecognized or sensitive issues, and to collect data in a holistic manner.
Often the client, faced with a complex web of daily decisions, will neglect the more important long term or strategic issues (lines 2789-2795). The consultant interviewed felt that one of her roles was to provide an accurate picture of what is happening in the organization and in industry and to share this picture with the client (lines 2350-2360). She brings in a stranger's view and a knowledge of what is happening in similar companies and other sectors of the industry. From this picture, important issues can be identified. These issues are diverse and may concern the long term strategy of the company, inadequate resources or cultural problems. The task of the consultant is to sensitively help the client recognize these issues during the diagnosis. Collaboration is an important factor in this process. According to Anna, if there is to be support for the intervention, there must be joint identification of the problems. In addition, part of her work involves "seeding" ideas: a consultant can harm the fragile relationship which he or she has with the members of the organization if an "expert" role is adopted. Managers who have had a long period of employment with the organization will feel insulted if their particular brand of knowledge and expertise is ignored (lines 2166-2180, 2720-2730).

Secondly, the consultant must draw the client's attention to issues which are not easily recognized due to the peculiarities of that organization, such as the personality of a leader or the culture. This aspect of the consultant's work is often the most difficult. Consciousness-raising, which
involves the identification of sensitive issues, is not always successful. "They will not hear, you can remind them... people will keep on denying" (lines 2642-2648). Contentious issues are rationalized and anaesthetized in a political manner. She refers to specific examples, some within Shell (lines 2643-2648), others to do with experiences with the police force (lines 2620-2635) and the National Health Service (lines 2572-2610). Like Lavoie and Culbert (1978), she suggests that the task of the consultant in tackling contentious issues of a highly moral nature, such as judgemental errors in the police force, is impractical if not impossible. There may however be an explanation. If Kohlberg's (1969) concept of the "level of moral development" is applied to the police force, it appears that the nature of the force does not allow a recognition and confrontation of the issues. It may be that the level of development in the police force is incompatible with the problems which it needs to address. She has no answers to Lavoie and Culbert's request for a developmental model which moves a system from one level to the next. But she feels that she has a moral duty not to neglect these issues. She allegedly knows that "a lot of consultants will only go with what clients say and forget they have seen other areas" (line 2637). Instead, her aim is to bring up these issues again at a later date in the hope that one or two individuals may be "developed" enough, in Kohlberg's usage of the term, to a "post-conventional" stage of morality, which allows them to accept issues of a highly self-critical nature. She accepts that accomplishing shifts in the moral states in individual and organizational
development are often beyond the abilities of an individual consultant. In doing so, she is provided with a useful perspective that as a consultant she need not neglect sensitive issues, nor does she have to overstate them and then risk being insensitive and lose her welcome.

Another aspect of the work of a consultant during diagnosis is to ensure that information is collected from as wide a variety of sources as possible so that the complexity of the organization is reflected. The consultant interviewed favoured one-to-one interviews with key figures of the organization, for instance with top management and focus groups throughout and across the rest of the organization. In Roggema and Voors's (1985) account of an intervention they favoured workshops where "there were individuals from all departments and levels of both the ship and office organization", so as to provide equal opportunities for all to participate. All views were encouraged. Other accounts of interventions within Shell which illustrate an approach which advocates "systems-wide" participation in diagnosis include Mungall (1985) and Cormack and Wallace (1985).

Organizational learning

It has already been suggested that, for an organization to survive in a turbulent environment, it needs to be capable of adapting through learning about itself and its environment (section 2.2). It must be able to correct and monitor its state. One way of looking at the work of the OD consultant
is in terms of how he or she can help the organization improve its ability to learn, which in turn affects to such a large extent the organization's performance.

The consultant can first provide the expertise to help the organization in the diagnostic aspects of self-discovery, that is to learn about itself, its members and its problem-context. Specific models or processual techniques can be used. Secondly, there must be learning as in the transference and teaching of skills. And thirdly, there must be learning from taking action and corrective activities involving monitoring and feedback. The consultant has a teacher function which can be explained in action research terms. Organizational change is seen as a process which re-iterates as the environment evolves. The present reality in which the organization finds itself is described in some detail and hypotheses are formed to explain the present situation. These hypotheses are validated and a new vision of an improved reality is conceptualized and the means for achieving this vision is planned and implemented. This is a cyclical process because initial diagnoses may be inaccurate and a vision will change as the environment evolves. Therefore, the consultant must transfer the relevant skills to the organization in order to enable the organization to help itself.

Help is provided for the organization regarding self-discovery. The consultant expertise in processual issues and their knowledge in the use of various models is tapped. Mungall (1985) uses an "open systems" model which increases
the client's and problem-system's understanding of the organizational dynamics. The model represents the interactions of the organization with its subsystems and its environment and is effectively used as a diagnostic tool. A better understanding of the organizational processes is generated by the representation in an interactive manner of the collective perceptions and statements gathered from the members of the organization. Watson and Pritchard (1985), on the other hand, emphasize consultant help in the design and implementation stages of their "strategic planning process". The consultant's skill applied in the minutiae of planning can help the people involved in the process to develop a common language as well as to extend their understanding of the nature and contexts of the issues at stake. Cooperative working is encouraged between individuals, between groups and within groups through organizing and running workshops. The consultant also helps the organization find out more about itself by providing a more objective view of the organization for the decision makers. The latter may be too involved in the day-to-day running of the organization to be objective. Anna feels that another advantage which a consultant brings to the organization is a "bird's eye view", that is a knowledge of the rest of the sector gained by working in other parts of the industry (lines 2350-2354).

This emphasis by OD consultants on using their expertise to help the organization learn about itself is inextricably linked to their "teacher" function. A degree of their skill and expertise must be transferred to the
organization if the consultant is to help the organization improve its long term ability to learn. The consultant interviewed stresses the importance which she attaches to skill transference (lines 2765-2990). "Learning and unlearning are concepts I have at the back of my mind. I assume a client, who has asked me in, may want to learn something." Some of the skills that the consultant would like to transfer are a greater understanding of the "processual things", to help a manager develop an effective ability in the delegation of everyday tasks, and "to build up their techniques and their skills to that strategic level in quite a conscious way." By this she means an ability to distinguish between operational and strategic levels: to distinguish between these simple concepts proactively while at the same time not neglecting the behavioral aspects of management. It is also apparent that the teacher-function can take on a "formalized" approach, for instance as in Gjemdal's account of OD in Shell Norway (1985). A distinct period of formal teaching is included in the intervention, where knowledge of the behavioral sciences is transferred to the members of the client-target organization. They can more effectively identify key problem areas because they now possess a better understanding of organization processes and dynamics. There is also a distinct learning phase which gives the groups the opportunity to consider in detail the material important to achieving an accurate diagnosis.

Another aspect of organizational learning is the learning from taking action. This involves feedback,
monitoring and taking corrective action and is considered a necessary aspect of the intervention process which enables the consultant and client to decide on a direction and pace appropriate to the changing context (lines 2992-3035). This aspect of an intervention has been discussed in detail in the previous section (section 6.2).

Cybernetic concepts

"Variety" is the measure of environmental complexity which can overwhelm a system's regulators (Beer, 1979). A system must possess the requisite variety to counter the disturbance in the environment. In other words, it is necessary to increase the level of variety in the organization to match the variety in the environment. Because the future is an unknown factor which organizations have to face, their members must, firstly, be able to accept this uncertainty and, secondly, be able to cope with the variety and changes that the uncertainty brings. These are concepts which have been applied in the OD interventions described by Roggema and Voors (1985), and Halpern (1985). Halpern's (1985) suggestion that the uncertainty within the organization must be increased or decreased to match the uncertainty in the environment bears a resemblance to the application of the concept of variety as described by Beer. He describes some specific examples of uncertainty-increasing steps. For example, formal rules in contracts can be minimized so as to increase system-flexibility and the speed of response to uncertainty. Also, through "multi-skilling",

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individuals are provided with a wider perspective to be able to confidently and effectively anticipate change. Halpern also describes "variety decreasing" techniques. Roles and goals are classified in a manner which helps exclude the non-relevant parts of the environment. In addition, the members are involved in a continuous open-ended process of re-design which puts into practice the two principles of "incompletion" and "experimentation": an intervention is never completed and it is necessary to learn from taking action. In this way he teaches the members of the organization to come to terms with the uncertainty which they face. Roggema and Voors's (1985) account of an intervention describes how organizational variety is increased, and how a system's ability to deal with uncertainty is improved by adopting an open-ended change strategy which reduces the prescriptive role of experts, increases participation and reduces the autocratic leadership and caste-like division of staff.

Improving flexibility

The decline in organizational flexibility can be attributed to several factors. An increased bureaucratization, a plethora of rules and regulations and excessive authority can all impair the organization's ability to be flexible and to respond rapidly to change in the environment. Flexibility also declines because of an organization's innate suppression of the information which is necessary for change to occur. The OD consultant has to pay
special attention to the processual elements of the organization, for often it is through the failure of some members to appreciate the different perceptions held by other members, the lack of support or confidence in a leader, or a fear of change itself which impairs an organization's ability to be flexible. The root of inflexibility can also lie with one key person, who set in his or her ways, will hold back the organization. The argument for improving the flexibility of the organization is self-evident and is summed up by two senior OD consultants in Shell International:

"The environment is critical in determining the central purpose of the organization, in terms of society's needs ...(because) organizations exist in their contexts, communicate and react to the environment... the systems and subsystems need to be flexible and responsive to outside influences." (Watson and Pritchard, 1985, p213)

Greater flexibility can be achieved by making changes in the structure and processes of the organization.

For example, in an organizational change project involving Shell Exploration and Production, the OD manager identified "human-processual" elements as key factors which inhibited the ability of the organization to be flexible (Mungall, 1985). There was a mixed level of commitment to tasks and poor working relationships. There was a lack of clarity in the minds of many people as to what their roles were. Relationships between on-shore and off-shore
operations, between client and contractor, and between joint-venture partners were marked by adversarial and negative attitudes. As a consequence, people and work systems adjusted at different rates, with little cooperation and continuity, causing long delays. All this created a climate of uncertainty, ambivalence and insecurity, with people being at their least flexible. There was a need to develop effective mechanisms to improve the level of interpersonal and group communication and understanding, and to build up a supportive relationship between the members of the system. Intergroup workshops were employed to determine better ways of communication and members were prepared for more cooperative working methods.

In another example, one of the main objectives of Shell Netherlands Refinery is to be permanently capable of exporting outside the Benelux countries (Langstraat and Roggema, 1985). The organization must therefore be flexible enough to adapt to the fluctuating economic circumstances. This was achieved by:

- a division of the refinery into eight production units, each relatively autonomous and managed by a multi-functional team consisting of operational, maintenance and technical staff;
- an improvement of the relationship between the central technical services and the production units;
- a reduced number of hierarchical levels.
A change in structure in this manner, backed up by an improvement in the human processes, in this case, the relationship between two systems, according to Langstraat and Roggema (1985), successfully enabled a greater degree of autonomy, flexibility and a more rapid response to the demands of the environment to occur.

Watson and Pritchard (1985) stress that consultants must beware of "overly simplistic" interventions which selectively focus on the human processes, as in the very early "traditional" OD projects, or of just tackling the formal structures and the relationship between the formal systems. To achieve flexibility, they argue, OD interventions must be comprehensive and aimed at both the formal and informal elements of structure and process. They found that many interventions ignore the need to work on the informal processes of the organization and the informal structures and relationships. They note also that, in addition to neglecting informal variables, often "structural" variables are emphasized in interventions at the expense of "processual" variable such as the culture, the values and the operating procedures.

During the interview with Anna, she suggested that there is a need for a preparation stage early on in the intervention process. It was difficult to intervene at the human processual level because the term itself was not well understood, "process to one group was the product process" (line 2773). She found that an awareness of the processual
elements which produces the closed frame-of-mind must be first developed among the members if overall flexibility is to be improved. There must be re-education because conventional education had closed their minds to one another’s, to other people’s meanings and sometimes their own. As a result there was often unintentional resistance to change and a suppression and an inability to acknowledge the information which called for change.

Anna also found that a department’s inability to be flexible can be commonly caused by the inflexibility or "short-sightedness" of one key decision-maker. The provision of individual and group training sessions and the conduct of workshops which involve role-playing can do much to improve the situation. She admits that inflexibility in a department cannot always be eradicated and she suggests that building-up a multi-disciplinary project team within that department can often help to generate new ideas and to provide the missing variety. (lines 2940-2950)

Summary

This section aims firstly, to illustrate, by way of examining some of the projects conducted in Shell, how OD tackles the particular difficulties of intervention in a complex system. There is an emphasis on providing an accurate diagnosis which reflects the organizational diversity and is not prescriptive in approach. The intervention process is based on action-theory, on learning from taking action and on
an understanding that it is an on-going process. Skill transference and learning are emphasized. Some accounts seem to illustrate the practice of cybernetic principles. OD must also leave the organization in a fitter and more flexible state, better able to cope with the changing environment. Many of the OD interventions in Shell considered the development of organizational flexibility an important objective.

6.4 Conflict management

Counter cultures, pluralism and conflict in Shell

Transactions between the organization and the environment involve not just resources such as raw materials and end-products but people with their backgrounds, their definitions of a problem situation and their expectations. Selznick (1970, p22) states that "individuals have a propensity to resist depersonalization, to spill over the boundaries of their segmentary roles, to participate as wholes". This "spill over" has meant the creation of the Shell Group as a multi-cultural organization in more than one sense. Firstly, each nation embodies different traditional values in its work force. This aspect of cultural deviation is of particular relevance to Shell because of its size and international operations and will be considered in some detail. Secondly, culture is also a function of the multi-faceted nature of the work-force. Each department, each subsystem has its own culture and subculture arising...
from not just the national but the other various social, educational or technical backgrounds of its members.

With regard to the first aspect, Hofstede (1980; 1985), with particular reference to the Shell Group, describes how different national differences might arise in culture. Within any culture, national or organizational, counter-cultures may exist because a work organization is not a total institution. It can only partially incorporate its members because they will to a certain extent still possess their own cultural layers. Research into national differences in mental programming allows Hofstede to make distinctions between values held in one country from another. It is these differences that a large multi-national such as Shell must take into account. Wide disparities mean that joint-ventures such as those between the Western and Third World are slow to develop because national dimensions are difficult to breach. Four dimensions are identified by Hofstede (1980) which vary from one country to another. These are:

- a tendency towards individualism or collectivism
- a difference in the acceptance of inequality
- a differing degree in the tolerance of uncertainty
- a tendency towards "masculine" or "feminine" societal values

Therefore, whether in its business dealings or within local operating companies, the Shell Group will encounter a deviation of dimensions which will contribute to the
establishment of a pluralist setting for decision making and problem solving. This is an aspect of management which cannot be ignored by OD groups in Shell.

On a different note, perhaps it should also be mentioned that Jaeger (1986) comes to the conclusion that the type of OD activity that can be utilized, is dependent upon the dimensions, as defined by Hofstede, which operate in the particular organizational context. It is important to choose the intervention which would clash least with the most rigidly held cultural values. For example, he suggests that situations of high uncertainty avoidance, high power distance and high masculinity, preclude the use of deeper interventions, such as T groups, sensitivity training and group psychotherapy. A more structured approach is appropriate in this context, such as survey feedback.

While a pluralist setting can stem from outside the organization, that is from the cultural values of a particular nation, it can also be fostered from within the organization. Burns (1966, p113) refers to three social systems which exist within an organization: the working organization, the political system and the career system. The first is composed of the formal authority system which is derived from the aims of the organization, the second is the alliance, based on self-interests, of individuals to groups or departments, and the third involves the career structure of the organization in which the members of the organization compete, cooperate and "bargain towards a satisfactory
equilibrium between their goals and those of the organization" (ibid, p119). Conflict can arise from the differences between these systems.

It is only by acknowledging and understanding the counter-cultures, the pluralism and the conflict in Shell, that the OD consultant can be of help to the organization.

The integrative role

The recurring question for management in Shell is, how can a very large assembly of very different people articulate a continuing joint purpose and plan to work together to achieve it (Hofstede, 1985). Paradoxically, while aiming to achieve a cohesion in order to function effectively, an increasing number of large companies like Shell wish at the same time to retain their cultural diversity. This diversity is now recognized as a strength which can be tapped to achieve a synergy that other organizations may lack. Possessing two or more cultures is seen as a positive source of richness where one plus one makes more than two (Pritchard, 1984). Therefore, organizations like Shell which claim an openness to cultural diversity cannot work at achieving a cohesion through an authoritarian top-down strategy. Such a method would not only stamp out all forms of diversity and any hope of synergy, but has little chance of being a long term success. Cohesion, and also the means of achieving it, must in the Western world be based on a "consensus approach". This implies an approach which
encourages cooperation and collaboration between the many different cultures and the different groupings within Shell.

One consultant's description of an OD project (Mungall, 1985) is an example of how different organizational cultures were integrated, at least for the duration of that one project. There were considerable losses due to the friction and the lack of cooperation between the two cultures of the on-shore and off-shore systems. Roles which lacked clarity in the minds of many people combined with poor adversarial relationships and negative attitudes created long delays. The first step which was taken towards encouraging cooperation between the two cultures was in the diagnosis stage.

"(Diagnosis) showed that the same problem area is perceived differently by different people and that in areas of conflict there are usually not a number of black knights on the one side and white knights on the other side." (attributed to P.A. Kouwenhoven, Head of Projects, in Mungall, 1985 p51)

In soliciting and bringing together the different views, the diagnosis allowed some degree of cooperation and an eventual plan to be put into operation. Firstly, to determine how each individual perceived his own situation and the state of the project in general, the consultant met and had discussions with key individuals and sat in meetings. Each of these views captured an "as is" state, together representing a "present situation". The important factors as determined by each contributor were depicted together in an "open
systems" model of the organization. By bringing out the different views in a meaningful manner, it was possible to validate the diagnosis. It was possible to discuss the areas of greatest concern and develop from the discussions a "desired situation". Once there was agreement over the desired situation, the various options for action were developed. There are marked similarities between Mungall's problem-solving approach and the Systems figures. Both Ackoff (1983) and Checkland (1981) ascertain present situations in a subjective manner, bringing together differing views for a dialectical discussion.

In an account, providing an overview of the OD activities in the Shell Group, an organization-wide approach is described which tackles the problems of decentralization and widespread fragmentation across the operating companies of the Shell Group (Cormack & Wallace, 1985). In the mid 1970s, managers began introducing radical changes in procedures and methods in response to growing business pressures to rationalize products, plants and services. Managers, who had previously advocated a centralized approach, now favoured decentralization. Lacking coordination, operating companies began pulling in separate directions. The level of internal tension between companies, departments and individuals was unprecedented. Conflict developed between the healthy sectors such as the speciality chemicals and those sectors such as crude oil which were in decline, as each fought to maintain its distance and its disassociation from the other. Departments and individuals were in conflict for personal
The key aim for the OD team at that time was to allow for the decentralization to take place with a minimum of destructive and disruptive conflict. There had to be an overall coordination of the changes. The main tasks were the identification, treatment and control of the major issues which caused the conflict. Bearing in mind the global scale of the operations, this was an immense task. To ensure overall coordination of the changes, a Steering Group made up of top management was set up to systematically review with the OD team at initial, interim and year-end intervals. As a result of the reviews, some issues were identified which could be tackled over the next three years. These issues included the superficial cooperation between companies, the limited trust and mutual respect, and the lack of communication. The OD team also helped set up what amounted to ground rules to prevent further outbreak of conflict and to improve relations between companies and individuals. The "trading concept" was established, that is rules for trading to help improve relationships between the operating companies. Guidelines were provided on trading roles and policies. To help alleviate the tension arising from a competition for power between individuals, the OD team instigated a rigorous application of the staff selection process. This involved the categorization of staff, the listing of candidates and pre-discussions between functional heads. Guidance was also given on communication and the management of feedback to ensure that there is regular survival.
communication with staff. Support networks for displaced staff were also established to remove some of the tensions from redundancy. The OD team provided a counselling service network and helped design the training for future redeployment.

Anna, the consultant interviewed, discussed in a more general manner the importance of achieving an accurate diagnosis which reflects the multiplicity of views within an organization and the need for conflict management. In an organization like Shell, a unitary approach for determining the scope, the direction and the type of intervention is inappropriate. The consultant found that she could not accept just one definition of a problem, that is the client's, because it was rare for a client to be able to define the problem with any accuracy. This is a difficulty which faces all consultants intervening in complex systems. Like the other consultants examined, Anna suggests that a consultant must provide a current picture of what is going on in the organization by collecting information from all sectors, and encouraging an exchange of this information and of the different views (lines 2449-2460, 3187-3195). The OD techniques which she found particularly useful in diagnosis included group work and brainstorming. She used her position as consultant to build up trust within and between the groups, and as an "enabler" encouraged a direct exchange of information. She stressed that it was not her role to pass on information, but to bring separate units or representatives together in order to allow communication to take place.

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Invariably where views are different, there may be conflict. Anna's view of how OD can help is that "if one reflects sensitively back the differences and also tries to get a valuing of the differences, you should be able to broaden the general negative views in which conflict is held so that it can be constructively used." (lines 3090-3140) An important aspect of her role is to encourage conflicting groups to speak out and obtain an acknowledgement of their perceptions and their grievances from the other parties. Another aspect of her work was to involve these groups in role-play, to test out one group's views on the other. However, she pointed out that conflict management is not an issue to be tackled without caution. As an internal consultant with Shell, she found that she could only deal with issues of conflict when she had the support of the rest of the OD group. Without this support and also the support of the interest groups which hold power within the target organization, she found that she could not proceed very far. This posed an additional difficulty for the consultant. These "points of power" are not always apparent immediately to an outsider. "There is a formal and informal top. In a public sector there is always an administrative head and a political head and you've got to work with those two." (lines 2658-2662) It was also crucial not to build up resistance to change by allowing the views of certain groups to be portrayed as her own personal views. In cases of serious grievances it is only too easy to take sides (lines 3200-3230).
Summary

OD was introduced into the Group as part of an attempt to make better use of behavioural scientists and can be seen in the context of a perceived need by management. Shell was going through a phase of expansion and OD was an aspect of behavioural science which supported and filled the gap left by the "New Philosophy of Management".

Like the other OD groups examined, to a large extent action research principles are applied in the practice of OD. However, there appears to be little evaluation. Like Price-Waterhouse, some of the consultants describe the integration of formal "teaching and learning" programmes as part of an overall change strategy. It also appears that the intervention process itself can vary substantially from project to project. There is no single pattern. Often a consultant may have to leave issues untackled because of inappropriate circumstances. As in the practice of OD by the consultants in the other organizations, it seems that for effective interventions to occur, the participants need to a certain extent to be "prepared". This may involve induction seminars, counselling or specific training. In this sense, implementation occurs at intervals throughout the intervention, and is rarely limited to the final stages.

From the 1970s onwards, the Shell Group, like all the multi-national oil companies, was experiencing a period of crisis with fluctuating output, demand and varying economic
pressures. An examination of some of the OD projects conducted in Shell during this period suggests that there developed in the practice of OD a greater emphasis on adopting a "systems" perspective. Many of the projects were geared towards helping the various systems and subsystems cope with the changes that the organization was undergoing. There was a greater need to be finely tuned to the turbulent environment and to the complexity of the Shell Group and its operating companies.

For the OD consultants to conduct successful interventions in Shell, it is necessary they understand and take into account the pluralist state of the organization. Firstly, the Shell Group is multi-cultural. Its companies operate on a world-wide scale, each company absorbing cultural values relative to its host nation. Cooperation between these cultures, based on an understanding of their different relative values, is the key to optimum Group performance. Secondly, in a large Group like Shell, conflict is an unavoidable aspect of management. Conflict arises between different organization roles, between sub-units and between individuals. Attempts by various OD consultants at conflict management have been described with the aim of showing how OD operates in a pluralist environment and to illustrate the specific integrative role which OD plays.
CHAPTER SEVEN

ICI: THE BILLINGHAM SITE

7.1 Background

The Billingham site

Located in the north east of England at Billingham is an operating unit of Chemicals and Polymers (C & P). C & P is a major part of the Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) Group. It has the status of a separate company. It has a varied portfolio of products. These products have considerable potential for development and expansion: PVC, plastics, fibres, ammonia and fertilizers, organic and agro-chemicals, soda ash, lime products and catalysts. There is also a wide range of new products and processes in the research and technology pipeline. Following a major restructuring of ICI, the Billingham site which was known as the "Agricultural Division" of ICI from the 1960s to the early 1980s, is now part of Chemicals and Polymers. The main products at Billingham are ammonia, fertilizer and general and industrial chemicals. Located on the site is also ICI Fertilizer's Headquarters.

OD: origins and contexts at Billingham until the mid 1970s

According to the "OD figure" interviewed, Mike, of the various ICI sites, Billingham "has probably the longest history of OD" (line 3708). An OD officer was first engaged in February 1969 "to help personnel managers and officers and
line managers to apply some of the more modern techniques and thinking arising from the behavioural science researches" (Terms of reference, Division Records, ICI, 1969). There was a need to tackle the many problems caused by the changes taking place on-site. Firstly, a change in feedstock from coal to oil had a direct impact on the optimum manning level. From 1959-65, the total number of employees in the division had declined from 17,000 to 13,000. Secondly, a change from multi-stream ammonia plants to single-stream plants meant that the new plants had to be kept running continuously and therefore there was a need to improve the quality of maintenance engineering. Thirdly, 1969 was a disastrous financial year. More money was being made out of the royalties licensing the new technologies than out of production. The early OD work concentrated on three projects taking place at the Methanol 2 plant, the Engineering Works and the Ammonia Works. (Pettigrew, 1985, pp166-173) During this period, the "Swallow Group" was also formed.

The Swallow Group was an informal gathering of like-minded people who were involved in training and related work. Its aim was to help others gain a perspective on themselves and to bring out the hidden issues which produce defensiveness through the use of third party groups. The first five years of OD work was aimed at developing and improving the industrial relations in various works by encouraging true collaboration through direct confrontation to minimise defensiveness, closedness and the impact of position, level, status and age, and also to learn from.
At about the same time, the new "Methanol 2" plant was commissioned. The OD resource was involved in extensive team building to bring people into the project in advance of the tasks which they were required to do. The aim was to work on role and task clarification, and organization and team building. There was also process consulting and training with nearly all horizontal and vertical interfaces between the various groups.

Later OD work spanned the early to mid 1970s. The aim was to introduce more participative ways of managing and to help create changes at the work group level through the use of behavioural science ideas and group processual skills. The Engineering Works project began in 1972. As a result of the reduction in the number of workers and changes in management, the supervisors were feeling alienated, there was a high level of conflict with the unions, a fragmentation between all levels of the workforce and a distrust between the managers and the shop floor. The Works Manager felt that it was necessary to foster a process in which development was taking place at all levels where people would identify their own problems and work out solutions. A set of open Systems ideas and process training developed by Clark, Krone and McWhinney were used (Clark & Krone, 1972). A second project was begun at the Ammonia Works almost simultaneously. Union-management workshops were used to provide an opportunity for trade union and management personnel to
jointly explore their working relationships, to become more aware of how relationships developed between individuals and groups and to broaden each participant's understanding of the process of communications.

**Current work**

Mike, one of the main OD persons and a senior figure at the Billingham site, described a tension amongst many of the members of the organization, caused by the conflict between individual needs and goals, and organizational needs and goals. (lines 3430-3510) It was no longer possible to provide the unwritten contract of career security and satisfaction in return for loyalty, hard work and ICI centredness. There was a need to face the change in the environment: the decline of older industrial bases, the development of new technology and the international context of decision making. One way of doing this, as confirmed by an internal document issued in 1988, "An important factor in promoting change is encouraging managers to face, understand and learn how to deal with the fact that 'change starts with me'. Adaptive managers who can handle change to their own lives will be able to lead and manage changes at work more effectively. Adaptive businesses will be the ones to tackle the growing challenges of our era." (ICI, 1988b, p1) The business realities of the day also heightened the management's interest in increasing the productivity of monthly and weekly staff in spite of the relatively favourable business position of the Agricultural Division.
In this climate, there was a need for the technically dominated managers to integrate people-management aspects into their role and to achieve a greater purpose and precision in the management of human resources. More specifically, OD and training became linked to the career and manpower planning aspects of personnel work. For example, the Life Business Workshops, the Career Investigation Workshops and the Personal Development Workshops all focus on the level of the individual, to encourage people to change their perceptions of their careers. Other interventions tended to have a performance-related emphasis. For instance, there was work which involved re-structuring and the use of a Total Quality approach. Another intervention was to re-examine the appraisal system which had tended to review the past year's work without sufficiently taking into account the future requirements. Competency models were also developed which examined the level of competence required by an individual in order to do a particular job well and the different behaviours which distinguish an excellent performer in a job from an average performer. These models had practical applications in selection and recruitment. In all these examples, the objective appears to be to ensure that the organization survives in a harsh economic environment. OD's role seemed to remain very much in the realms of personnel management. This is not at odds with Pettigrew's (1985) conclusion that, on the Billingham site, OD possessed "a new value which was to do with the needs of the business" (ibid., p206) and projected "a high profile in association with a management-led manpower productivity drive" (ibid., p207). He
went on to report that "the need was to reduce the cost base of the business by reducing the number of employees, and yet to 'export not cadavers, but live bodies' while retaining lively, committed people..." (loc.cit.). The new policies of recruitment, re-deployment and rationalization challenge the long-established employee assumptions about their own careers. Eckblad et al (1984) and Pettigrew (1985) both chronicle the rising resentment, alienation and unproductive activity when the employees of ICI were faced with a whole new set of rules. Two of the main vehicles used to tackle the ill-feelings were Career Investigation (Eckblad et al, 1984) and Life Business Workshops (Bumstead & King, 1985; Eckblad & Bumstead, 1982; 1984).

**Life Business Workshops**

There are two premises inherent in Life Business Workshops (L.B.W.): (1) taking active responsibility for managing your own life and career is important for the individual, and (2) organizations made up of such people are much more effective than organizations in which such matters are left to the personnel department, or to chance. Working on these premises, the L.B.W. have four specific objectives. The first objective is to help managers to take stock of, and make plans about, their own lives and careers. The second is to help managers to become clearer about their own essential purposes and skills, so that they may have more energy and attention for the aspects of their lives which matter most to them. The third, to contribute to building
networks of managers who have these characteristics. And finally, to contribute to the organization's ability to become more innovative and effective.

The L.B.W., led by experienced trainers, is made up of a series of exercises and readings which are based around a workbook. It takes place over an initial three days, followed by a two month break for "market testing", then reconvenes for a one day progress review. There are six steps which can be seen as analogous to an organization's annual business planning cycle. These are summarised below. Full descriptions of the L.B.W. activities can be found in Eckblad and Bumstead (1982) and a revised version in an internally circulated ICI document (ICI, 1988b).

Step 1: self selection

Participants are responsible for their own initiatives, beginning with self-selection for inclusion in the programme. They are encouraged to discuss with previous participants about what they did in, or as a result of, the programme.

Step 2: the annual report

This is a review of the participant's personal performance in the past year. Satisfaction, and not money, is the prime criterion. The participants report on where their energy came from and what it was spent on in the past year. They reflect on their mission, objectives and strategies as illustrated in last year's projects and results. All their activities, their "whole life", and not just work, will be
taken into consideration. Participants will work alone, in co-ordinating pairs and in bigger groupings. Feedback is valuable in reviewing and planning and participants are encouraged to share data. They are required to consider their energy flows, whether their various activities and relationships are net energy sources or "sinks".

Step 3: systems analysis
The aim is on participants extending the picture which they have of their "business in life", and developing more ideas and knowledge about the areas or markets in which they operate. The questions which they must ask themselves are:

-what business am I in?
-what are my underlying qualities or productive capacities?
-what unique elements in me can I recognize and bring into operation?
-what skills or managerial abilities do I have?
-how can I make use of them to express my basic qualities?
-what skills do I lack and how can I develop them?

Step 4: market research
Participants are asked to examine the current scenarios and to identify the "environmental conditions" which affect them and then to work out alternative scenarios for trends in their company or department and their profession, and also for their family and other social groups that they have dealings with.
Step 5: The planning report

This step involves working in pairs and group work to help each person develop a clear set of pictures about the current situation of his life/business. The aim is, firstly, to have a data bank which summarizes the current situation, and secondly to identify the "business areas", that is the different pieces of the world which the participant deals with. It is now possible to identify the basic problem underlying the sub-standard areas of performance. There are usually three types of problems:

Product problems: there is demand for a particular behaviour, but the participant lacks the necessary skills to produce it.

Productivity problems: there is demand for a particular behaviour, the participant is capable of producing it, but lacks the time or energy.

Demand problem: there is no demand for a particular behaviour that the participant is producing.

The planning report focuses on the future to generate project plans which are targeted at specific problem areas. The feasibility of these plans are tested against the data-bank. A combination of specific goal-oriented plans and more open-ended directional plans constitute the basis of the life business plan for the following year.
Step 6: progress review

The group re-convenes for a day to compare notes, check on their progress and revise their plans in accordance with their interim experience and the results of the market-testing activities.

Career Investigation Programme

The Career Investigation Programme (C.I.P.) is the other attempt to re-align the basic career and succession expectations of the individual with that of the organization. A description of the C.I.P. at Billingham can be found in Eckblad et al (1984). The C.I.P. operates on five assumptions. Firstly, an individual needs to influence his career, and equally the organization needs to ensure the succession of qualified people to key jobs. Secondly, an individual's "career" may have a broader meaning than employment in one particular company. Thirdly, the company's responsibility to plan for the succession to a job must not be undermined by the increased pressure by an individual to develop his or her own career. Fourthly, an employment relationship which with planning, clarifies the individual's responsibility for his or her career and the company's responsibility for succession, will foster a greater openness on the part of each party. Finally, to be effective, the C.I.P. requires the joint involvement of individuals, their managers and training and development resources.

The C.I.P. begins with the individual determining what
he wants in his career. He assesses his current job performance and obtains feedback from other people, including his immediate manager, in order to have a better understanding of his job requirements and his performance. A part of the data which becomes available to him, is a projection of the future manpower needs, the career options and his potential for advancement. The participants are then able to make their own personal and career plans.

A programme begins at the "contractual" stage which ensures that the manager is prepared to give the participant an honest feedback on his performance. After the introductory event, in the interim period, computers are used to provide a wider picture of the organization, and personal counselling and personality profiling also take place. Vocational guidance exercises are included.

The second event, which lasts for two days, provides an opportunity for the participants to share their experiences, to hear the Division's career-management system and to develop skills in participating with management in open and honest career discussions. It concludes with the making of personal action plans. These plans are tested with managers back at the work-place. Managers may help participants review their plans, but the onus is on the individual achieving their own goals. An annual review takes place when participants review, update and adjust their personal development programme with managers.
Summary

It seems that on the Billingham site, at least as illustrated by the accounts provided of the L.B.W. and C.I.P., there is a gap between the traditional "human oriented" values of OD, as described in section 1.3, and the "organization" centred values which are espoused in these interventions. It can be argued that this particular brand of organization development may not necessarily maximize both the human and organizational interests. At the time that this research was conducted, the most visible OD work, as defined by some of the consultants involved with the organization (ICI, 1988b; Pettigrew, 1985, pp206-207; lines 4410-4423), seems to hold very different values from those of the early OD projects, conducted for example by the Swallow Group, or those at the Methonol 2 plant or the Ammonia works. The former, that is the L.B.W. and the C.I.P., focus on the need to streamline the organization, while the latter contributed to organizational effectiveness through the more "traditional" OD approaches, such as team building, confrontation groups and role clarification. Consider some quotes which Pettigrew (1985) collected concerning the latest OD work: "I think the situation is being exploited to the detriment of the people" (ibid., p208) or "I see no conflict between my own values as a change agent and paring down this organization" (loc.cit.). Perhaps to avoid the conflict of values between what they do and what OD stands for, as defined and described by some of the key OD figures reviewed in Chapter One, Pettigrew (1985, p208) reports that
"the OD team was actively seeking to play down the use of the organization development label and any claims to be associated with a special and exclusive body of expertise." This seems to be confirmed by Mike, the senior OD figure who was interviewed. Unlike the formal titles of the consultants from the other organizations who were interviewed, there is no mention of organization development or any OD related activity in his formal job title. Yet it is apparent from his account of what he does job-wise that he is the "internal" who liaises, works jointly with and shares his experiences with the OD personnel from other organizations. In addition, an internal document (ICI, 1988b) clearly identifies him as participating and running joint programmes with the Individual and Organizational Development Manager of BP International and the Organization Development Manager of Shell UK Oil. Furthermore, he often coordinates and works with the external OD consultants when they are brought in. The non-emphasis of OD at Billingham is also implicit in Mike's reply when he was asked to explain the term "organization development". "I tend to look at the word 'development' as the operative word, and organization development is only one part of development... there are a whole lot of processes which go on within the organization and development is about improving the performance of the individuals within it, and through the framework within which they are operating... Overall, it is about the organization structure, about selecting the right people, about following through their careers, about the culture and certainly something to do with training and development and certainly
something to do with the whole purpose of the organization." (lines 3330-3356)

7.2 The process of intervention

Initial contact

Initial contact with potential clients is described by Mike as arising from the close working relationship which he has with them at the day-to-day level of routine organizational work. From this he develops a good knowledge of their requirements and problems. The nature of his work is such that he meets daily, and works with, senior managers on-site and also at other factories in ICI (lines 3819-3828). There is no formal contract. The authority to operate in his role as consultant depends on his "ability to deliver" (lines 3924-3933). Mike found that he is expected to provide help although the client is not always clear about what he desires as a preferred outcome. However Mike is not, and cannot be, clear about how to deliver that help prior to being actually involved.

Diagnosis

The initial meeting with a client will involve the clarification of particular problems or issues, and a discussion of how to best proceed, for instance, in respect of the time-tableing of meetings, and of the desired outcome. Once that first meeting has taken place, Mike describes only
intermittent formal contact between him and the clients (lines 3950-3956).

It is quite common for data to be gathered after an initial meeting with the client and before meeting with the management group. Interviews are frequently used as a means of collecting data: soft data on views and feelings about existing systems and procedures, styles and culture, views on how things are at present and how people would like them to be in the future. Less frequently questionnaires and surveys are used to collect hard quantitative data (lines 3963-3975).

Clients often only have vague notions of what the problem is: to clarify and to define the "problem" area are important objectives in the early stages of a project. Often the cause will not be in what is presented as the problem area, instead it will lie somewhere else. Or sometimes, it might not be a "problem" at all (lines 3988-3996).

Therefore, at the beginning of any project, Mike finds that initially he has to ask two sets of "challenging" questions. Firstly, he has to identify where the feeling that there is a problem stems from, and not, for instance, to take just one manager's account. He has to search out the evidence. The questions that a consultant should aim to answer are: who else says that? why is it "bad"? what is the evidence? Secondly, he has to ensure that he is addressing the actual cause of the problem and not just agreeing with the solution as suggested by the client. He has to backtrack to the root-cause of the problem rather than to deal with the
symptoms. He must ask himself; if this solution is implemented, what problem is left behind? Mike provided some examples and anecdotes illustrating how easily he had made inaccurate diagnoses because he had accepted, and not first questioned, the views and assumptions of the client or manager (lines 3978-4030).

Planning

The activities involved in planning depend very much on the problem and the problem context. "I don't think there's a standard procedure, a standard method... (it) depends on who that problem comes from, how it is identified, what my own feelings for it are." (lines 4089-4092)

Planning, in terms of exercising a control over the rate of the progress of an intervention, again depends on many factors, "on what is down in people's diaries and the frequency that I can get hold of them in order to work things through" (line 4120). Mike found that a critical path network was useful in the scheduling of a large-scale complex intervention and in integrating the numerous tasks which need to follow a logical sequence (lines 4110-4120).

It was stressed that an expert role is never adopted and that the choice of strategy is determined by the participants involved in the planning process. His aim is to ensure that as many different ideas as possible are generated during planning. Unstructured, informal meetings, involving
people from ICI and from other companies, are set up where current issues are discussed. These meetings provide "opportunities to generate and bounce ideas and problems off each other" (lines 4100-4110).

In a particular example of the planning process, Mike describes the use of a set of four "generic models" (lines 4129-4180). These models provide a means of expressing conceptually a set or group of activities. One of the models shows how the different activities within the organization relate to each other. The model is written in such general terms that it would apply to any manufacturing operation within Billingham. Other models are the "work" model which identifies what a person is required to do in his job; the "needs" model which identifies the skills and knowledge required to do the job effectively; and the "training" model which helps to identify how the necessary skills can be acquired. These models complement each other, and help the users to think about their objectives, not for the following year but for some years ahead. When used together, the models represent an ideal situation of the future and a bench mark for making comparisons between the present and the future.

Evaluation

It is confirmed by Mike that "truthful" and "accurate" overall evaluation often remains a difficulty. This is because it is impossible to isolate one particular outcome as
a direct effect of an intervention. Firstly, involvement in a system will tend to affect its state and performance. The Hawthorne experiments are an example of a system improving its performance because it was under observation (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1949). To be able accurately to evaluate an intervention, ideally an unaffected control group is necessary. This is impossible when strategies are not only on a large scale but may have an organization-wide impact. Secondly, an organization as a system cannot be isolated from the wider system which it is a part of. The success associated with an intervention may be due to some unanticipated and unmeasured factors. "One of the difficulties is that, at any one time, there are probably many different things going on... for example, you might simultaneously be reducing the number of people you employ, introducing new technology, going through a programme of training... if your profitability goes up by 10% in that time, what caused it? It could be the price of oil, the change in Deutsch Mark, or it was Christmas time." (lines 4310-4330)

This begs a final question; how can the "success" of an intervention or the effectiveness of the consultant be measured? "Profitability" is obviously only one criterion. Others include the general performance of the organization and a better quality of working life for the individuals. As in the interviews with the other consultants, Mike's answer tended to be predictable. "It is almost impossible to arrive at a hard evaluation... there has to be something positive,
whatever's going on has to be seen as contributing to success but quantifying what that contribution is, is almost impossible" (lines 4325-4330). Effective evaluation of an intervention which is conducted in the "real" world appears to be hampered by the difficulties of devising acceptable criteria.

7.3 Systems management

Organizational context

ICI like most of today's companies is operating in a changed environment. Like a lot of organizations, its existing systems, particularly for planning, personnel and research and development are out-dated. In the 1960s and 1970s, in an era of growth, when ICI's major preoccupations were to ensure that its plants worked efficiently and that extra capacity came on stream at the right time, the Planning Department's prime task was to help the Board ensure that the financing of capital projects was carried out efficiently. Planning was a very numerate activity, with a high element of operational research in it (Turner, 1984). By 1980, the world economy had clearly become ex-growth, which had an overwhelming effect on several of ICI's basic commodity businesses. A slump in the UK market due to historically low domestic demand had meant that chemical companies such as ICI were producing well below capacity at international prices which were kept artificially high by an overvalued sterling. The particular volatility in the world market for chemicals
The local development of commodity chemicals in South-East Asia and Latin America caused a fall in UK exports to these countries. The development of petrochemicals production in countries in the Middle East, Mexico and Canada based on low-cost feedstocks such as ethane, similarly had an adverse effect on exports to these countries as well as challenging the home market through imports. The development of processing facilities in Eastern Europe, based on "artificially" priced commodities and pressure from the US commodity chemicals producers, who enjoyed the advantages of ethane-based production and who were also in a stronger monopoly position. Both of these factors posed further challenges to ICI's profit margins.

The development by foreign countries of the capacity to manufacture commodity materials provoked a crisis situation for companies like ICI in the United Kingdom. In response, ICI re-directed investments abroad while simultaneously cutting home production. A policy was also implemented, aimed at changing factory production from bulk-commodity, low-value-added products to specialized, low-volume but high-value-added products such as pharmaceuticals, specialized organic chemicals and agrochemicals. There were major implications for future employment, training and investment decisions in those areas.

Firstly, the existing machinery for consultation and planning for the desired change was totally inadequate.
Turner (1984) suggested that it was not operational research planners or masters of particular techniques who were required, but planners who were able to help ICI’s executive directors make business decisions based on an instinct for marketing, and to encourage and manage technological innovation.

Secondly, due to economic necessity there was a change in the unspoken contract of a job for life. Since 1972, ICI has reduced its UK workforce by over 60,000 and between 1978 and 1981 it has cut employment by 16.4% (G.M.B.A.T.U., 1983). This is also confirmed in the interview. "In the particular case of Billingham, the number of people we employ these days is much less than it used to be. Within this factory we employ something less than 5,000 people, whereas back in the 1940s, it was 20,000. The number of people will continue to fall." (lines 3440-3448)

For the organization to survive in a rapidly changing environment governed by such volatile market forces, OD was used to develop more adaptive managers, a more adaptive workforce, and a greater flexibility in the culture.

Developing flexibility

Improving organizational flexibility at the Billingham site has meant in human processual terms, primarily a concentration on attitude change, and, in terms of structure, a more flexible approach to working.
The fertilizer business after many years of contributing very large profits to ICI was facing a particularly hard time, along with other fertilizer producers. The key to attitude-change was to provide a more realistic picture of the business to all members.

"All employees working in fertilizers at the moment are very aware of the problems of their companies... we've put a lot of energy into telling them about the business. We've been running a lot of business courses. It is in fact a feature of the developmental work we've been doing on Teeside. We've spent a lot of time with employees at junior level telling them about our business, telling them also about how our business works, so that we feel much more comfortable about telling them about the impact of higher raw materials or the impact of higher labour costs or how we compare with other competitors." (lines 3255-3468)

Underlying this attitude-change programme is the all too probable rationale that a basic change in culture will make the task of streamlining the organization easier, with less opposition encountered from the workforce. In conjunction with the attitude-change programme, multi-skills training takes place. Although this is not at odds with the "belief in developing people to a higher degree" (line 3504), helping the workforce to acquire different skills, thus making it easier to relocate staff, can be seen as conveniently fitting in with the objectives of streamlining the business.
"Increasingly we are telling people not to expect a career for life... last year on this site we lost over 20% of our employees. We have reduced our numbers quite substantially and the way that this has happened is by a variety of techniques where we can offer voluntary settlements. We offer very good terms for people who leave the company. We put a lot of energy into training them to do very different kinds of work, we use secondments a lot, we actively encourage people to try their hands at a variety of jobs both within ICI and outside." (lines 3480-3505)

The success of this strategy is evident in that "there's no evidence of low morale. There has been some discussion in some Joint Consultation Meetings. Some of the employee representatives are talking about low morale but I believe that to some extent low morale would be represented by a lot of people leaving the company to take jobs in other areas, entirely on a self-motivated basis. It would also be reflected in a very high level of sick absences, a high level of industrial dispute, we haven't seen any of that." (lines 3484-3493)

Therefore the need for flexibility has been imposed on the organization by an environment which is itself undergoing change. Firstly, it has necessitated a change in attitude among the members of the organization, in order that the organization can operate successfully and survive under the economic constraints imposed by the environment. Secondly, the environment has also worked directly to influence
organizational policies.

"We changed our shift patterns in recent years for external reasons. We had a 40 hour week, while some people in this country have a 37 hour week. Our monthly paid staff were on a 37 1/2 hour week. Our weekly paid staff were on a 40 hour week. One of our principles is to move towards greater equality in our terms of employment. That was one of the driving forces. Another driving force was that other organizations in this country have a shorter working week. Because of that we had some pressure from the shop floor." (lines 4360-4371)

This is an example illustrating the change which can be imposed on an organization by the changing values outside of the organization. It was an anachronistic practice to work a 40 hour week which was at odds with the wider societal norm. Other examples include the "Working Practices" drive which is about developing flexible working. (lines 4372-4380)

Participation

Participation can provide the consultant with access to information from stakeholders who are closely associated with the problem situation. These stakeholders provide additional viewpoints and contribute a personal knowledge to the data collected, knowledge which might otherwise not be tapped.

"Some people are closer to a particular problem, some people
have a different angle, some have a particular experience. I like to give them the opportunity to influence what is done. Participation is a device for bringing people on board who otherwise will not be involved, and a device for refining." (lines 4305-4310)

Participation is encouraged not just at the diagnostic stage, but also in planning, implementation and evaluation (lines 4299-4305). In addition to involving the stakeholders who have first-hand knowledge of the situation, participation also generates commitment. Without participation, and the commitment it generates, the intervention flounders (lines 4290-4298).

Change as an on-going process

For the project to remain tuned to the changes in the environment, change has to be treated as an on-going process. Taking effective action cannot just involve the implementation of structures and processes on a "one-off" basis, expecting the action taken to remain valid for all time. Monitoring ensures that what is happening on a day-to-day basis within a complex organization stays in tune with the "vision". The OD resource provides an "overview, the eagle's eye view of the organization by being involved with all the processes which I see as part of contributing to the excellent performance of this organization" (lines 3680-3700). These processes include activities which are all a part of the overall change strategy to achieve a vision.
For example, the selection and recruitment process, the training and development process, the redeployment and appraisal process, and also the internal systems that support them, such as keeping records and working with senior managers.

The vision itself is not permanent but kept under constant review. The "visioning" process is considered "on-going...there is always room for improvement and that needs to be added at the appropriate time." (lines 3675-3676)

Promoting change is not a quick process. Often, in the implementation of a strategy or "vision", many issues have to be first addressed. For example, in tackling working practices, Mike had "to address a lot of other issues first. One of them being that a very large number of people wouldn't understand what we definitely need." (lines 3864-3970)

There are times when strategies can only be implemented after years of preparation. Because of this slow process, Pettigrew (1985) has used the term "evolution" in conjunction with the OD process at Billingham. Mike too takes the view "that change is slow. It is in small steps, it is an evolutionary process rather than revolutionary. The only time you ever get revolution in an industry is when you have a crisis. For example, a plant or factory has to close down unless certain changes take place" (lines 3879-3890). He explains that there can be rapid implementation of technological changes, but, like Paul from Price-Waterhouse,
when "change is about changing people's mind", that is cultural change, it becomes a slow process. Therefore, "there has to be a comparatively small group of people who have been continuously promoting change within Billingham for the last twenty years ... a group of visionaries." (lines 3858-3862, 3878)

The role of the consultant

During the course of the interview, Mike identified several roles which he performs as change agent. The consultant is a change agent, a change agent "to spark things off" (lines 3645-3650). The role of the consultant is not to act as a catalyst in the chemist's sense of the word, that is to speed up the process of change which the organization is undergoing, but to generate new ideas and to initiate the change. This role is particularly important today when managers are resisting very strongly the pressures to spend time on strategic thinking because there is so much time spent on day-to-day thinking. One of the things that the change-agent does is to make connections to spot activities in one place and to relate that to other things happening somewhere else (lines 3659-3678). A consultant has to "seed" ideas without appearing to own them (lines 3775-3788).

In discussing the respective roles of internal and external consultants with Mike, several points were raised. An internal has a better knowledge of the organization which
can only arise from first hand experiences, for example he knows "who to trust, who to believe in and who to check things with" (lines 4030-4040). The internal consultant has a greater ability in ensuring that any information supplied is accurate because he or she is more aware of the reliable sources which are apparent only from long term working within the organization. An intervention can be rendered ineffective because of the length of time it takes for an external to get a feel for the organization, to know the key points of influence (lines 3607-3612). On the other hand, an external is associated with "distance" and "expertise", while an internal is associated with management and may have a "personal axe to grind". This can affect the regard with which the change agent is held. Mike found that optimum effectiveness is achieved by both internal and external working together. (lines 3615-3630)

7.4 Conflict management

Possible situations of conflict at Billingham

There are problems posed by the human aspects of the organization in all industries, particularly for a "chemical-processing" one like ICI. Because there can be catastrophic consequences from accidents occurring at chemical plants, it is unavoidable that at these organizations, detailed and often restrictive guidelines for conduct exist as a matter of need. The restriction and the little freedom of expression there is in an individual's work can lead to
situations of conflict, alienation, apathetic behaviour and a lack of creativity. (lines 4195-4228)

In addition, it was suggested that there are other "kinds of conflict". Firstly, conflicts which are an "expression of bad management" (line 4238) for instance, "typical industrial relations conflict where you get people going on strike" or conflict based on "misguided information" (line 4240).

Secondly, there is conflict based on differences of opinion. "That sort of conflict is part of the creative process. If you have the kind of management which is coercive to the point of saying this is the way something's got to be done... then you have a very unsatisfactory situation... management must be aware of the feelings of a subordinate group (and) of someone who disagrees" (lines 4230-4241). It is unhealthy for the organization to suppress this form of conflict, and Mike stresses that opportunities must be provided for the expression of the differences of opinion, "different ways of addressing problems and different solutions" (lines 4275-4288).

There can also be conflict caused by the different roles and different objectives which a member of the organization has. To illustrate, Mike explained that "on Teesside a plant manager would be accountable to two different senior managers. One would be to the business within which that operation exists, that's commercial: he would be responsible
for satisfying their needs for tonnage, quality, reliability and secondly, he would be responsible to the other senior managers for safety and other than management matters." In this example, it is easy for the different objectives of satisfying the production quota and safety needs to be in conflict (lines 3405-3425).

Conflict can also be caused when two or more demands are made on one resource. For example, "we have two major interventions going on in parallel to each other. One is a total quality initiative... the other is the initiative on working practices. The working practice initiative is likely to have a significantly lower cash return than the quality initiative but the two initiatives are going to make demands on the same resources. So we have people who take very different positions on the relative importance of those two initiatives in the first place. They will make different value judgements about each of them and, in some cases, individuals will be totally opposed to pursuing for example the working practice initiative. The problem is compounded because the underlying purpose behind working practice change is still not clear. Are we doing it to reduce our costs? Or are we doing it because we have a vision of a more rewarding future for our employees?" (lines 4060-4085)

Conflict can also exist at the organization level, for example, between the different factories. The recent restructuring of ICI has brought the operation of different factories on the Teesside, under one management. The three
factories used to be more autonomous, and the relative cultures of each factory were very different from each other. Billingham is much more influenced by concepts such as purposefulness and organic change. Wilton is more task oriented, has much less of a focus on people and much more of a focus on technology and the business. North Tees is the most "traditional": it is very much managed from the top and the values employed are the values of the senior manager and his immediate supporters (lines 3700-3736). The three disparate cultures have to be brought together.

Coping with conflict

In tackling the problems of conflict, pluralism and de-humanization, Mike suggests that first, a greater degree of participation must be encouraged and ensured. In enabling all stakeholders to be represented, when a decision has to be reached, their different views can be taken into account and the different solutions can be assessed. This generates a more acceptable decision, greater commitment and enables a certain degree of debate to occur. Mike stresses that it is part of ICI policy, in recruitment, to appoint members with "a particular style of listening to others, allowing other people to express their disagreement even if at the end of the day we're saying to these people, we hear you, but we cannot accept it." (line 4260)

Creativity techniques have been used with success in helping to generate novel ideas and solutions where the
organizational processes have inadvertently stifled the imagination and creativity of workers.

"There has not been a lot of it, but what I've done has been quite useful and I think there is a little bit more creativity wherever you can identify a problem. What I try to do is to take them through a process, not to sell them a package, but to guide them through a technique in order to address a particular problem. I'm helping them with an issue which they own and generating a higher level of imaginative thinking than they would apply." (lines 3802-3812)

Conflict also arises from the different demands which are made on inadequate resources, the ambiguity in longer term objectives and uncertain guidelines. Life Business Workshops can be perceived as one way of tackling the conflict at the level of the individual. Because a person is capable of expending only a limited amount of energy, on which various demands are made, it becomes crucial that he or she has clear priorities and the L.B.W. can help to achieve this. At an organization-wide level, the Chemicals and Polymers section is in the process of developing and issuing a "statement of philosophy" to make clear the objectives of the organization and to "provide some sort of guiding principles which will clear some of the undergrowth away." (lines 4040-4060)

At the organization-wide level, there is also the problem of bringing together the different cultures of
different sites and factories. An initial step is to identify key stakeholders and senior management in terms of the values they hold, to bring the various parties together "to talk, to react, to respond". (lines 3738-3758)

Summary

This chapter describes the use of OD and OD resources on the Billingham site. The first section provides some information on the site and its factories and the context of early OD work conducted at Billingham. The values and aims of the current OD work are also described, focusing on two key interventions: the Life Business Workshop and Career Investigation Programmes. The activities at Billingham serve to highlight the increasing gap between what occurs in practice and what is defined conceptually, as summarized in Chapter One, by some important OD figures.

The complex organizational context and the increasingly turbulent environment has meant the need to improve the flexibility of the organization, to increase the level of participation, and to develop "evolving visions" of the organization. Some change agent roles were identified and the relative merits of external and internal consultants were also described by the member of the OD resource who was interviewed. In addition, he described the problems at Billingham caused by some activities which tended to "dehumanize", and some possible situations of conflict caused by the plurality of values and perspectives existing in the
organization. The consultant has the task of clarifying aims and objectives where ambiguities exist, to develop a more creative and participative style of problem-solving management and to encourage a confrontation of views when necessary. Overall, the organization development strategy at Billingham is described as slow and evolving. Its basic objective, which remains unchanged, is to help the organization to cope with changed circumstances. However, the economic context has meant that, from jointly optimising both people interests and organizational needs in the early projects, more recent work has tended to emphasize the latter at the expense of the former.
CHAPTER EIGHT
OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION

8.1 Review

To very briefly re-cap, an examination of firstly, the many "classic" and some more recent definitions of organization development provided by some leading OD figures, and secondly, the characteristics of, and assumptions which underlie OD as described in literature (Chapter One), led to the identification and more detailed examination of what can be considered as some of the key features of an OD intervention. These features were discussed with reference to specific OD theorist-practitioners and OD techniques (Chapter Two). Firstly, it appears from an examination of literature that many theorist-practitioners in OD have argued that action research is a primary process used in most OD programmes. Secondly, OD is concerned with the implications of organizations as systems. Thirdly, conflict management is very much a part of OD. In addition, the examination of literature suggested that there are differences of values amongst the main OD figures. Because these are statements which are based on literature, much of the literature also being American in origin, data was collected in order to examine how much of this is actually reflected in the practice of "local" practitioners of OD. Answers were sought to the following questions. Firstly, how does the action research format relate to the actual process of OD as experienced by practising OD consultants in the UK? How does
the intervention process in practice compare with the
descriptions of the "popular" and frequently cited models of
the OD process found in literature, such as Lippitt, Watson
and Westley (1958), Greiner (1967), French (1969), Kolb and
Frohman (1970), Frohman et al (1976), Burke (1981) and French
and Bell (1984)? Secondly, in practice, how aware are
consultants of the implications of organizations as systems,
and how are the particular problems posed by a complex
organization and evolving environment tackled within the
context of an OD intervention? Thirdly, how do the
consultants deal with the particular problems of the
organization as a human system: the differences in values, in
perceptions and the inevitable occurrence of conflict.

The data collected from in-depth interviews with the
consultants and evidence from the documented accounts of the
practice of OD is presented as four separate case-studies,
respectively Chapters Four to Seven. As far as possible, the
same framework was utilized in analyzing the data relating
to the four case-studies. The sample sought to reflect both
internal and external consultants in a variety of
organizations, given the constraints described in Chapter
Three. It is now possible to take an overview and discuss the
implications and conclusions.

For clarity, as far as possible the same framework has
been adopted in the following discussion: the process of
intervention (section 8.2), systems management (section 8.3)
and conflict management (section 8.3). Section 8.2 initially
reviews the intervention process featuring in the practice of OD as demonstrated by the data gathered. Some conclusions are drawn regarding the action research and organization development relationship. Some comparisons are made between some of the more commonly featured models of the OD change process with what actually occurs in practice as demonstrated by the data gathered. Some key features are also related to the overall consultancy process. Section 8.3 considers both systems and conflict management aspects of OD. The data collected suggests that in practice the systems management aspects of OD and conflict management are very much inter-connected issues. Conflict management will always be an integral part of the overall intervention process because in the practice of OD, multiple perspectives are encouraged, followed by a need to achieve an adequate level of consensus whereby decision making can take place. Generally speaking, systems management seems to operate at the organization-wide level and conflict management is targeted in a more specific manner at individuals or at particular groups. A final section discusses the roles and relationships which a consultant has with (in) the client-target organization (section 8.4).

8.2 The process of intervention

The process of intervention illustrated by the work of the consultants interviewed and by the documented accounts of OD practice is summarized in Table 2. Table 3 describes the aims and the actions in the initial phase of intervention.
Similarly, Table 4 summarizes the planning and implementation process, and Table 5 evaluation.

The use of common nomenclature in literature and by the consultants interviewed misleadingly suggests that there is a homogeneity in the actual processes of intervention. The tables, while providing some evidence of action research principles in the practice of OD, instead show that apart from the commonly adopted terms of diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation, which helps a consultant or writer identify and refer to particular phases of an intervention, there is otherwise little in common between the content of each phase of an intervention. The evidence suggests that the activities which occur within each phase and a consultant's actions are determined by his or her specific aims as he operates in the different contexts of each intervention.

Initial contact

The means by which initial contact is established by a consultant with a prospective client varies considerably. For internals, it is usually through what one consultant, Mike, refers to as "routine contacts" (lines 3890-3900). This is contact which is established from knowing and working with managers at a personal level, and being sensitive to the changing circumstances of the organization in which they work. Another internal consultant, Anna, explains that on-going interventions can also be used as a means for
Table 2

The intervention process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shell</th>
<th>The Civil Service</th>
<th>ICI (Billingham)</th>
<th>Price-Waterhouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*exploration and problem definition</td>
<td>*initial phase: interest, response, foundation, preparation</td>
<td>*initial contact</td>
<td>*diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*planning and implementation</td>
<td>*planning and implementation</td>
<td>*diagnosis: data gathering and problem identification</td>
<td>*strategy development and implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*evaluation</td>
<td>*the longer term: evaluation, ownership</td>
<td>*planning and implementation</td>
<td>*feedback and evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3
The intervention process: the initial phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shell</th>
<th>The Civil Service</th>
<th>ICI (Billingham)</th>
<th>Price-Waterhouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
<td>*establish collaborative</td>
<td>*establish contact</td>
<td>*data gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*establish collaborative</td>
<td>*arouse interest of</td>
<td>*data gathering</td>
<td>*data feedback and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship</td>
<td>staff, management,</td>
<td></td>
<td>analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*collect information on</td>
<td>local TU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organizational variabies</td>
<td>*dissemination of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and processes</td>
<td>information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*return data to client</td>
<td>*laying foundations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for discussion and</td>
<td>for project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diagnosis</td>
<td>*data collection and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific action:</strong></td>
<td>*implement a workshop</td>
<td>*identify potential</td>
<td>*to identify with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*implement a workshop</td>
<td>approach to enable</td>
<td>clients from day-to-day</td>
<td>management a change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approach to enable</td>
<td>participation at all</td>
<td>meetings</td>
<td>plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation at all</td>
<td>levels</td>
<td>*use in-depth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>levels</td>
<td>*conduct interpersonal/</td>
<td>interview techniques</td>
<td>*develop hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*conduct interpersonal/</td>
<td>communication sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td>*statistical verifica-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication sessions</td>
<td>to develop a member's</td>
<td></td>
<td>tion of hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to develop a member's</td>
<td>appreciation of other's</td>
<td></td>
<td>*compare 'now' data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciation of other's</td>
<td>views Vs his own</td>
<td></td>
<td>with 'future' assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>views Vs his own</td>
<td>*use modelling to represent 'as is' states</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*reduce to manageable</td>
<td>*analyse causes and</td>
<td>*backtrack to identify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proportions no. of</td>
<td>symptoms</td>
<td>how opinions formed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issues</td>
<td>*reduce to manageable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>proportions no. of issues</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*reduce to manageable</td>
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<td>proportions no. of issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*reduce to manageable</td>
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<td></td>
<td>proportions no. of issues</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*reduce to manageable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>proportions no. of issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4
The intervention process: planning and implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shell</th>
<th>The Civil Service</th>
<th>ICI (Billingham)</th>
<th>Price-Waterhouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
<td><em>develop specific action plans</em></td>
<td><em>identify needs of various stakeholder groups</em></td>
<td><em>identify systems change</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>to act as process helper and trainer</em></td>
<td><em>consider effects on non-project areas</em></td>
<td><em>identify resources</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific action:</td>
<td><em>consider timing, order, levels and types of presentation</em></td>
<td><em>generate ideas</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>workshops to focus on present and future</em></td>
<td><em>consider effects on non-project areas</em></td>
<td><em>arrange rate of change</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>ensure collaboration &amp; learning process takes place</em></td>
<td><em>specific processual and technical training</em></td>
<td><em>identify external interventions</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>use confrontation techniques to achieve consensus</em></td>
<td><em>specific processual and technical training</em></td>
<td><em>identify and train internal OD personnel</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>integrate formal OD training in daily work schedule of selected staff</em></td>
<td><em>use conceptual models for making comparisons between present and future</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5
The intervention process: evaluation and monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shell</th>
<th>The Civil Service</th>
<th>ICI (Billingham)</th>
<th>Price-Waterhouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>consider effects and effectiveness</em></td>
<td><em>early and continual monitoring of progress</em></td>
<td><em>learn from mistakes</em></td>
<td><em>feedback (validation)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>cost-benefit</em></td>
<td><em>encouraging ownership</em></td>
<td><em>develop on-going commitment to change</em></td>
<td><em>estimation of the value/worth of consultant and intervention</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>evaluation of consultant</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific action:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Specific action:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Specific action:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Specific action:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>senior management assesses change process &amp; wider implications, set points incorporated into project with client to monitor evaluate and review</em></td>
<td><em>measure quantitative differentials in productivity, backlogs, workloads, absences, turnover</em></td>
<td><em>measure general performance, better quality of working life, profitability</em></td>
<td><em>use performance indicators</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>measure qualitative changes in climate, morale, enthusiasm, relationships, perceptions</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>incorporate use of competency models by managers to identify own gaps</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>middle management development seminar to help managers adopt ownership</em></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
opening doors to a wider section of the organization, allowing her to come into contact with personnel which she might otherwise not meet (lines 2100-2110). The ability to appear to be non-threatening seems to play an important part in helping consultants retain a wide and varied client base (lines 3760-3770).

With externals, although cold calling is sometimes attempted (lines 2264-2284), it is not uncommon for a client to approach a consultant because they have worked previously together on a project, or simply because they are attracted by the image and reputation of a particular consultancy firm or a consultant's previous association with one (lines 3-18, 29-53, 2279). Direct and non-direct contact publicity is also employed: an example of the former is the invitation of prospective clients to talks and seminars, and of the latter, the publication of articles in journals and periodicals. The internals interviewed stressed that they enter by invitation only, their's is not a "policing" role (lines 1310-1325).

Even though the consultants interviewed stressed that establishing contact with a wide range of prospective clients is an important aspect of the overall consultancy process, it does not necessarily imply that further progress would be made after that. It is usual for both consultant and client to use a series of initial meetings as sounding boards to explore needs and expectations. It is clear from Paul's description of meetings that clients will use the actual presentations by different consultancy firms to clarify their
own experiences and understanding of the context from which their perceived needs arise. The initial meetings are also used by consultants to informally assess the responsiveness of leaders and key figures in the organizational system to change. Anna states emphatically that it would be, to paraphrase, "quite pointless to continue if the time is not right". After establishing contact, it is often necessary, "to hold off, to keep the contact warm and re-enter at a later date" (lines 1040-1065, 2264-2278, 2594-2628).

**Contracting**

The interviews revealed a wide range of contracts and varying degrees of accountability between clients and consultants.

At one end of the spectrum, the internal consultants described very little in terms of formal contracting in relation to their practice of organization development. John, referring to the Job Satisfaction Team (J.S.T.) which has a wide client base within the Civil Service, said that "the contract is a non-legally binding agreement" (lines 1355-1378). For Anna and her colleagues from an OD unit within Shell, "there is little in terms of contract" (line 2010), and the same for Mike, a practitioner on the Billingham site of ICI (line 3924).

The evidence also suggested that there was little formal accountability experienced by Mike and by the OD unit.
in Shell. For Mike, there is no formal accountability (line 3930), and Anna reported that little went on in terms of the reporting which was made to the Personnel Director (lines 2212-2222). The services of Mike was "free" at Billingham, and in Shell no actual money passed hands but services were accounted for at the year-end.

Data collected from the J.S.T. reveals that there is marginally more accountability and control within the Civil Service. The J.S.T. reports to a sub-committee of the Whitley Council, which monitors the direction of work (lines 1110-1130). Furthermore some of their clients are fee paying. While its services are free for the Exchequer Departments, such as the various departments dealing with taxation, "quangos", such as the Nature Conservancy Council and the British Library at Boston Spa, are fee-paying.

At the other end of the spectrum, formal contracts were very much in evidence amongst the external consultancies. Anna described the very clear contracting which occurred while she worked with a small consultancy headed by a leading OD figure, and also while at Coopers Deloittes (lines 1986-2034). Paul similarly described the drawing-up of clear contracts and the careful attention paid to detailing the obligations of the consultant and the client in projects run by Price-Waterhouse (lines 55-145). These two accounts of contracting reveal that practitioners with external consultancies are more clear than internals in describing to clients what they offer, what they expect in return, and in
stating their aims. Paul described an interesting development in contracting style: the move from "responsive" to "pro-active" contracts (lines 55-80). The former dictated a term of contract, which, regardless of the outcome, had an onus on the time spent and on payment. The new-style contracts encouraged a greater degree of collaboration between client and consultant by stipulating an exit clause if the client is dissatisfied, with no penalty fees due. The pro-active contract is considered to be mutually beneficial to both client and consultant. Re-contracting is a common aspect of pro-active contracts, which ensures that the desired outcomes for both consultant and client remain accurately described given the unstability in the environment. From the point of view of the consultant, it also ensures that the client is committed to the intervention by choice and interest, and not because of a legal obligation to do so.

Therefore the evidence suggests that the more external the consultant the clearer the contract. Implicit in this suggestion is the notion that the consultants interviewed vary in degrees to which he or she can be considered either internal or external. This will be discussed in more detail in a later section. Because payment is made only to externals, it can be inferred also that there is an element of "pledging" and also a safeguard function in the drawing up of contracts. Although it cannot be generally assumed that the effectiveness of a consultant is impaired by either the low degree of accountability or the absence of clear
contracts, allegedly there was questionable behaviour within one of the OD units (lines 2038-2050). It is obvious from Anna’s comments that this alleged behaviour was possible because of the contractual "fogginess", the non-definition of aims and obligations, and the lack of accountability within that unit.

Data-gathering

Although the methods of data gathering varied tremendously, all the consultants interviewed expressed a preference for qualitative interviews which involved personal contact as a means of data gathering. Although criticism was made of large consultancies for their use of non-direct quantitative methods, such as questionnaire surveys (line 2328), there was little evidence from Price-Waterhouse to substantiate this accusation. Even though the use of a questionnaire survey was described, it had been employed only in the testing out of some hypotheses which had been formulated from data gathered earlier through a series of personal interviews (lines 170-200).

The preference for qualitative data posed some particular difficulties. In projects which involved large organizations, logistically it was impossible to interview all the members on a one-to-one basis. To be over-ambitious in data gathering, in mismatching the resources required for the task, was cited as one of the causes of failure (lines 1885-1890). Because of the limitations in collecting
qualitative data, there is a need to be selective in who to interview. The inherent danger of being selective is that an unbalanced picture may be produced. The consultants appear to be aware of this, as reflected by their attempts to include as wide a vertical and horizontal cross-section of the organization as possible (lines 1140-1158, 2318). To cover the lower levels of an organization, it is often necessary to do group interviews with staff representatives (lines 190-200, 549-560, 2330-2350). They point out that it is more important to conduct one-to-one interviews with senior management, because it will be at this level that the diagnosis will be approved, and it will also be at this level that the consultants build the relationships which will ultimately determine the success or failure of an intervention. Initial interviews are seen as the beginning of an on-going process to establish close contact and to secure the support of the key figures of the organizational power system.

The overriding argument for a comprehensive collection of data which reflects the complexity of the organization lies in the consultants' suggestion that clients have little idea of what their problem is, and quite often will present consultants with their ideas for a solution and not a definition of the problem. As many different views as possible are collected (lines 152-163, 364-378, 1380-1386, 2293-2310, 4011-4030).

The questions asked by the consultants aim to obtain
"balanced pictures" of existing procedures and operating systems, desired futures, strengths, weaknesses, constraints, and culture. Some examples of these questions can be found at lines 200-210, 1147-1157, 2317-2318, 2360-2390, 2365-3990.

Analysis and planning

As in data-gathering, the involvement of a wide cross-section of the organization is advocated in analysis and planning. There are descriptions of the use of focus groups (lines 2119-2128) and work groups (lines 1172-1198) in drawing out the different perspectives to a problem situation and as devices for refining the ideas (lines 4290-4310) which have been generated through a brainstorming process (lines 2128-2160, 499-540). While recent research into the changing practice of organization development has also pointed to the "more involved and complex diagnosis process" (Van Eynde and Bledsoe, 1990, p27), that is to involve more people and to collect and utilise information from a widening array of sources, Van Eynde and Bledsoe (1990) fail to demonstrate that there were particular difficulties to the participative approach in planning and analysis. From comments made by the consultants during their interviews, several issues can be identified.

In Paul's view, while organizations in general, are more active in adopting a participative approach, he believes that there are some exceptions. He cites as an example the organizations with a paternalistic and
authoritarian culture, where participation is discouraged and any attempts to involve non-managerial staff in discussion groups is impossible (lines 450-470). If the continued support of the senior management is to be expected, it is unwise to make any attempt to go against the prevailing culture. To paraphrase, "consultants have one crack, and if the involvement of non-management will jeopardize the chances of obtaining an acceptable diagnosis, then I don't have much choice".

Although John too, feels that a problem lies with managers, he believes that, with counselling, it can be conquered. The reluctance of middle to senior management to accept on an equal footing the participation of staff from the lower levels of an organization is identified by John as arising from their feelings of insecurity and from their belief that their management role is gradually being eroded. From his experience within the Civil Service, he suggests that individual counselling can help overcome their reluctance (lines 1797-1803).

Although the consultants who were interviewed were keen to point out that they encouraged a high level of participation during the analysis and planning phase, a trend which can also be identified from their accounts of interventions and from the documented accounts of OD practice, a question mark emerged over how truly representative and impartial the participative process is. As in data-gathering, the direct involvement of every member
became unfeasible in large-scale projects, and selected members were often relied upon to provide a representative input into analysis and planning (lines 558, 1172-1198, 2119-2160, 4290-4310). There is no evidence that the choice of individuals was arbitrary and unbiased. Instead, consultants relied on the in-house resource or managers to suggest which members to involve. It appears then that consultants can, in this manner, be very much under the influence of certain stakeholders in making their choice of who to believe in and who to trust (lines 345-360, 1580-1585, 1598-1605, 4030-4040).

Evaluation

Examining the data collected, it becomes obvious that, while clearly a high degree of monitoring takes place during the course of a project, there is little evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention process itself.

The term monitoring was used synonymously with "negative feedback" by two of the consultants interviewed (lines 800-810, 3030). It was the correction of deviation, and monitoring points were established where the client and consultant could exchange views (lines 3013-3023). These formal review points were clearly marked at certain intervals. For example, Anna would conduct a review with a client at the end of the first month, then once every three months (line 3012). It was also observed that there is a difference in the intervals between the review points set up
by internals and by externals. For example, externals review as often as every six weeks, and internals once every three months. Another consultant, Paul, described the development and use of performance indicators in the monitoring process (lines 690-707). It was also stated by the consultants, for example Anna (lines 3030-3035), that, when clients were unhappy, they were quick to let the consultant know.

On the other hand, there was little evidence of evaluation. Evaluation is to do with more than just the effectiveness of the final actions taken. It examines also the effectiveness of the overall consultancy process, the effectiveness in the various processes which comprise a project such as the methods of data-gathering, the means by which the data is analysed or the effectiveness of the process of strategy formulation. It also takes into consideration the effectiveness of the consultant himself, that is the success of his "bed-side" manner and his ability to manage relationships with key personnel within the client-target system. A reason given by a consultant for the limited amount of evaluation which occurs is that, because there is always such a rush to get onto the next project, there is little time to evaluate (line 3004). Two of the consultants, interviewed while expressing their concern, revealed that it was generally an "academic" area which caused little worry to the clients (lines 830-840, 3004-3007). They admitted that there should be more evaluation, and that the complex strategies implemented by the consultants cannot always be correct (line 870, 3033).
The evidence collected suggests that after a consultant withdraws, there is often little further contact (lines 2990-3002).

The data suggests that a key factor, which contributed to the lack of evaluation, is the disinterest expressed by most clients, and further, three key questions had to be first resolved: (1) How do you evaluate? (2) Who pays? and (3) Who evaluates?

The latter centres around the issue of objectivity. It is questionable if those who are directly involved in an intervention, such as the client, the target, or the consultant, can provide an objective evaluation. If not, should third parties be used, such as business schools, as in the project described by Gjemdal (1985). These are thoughts voiced by Anna (lines 3013-3035). The concern with bias in the evaluation of OD interventions is also reflected in literature and as yet remains unresolved. While Terpstra (1981) found evidence of a bias towards positive findings in the evaluations of OD interventions, Bullock and Svyantek (1983) attempting to use the same sample, reached an opposite conclusion. Woodman and Wayne (1985) reviewed fifty original empirical evaluations, their results indicating no support for the notion of positive bias in the conclusions drawn by those intimately involved in the interventions.

The expense of evaluation is another issue which faces the consultant, in particular the external. For example, the figures quoted for an evaluation of an intervention in
British Telecom was in excess of five figures (line 883), and the obvious reluctance of either the consultancy firm or the client-organization to be responsible for the costs is understandable. At the practical level, the data collected provides some pointers in answering the question of "who pays?". John suggests that evaluation should be marked up as an agenda at the beginning (line 1739), and, more effectively still, Paul feels that the costs should be written into the contract and there is evidence from a project with the Grampian Health Authority which supports the success of this approach (lines 875-893).

The question of, "How do you evaluate?" still remains to a large extent unanswered. Some consultants, such as Anna and Paul, feel that it is an area which is underdeveloped. To illustrate, at the time of interview, Price-Waterhouse had just employed a new part-time member of staff from North London Polytechnic to investigate the possibilities of developing a methodology for evaluation. Others, such as Mike, are of the view that the contexts of intervention are of such complexity that any causal evaluation remained unreliable (line 4310-4330). What little evaluation there was remained very informal, based on criteria such as "gut feelings" (lines 830-840, 3051), "something positive" (lines 4310-4330) or a client's impressions of success (lines 1780, 3930, 4310-4330) which were themselves founded on "grape-vine" gossip, "like what they heard over lunch" (lines 898-911). An anomaly in this pattern is the Job Satisfaction Team (J.S.T.), which, according to John, had well-defined
criteria for evaluation. This may well be explained by the nature of their work. Its projects are basically of a more techno-structural nature based on the principles of job re-design and organizational re-structuring. It is conceivable that the outcomes of such projects are more immediate and more easily measurable. Several other explanations are also possible. Evaluation may well have been encouraged by the particular environment of the Civil Service where the J.S.T. had to make various reports, for instance to the Steering Committee. In addition, it seemed from a study of the prospects of OD in central government that, within the Civil Service, OD was held in low esteem in the early 1970s (Harrison, 1985). The development of evaluative measures and the documentation of such results can be explained as an attempt to attract the serious attention of the policy makers in government. It is also possible that a more distinctive form of evaluation was developed because some of the consultants found that the actual process of evaluation helped the client-organization take on ownership of the intervention (section 5.2). Their criteria for evaluation included both quantitative and qualitative measurements: productivity, sick absences, turnover, level of error made, personal attitudes to work and differences in management (lines 1490-1500, 1749-1760).

Action research and the OD process

One of the initial aims of the research sets out to examine how closely the practice of OD incorporates action
research principles, given that a review of many of the
different accounts of OD's history states that action
research is one of the "primary roots" of organization
development (Chapter One). Sections 4.2, 5.2, 6.2 and 7.2
described in detail the OD process as illustrated by the
practice of OD in four organizations. An attempt has been
made to bring together the separate descriptions into a
common framework. It seems that there is only a superficial
correspondence in the OD intervention process to the phases
of the action research process as described by Frohman et al
(1976, p133) and reproduced in Table Six. The evidence
collected instead suggests that the OD process is variable.
There is no evidence to support the proposal that all the
phases described in Table Six are inherent to an OD
intervention, and certainly the phases of an OD intervention
are far from the "cyclical and sequential" (loc. cit) process
which had been envisaged. In addition, the accounts examined
show that only some of the characteristics of action research
are incorporated in the practice of OD. Namely, of the six
characteristics described by Frohman et al (1976, p132), only
four are found to be present in all the accounts examined.
These are: an emphasis on data-based diagnosis; action aimed
at improving the problem-solving skills of the client system;
the rare use of "pre-planned packages"; and an emphasis on
training the client in problem-solving skills and processes.
With regard to the other two characteristics, although
evaluation and new knowledge are considered key features of
action research, there is little evidence showing that in
practice, they are also key features of OD. The accounts of

261
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action research phase</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Aim</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scouting</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Arriving at a decision of whether or not to enter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Establishing a collaborative relationship, initial problem exploration and selecting data collection/feedback methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Developing measures of organization variables and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data feedback</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Returning data to the client system for discussion and diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Understanding the state of the system and problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action planning</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Developing specific action plans—including determining who will implement the plans and how the effects will be evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action implementation</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Implementing specific change plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Determining effect and effectiveness of action implementation, leading to further efforts or to termination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Summary of the phases in action research
(source: reproduced from Frohman et al, 1976, p133)
OD practice which were examined showed that there may or may not be evaluation and that there is not necessarily a contribution to behavioural science knowledge. Generally speaking there is evidence of monitoring as the intervention progresses, but there is little formal evaluation, except in the cases described by the J.S.T. Therefore it is difficult to say that there is a final "research phase" in evaluation. It is also difficult to conclude that there is always a definite contribution to knowledge. There is little evidence of a consultant making a direct contribution to behavioural science. If learning from taking action occurs, it does not necessarily mean that this knowledge would be shared. Although networking was recognized as an important means for exchanging experiences with a small group of personal friends, it can hardly be considered an effective means of disseminating new knowledge. There is little conclusive evidence which suggests that a consultant's experience or learning will always reach a wider audience of behavioural scientists, for example through publication in journals and periodicals and through talks and seminars.

As a result of examining the intervention process adopted in the projects, two conclusions can be drawn concerning the relationship between action research and the practice of organization development. Although many accounts of OD's history claim that action research is an important root in OD theory and a salient feature of OD practice (as pointed out in Chapter One and section 2.1), instead firstly the data collected suggests that there is only superficial
resemblance to the action research process. Not necessarily all the stages of the action research process as described by Frohman et al (1976) and summarized in Table Six feature in the practice of OD. Secondly, only some action research principles are incorporated in the practice of organization development. The data gathered provides a more accurate picture of the actual activities and actions which take place in practice. This has allowed the development of an overall view of the consultancy process. There appears to be some differences between the portrayal of the OD change process in literature and the actual process described by the consultants who were interviewed. This will now be discussed in greater detail.

Relating some key issues to the overall consultancy process

There are many models of the OD process. While these models have been paramount in developing a greater understanding of the change process, providing a useful framework around which theorist-practioners have structured their experiences, they have all aimed to depict the process as something universal. The data collected on the practice of OD suggests that many of these models in their attempts to embody or provide some universal theory of change, fail to recognize or incorporate certain key features which the consultants interviewed have demonstrated are a part of the consultancy process. While reviewing many of these models, it has been noticed that many are simply variations on the earlier models. Some of these models are now briefly
described. Where the authors have provided a diagram or figure which summarizes their model or description of the OD change-process, these have been reproduced or adapted for reference and included in Appendix Two.

One of the earliest models by Lippitt, Watson and Westley (1958) describes the change process as occurring in seven stages: scouting, entry, diagnosis, planning, action, stabilization and evaluation, and termination. Another is by Greiner (1967), who, in reviewing eighteen studies of organizational change, noted that the successful cases had in common six steps: recognized need, entry, diagnosis, collaboration, experimentation and search, reinforcement and acceptance. Many of the later models are variations. For example, Kolb and Frohman (1970) describe a seven step "OD approach to consulting" which is identical to Lippitt et al's: scouting, entry, diagnosis, planning, action, evaluation and termination (Appendix 2). A later version is re-titled "an action research approach to OD", the only difference being that diagnosis is now prefixed by data-collection and data-feedback (Frohman et al, 1976, p153). French (1969, p385), not too dissimilarly, described a cyclical model of OD based on action research, the stages being: diagnosis, data-gathering, feedback, action-planning, action, and at a much later date is still reproducing the same model with the same diagram (French and Bell, 1984, p 109). Burke (1981) deviates little from this approach, describing a six step process: entry, contracting, data-collection and diagnosis, feedback, intervention and
evaluation, although in addition he firmly states that these steps may occur "out of phase". Other similar models can be found (Margulies and Raia, 1968; Gallessich, 1982; Woolhouse, 1983; Hellriegal et al, 1989). However one model can be noted for its more accurate portrayal of the complexity of the intervention process (Lovelady, 1983).

While it is undeniable that action research has contributed to the development of OD, it has also encouraged the development of a certain genre of models, mostly based on the action research process. The earlier models all exhibit similar characteristics. Although these models have contributed to our understanding of the consultancy process, they mislead in more than one way. Firstly, they view the change process in continuous cycles made up of progressive steps or stages. Secondly, all these models are similar in that they take on an action research "format", describing or depicting the same stages which are based on action research. The resemblance implies that there are universal stages and may mislead their readers into thinking that there is a universal change process, despite the different contexts of each OD intervention and the fact that it is not uncommon for consultants to be forced to leave the system. Furthermore while these models stress the "interactive" nature of change, they do little to relate it to the change process. The definition of "interactive" often appears to be limited to the environmental factors, as indicated by the descriptions of French and Bell (1984, Chapter 5). In fact, many of the important interactive issues, those to do with building
relationships with key figures which the consultants interviewed have claimed to affect the success or failure of an intervention, for example the "where, when and how" issues of involving key figures or the training or involvement of in-house resources are barely mentioned in relation to their models. Finally, the data collected distinctly suggests preparation phases. These points will now be discussed in more detail.

There is no evidence from the data collected to suggest that interventions progress in the sequential manner as described for example by French and Bell (1984, p109) or Frohman et al (1976). Instead the consultants interviewed made the obvious points that there are periods of advances, there are periods when set-backs are experienced, and times when everything is stationary. Furthermore it is indicated, that as far as the consultancy process is concerned, that is, the process whereby a consultant is involved with an organization, continuity rarely came into it. The multiple points of exits and withdrawals which have been described by the consultants do not feature in the models reviewed.

Four common exit or withdrawal points have been described. It should first be pointed out that "withdrawal" refers to a partial exit, that is a consultant will keep up intermittent contact with the organization with the aim of re-entry at a later date, while "exit" is defined as complete departure. These points are:
1. After establishing contact, deeper entry into the system is denied and the consultant withdraws or exits.

2. A consultant is invited into the system, however he or she "feels that the time is not right", and withdraws. This period of withdrawal can last weeks or years (lines 2264-2278).

3. The evidence points to there being very little evaluation in practice, and usually a consultant exits or withdraws after implementation.

4. Evaluation, if it occurs, can lead to the drawing-up of new contracts or withdrawal.

These withdrawal or exit points are illustrated in relation to the phases of the consultancy process in Figure 2b. Surprisingly, it was also indicated by Paul that once data is collected, its analysis, the discussion of recommendations, followed by some form of implementation is almost inevitable. Objections or protests often occur before data-gathering, or after implementation, and it was rare for exits to occur in between. It was also pointed out that there were times when an organization was not able to acknowledge or work on certain problem areas (lines 1040-1065, 2600-2628). Two reasons can be identified. Firstly, some key figures operating in the system may act as obstacles; Paul cites the director of a rail network as an example, while Anna speaks of "stubborn" medics. Secondly, Anna admits, in reference to an intervention with a police force, that she can "shout herself blue in the face" and still not be heard, implying that some of the values advocated by OD can be incompatible
KEY PERSONNEL
(power system)

Figure 2a. Involvement points for key personnel and in-house resource.

IN-HOUSE RESOURCE
("locals")
Figure 2b A re-defined consultancy process
Figure 2a Involvement points for key personnel and in-house resource

Figure 2b A re-defined consultancy process
with the values upheld by an organization at certain points of its life (lines 2610-2630). This is a theme which has been discussed by Lavoie and Culbert (1978) in relation to OD. They also suggest that certain interventions may be unacceptable because of the limiting constraints imposed either by an individual or an organization's state of moral development. However, Lavoie and Culbert claim in their conclusion that OD is not concerned with development, that is to move or guide organizations from one level to a higher level of development, but rather with implementing strategies for improving organizational effectiveness through a transformance of the human condition and productivity. Perhaps the fact that a consultant withdraws, rather than confronts, upholds their claim, although to be fair to the consultants interviewed, Lavoie and Culbert, while making an effective criticism, have not proposed the means whereby this situation may be ameliorated.

It can also be argued that the withdrawal of a consultant can be seen not as an indication of failure, but of his or her astuteness in not wanting to jeopardize any positive progress which they have made, or to risk destroying the goodwill, which they are receiving, by forcing further, activities if "the time is not right". To paraphrase Anna, "I can always go back, if I don't blow it the first time."

Finally, another possible explanation has been implicitly suggested by McGivern (1983) who researching some facets of the relationship between consultants and clients.
found that the successful consulting relationship is characterized by an interdependency between consultant and client which is both mutual and in balance. There is also evidence which suggests that, where it has been impossible to achieve this interdependency (that is to maintain high levels of trust, cooperation and interaction), consultants have been forced to exit. For example, it was alleged by Anna that this was happening to her colleagues (lines 2038-2050, 2180-2195, 2310-2315).

Therefore, in conclusion it can be suggested that at the practical level, the strategy which is developed by a consultant and the activities which go into it, may be severely limited by a key figure or by the organization for the reasons suggested. Whether a consultant carries on or leaves the organization may also be similarly determined. Exits can also occur before or after evaluation.

Figure 2b represents the consultancy process as described by the consultants interviewed. The model possesses several features which are not represented or stressed in many of the other models reviewed. These are now summarized. Each phase of the process is represented as an open-ended and overlapping, disjointed loop. The arrowed loop represents a two-way communication flow. It also suggests that the process can oscillate at a particular phase or between phases. This is because an intervention will not always move forward. The loop is open because the duration of each phase varies from project to project. The open-
endedness also allows one loop, that is a phase, to be connected to any other loop, because, from the consultants' accounts of their work, it seems that there is no set number or definite order of phases. The number of phases vary, for instance, because a project may not necessarily be the result of a new contact, or some consultants will have a distinct contract drawn up while others do not, or there is no evaluation. There is no definite order because, for example, setbacks are encountered and a phase or series of phases are reiterated. A loop is disjointed because it is indicated by the consultants that each phase will take on different forms determined by the different circumstances of each project. Furthermore each consultant will have an individual approach to his or her own work. In fact, this is stressed by Mike who voiced his concern during the interview that the grouping of questions to correspond with a particular phase would give the false impression that there is a standard approach to change. This was because, during an interview, in addition to other things, a consultant was asked clusters of questions which corresponded to discernable phases in the consultancy process, such as contact, contracting, data gathering, analysis and planning, and evaluation. The intention was to provide a loose structure for the recording of the data. Therefore Figure 2b stresses that any number of permutations can be made from the open-ended loops and various exits, to represent a consultancy process as experienced by a particular consultant in relation to a particular intervention. It is argued that this represents more accurately the consultancy process in the practice of
OD. This can be contrasted with the more usual representation of change as a regular progression through defined, closed boxes, such as Kolb and Frohman's diagram (Appendix 2) which implies that there is a greater order to change than there really is. However it is noticed that in a later article, Frohman et al (1976, p139) do stress that there is a degree of flexibility in the OD process, and that "recycling" (that is, a re-iteration of one or more steps), is an aspect of this flexibility.

It is also suggested that the models of OD which have been reviewed, while referring to the interactive nature of intervention, tend to focus on the interactions occurring at the organizational level, that is between operating systems and between the organization and the environment. Little attempt has been made to relate the important part which interaction at the personal level plays in the overall consultancy process.

A key element in interaction at the personal level, as indicated by the consultants interviewed, is the identification and involvement of key figures within, or connected with, the organization. While this will include the figures who are prominent at an organizational level, it is vital not to overlook personnel who are important at a local level of the target system. It is apparent from comments made by the consultants, that after gaining entry but before pursuing further any line of action, they will assess in an informal manner the distribution of power and
the propensity of the key figures in this power system for change. Therefore in Figure 2b a loop, which represents this "systems assessment", straddles the entry and contracting phases. Although John emphasizes the importance of looking for wielders of power and of influence on entry, and making contact with and relating to power centres (lines 1327-1351), it is stressed that rather than being permanently in that position, this loop can act as a precursor to any phase because, as the intervention unravels, overall success will be determined by knowing who to work with (line 1580). For example, Anna also identifies a need to work with shadows, and John, speaks of particular "pivotal" groups of senior managers to involve in diagnosis (lines 1210-1258, 1532) and in planning (line 1580). And in the Civil Service, because of its heavily unionized nature, it is important to ensure that certain key figures from the trade unions are not ignored (lines 1393-1410). While implicit in their accounts is the notion that the endorsement by power centres of a consultant's activities is something to strive for, Paul also points out that they play a crucial "steering role" too. Key figures help steer, lead and guide an intervention because "they have the power to make changes" and they can "lead by example". Therefore, with impotent leaders a consultant often becomes ineffective (lines 1040-1065).

The data collected indicated that a successful working relationship with the important key figures is determined both by the consultant's effective social interaction within the organizational system, and by his or her ability to
manage the relationship. Five factors have been described by Pettigrew (1975) which enhance the influence that an internal consultant can exert: his or her expertise as a source of power, the control over the flow of information, the ability to have political access and to be politically aware, to make use of his stature and reputation as consultant, and the use of group support. To manage a relationship implies a certain degree of manipulativeness on the part of the consultant and the exercise of some form of control. It is clear that the consultants interviewed make use of factors such as those described by Pettigrew to manage a relationship, but the extent to which they can be considered manipulative varies. At one extreme the behaviour of Anna's colleagues may be considered to be underhand because of their intentions to mislead through providing inaccurate information and in devising "loose and woolly" contracts. However, a consultant can also manage or "control" by acting intuitively and sensitively. For example, Mike relies on his ability to be able to arrange a meeting so that he can make use of the presence of the key members who support him in order to influence the eventual outcome. It is also obvious that, while a consultant is fairly limited in the range of activities which he can pursue in his attempts to influence and "control", they do not necessarily have to be of a "covert" nature. For example, Paul appears to use the contract as a means of control in order "to make a client listen" (lines 380-395). It can also be pointed out that implicit in Pettigrew's analysis is the assumption that an internal consultant will have far greater political access.
than an external. The data collected instead suggest that for a variety of factors this may not be the case. It has already been noted that internal and external are relative notions. Therefore it may be possible that an "external" consultant may be more internal than an "internal". The evidence proposes that access is determined by a combination of factors: the relativity of a consultant to the internal-external scale is just one factor, others include the level of professional expertise which he possesses, and his ability in preventing any detection of his attempts to covertly manage his relationships. An adverse combination of these factors, as typified by Anna's colleagues, illustrates the marginality which can occur even to internals.

While the involvement of key figures of power and the management of social relationships with them are important aspects of the consultancy process, not to be ignored are the more ordinary members of the target system with whom the consultant must work every day. For example, a consultant will have to work closely with the in-house resource, or the members who have been identified for that role, and his success in being accepted by them will affect his ability to find his way around the organization. Furthermore, this acceptance or friendship will affect the depth of their involvement together in the intervention process, and hence the speed with which a consultant can leave behind an adequate level of processual skills.

It was also suggested that distinct preparation phases occur. The consultants interviewed all spoke of a need "to
prepare the ground". There is often a need for a "preparation phase" prior to data-gathering and planning. The preparation may involve counselling or training-based activities. For example, Mike refers to the need to address "other" issues first, that is to say other than the "problem", because some members do not understand "what the intervention is all about", and this needs to be rectified before further progress can be made (line 3870). John also proposes that senior staff will frequently require counselling before the commencement of a project, because, from his experience, they are often opposed to the participative methods used in data-gathering and in the analysis of the data. In addition, the staff from the lower levels of the organizational hierarchy have been found by both John and Anna to lack experience in participative methods, and both consultants recommend the early provision of a training programme to redress this (lines 1480-1485). Another phase has been identified by Paul. Although it can be argued that this phase should be considered a part of implementation, it can more accurately be described as a precursor to implementation. This is because, it is a phase of activities which does not directly improve the "problem" situation, but instead, tackles the existing organizational infra-structure, such as the reward system, thereby making it possible for the actual action which will alleviate the "problem" to take place. Finally, if there is evaluation, the J.S.T.'s experience suggests that it may be necessary to train the staff in evaluation techniques.

Laying Figure 2a onto Figure 2b will position the
preparation phases and the main points for the involvement of the key figures and the involvement of the in-house resource, in relation to the overall consultancy process.

8.3 Levels of intervention

A summary of consultant activities demonstrates that, during a project, there is a wide range of possible aims and actions (Table 7). Some writers, for example Beckhard (1969), Beer and Huse (1972), Sherwood (1972), French and Bell (1984) and Burke (1987), have claimed that OD is a total system approach. However, examining the data collected, it appears that, while some activities are total system in that they take place organization-wide or have an organization-wide impact, others limit their attention to the specific individuals or groups which are the cause of specific problems. On the whole, the conclusion can be drawn that the activities relating to "systems management" occur at the organization-wide level, while "conflict management" focuses at the micro-level, tending to be more specific and limited to particular "problem" groups or individuals.

Systems management at the organization-wide level

The organization-wide activities appear to be closely linked to the broader strategic aims of the organization. Some of the strategic aims are summarized in Table 8. The realization of these aims will involve a combination of
Table 7
Summary of consultant activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shell</th>
<th>The Civil Service</th>
<th>ICI (Billingham)</th>
<th>Price-Waterhouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>holistic diagnosis</td>
<td>*provide objective perception: a stranger's view</td>
<td>developing consensus</td>
<td>holistic diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*consciousness raising for sensitive issues</td>
<td>*provide scenario of future facing</td>
<td>*vertical &amp; horizontal data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*widest sources for data collection</td>
<td>*job enrichment</td>
<td>*any change considered as part of a wider strategy which encompasses the whole organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developing autonomy</td>
<td>*reduce hierarchical levels &amp; control</td>
<td>*consider impact of intervention on other systems</td>
<td>developing flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*division into autonomous units with multifunctional teams</td>
<td>*technical &amp; processual training</td>
<td>*'Working Practices' initiative for wider range of jobs, different skills training, flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*improvement of relation between central services &amp; production units</td>
<td>*training</td>
<td>redeployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*develop appropriate culture, procedures, values</td>
<td>*individual counselling for managers who feel threatened</td>
<td>*'Life Business Workshops'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop interdependency</td>
<td>*encourage cross-cultural cooperation</td>
<td>*technical &amp; processual training to develop in-house support service</td>
<td>*'Career Investigation Programme'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*guidelines for policies &amp; roles between different operating companies</td>
<td>*develop communication networks</td>
<td>cultural change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*develop communication networks</td>
<td>developing consensus</td>
<td>*work on top management to change beliefs, values, norms &amp; style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developing consensus</td>
<td>*role play</td>
<td>*revise organizational policies &amp; budgetary systems to remove contradictions</td>
<td>*reinforce cultural change throughout organization using organizational mechanisms: reward systems, organizational structure, operating procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*encouragement &amp; acknowledgement of each group's values</td>
<td>*encouragement &amp; acknowledgement of each group's values</td>
<td>training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*rigorous staff selection policy</td>
<td>*specific training to manage change plan, monitor &amp; correct</td>
<td>*training of organizational members to manage change plan, monitor &amp; correct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

training

*transference of technical & processual skills: specific teach & learn periods

*specific training to combat low retention of processual skills amongst line & senior management

*support networks for displaced staff:
counselling service & technical training
Table 8
Strategic aims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shell</th>
<th>The Civil Service</th>
<th>ICI (Billingham)</th>
<th>Price-Waterhouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*improve responsiveness to the environment</td>
<td>*develop flexibility in the work force</td>
<td>*streamline the organization</td>
<td>*develop better fit between organization and environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*increase autonomy of operating companies</td>
<td>*develop a greater understanding of how various departments fit together</td>
<td>*develop organizational flexibility</td>
<td>*develop cohesiveness in face of changed objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*develop greater cohesiveness</td>
<td>*develop autonomy and responsibilities of lower levels</td>
<td>*making the organization more responsive to the environment</td>
<td>*ensure fit between new objectives-structure-processes-culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*smooth out conflict-filled environment</td>
<td>*improve communication</td>
<td>*bring together the different cultures of the factories on the Tees</td>
<td>*bring together different cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*develop a participative culture</td>
<td>*increase responsiveness to customer demands</td>
<td>*develop creativity and sustain productivity levels given safety constraints and lower work-force levels</td>
<td>*develop a culture which encourages change and flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>Processual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*decentralization &amp; creation of independent units</td>
<td>*creation of house style symbolized by Statement of Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*units function as profit centres</td>
<td>*clarification of company identity and mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*clear output criteria &amp; targets</td>
<td>*moral standards of how company operates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*income &amp; resources depends on results</td>
<td>*internal entrepreneurship: incentives to experiment with new procedures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>*direct feedback of results</td>
<td>*reward system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*systematic horizontal exchange of results</td>
<td>*investing in people: improved training and education facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*horizontal job rotation</td>
<td>*leadership style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*training in social skills, constructive meeting/negotiating processes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
structural and processual interventions. Some of the interventions which have been described in the projects examined are summarized in Table 9. These interventions work on the organizational conditions which facilitate or act as obstructions to change, thereby controlling the ability of an organization to be responsive to the environment. A two-fold principle can be determined. On one hand, organizations are made more flexible by, for example, introducing a greater autonomy amongst its sub-systems, on the other hand, these sub-systems are brought closer together by improving the lateral and vertical communication or by the issue of mission and philosophy statements.

Consider firstly the structural interventions. Some of the actions taken aim to decentralize the system in order to create more autonomous units. These units will then possess a greater degree of flexibility and responsiveness. Individual units become responsible for their profit and internal resources. The action taken may involve extensive change to the structure of an organization. As long as a department manages to achieve the predetermined ratios, such as the performance indicators described by Paul (section 4.2) which take into account the respective costs, personnel, resources and productivity ratios, there is relatively little hierarchical interference. In particular Chapter Five, describing the projects involving the J.S.T., illustrates the use of structural levers. For example, consider the interventions at the Inland Revenue Accounts Office at Cumbernauld and the Customs and Excise unit at Southend, both
described in sections 5.2 and 5.3. In these examples, there were extensive structural changes which decentralized and created more independent work units. Clear output criteria and targets were established, and greater accountability developed to the customers.

The greater degree of autonomy has to be counter-balanced by the development of closer links between units. This can be provided in two ways. Firstly, there is systematic job-rotation and job-enrichment for both staff and management. In this way, organizations develop multi-skilled personnel, who will have a greater awareness of how they fit into the rest of the organization and a greater appreciation of what other departments stand for. Members will also be able to expand their network of personal contacts throughout the organization, thereby improving interpersonal and interdepartmental relationships. At an executive level, also suggested by Schein and Greiner (1978), horizontal job rotation has proved to be particularly useful in preventing the functional myopia and the tendency of specialists to establish strongholds. Secondly, additional horizontal channels of information can be created to encourage the regular and systematic exchange and comparison of results between units. Increasing the horizontal exchange of information helps develop a greater awareness of the holistic nature of the organization and of the need for units to function together as a whole. Furthermore, the benefits of sharing ideas and experiences can be seen in the generation of new ideas and also allows one group to learn from another.
In a vast organization like the Civil Service, where one department can have little contact with another, this can be of particular benefit. John described the setting up of horizontal links: the establishment of in-house newspapers, journals and regular meetings and conferences. Improved horizontal communication can also encourage a department to be more conscious of its performance, and, by introducing a sense of rivalry and competition to the work place, less direct hierarchical control is needed and units are allowed to become more independent. A final point to make is that before encouraging a department or organization to implement new ideas and work systems, their members' fears of forced dismissals must be overcome. This increasingly involves counselling and, in the larger organizations, a search for openings elsewhere within the organization for displaced personnel. Two examples of this are the Life Business Workshops and Career Investigation Programmes at ICI described in section 7.1. Some consultants found that they also had to deal with the additional problems of senior management who view the participation of juniors in problem-solving activities as an erosion of their traditional prerogative.

There are also interventions directed at the processes and culture of the organization. Both structural and processual interventions often take place in conjunction with each other. Processual change is often initiated with, and evolves around the issue of a company philosophy or mission-statement. A well-publicized example was the statement of
philosophy at Shell described by Blackler and Brown (1980) and Hill (1977) and briefly summarized in section 4.1, and being prepared at the time of interview were statements at Chemicals and Polymers (ICI), Scot Rail (by Price-Waterhouse) and British Telecom (Price-Waterhouse). These statements are often used as instruments to disseminate revised company policies. They also serve to promote cohesiveness and at another level, to clarify. Paul referred to their use in removing contradictions and Mike described the aim of the statement at Chemicals and Polymers as helping to achieve a balance between the conflicting production objectives and safety constraints. In the view of Pascale and Athos (1981), the collective identity, the "we-feeling", is "the most underpublicized weapon of great companies" in promoting and retaining the cohesiveness between the disparate groups making up an organization. A strong "we-feeling" is developed in many companies by fostering the common values which have been summed up in statements of philosophy. Pascale and Athos suggest, for example, that members be encouraged to recognize the company history, the company's important social role, its "revolutionary" research and development, its superior service to its customers, its extensive investments in the education and training of its personnel and the quality of its products. These values are reiterated at training activities, speeches and official occasions. It was also stated by Mike that the value-system is reinforced by the selection of a particular type of employee who fits in well with it. Basically the aim is an unremitting confirmation and articulation of the company's values, and
this has become a means for organizations to fulfil the need of their employees for emotional support while ensuring that there is cohesiveness.

The other "processual levers" identified in Table 9 relate to technical and processual training needs. The Life Business Workshop and the setting up of internal careers services departments provide the means to develop a profile of the technical weaknesses of employees and their retraining, following enforced dismissals. The consultants interviewed have also placed important store by "processual skills" training. There are specific "teaching and learning" periods in some of the Shell projects (sections 6.2 & 6.3), and an "Internal Consultant Development Programme" run by Price-Waterhouse (sections 4.2 & 4.3). John also described the need to develop constructive meeting and negotiating skills amongst the junior staff (sections 5.2 & 5.3).

Therefore often an OD project will be multi-layered, dealing simultaneously with both the structural and processual aspects of an organization, and aimed organization-wide. However there is also evidence that some aspects of OD have a more limited focus.

Conflict management at the micro level

A second level at which OD work is conducted is the micro level of organizational life: the level where specific problems are encountered, mostly concerning the "soft" human
problems of an organization as opposed to the more "strategic" aims at the organization-wide level, such as achieving flexibility, responsiveness and cohesion. The problems at the micro level relate to the operational frictions and conflict occurring in organizations. Section 2.3 reviewed some of the different types of conflict.

It is apparent that there are different ways for tackling the different types of conflict. There are various documented studies of the interventions dealing with, for example, the allocation of scarce resources (Fisher and Ury, 1981; Scott, 1981), value based differences (Walton, 1969) emotionally charged situations (Johnson, 1967; Johnson and Dustin, 1970), and building up mutual trust and acceptance (Walton, 1965). From the data collected, it is possible to determine a "contingency approach" to conflict resolution. Several different forms of conflict were defined and the appropriate strategy for their resolution was described in the accounts provided by the consultants interviewed and in the projects examined.

Firstly, all of them agreed that a distinction can be made between the expression of different views and "proper" conflict. The expression of differences of opinions is part of the creative process and has a positive function. Anna describes the importance of providing the opportunity for alternative perspectives to be expanded and explored, and the synergy which can be exploited from the combination of differences (lines 3075-3081, 3187-3185). Paul describes a
brainstorming session in progress in which as many views as possible are generated (lines 492-526) and a funneling process is employed to reduce the multiplicity of views (lines 266-270). Mike also suggests that there is a need to "challenge" the views provided rather than accepting them at face value (lines 4000-4030). It is observed that the most common mechanism for generating a consensus is "to focus on a desired future". Ideas or plans are thrown up during the planning process, and, by envisaging a desired future scenario, some form of consensus is reached and the task of sifting through the means of achieving this future becomes freer of disagreements (lines 497, 1158, 2429-2445, 3969-3989). Paul feels that a higher level of satisfaction amongst the participants can be achieved during planning by ensuring that all the suggestions which have been made are not ignored. To paraphrase, "some of the ideas will be incorporated into the strategic plan, others into a non-strategic action list and the remaining will be given to the Managing Director who will explain to each contributor why his idea was not acted upon" (lines 570-590, 528-538). He finds that most members involved in planning will accept that a filtering-out process occurs in putting together a sequenced and operational plan, and that unavoidably some ideas will be left out. Both Mike and Paul stress that in practice most contributors are so pleased that a viable plan has been devised that losing some of their ideas is often less of a problem than expected (lines 590-600, 4280-4288).

The resolution of different opinions is not to be
confused with "proper" conflict which is considered a negative aspect of organizational life. Paul differentiates between three different types of conflict: conflict in the definition of a problem-situation which is related to inadequate or inaccurate information; value-based conflict caused by a member's or department's adopted value systems; and conflict stemming from malfunctions in the organizational dynamics, for example conflict arising from a punitive budgetary system or from the allocation of scarce resources. (lines 270-280, 970-1020). Anna identifies again three forms of conflict; unilateral conflict which she defines as mostly misunderstandings caused by poor communication; intentional conflict which is value-based; and unrecognized conflict which is power-based (lines 3200-3231). Mike refers to conflict emanating from misguided information (line 4240) and conflict linked to inadequate resourcing systems (lines 4060-4085).

Respectively, Paul describes the improvement of data-gathering systems for reducing uncertainty, confrontation forums for value-based conflict, and revised budgetary systems and developing an open attitude to resource trading for conflict arising from the allocation of scarce resources. Anna describes the need to make explicit each value system, to provide opportunities for members to fight out the differences, and counselling for the members engaged in value-based conflict (lines 2449-2460, 3090-3140).

The reality of "intended" conflict is an issue which is
also recognized. Anna speaks of her naivety in not having recognized that some people enjoy conflict (lines 3128-3138). Paul also describes instances where a consultant is not able to handle a conflict situation, which eventually has to be dealt with by hierarchically more powerful superiors. To paraphrase, the "I understand you, but I still want to be difficult" attitude (line 1000) may require a certain amount of shifting of personnel, tying them into organizational systems or external relocation. However, structural reform of this nature will involve the consent of top management, and, if the consultant is perceived as an informer, he will place into jeopardy the relationship of trust which he had carefully established with the other members of the organization (lines 950-970, 995-1005).

It is interesting that the consultants interviewed were on the whole more reticent in discussing power-based conflict, that is the conflict between subordinates and hierarchical superiors. It appears that in practice, this is an area which the consultants steer clear of. In tackling the inequalities of low-status groups, Anna can only suggest a limited message-taking, "giving them heart, encouraging them again" (lines 3200-3230). The issue of power in relation to OD is recognized to be important. However, as this issue cannot be directly related to the data, there will only be a short discussion on this subject in Appendix One.

Table 10 is a summary of the five common categories of conflict-based problems which have been described by the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Types of problems</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>procedural</td>
<td>*problems in coordination and synchronization, quality errors</td>
<td>*problem analysis, more efficient meeting and decision making behaviour improve planning, clearer allocation of tasks</td>
<td>*teach techniques of problem analysis and decision making, introduce better coordination and planning procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>values</td>
<td>*lack of trust and acceptance, personal irritations, stereotyping</td>
<td>*express 'irrational' feelings and irritations, promote 'informal' communication, empathy</td>
<td>*make irritations and stereotyping open for discussion, training in open communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources</td>
<td>*continuous deadlocks, application of more pressure by both sides</td>
<td>*recognize controversies, create 'give &amp; take' climate</td>
<td>*suggest compromises, training in negotiating techniques, chair negotiations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definition</td>
<td>*constant disagreement, interruptions to the intervention process</td>
<td>*to re-define situation</td>
<td>*improving data gathering techniques, check reliability of sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power</td>
<td>*suppression of &quot;have-nots&quot; in disadvantaged positions, related problems</td>
<td>*make explicit true costs of situation, keep up the spirits of &quot;have-nots&quot;</td>
<td>*coaching and counselling, develop skills in mediation, some message taking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
consultants with some of the possible actions for their resolution.

The first category is procedural. These are problems related to the production process. People are considered as a "means of production" and their relationships are determined by the way in which the work in organizations is divided and co-ordinated. Procedural conflict mostly arises from failings in communication patterns, methods of problem solving and decision making, and procedures of co-ordination.

The second category deals with the issue of values and emotions. Alliances are formed between people, who identify with common values, some personal, some peer-group. Friction can occur between the members of an organization and interventions at this level aim to tackle this; increasing openness and acceptance; changing behavioural patterns; developing an ability to cope with and to express emotions; encouraging self-disclosure, feedback and confrontation.

The third category is concerned with the conflict over resources. Within an organization, people have to share limited resources: jobs, space, budgets and equipment. The consultants interviewed have described the prevalent attitude adopted by members with respect to resource allocation as "win-lose". By focusing on common interests and the consequences of prolonged conflict, a consultant can turn a situation to "win-win". The chances of reaching an amicable settlement will depend much up on the personal abilities and
personality of the consultant because much of the negotiating process involves promoting a constructive climate which encourages the exploration of impasses and creating leeways.

The fourth category refers specifically to conflict arising from inadequate or inaccurate data in the definition of a situation.

For the sake of completeness, in spite of the limited data, a fifth category is included which refers to subordinate groups within an organization.

8.4 Roles and relationships

Consultant roles

The roles and functions of change agents have been discussed at great length by writers. Sashkin (1974) identified the roles of consultant, trainer and researcher as characteristic of change agent activity. Steele (1975) identified eight relevant roles: teacher, student, detective, barbarian, clock, monitor, talisman, advocate and ritual pig. Menzel (1975) described the roles of educator, diagnostician, consultant and linker. Lippitt and Lippitt (1975) provide a descriptive model of eight different roles: advocate, technical specialist, trainer, collaborator, alternative identifier, fact finder, process specialist and reflector. Nadler (1980) reviewing the work of human resource development consultants, identify four roles: advocate,
expert, stimulator and change-agent. McLean et al (1982) describe the consultant roles as tactitian, cultivator, trainer and offering new perspectives. And most recently and most comprehensively, Wooten and White (1989) identify thirteen roles in a change effort. They attempt to draw together the various roles identified by earlier theorists. The five roles of the change-agent: educator or trainer, model, researcher or theoretician, technical expert and resource linker; the four roles of the client system: resource provider, supporter or advocate, information-supplier and participant; and four mutual roles: problem-solver, diagnostician, learner and monitor. Drawing on the experience of the consultants interviewed, it has been possible to observe how these change-agent roles specifically relate to the practice of organization development.

All the consultants interviewed argued that because the senior managers were too involved in the daily operations of running their organizations, they spent little time on strategic thinking (lines 2720–2730, 3645). Therefore one of their roles is to help the manager to step back in order to view the organization in a strategic manner (lines 328–340, 1270), to act as a stimulus and to help him or her be more objective, to encourage participation in diagnosis and to ensure that an accurate diagnosis is reached. While the mutual roles of diagnostician and problem-solver can often be observed at the initial phase of a project, it would be misleading to generalize. Given that problems recur throughout the duration of a project, these roles can be
adopted at any time. In addition, Anna feels that she has to be equipped with a knowledge of other sectors (lines 2350-2360) in order to be able to act as a stimulus, to "spot connections" and to openly recommend (lines 2166-2180). This was a view which was echoed by Mike (lines 3645, 3660-3665), although he also saw it in rather less overt terms: to seed ideas without appearing to own them (lines 3776-3788). It was generally accepted that it was more difficult for an internal such as Mike or Anna, to be totally objective, that often "an internal had an axe to grind" (line 3615). Furthermore, Mike found that the lower levels of the organizational hierarchy, in associating him with management, would provide him with only what they think he wanted to hear. Anna also warns that it is easy for an internal to be drawn into a collusive relationship with the client. This can sometimes be out of fear (line 3260), or out of the necessity to agree with the problem area that the client has defined for her, if she wishes to remain (lines 2629-2635). A question which always faces the consultant is how far he or she can accept a client's values without compromising his own. This aspect of the relationship is discussed in some detail by Argyris (1976) who suggests that a consultant is faced with a dilemma: if he holds fast to his values, he may be asked to leave, but if he temporarily acts in accordance with a client's values, he may become totally immersed, and adopt the client's value system on a more permanent basis.

While all these roles, that is to provide objectivity, to seed ideas, to stimulate, and to encourage a participative
approach in diagnosis, were expected of both internal (line 3683) and external consultant (lines 2350-2354), they did not always take place with ease. The consultant often described taking on a trainer or counsellor role to overcome problems. For example, it was not unusual for a manager to feel insecure over the participation of their subordinates in the problem-solving process. It also emerged that often the manager had to first put aside his value system, before he could accept how other people perceived, perhaps critically, the way in which he ran the organization or department. Therefore, a consultant may have to adopt the trainer role which may involve individual counselling sessions, whenever such problems occur.

Throughout a project, a consultant is constantly a process helper or facilitator (lines 410-430, 1265-1280). As John explains, he believes that 90-95% of the problems in an organization can be solved by the resources and expertise already present within it (lines 1300-1310). Similarly Paul feels that with some help, and, if necessary, some training, organizations can solve their own problems (lines 766-770). Implicit therefore is a focus on the transference of processual skills and the training of staff so that the system is prepared for the eventual withdrawal of the consultant (lines 3594-3600). John gave various accounts of the involvement and training of staff in problem-solving (lines 1465-1477, 1550-1605). Anna described the role she played in the transference of skills (lines 2765, 2800, 2980-2990). Mike drew attention to the loss of personnel who
having been developed from line management as internal facilitators, left ICI to practise as independent consultants (lines 3594-3600). The training and development of specific individuals to act as an internal resource is also described by Paul (lines 780-790), who in fact considers the transference of skills as one of the measures of success (lines 439-443). He indicates that Price-Waterhouse runs an "Internal Consultant Development Programme" (lines 355-361), and explains that, from his experience, he found that the level of retention of processual skills is low amongst line and senior managers, hence it is important to develop a specialized internal resource in order to ensure that an adequate level of processual skills remains after his withdrawal (lines 770-780). The consultant can be required to be educator or trainer at any time during the course of an intervention, whenever the need arises. The client's or target system's role as learner is one which in practice is adopted right from the beginning.

At another level, there were differences in the manner in which roles can be conceptualized. To paraphrase Paul, there is a perceived role, a prescribed role and a personalized role. Respectively, these are explained as: what the client as an individual wants, what the organization expects or needs, and what the consultant wants (lines 80-145). It is pointed out that these roles can often be at odds with each other. For example, Paul identifies as a common problem the misconception that a client will have of the consultant's role. A client, in expecting loyalty to him
and not the target, will demand the release of information which the consultant may receive on the understanding that it will remain confidential. Misunderstandings of this kind can easily undermine the relationship between a consultant and his client.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the data gathered. Firstly, a consultant played out more than one role during the course of an intervention. It was also clear from their descriptions that these roles were not taken in consecutive order. Therefore secondly, the evidence suggests that there is no discernable pattern to the adoption of roles. And thirdly, at any one time, a consultant will be playing a combination of roles. While the first and third conclusions have been extensively reported in literature (McLean et al, 1982; Burke, 1987; Wooten and White, 1989), there has been less research conducted into the second. Indeed, Wooten and White (1989) drawing together much of the previous literature on "change roles", suggest that, as an area of further research, attempts should be made to determine the possible optimum combination of roles at particular stages of the intervention process in order for the change agent to be at his or her most effective. They hypothesize that each stage of change requires a different combination of roles to be adopted and call for further research to verify this. Table 11 (reproduced, in part, from Wooten and White, 1989, p664) summarizes the roles which they suggest are appropriate to each stage. From the data collected it was found that it would be unsuitable to hypothesize and seek out evidence in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Change agent</th>
<th>Client system</th>
<th>Mutual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>technical expert, model</td>
<td>information supplier</td>
<td>learner, problem solver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>researcher/theoretician</td>
<td>supporter/advocate, information supplier</td>
<td>learner, problem solver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specification/agreement</td>
<td>resource linker</td>
<td>resource provider</td>
<td>learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td>researcher/theoretician, technical expert</td>
<td>information supplier</td>
<td>diagnostician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting/action planning</td>
<td>educator/trainer, technical expert</td>
<td>supporter/advocate, participant</td>
<td>problem solver, learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems intervention</td>
<td>technical expert, resource linker, model, educator trainer</td>
<td>resource provider, participant</td>
<td>learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>technical expert, researcher/theoretician</td>
<td>information supplier</td>
<td>diagnostician, problem solver learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alteration</td>
<td>model, technical expert, resource linker</td>
<td>supporter/advocate, participant</td>
<td>problem solver learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation/maintenance</td>
<td>model, educator/trainer</td>
<td>participant</td>
<td>monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>technical expert, model</td>
<td>information supplier, participant</td>
<td>diagnostician, monitor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 Situational roles at various stages of change  
(source: reproduced from Wooten and White, 1989, p664)
this manner because the particular configuration of roles adopted during each phase of an intervention is determined by numerous factors. These factors are individual to each context, sometimes unique, sometimes repeated, but they do not form a "testable" pattern. There is an almost infinite number of factors which could be different in each context. Some of these factors could be: the level of skill and amount of experience which the internal resource possesses; the personality and education of the client; the average level of education in the target system; the personal values and beliefs held by the client, target and leaders; or the expertise and level of technical skill possessed by the consultant. The roles which a consultant will adopt at any one time, will be determined by these factors. Therefore it would be inaccurate to suggest that particular roles are appropriate to specific phases of the intervention.

It was difficult also to identify significant differences between the roles of internal and external consultants in practice. This is because even though consultants can label themselves internal or external, any difference between the two is determined by the degree to which they are internal or external to that particular system. For example, some factors which have been identified by Maclagan (1985) as determining whether consultants can be considered internal or external to a system include their familiarity with the culture and politics of that system, their knowledge of the practices and procedures, whether the consultant is subject to the same authority system and if he
or she is personally known in the target system. A rather more obvious point to be made is that, with externals, money changes hands and with internals this generally does not occur. Also from the data collected, there appears to be differences in the manner by which an internal and an external establishes contact with a prospective client, and differences in accountability and contracting. To illustrate these points, consider some of the consultants interviewed.

Paul can be considered an example of an external. His targets of intervention are completely external to Price-Waterhouse and geographically removed, and contact with fresh clients is primarily made at conferences or at seminars run by Price-Waterhouse. Additional publicity is generated though articles published in periodicals and journals. Mike, on the other hand, is a good representative of an internal. He operates from a local base and has been in employment with ICI for over fifteen years. He remains in daily contact with line management and senior staff, both at the workplace and outside office hours. He meets his clients through "living" at Billingham. Now consider John and Anna. John in all respects is an external consultant. However he is considered an internal because his clients are solely drawn from within the Civil Service and the services of his unit, the Job Satisfaction Team (J.S.T.) is free to all Exchequer departments. Yet his unit is otherwise unconnected to his sprawling and geographically well-dispersed client base, and, to attract clients, he employs the same publicity machine as
Price-Waterhouse. In Anna's case, she is based in Shell-Mex House, and, to paraphrase, "reports to the Personnel Director next door". Unlike Mike, she is an "off-site" consultant. However, the narrow base from which her clients are mainly drawn, that is the Exploratory Sector, ensures that she has a better knowledge than the J.S.T. of the structure and procedures, and the culture and the politics of the target system. It can therefore be suggested that, if viewed on an external-internal continuum, the four consultants can be respectively placed in the order: Paul, John, Anna and Mike. This explains why on one hand an internal unit, such as the J.S.T. will play a similar role to that of an external consultancy such as Price-Waterhouse, and on the other, why some differences exist between Mike and Anna and her colleagues, even though they are all internal. Their relativity to the factors which determine the degree to which each is internal or external should be kept in mind in considering any of the roles which have been identified from the data gathered.

It was also apparent that the mutual benefits of internals and externals can be best maximised by the two working together. In fact in Mike's view, it was ineffective for either to work on their own (line 3630) because an external is associated with distance, objectivity and expertise, while an internal is able to identify the key individuals (lines 345-360) and to identify who to involve (lines 1580-1605). Anna cautioned that the most difficult time for her is when she enters, unaware of the
"personalities and intricacies" of the organization (lines 3317-3322). In a similar vein, Mike said, "It takes a long time for an external to get to know an organization, to get a feel of the culture, to know where the key points of influence are" (lines 3605-3612). This implies that with the help of an internal, because of his greater knowledge of the target, firstly, a more accurate diagnosis can be reached; secondly, the chances that the diagnosis will be accepted will be far greater for having involved the key figures in that system; and thirdly it is more efficient time-wise for an external to work with an internal. According to Paul, he would have to spend a longer period at an organization if it were not for the internals (lines 345-350). It should be pointed out that sometimes when the term "internal" was used, apart from strictly referring to themselves, it was applied quite loosely by the consultants in their discussions, to indicate also the "local" staff who had been specially chosen to help them during the period that they were involved with an organization.

Relationships

While it has been pointed out that a consultant will adopt different roles, it is not too fine a point to stress that a number of differences can been noted within each role; a consultant will play the same role for a number of different persons, and he or she will relate to each person in a different manner. Take for example some of the roles which a consultant might play for a client: he offers a
particular expertise but this will be on offer to more than one person, he provides an objective view and brings in a "first-hand" knowledge of other sectors of the economy but the benefit of this experience will be available to more persons than just the client, and so on. This is because not only does he have a relationship with more persons that just the "client", but also because there is some ambiguity over the definition of the client. It is generally accepted that a consultant will have various client groups. There is the "formal" client, the person who calls in the consultant, who is also usually a member of management. Then there is the person, generally the paymaster, with whom the contract is drawn up. Other factors to be borne in mind are that the paymaster may not be the manager who requires help, that payment is not always involved, and that the type and style of contracts, if any, will vary with each consultant and each organization. It can also been observed that although mostly a "formal" client, often the manager, is distinct from the target, in some cases, such as in many of the J.S.T. projects, there is little separation of the two. Their services are mostly free, and the formal heads of the local systems, in which their interventions are set, will often be as much affected by the intervention as the target. This is because, by their nature, job satisfaction interventions will affect in a systems-wide manner all the operating procedures. In addition, the consultants interviewed described the need to interact positively with other various groups; the formal and informal tops, administrative and political heads (lines 2660-2670), with leaders (line 1024), shadows (lines
2690-2700), influential members (lines 1340-1351) and persons with real power (lines 2670-2675). That these groups are considered "second order" clients, is a notion introduced by Lovelady (1983), who suggests that they, like the "client", need to be kept informed of events and progress, and that there are multiple client-consultant relationships rather than a single client and one consultant. The consultants interviewed also suggest that the aim is to involve these groups in data-gathering and planning, and so show the rest of the organization that they endorse the activities of the consultant.

It is also noticed that during the course of an intervention, the relationship which a consultant has with a client will vary. For example, there were particular circumstances when it was quite usual for a consultant to behave in a prescriptive manner, for example, when there is a requirement for the specialized expertise which he possesses, such as his greater knowledge in strategy formulation. Indeed it was stressed that a consultant is employed for his expertise, and that a successful consultant must possess "real" skills as opposed to a hand-holding approach (lines 2355-2358). However, it was also apparent that a display of expertise can easily develop into a more permanent state of non-collaboration, in which the client is dependent on the consultant. Anna cites her own colleagues within Shell as an example (lines 2950-2955). Also it is alleged that many of the large external consultancies offer a prescriptive approach with little transference of skill during the course
of the intervention. In fact this is desired by many of the clients (lines 2954-2990).
CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION

9.1 The process of intervention in OD consultancy

In-depth data of a qualitative nature has been collected, through interviews with consultants and from published and unpublished sources, in order to describe in detail actual "goings-on" in what has, for convenience, been loosely described as "phases" in the intervention process. Data has also been collected on key issues in the intervention process: the approaches to conflict and to the systems aspects of the organization. The latter concerns the need to develop an organization to be more closely tuned to the environment, and for interventions themselves to take into account the holistic and environmental considerations. The data collected resulted in a greater understanding of the practice of OD and provided a basis from which it was able to derive a more accurate picture of the overall OD consultancy process.

As a consequence of the data collected, some points were made in relation to the practice of organization development and the way in which OD consultants operate. Even though action research is considered a major factor in OD's development, the practice of OD does not necessarily follow the action research process nor does it incorporate all the principles of action research. Therefore, many of the "classic" or "popular" models found in OD literature which
bear a close resemblance to the action research process, are not a close representation of the OD consultancy process, that is they do not relate to some of the key features and issues which an OD consultant would find as characteristic of their involvement with a client-target organization. The features and issues, as suggested by the data gathered, have been discussed in section 8.2. Briefly they are: the phases of the intervention process are not necessarily sequential; there are no "fixed" number of phases; there is more than one exit and entry point; there are distinct preparation phases; the identification and involvement of key figures and local staff from the client-target organization are important aspects of the consultancy process. The data collected provides a detailed description of all the phases, drawing together the experiences of different consultants, both internal and external, and many different accounts of OD practice in various contexts, into one framework. These descriptions in conjunction with Figure 2(a+b) (pp269+270) can be seen as a step towards generating an overall model of the OD consultancy process.

In terms of contribution at the practical level, the research has provided a rich picture of what occurs during the practice of organization development and acts as a guide to the OD consultancy process. Although there is a great deal of literature relating to OD, there is little relating to the actual consultancy process in organization development which is explicitly based on the work of multiple OD groups in Britain. In terms of contribution at the theoretical
level, the research is a synthesis of earlier models and will hopefully be an impetus for further research to be conducted into the consultancy process as adopted by organization development consultants in this country.

9.2 Systems management in the practice of OD

A review of literature in Chapter Two suggested that systems management forms an important aspect of OD. The data collected confirms that this is reflected in practice. Two inter-related themes emerge. Firstly, consultants are faced with what amounts to actual difficulties in the process of intervening caused by the complexity of the organization. These issues relating to the process of intervention have been reviewed and summarized in the corresponding section (section 8.2) and to re-cap they are: the problem of identifying effective leverage points; the need to ensure that the data collected reflects the complexity of the problem situation; the need to develop fast and effective communication; and the development of interventions which are capable of self-correction. Secondly, OD consultants are often expected to help in the creation of more adaptive organizations because today's organizations are increasingly facing more turbulent environments. This was identified as one of the strategic aims of the organization (section 8.3) and is recognized by the consultants interviewed as an important aspect of OD work. Some conclusions will now be drawn regarding this salient feature of systems management with the aim of summarizing what OD can do in terms of
helping to create more adaptive organizations.

It became apparent, from a review of OD literature, that, from the late 1960s onwards the unstable environment, which was facing many organizations, became a primary concern of many OD theorist-practitioners. The publications which have referred to the environmental issue are too many to list individually, but some which have developed this as a key theme include Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), Clark and Krone (1972), Galbraith (1973), Starbuck (1976), Jayaram (1976), Beer (1980), Burke (1987). They all have in common a deep-seated belief in the need for OD to operate from a broader base which incorporates an open-systems view of the organization with the more "traditional" OD approaches such as the interpersonal, intergroup and survey feedback approaches. The aim is to enable managers and practitioners to maintain a better fit between the internal arrangements of an organization with its environment. More specifically, Sashkin and Burke (1987, p393) argue that the Clark and Krone (1972) framework, which emphasizes the adaptive change by managers in response to environmental changes and pressures, has consistently remained at the heart of most concepts in OD.

The data collected has shown that this is a concern which is also reflected in the practice of OD. Organization development, as represented by the consultants interviewed and in the examined documented accounts of the practice of OD, suggests that the creation of organizations which are
more adapted to their environments, has been fulfilled by developments in three directions.

Firstly, there is an emphasis on improving overall flexibility by changes at the level of the workforce and at the broader organizational level. Numerous accounts have been provided of expanding the skills of a workforce through job rotation, job enlargement and multi-skill training schemes. The creation of autonomous work groups which are responsible for a whole task have also been popular, especially within the Civil Service. Although John speaks of increasing the level of satisfaction as an aim, it is clear that there is more to the J.S.T.. Developing a multi-skilled workforce improves its flexibility and the ability of the organization to respond to the changing demands of the environment. The project at Cumbernauld, described in section 5.3, is an example. At the organizational level, there is evidence of re-structuring activities at ICI and the Civil Service, and at some organizations with which Price-Waterhouse has been involved, for example, British Telecom and the Grampian Health Authority. In part, the flatter structures which have resulted, can be seen as a response to the need for faster vertical communication and decision making. It is up to the consultant to ensure that the potential of the shortened vertical channels are realized, and that horizontal communication at the lower levels of the organization, despite the wider span, remains effective. Examples of activities which were described to realize this aim are: encouraging meetings between supervisors, managers
and employees; pulse checking to identify key areas of employee concern; redirecting division newsletter practices; and initiating small-scale OD projects.

A second direction can be identified in the role that the consultants play in helping an organization through a declining environment. Some of the clearest examples are from ICI. To illustrate, consider the Life Business Workshops (L.B.W.) and the Career Investigation Programmes (C.I.P.) described in sections 7.3. Both these activities are crucial components of Chemical and Polymers' overall strategy to manage decline. The inevitable consequences of organizations adopting the more stream-lined structures necessary in decline, are the relocations, retraining or redundancy of staff. However in face of this threat, employees are still expected to possess a high morale and an even higher productivity level. This is where some OD practitioners have developed strong interests, providing at times, what is basically a career counselling service with a fair amount of personal counselling included. Because counselling of this kind can only be deemed successful if new avenues for employment are opened and, as this is not always the outcome, the L.B.W. and the C.I.P. can be criticized as being merely placatory, in face of the insecurity, anger and denial which many employees are experiencing. A review of literature has shown assessment and career development to be a rapidly increasing area of interest for OD consultants (Appelbaum, 1991; Buch and Aldridge, 1990; Stebbins, 1989). OD consultants have been described as performing
"outplacement services", that is to assist an individual in finding a new job or furthering a career (Masterson, 1988), individual skills assessment and development described in British Telecom (Iles and Johnston, 1989) and in British Petroleum (BP) (Greatrex and Phillips, 1989), and morale building efforts in Shell (Smith, 1988).

A third area which has been identified as contributing to the creation of an adaptive organization, is the role which consultants have played in the development of the organization as a self-learning system. This implies the transferring of processual skills to members of an organization, so that they can make full use of the learning experience, to monitor and to correct deviations, and to reformulate strategies when faced with a changing environment. The various participative methods employed in each organization, and the success encountered by each consultant has been considered in the respective case-studies. Additionally, Stata (1989) argues that open and objective communication between people and between organizations is essential for learning, and this serves to highlight yet another main area of activity for OD practitioners which has been demonstrated in many of the accounts of OD practice examined. Developing learning through improving communication has also been described by Byrnes and Copacino (1990). The data collected suggests that the concept of organizational learning, far from being a recent concept, is well-established in the practice of OD (Sections 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3). There is however a "renewed" interest in the
subject, and at least two good reasons have been identified for this. Firstly, although the inability to learn is not the only reason why organizations get into trouble, it is possible that they would avoid the worst consequences if they were capable of learning (Easterby-Smith, 1990). Secondly, to summarize and admittedly simplify State's (1989) view: a firm's progress depends on managerial innovation, and both hinge on effective organization learning. According to Hedberg (1981) organizational learning may be facilitated by appreciating the significance and dynamics of the learning process, promoting experimentation, and regulating awareness to both external and internal information. Organizational learning occurs through shared insights, knowledge, and mental models and builds on past knowledge and experience, relying on institutional mechanisms such as policies and explicit models. The application of these "learning principles" and the development of the learning organization in practice has been described by Willcocks and Harrow (1991) and Gaunt and Rix (1991). The data collected points to the important role which OD consultants play in the development of a learning organization, however there is a need for further research into the relationship between OD and organizational learning.

9.3 Conflict management in the practice of OD

A review of literature suggested that the management of conflict is a basic element of OD (Chapter Two). The evidence collected confirms that this is reflected in practice.
Several conclusions are reached. Firstly, resolving conflict and ensuring that there is smooth and effective vertical and horizontal relations are confirmed to be characteristics of the work described by the consultants who were interviewed and in the documented accounts of the practice of OD. Secondly, there is evidence which suggests that the management of conflict will continue to be an important focus in the practice of OD. At least four reasons can be identified from the data collected for this trend. Thirdly, it can be said that the popularity of some of the traditional OD techniques, such as T Groups and Sensitivity Training, are in decline, and there is also no evidence of the "traditional approach" to conflict management.

The data collected suggests that an important aspect of the practice of OD will involve the management of conflict. Confrontation and feedback sessions between groups and individuals are considered popular and effective methods for resolving conflict. Furthermore, the consultants interviewed have also commented on the success of confrontation methods in widening the perspectives of the participants and thus allowing a wider range of alternatives to be considered. The participation of the various parties in the visualization and design of a "desirable future" is also an effective means to overcome their value differences. The issue of statements of philosophy have also been used in promoting cohesiveness. The various methods for conflict management have been examined in Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.3.
The evidence collected also suggests that the amount of OD work relating to conflict management is on the increase. A literature search of OD work outside of the organizations relating to the case-studies confirms this as a general trend in the practice of OD (Cunningham, 1989; Dinnocenzo, 1989; Bloch, 1988). Four reasons can be found for this trend.

Firstly, there is a tendency towards more decentralized authority structures and flatter hierarchies in many of today's organizations, as illustrated by the restructuring of ICI and the move towards a more autonomous working practice within the Civil Service. The success of these structures will depend on having good lateral relations and maintaining effective horizontal communications. For Mike, a part of his formal job description, is the setting up of meetings to ensure that the different functional groups work closely together. Similarly there are examples of John arranging sessions for different parts of the Civil Service to come together, to exchange views and to "have a better idea of how they fit" (lines 1690-1710), and the devising of some additional means of communication such as staff newspapers, circulars and news letters. The tendency towards flatter structures and the need to improve the cohesiveness of the lower and wider levels can also be identified in organizations other than those referred to in the case-studies (Gazell and Pugh, 1990; Pullan, 1990; Cross, 1989; Boudette, 1989).

Secondly, the consultants interviewed believe that they
have a major part in preparing for the continuing move away from an adversarial approach between management and trade union. The 1980s up to the early 1990s was a period of quiet labour relations, and this is a trend which the consultants foresee for the rest of this decade. Encouraging and making possible a collaborative approach at a grass-roots level between trade union and management are stated aims of two of the consultants interviewed. Mike stressed that a lot of work goes into educating the workforce in the economics of the market forces facing ICI, and John reported that there is mostly cooperation between unions and management. Like John, he spoke of the "realism", particularly of the unions in recognizing the limits imposed by the market place on the management's ability to fulfil their demands. In part, this understanding has been reached through more extensive involvement of trade union officials (lines 1410-1450), and the creation of more opportunities for both management and unions to work together.

Thirdly, the numerous privatizations of the 1980s and the increasing number of mergers and acquisitions have created settings for serious value-based conflicts to occur. All the consultants interviewed have described an experience of conflict which arises from the merging of organizations with vast cultural and attitudinal differences. Some of the activities to resolve this conflict have been described by the Price Waterhouse consultants for example, the immediate issue of a joint statement of philosophy, finding a flagship for change, the involvement of subsystems in the planning of
their own change programme, initiating a strategy for improving communication and for rotating managers (Price, 1987). The different expectations introduced into an organization by privatization have also created immense problems. Murphy and Price (1987) describe an OD strategy to help achieve a desired future state, and the need to overcome the problems arising from attitudes and perceptions. The value-based conflict problems amongst the employees in privatized organizations (Goodstein and Burke, 1991; Margerison, 1988) and public and private sector mergers (Rhinesmith, 1991; Pulmer and Gilkey, 1988; Connolly, 1988) are well-documented, and provide many opportunities for OD work. Some specific OD interventions have been identified as useful in a public-sector merger to bring together two different organizations: survey feedback, third party facilitation, family group confrontation meetings, intergroup team building and process consultation activities (Boss, McConkie and Ringer, 1991). In addition, a recent article by a Director of Booz-Allen & Hamilton, a large management consultancy, identifies an Eastern European flavour to management consultancy, and highlights three growing areas of work: Western enterprises which are seeking entrance or developing operations in Eastern European markets, sectoral studies financed by international bodies such as the World Bank, and local Eastern European clients (Wormald, 1991). It is evident that already in the first and third areas, initiating the integration of Eastern European countries into the open, competitive system of the West has created numerous settings for value-based conflict and OD work (Smith, 1990;

Finally, from data provided by the consultants interviewed, the public sector can be identified as an area in which there will be an increasing amount of OD work available. Ignoring for a moment the work of the J.S.T. which draws its clients mainly from the Civil Service, many of the projects described occur in the National Health Service, the various rail companies and the police force. Implicit in suggestions made by Anna and Paul is the belief that the significant changes in organizational missions, accompanied by the tightening of budgets and the considerable amount of re-structuring which is taking place in the public sector, have caused the unprecedented level of dissatisfaction and conflict which consultants are called in to deal with. A survey of literature revealed reports of increasing OD activity in the public sector (Dahl and Glassman, 1991; Moore, 1989), specifically in the National Health Service (Edmondstone, 1989) and in British Rail (Bate, 1990).

With an increasing amount of work in the public and newly-privatized sector, and in mergers and acquisitions, it seems that there is a need for current methods to be more finely-tuned to working out acceptable and effective ways for combining different cultures, and in providing help in the development of organizational missions and ensuring that plans are made to modify the culture and structure accordingly. There is evidence from literature that, in the last four years, the OD community is beginning to take note
of this. There has been a review of the various methods for developing a strategic plan and mission statements (Lau and Kleiner, 1988), and Campbell (1989) examined the process of mission-development. Creating a mission involves defining a purpose, developing strategies and a set of values that reinforce each other, and identifying the standards and behaviours that are the expression of the mission. The issue of a mission-statement is very much tied in with encouraging the appropriate culture. Burack (1991) examined the role of human resource-development in changing a company's culture. Potter (1989) discussed the culture concept in data gathering and how cultural sensitivity increases a manager's or consultant's awareness of the significance of proposed changes on the organization's various constituents. In addition, Sutton and Nelson (1990) stress that chief executive officers (C.E.O.) have a role to play in promoting and protecting culture-forming values. They suggest that this can be done in several ways by the C.E.O.: personal enactment of cultural values, that is to lead by example, and to communicate the desired culture through ceremonies and rites, stories, rituals and symbols.

Therefore, from an examination of the developments in the management of conflict, it seems that in both literature and in the practice of the consultants interviewed and their colleagues, two of the traditional approaches which were a main feature of OD in the 1960s and 1970s are seldom, if at all, mentioned. T Groups and Sensitivity Training were important techniques which increased the awareness of the
participants to each other's values and, through their acknowledgement and acceptance, brought the various individuals closer, promoting a more conflict-free environment at the work place (Bradford, Gibb and Benne, 1964; Argyris, 1964; Delbecq, 1970). In addition, there is little or no evidence of the more "traditional OD approach" to conflict management as epitomized in Beckhard's (1969) "classic" account, that is top down and organization-wide development. In Beckhard's description, confrontation groups were run throughout the organization, at all levels over an extended period, with the effect of this intervention, percolating downwards. Instead the evidence points to a more specific approach. The breadth of intervention is determined by the context: interventions could either be limited to specific target systems or aimed at the organization as a whole depending on the particular requirements of the client and the organization. Specific techniques, such as confrontation, are only applied in a limited manner, not organization-wide, to particular individuals or groups who are in conflict. Intervention, in an organization-wide manner to tackle conflict, seems only to occur when the organization as a whole is under "uncertain" circumstances, such as the bringing together of different cultures, the merging of different organizations and after extensive re-structuring. Then the intervention usually involves the issue of a statement of mission or of philosophy and the associated activities. Two of the deciding factors on whether or not to adopt an organization-wide intervention are the high level of resources involved, these being time, finance and manpower,
and the high level of commitment required before the benefits can be noticed.

9.4 Other issues in OD

**Structural and processual integration**

The data collected suggest that structural and processual issues are now more fully integrated in the practice of OD. The consultants interviewed demonstrated an appreciation of the interdependent nature of structural and processual issues in the many instances when a "multi-stranded" approach was described which brought into play both elements. The evidence suggests that generally a wider, more systemic perspective of the organization is being taken which focuses on issues as varied as strategic planning, statements of philosophies, reward systems, budgeting, performance indicators, management structures and information systems. This "macro" approach would tend to incorporate rather than exclude interventions at the micro level. No longer is the OD focus solely on "micro" interventions such as team building, interpersonal issues and training.

Furthermore, within the context of an intervention, the consultants interviewed are stressing the importance of teaching processual skills. This is done with the aim of helping organizational members solve problems themselves and more effectively carry out their work. The "love and trust" aspects, such as members feeling better about themselves,
about each other and about the organization, are incidental benefits.

Discrepancies between literature and practice

Three related areas of discrepancies which have been identified between literature and the practice of OD have yet to be discussed. Firstly, a difference exists between the values espoused by some OD figures and the values embodied in the practice of some consultants, secondly the idealised sentiments surrounding the establishment of a democratic organizational system through participation as suggested by some OD figures is not reflected in practice, and thirdly, while in literature the tackling of power issues is advocated, there is little evidence of this occurring in practice.

Firstly, it seems that there is a different emphasis in many examples of current OD practice which comes close to displacing the notion that both human and organizational oriented values are of equal importance. There seems to be a greater significance put on purely effectiveness driven criteria. Therefore, it can be argued that the encouragement of participation in the increasing number of career and performance-related OD interventions such as outplacement services or career and life business workshops, reflect little of the humanistic values exhibited in the early definitions of OD and referred to in Chapter One.
Secondly, participation is also no longer viewed as the democratic process initially envisaged by theorist-practitioners such as Argyris (1962), who perceived it as a means for an individual to have control over his or her own actions. The distinction between democracy and participation has long been made by political theorists (for example see Pateman, 1970). Democracy is a "value state" while participation is a "means". It follows therefore that democracy must involve participation; however, participation does not necessarily imply democracy. But this is not a distinction which can be said to be apparent in OD. Examining a selection of organization development literature suggests that firstly, it is clear that a participative approach is encouraged, secondly, OD values clearly support democracy (Tannenbaum and Davis, 1969; Elden, 1985), and thirdly, democratizing organizations, as an aim of organization development, is clearly argued by some OD figures (Argyris, 1962; Elden 1985). However, the data collected suggests that in practice the distinction applies. To quote one of the consultants interviewed, "I want your ideas, I want you to participate, but, at the end of the day, someone needs to integrate all the ideas into an actionable plan, and I as the boss would do that" (lines 587-591). A recent survey described by Landen (1989) also confirmed that quality and productivity were the main reasons given by one thousand leading American companies for introducing employee involvement, with democracy and altruism low on the list. Therefore the evidence collected concurs with Elden's (1985, p201) view that "many OD efforts are highly participative but
not necessarily democratic" even though OD upholds democratic values.

A third area of interest which was identified in literature is the increasing recognition that there is a need within OD to address the power issues (Appendix 1). Many OD figures have adopted the view that it is possible to combine a power based approach with OD. For example, Pettigrew (1975) argues that a consultant should make use of his own sources of power to bring about desirable change in human organizations. Borum (1980) makes a clear case for the strengthening of a party's power bases prior to negotiations, and Chesler, Crowfoot and Bryant (1979) endorse the need for "power training". More dramatically, Alderfer (1977), in an account of Tichy's (1974a) interview with Max Pages, writes "Pages indicated that he had stopped working for organizations, preferring to help individuals destroy the organization forms in which they were imprisoned" (p198). In discussions with the consultants interviewed, there was little evidence of such interest in combining power and OD. They were rather reticent in discussing the subject of power, and certainly there was very little related activity going on in practice. To paraphrase Greiner and Schein (1988), power and OD are not incompatible, and OD can incorporate a "modern" approach to power. They provide some directives for adopting such an approach and it is useful to briefly list them here because not only have they effectively summarized much of what many writers have advocated, but their list of activities can be used to illustrate how little actually goes
on in practice: consultants should build their own power base so that they have access to those in power, to utilise power strategies that are open and above board for influencing key powerholders to accept the use of OD, to provide a facilitative process for those power holders to address critical substantive issues, to assist the power structure to confront and transform itself, and to uphold the concerns and interests of those with less power. It is clear from the accounts of OD practice provided that the consultants interviewed make good use of the first two directives. For example, they make use of their expertise as a power source and they court in different ways powerful key figures. However from the OD practice examined, there is little evidence of the other possible actions which a consultant can take in a power-laden situation. In addition, the rationale behind the action which is taken appears to be that of ensuring the success and the acceptability of their intervention (Section 8.5). The intervention itself may have very little to do with the pursuit of human oriented values. If the consultant's major choice, as outlined by Alderfer (1977), is to choose between the proactive or reactive use of power to advance "humane values" (p199), then the practice of OD as examined would score very low, with Anna being the only consultant interviewed indicating any proactive activity: by her message taking, she upholds the interests of the less powerful as suggested by Greiner and Schein's (1988) final directive. Perhaps this incongruity between what clearly in literature is an area of deep interest for OD and the lack of evidence in practice to support this, is hardly surprising.
After all professional OD consultants, like all other employees are ultimately dependent upon the paymaster for a livelihood. Upholding the interests of the less-powerful could be perceived by the more dominant grouping as revolutionary and contrary to their self-interests and most often, in the case of commercial organizations, the paymaster is a part of this dominant grouping. It can also be noted that elsewhere a mismatch between what consultants say they do and what they actually do was reported. Alderfer (1977) and Tichy (1974b) both found that, while OD change-agents said that they wanted to promote individual freedom and power-equalization in society, in terms of behaviour they actually worked to improve the productivity and the problem solving abilities of the organization.

Evaluation

The consultants, when questioned, admitted that very little evaluation takes place, formally or otherwise, as an integral part of the intervention process. This low level of evaluation as reflected in practice is surprising, given the action-research tradition of OD. The amount of evaluation, and the means employed, have already been discussed in some detail in Section 8.2, and it now remains to consider the implications of this. From comments made by some consultants, it appears that this is an area which worries them. Firstly, the lack of evaluation poses a dilemma. Clients in general are not interested in evaluation, yet as prospective clients, they increasingly require evidence of
OD's effectiveness, and at an informal level, they are concerned enough to find out what other clients think of a particular consultant. Secondly, the consultants themselves feel that their own "learning" process can be improved, that there should be more evaluation of the kind which leads to learning and theory building. In more general terms, this level at which personal learning occurs will ultimately affect the development of the field as a whole, as it determines the quality of the new knowledge being generated. And thirdly, one of the usual means of presentation and dissemination of this new knowledge will be through published studies or accounts of an evaluative nature. As a consultant will also build on his own experiences with knowledge gleaned from evaluative studies carried out by other consultants, it is important that these studies present an accurate and full enough picture from which their readers can draw their own conclusions with reference to their own experiences.

The perceived need therefore, is to develop evaluation with the requirements of the client, consultant and the discipline in mind. The data collected suggests a few possible directions.

Firstly, the consultants interviewed are reporting that clients and managers are reluctant to spend either time or funds on evaluation. The aim therefore is to convince them of its worth. This means that evaluative studies must always involve the participation of clients and managers in their design so that their needs can be taken into account. And
also, by giving them first-hand experience of the role which evaluation plays as a means by which a consultant learns and improves on his abilities, they know that in contributing, they are indirectly benefitting themselves and future clients. Of the consultants interviewed, it was only the J.S.T which encouraged and trained the client to evaluate on a constant basis. A step-by-step evaluation process was developed for the "end-users", that is the branch managers (Sections 5.2 and 5.3). The other consultants interviewed reported that often evaluative studies, if any, are devised and conducted by consultants with little participation from the client or target organization.

Secondly, it was stressed by the consultants interviewed that the time span of each project varies tremendously. It was also felt that in certain cases, for example at Billingham, where there is a twenty year history of OD efforts, it was impossible to consider an individual intervention without taking into account the overall involvement with OD which spanned decades. The point, which is being made here, is that when published evaluative research in general is examined, many studies seem to be "one-offs", seldom providing more than a cursory account at certain point in time. If an accurate picture is to be given, evaluative studies must possess a longer time-frame.

Finally, it is suggested that an evaluative study is even less accurate, if particular outcomes are attributed to just one intervention or project. It was agreed by the
consultants interviewed that effects are multi-causal, and, to quote Mike on the difficulties of measuring change, "there are so many things going on, it's impossible to identify a particular outcome with one intervention" (lines 4310-4320). Studies should therefore aim to describe in greater detail the overall organizational context, instead of focussing on a particular context of intervention, so that a collection of events can be considered by an "uninvolved" reader in relation to his own experiences.

Leaving an impact

The research carried out for the purposes of this thesis does not claim to be an evaluative study of the impact of OD, the data collected being insufficient in terms of latitude and longitude to provide any accurate conclusions. It can be pointed out that much previous research has addressed the issues of whether or not OD leaves an impact and whether there are determinable factors affecting the effectiveness of OD: research on the conditions that led to OD success (Franklin, 1975), case-studies of failures (Mirvis and Berg, 1977), studies of the personality characteristics and behavioural tendencies of effective OD consultants (Hamilton, 1988; Eubanks, O'Driscoll, Hayward, Daniels and Connor, 1990), a study of the common behaviour change in successful OD interventions (Porras and Hoffer, 1986), and comparative measures of the impact of different OD technologies (Porras and Berg, 1978b; Nicholas, 1982). Nevertheless, during the course of the interviews, it was difficult to ignore some
excellent opportunities to encourage some of the people, who are actively involved in the practice of OD, to comment firstly, on what they perceive as the impact of OD and secondly, on what they consider as having caused failures. These are now summarized. It is to be expected of course, that the consultants themselves will always believe that the employment of OD techniques has positive outcomes for the organization.

Although there is very little formal evaluation by the consultants interviewed, where quantitative measures have been taken, positive effects have been noted in terms of output, accuracy, turnover and absenteeism. John reports that the higher levels of autonomy and participation designed by the J.S.T. into a job has resulted in a greater satisfaction and commitment to the job, and ultimately higher levels of performance and motivation. This quantitative impact of OD has also been measured by Spector (1986) and Guzzon, Jette and Katzell (1985), the latter using meta-analysis on 98 studies found that worker performance and productivity had increased by nearly 1/4 to 1/2 standard deviation.

On the other hand, the measurement of the attitudinal and qualitative impact of OD has always been more difficult. Some of the qualitative indicators, which the consultants interviewed have considered as signs of success, include: a lower level of conflict and improved mechanisms for conflict-resolution, a greater flexibility and awareness of the
environment, the development of internal consultants, raising the awareness of senior management and educating them in the complexities and skills involved in managing change, and making the whole culture of the organization more responsive to change. The difficulty in "measuring" such indicators perhaps explains why so many clients and consultants rely on "gut-feelings".

The consultants interviewed were also asked, what in their view are the factors which contributed to the success or failure of an intervention. Amongst the catholic replies received, six common factors were identifiable.

Insufficient resources was universally cited as the most common reason for failure. There were instances of failing to match the available resources to objectives, either by being over ambitious, or by neglecting to develop the adequate resources in order to manage the transition (lines 600-645, 1886-1891).

It was also suggested that the success of an intervention will depend on a consultant's ability to maintain a good working-relationship with all the key figures in the client and target systems. This would include a courting process on and off site, to involve them and to obtain their support for the intervention.

It was also universally stressed that a consultant should not allow a client to forgo active interaction, to
lapse into a relationship which is based on a dependency on consultant expertise. It was indicated by Paul that a balance had to be reached between expertise and process involvement (lines 410-430), and that with encouragement from busy clients, it was all too easy for a consultant to forget his temporary function, and to assume "the mantle of leader and guru" (lines 1030-1040) on a more permanent basis.

The issue of leadership was considered an important one. A leader is a significant motivator of change, and the success of an intervention can depend on the leadership ability of a key figure within the target organization to galvanize support (lines 402-408). Leadership, as defined by Mike, is not necessarily confined to the singular: Billingham's experience had always been of joint leadership between a group of influential persons, and it was through such a group that change continues to take place. Furthermore he commented that their success was in part due to their ability "to think in long term chunks, ten to fifteen or twenty years ahead" (line 3862). This ability to be a visionary, that is to create and translate to others a set of expectations for the future in order to influence behaviour, is one of the qualities which is identified in successful leaders of change. It was also suggested that leaders should themselves exhibit some evidence of the transition that their organizations are undergoing, if continued change is to be expected. It was not uncommon for leadership problems to emanate from the top. To paraphrase Paul, "often bosses make the worse leaders" (line 953). This
is a grey area for consultants to tackle. The unsanctioned development of leaders can possess heavy political overtones. Further, it is questionable if actual leadership skills can be effectively developed: the skills which denote a good leader are not clearly specified, nor are the means by which they can be transferred.

It was also noted that the consultants interviewed put much in store by their network of contacts: an important part of the process of developing strategies and in the learning process was the exchanging and challenging of ideas and experiences with other consultants.

One consultant also identified "questionable" practices as causing a tension within the client-consultant relationship, which ultimately brought about a termination. Taking into consideration that the evidence suggests that there are huge variations in the degrees to which a consultant is accountable, for example an internal consultant had very little written down in terms of contractual obligations and responsibility, and that opportunities will always arise for some consultants to behave dishonorably, the revelations seem to support the many cries for OD as an area of application and practice, to develop as in other "professional" fields such as law, accountancy or medicine, a code of conduct and ethical behaviour (White and Wooten, 1986; Frank, Struth and Donovan, 1981; Varney, 1979). That this should be seen as an important aspect of the professionalization of OD, seems to be indirectly supported
by the consultants interviewed, who all spoke of a need to behave with integrity and to act by a code of ethics, but, when probed, were unable to provide more than homilies. During the course of the research, it was discovered that there is a professional body to which OD consultants can, and do, belong. Some of the issues of questionable practices can be resolved in this manner although it is accepted, as Maclagan (1989) suggests, that "detailed codes of practice cannot eliminate all such problems". The Institute of Management Consultants "embodies within its Code of Professional Conduct those duties and obligations required of all members which will ensure the highest standards of performance" (Tindley, 1991b, p101). The Code of Professional Conduct, as detailed by the Institute of Management Consultants (1987), is built on the three basic principles of: high standards of service to the client; independence, objectivity and integrity; and responsibility to the profession. Under each principle are very detailed rules. Under the first principle are specific rules which ensures that a member shall carry out the duties which he has undertaken diligently, conscientiously and with due regard to his client's interest. Included are rules concerning suitability, contracting, subcontracting, confidentiality, and evaluation. Under the second are rules which aim at ensuring that a member shall avoid any action or situation inconsistent with his professional obligations or which in any way might be seen to impair his integrity. Some of these rules concern the disclosure of relevant personal, financial or other business interests, the use of confidential inform-
ation for personal benefit or for the benefit of others outside the client organization and subsequent changes in the scope of the engagement. The third set of rules ensures that a member shall at all time conduct himself in a manner which will enhance the standing and public regard of the profession. Included are rules concerning the accepted methods of making a consultant's experience or availability known. While it can be shown that some of the problems of questionable behaviour can be overcome by membership to a professional body, the complex underlying question which OD as a profession must first face is why a professional body specific to OD does not exist?

A problem of image

A recurring question which the consultants interviewed admitted that they often had to answer was, "What is OD?" This only serves to underline two of the problems which OD as a profession is facing.

The first relates to the difficulty of defining OD and may provide the answer to the question of why a professional body specific to OD does not exist. One of the aims of the thesis has been to expand the understanding of OD through an investigation of the way in which OD practitioners work. While to a great extent this has been achieved, the evidence collected also reveals and supports two findings. Firstly, many contradictions exist in OD, not least between values espoused in theoretical terms and values in practice, and
secondly, OD cannot be easily defined. The consultants interviewed, themselves view OD not as an unitary discipline, but as a field spanning several disciplines. Mike felt that OD was no more than "a box of tools" (line 4337), and that as a developing field, there is an on-going process of adding to and a constant discarding of tools. Furthermore practitioners describe their own backgrounds as varied (lines 4337-4345). OD's contradictions, and its evolving and multi-disciplinary nature, all contribute to the problem which it has with its image.

Mike also discloses that, from his experience, "The term OD, makes people suspicious. Some people react negatively, even though it's been around a long time" (lines 4380-4401). There are indications also that misconceptions are rife: the term OD is, maybe unsurprisingly, not well understood by prospective clients. Consultants are often expected to be prescriptive (lines 2969-2973), they are considered "personnel officers" (line 2305) or they are required to act as "staff assessors" (lines 110-135). As a consequence of its problems with definition and image, many prospective clients are still unsure as to what OD is.

9.5 Areas for further research

At least three areas for further research have been alluded to at various points of the thesis. They will now be more clearly stated.
Contributions between the practice of OD and the practice of "soft" Systems Theory

The first area concerns the relationship between OD and systems theory. This is an area which has been subjected to discussion by a number of authors. Perhaps the earliest attempt to make an inter-disciplinary "connection" was by Bennis (1965) who identified some similarities and differences between planned change and operations research and more recently, Tay (1989) proposed some connections between systems theory and OD. However at the level of practice, there has been little attempts to examine the relationship between the two, although Eden (1978) described how the initiation of an operational research project led to an organization wishing to be involved in OD, and Nicholas (1979) discussed the possibilities of incorporating OD in systems management. It is proposed that to further this area of study, a comparative examination between systems practice and OD practice must occur. The argument is made that it is possible to build effectively using the data collected and presented in Chapters Four to Seven because inherent in these chapters and in the research conducted, is a clear framework for furthering this area of study. The need for OD to adopt a systems perspective has been amply voiced by some authors and their views have been reviewed in Chapter Two (section 2.2). The same section went on to review how some OD figures have adopted and incorporated various perspectives and means to face the challenges and problems posed by a "Systems Age", namely the complexity of
organizations and the unstability in the environment. The following section focused on the conflict management aspects of OD as described in literature. This aspect of OD parallels the "soft" aspects of systems theorist-practitioners such as R.L. Ackoff and P.B. Checkland, to tackle the pluralist implications of intervening in human systems. These implications have been described by Jackson and Keys (1984). A key element in both Ackoff's and Checkland's methodologies is the focus on a desirable future in order to resolve the differences between the stakeholders. This was also shown to be a component in many examples of the OD process. Subsequent chapters have examined what OD consultants actually do in practice and detailed descriptions provided of what occurs at each phase of the intervention process, how the intervention relates to systems aspects, and to conflict management. Therefore it can be said that the research so far has already addressed "half" of the stated brief. Already some possible contributions from OD to systems practice have been revealed. These concern mostly OD's inherent specialism in "human problems" and their resolution when they occur during the course of the intervention process. They can be broadly classed in four categories:

- Improving the effectiveness of interpersonal and intergroup communications by destroying value based barriers during diagnosis so that a more accurate diagnosis can be achieved.

- The use of specific OD techniques such as nominal groups or the Delphi technique to ensure that as many alternatives are
Through confrontation and counselling it can be possible to broaden the perspectives of the key figures involved in a project, and so widen the number of acceptable alternatives.

The use of team building techniques to ameliorate some of the problems and disruption caused by the re-structuring of an organization and by the introduction of new personnel onto a project.

The relationship between OD and "open learning"

A second area also for further research has been identified in the previous section: the relationship between OD and organizational learning (OL). Section 2.2 reviewed some of the OD literature which advocated the need to develop an organization capable of learning and thus capable of adapting to environmental changes. The means by which this was achieved in practice was highlighted in Chapters Four to Seven. Throughout the case-studies (sections 4.2, 4.3, 5.2, 5.3, 6.2, 6.3, 7.2, 7.3), the actions taken by a consultant to improve the ability of an organization to learn were described, such as the transference of evaluative skills, the training and involvement of internal personnel, the use of participation as a means of learning, the use of corrective feedback and the setting up of review and monitor points. However, the research did not explore any of the barriers to learning; the various methods for encouraging organizational
learning, such as reward structures and the reasons behind the inability of some organizations to learn. These are specific areas of research which are being explored in the OL field (Fiol and Lyles, 1985; Argote, Beckman and Epple, 1990; Edmondstone, 1990). Because it has been shown that a key aim of OD consultants can include the development of an organization's learning ability, it is important to further research into what can be perceived as the substantial overlap between OL and OD.

Changes in the values in the practice of OD

A third area for further research concerns the values held by OD consultants. The data collected suggested that "traditional" OD values, as illustrated in literature, tended to be humanistic and research conducted over a period of years into the practice of OD in the 1970s concluded that most OD practitioners shared a set of normative goals which were also mostly humanistic (Tranfield, 1978) and that a characteristic of OD practitioners was "their strong tendency and ability to idealize" (Tranfield, 1983, p510). A current literature-search suggested that some OD figures in literature now place less of an emphasis on the humanistic element in OD. The data collected on the current practice of OD also reflected the differences of values observed in literature. For example, some OD techniques such as the Life Business and Career Workshops may be seen to possess anti-humanistic values. The question which remains
unanswered is, does this reflect the changes in the values that current OD consultants hold? Therefore, further research needs to address three areas: (1) the changes in the value systems of the key figures in OD literature, (2) the changes in the values behind practice, that is the values upheld by popular current OD techniques, and (3) the changes in the values of current OD consultants. The most recent empirical research in this area so far is limited to a study of OD consultants in the US Navy (Hamilton, 1988).
A review of OD related literature immediately suggests that the issues surrounding power and the particular difficulties and problems of intervening into a power-filled situation, are noticeable concerns of the OD community. However because little of the data collected actually relates explicitly to the literature on power, it was decided that this discussion should be brief. Bearing in mind that the aims of the research are to examine the practice of OD, this discussion will seek to highlight the possible actions that a consultant can take in a power-filled situation. The concern with OD's inability to tackle power-filled situations will be examined. The means by which power arises or is exercised will be briefly discussed and the possible consultant actions in a power-filled situation summarized.

The criticisms of the OD community seem to be centred around the acceptance by consultants of the "false consensus" under which they operate in power-filled situations. Kakabadse (1984, p 171) argues that the values of acceptance, trust, working together and sharing, indicate nothing more than just an acceptance, by the various parties involved in an intervention, of the dominant group's value system. Similarly, Clegg (1975) points out that power is not necessarily openly exercised. A group retains its dominance because there is a general acceptance that the rules and procedures which support the dominant coalition are
"rational". Walsh et al (1981) too observe that the "prevailing set of values" operates to the advantage of the dominant group thereby ensuring that it remains in power. Kakabadse (1984), Brimm (1972) and Reason (1984) all reach the same conclusion that OD consultants operating under these situations are no more than "system maintainers". If the consensus is not genuine, the validity of the OD process becomes questionable because little of the "negotiating reality" which Mangham (1978) describes will take place. This negotiation relies on the operation of the key tenets of OD. These are described by Argyris (1970) as the generation of valid information, free choice and true commitment. Further, some writers have argued that there are few power-free contexts (Nord, 1974) and that in most situations "change is not an open forum situation, but more of a closed, small group, vested interest, power struggle amongst people" (Kakabadse, 1984, p170). The aim of the different parties involved in the change is to manipulate the outcome in their favour.

It is through the socialization process that individuals come to adopt the values favourable to the ruling elite, thereby maintaining the powerful and the existing structure which supports them (Miliband, 1969; Freire, 1973). Berger and Luckman (1966) explain that powerful groups can actually determine this socialization process, and therefore they possess the power to produce reality. To be able to define and to produce reality allows the dominant group to maintain its dominance. Lukes (1974) described three dimensions of power. The first is the overt exercise of power. By studying
the situation, it is possible to determine that the dominant group is the one which the decision or outcome favours. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) argue that it is also necessary to study "non-decision making" to understand the manner by which power is exercised. Lukes (1974) refers to this as the second dimension of power. Debate can be limited by powerful groups to only what is acceptable to them, therefore issues which threaten their dominance will never be on the agenda for discussion. This can be done through the prevailing value-system which prevents certain issues from arising or through conscious manipulation, such as distorting information, in order to keep undercover the issues which can be disruptive to the status quo. It is also possible that the power of the dominant group is so overbearing that it becomes inconceivable to the less powerful to mount a challenge to it. The third dimension, Lukes suggests, operates through the "false consciousness" of the less-privileged groups. Simply, they are not aware of the operation of power. They perceive the status quo as "natural or divinely ordained" (Lukes, 1974, p24).

In considering what actions are open to a consultant in a power-filled situation, it is important to remember that the consultant, internal or external, will operate under contractual obligations and is therefore also constrained by the organization in which he works. Because of this, at best a consultancy approach can only tackle the problems of power in an evolutionary and not revolutionary manner. Two key concepts have been identified which lie behind any action:
one is the ability to define reality (Berger and Luckman, 1966), the other is the ability to create dependence (Hickson et al, 1971), that is the more parties are dependent on each other, the more power they can exercise over each other. The first implies a need to intervene in the system of values established by the dominant party, and the second, to curtail the attempts by one party to maintain or strengthen its own position in relation to those surrounding positions on which it is dependent. These are the two fundamental concepts behind the following suggestions. Some of the suggestions assume that the consultant's attempt to intervene in a power-filled situation has been sanctioned by a higher power and the suitability of these suggestions are of course dependent upon the context of each situation.

Firstly, as Kotter (1979) points out, the negative view that many under-privileged groups have of themselves is supported by a socially legitimized system of sanctions and rewards which exists within all organizations. A first step is to try and change this system and, by doing so, enable the under-privileged to change their perceptions of themselves and of their chances to improve their situation.

Secondly, the consultant can remove and replace personal power and control with an impersonal, less-partial system of rules and procedures which is reflected in a revised and openly stated company policy. He can also reduce the power that one party has over the other, for example by separating the parties or having coordinating decisions made by some
higher authority.

Thirdly, to alter the perceptions of the dominant party. The consultant is able to influence the perceptions that the party in power will have of him in a number of ways. For example, Pettigrew (1975) identifies five potential power resources available to the consultant: expertise, control over information, political access and sensitivity, assessed stature, and group support. By exercising his influence over the dominant group, he might be able to change the way that they perceive the status quo.

Fourthly, to increase the degree of interdependence between the less-privileged and the more-powerful. This forces the more powerful party to consider the welfare of the less-privileged. This is because the greater the interdependency, the more reciprocal the relationship becomes. This can be achieved through changing organizational procedures and systems, for example, assigning the two groups joint tasks or by integrating them into one entity.

Finally and perhaps the most difficult strategy for a consultant to adopt, is to work from the "bottom up" to raise the consciousness of the "oppressed" and develop their confrontational skills. This is the view taken for example by Freire (1973) who believes that to change the basic dynamics of a power situation, the critical consciousness and awareness and the ability to take action by the less powerful must be developed.
APPENDIX TWO
VARIOUS CHANGE MODELS

PHASE 1
Pressure on top management
Arousal to take action

PHASE 2
Intervention at the top

PHASE 3
Reorientation to internal problems
Diagnosis of problem areas
Recognition of specific problems

PHASE 4
Intervention of new solutions
Commitment to new courses of action

PHASE 5
Experimentation with new solutions
Search for results
Reinforcement from positive results
Acceptance of new practices

Dynamics of successful organization change
(source: adapted from Greiner, 1967, p126)
An action research model for organization development (source: reproduced French, 1969, p383; also reprinted in French and Bell, 1984, p109)
Process of planned change
(source: reproduced from Kolb and Prohman, 1970, p53)

The team building cycle
(source: reproduced from Hellriegal et al, 1989, p569)
Stages in an organization development programme
(source: reproduced from Woolhouse, 1983, p45)

A chain model of the change process
(source: reproduced from Lovelady, 1984, p3)
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VOLUME TWO

TRANSCRIPTS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH:

"Paul" (Price Waterhouse)
(P: lines 1-1069)
14th May 1987

"John" (the Civil Service)
(J: lines 1070-1890)
10th April 1987

"Anne" (Shell UK)
(A: lines 1900-3330)
8th April 1987

"Mike" (ICI, Billingham)
(M: lines 3331-4462)
8th March 1988
Paul: Everything I say would reflect the state of transition Price-Waterhouse is in. Three years ago, we were not getting any OD contracts, a year ago we started getting enquiries, and I was asked to join. I was from British Telecom (BT).

We used personal contacts. It happens literally like this. People rang us up, "I'm the MD of BT and we want 200 leadership courses." We would say that's very interesting and go along to talk to them and we would attempt in the process of the meeting to get them to come to a diagnosis and say the answer to the problem is not 200 leadership courses... sometimes it was but very very rarely. We would use different models to do that, to help the client to re-question his needs.

In BT we did that and used McKinsey's 7S methodology to ask "What do you think the issues are?" and he said, "It's a shared value and style thing", and we said, "The answer to this is not training, the answer lies in a broader diagnostic intervention".

Q: How do you get the clients to ring up?

P: There are three methods we get clients.

Firstly clients come to us because of our reputation as
They also come to us because we do direct publicity through seminars and articles, but not advertising. We have a policy of non-persuasive advertising, so we are genuine in saying we would never try to persuade a client to employ us, but we would tell him what services we have available. The reason for this comes from an orientation towards the work that we do, which says the intervention won't work unless the clients are committed. Persuading people doesn't make them committed. What we do is we invite senior managers to seminars. For example next Tuesday we have a seminar "Managing cultural change". Twenty-seven chief executives are attending this one day event. They don't pay, and listen to me talk for a day and out of that several potential clients, hopefully 5 or 6, might be interested enough to contact us at a later date. These seminars are held every month—the later ones are on strategic change, followed by management development.

The third way is through non-direct publicity, non-direct contact, through articles in journals, videos.

Q: Can you tell me about the contracting in Price-Waterhouse?

P: We're moving from a responsive to a pro-active contract, so that we can influence the type of contact we have—we're changing the relationship between client and
consultant, in a way.

In the formal sense, the old-style contract was, "You're the client, I'm the consultant, we agree on the contract, if you pull out you still have to pay". That is not appropriate to OD. We now do it on a day-to-day basis. For example downstairs we have the Director for Strategic Planning for the Grampian Health Board, 13,000 employees, £400 million budget. We work with them for 6 months on a diagnostic intervention. We feed back the data to top management and with them we devise an outline strategy. That strategy will involve about £100,000 of work by us. They will agree to that, but if in the middle, they feel it's not working and wish to withdraw, there is no cancellation fee. We do that so that they feel complete freedom in determining what happens, so that they only carry on if they're committed, if not we are wasting our time and their's.

Our formal contract is very informal. The only formality we have is that we can't offer any of their people a job, and they can't offer us a job within one year of working with them. Because we always work through internals now, if they are not there, we develop them, and if they turn out to be really good, we could easily steal them away, and leave the company in the lurch. So we formally write that into the contract, no poaching!

Apart from that we state what we offer, for example
process consultancy help, skilled help in XYZ, but we don't lay down 'foreman's criteria'. Our reason for this is that we cannot really measure what a process consultant offers.

My experience is that a client's decision about which OD consultant to employ is a very personal one. They employ the individual. Because of this clients will contract with me as an individual. So one part of our contract formally refers to that. If I'm ill, Price Waterhouse does not put in another consultant. Price Waterhouse does not have the right to take me off the job, or put me on another job and put someone-else in.

Q: So far the impression that you've given me is that there is an informal aspect to the contract.

P: Yes, and it's even more personal. We make a big deal out of it. We spend a lot of time on it. It's something which develops throughout the contract but at the beginning we would spend about a day making very clear to the client what the psychological contract is. There is a model of role which is a triangle, that says you can think about role in terms of my 'prescribed role' which is what the organization expects one to do. For example, X numbers of team building sessions, Y number of hours etc. Then there is the 'perceived role' which is what the client as an individual wants me to deliver, such as personal counselling and to reveal to him
everything his employees have confided in me. Finally there is the "personalized role" which is what I as an individual want to bring to the situation. I'm very upfront about that, I'll say I don't do jobs that I don't find interesting. Or I'm not prepared to be away from home for more than three weeks running.

Where we have experienced difficulty is in trying to get the client to change his concept of "perceived role". Often the client will want to know who said what in the diagnostic phase and what do we think of the individuals that work for him. It is difficult for the client to accept that, that is not our role as consultants. And we say that we won't tell him either of those things. A diagnosis has to be confidential until the feedback phase, and then it has to be non-attributive. Also we will not give our assessment of any employee unless it is decided as part of the overall programme, to do a formal assessment or career development project.

The purpose of this explanation to the client is to correct his misconception of what management consultants do: they come in, they're really clever, they're experts, they study the problem, then they give a solution, and of course that's not how we work.

So we have to put up a few markers: we are in the business of catalysing, facilitating, to help you to help yourselves.
Q: Apart from making requests which you feel you cannot comply with, you mentioned that clients often have an idea of what they want, an example you used was leadership courses. Can you elaborate on this?

P: A difficulty in the diagnostic phase is to convince the client that a proper data gathering stage is essential. Often they (clients) have an idea of the solution, not the problem. They rarely come to us and say, "My problem is that my team isn't integrated", or "My problem is that we're losing market share". They come to us and say, "What I want is a team building programme", or "What I want is a quality programme". So what I have to do is to get behind the solution to the problem. Almost everything we do is started with some kind of diagnostic phase.

I'm using the term diagnosis to include both data gathering and data analysis, and that the total activity would be a diagnostic one.

Q: How do you gather data?

P: The methods of data gathering vary tremendously.

An example, the Grampian Health Board, 13,000 people. The aim was to help senior management identify a five year change plan, to support an overall strategic plan of
cultural change. We used interviews, both individual and group, and a questionnaire survey. Individual interviews are conducted at the top of the organization—two hour interviews by two consultants to establish primary themes from verbatim data. In this case, 30 themes, covering very simple areas such as communications and conflict. We turn the themes, in an expert role, into hypotheses. We linked the themes together. For example, in the organization, in this situation, is XYZ. We then have to test the hypotheses. We do this through a questionnaire. Sometimes we would then pile up the questionnaire, do a fairly sophisticated statistical analysis on it, to find out if it's valid and reliable. Depending on the size of the organization, we would normally work to 95% confidence limits. In the Grampian project, we were sampling 1000 people across different professions, levels and locations, to give us those people's perceptions on the hypotheses. It doesn't provide us with additional data. So we also do group interviews throughout the organization, across different levels.

In Grampian, we would do about 200 people. We run the group through:

- what is it like now: tell me about the tasks, relationships, the way it's working
- what should it be like in the future
- what's the strategy in terms of moving from now to the future
- what do you think about it
- how does it make you feel
- what are you prepared to do

You get dramatically different views of what the organization is like now, from different power groups. The pluralism in the health service as an organization is fantastic, because the medics' views and core values are diametrically opposed to the new general managers' at unit level, the political values are significantly different.

Q: When pluralism is exhibited to such a degree within one organization, what can you do?

P: When you've got your data, we don't do an actual analysis. We put it together with themes, and we feed it back to the top management team. We just did that with Grampian about a month ago— for 3 days, involving about 15 key players. It involved a very large amount of data. We get the senior management team to do first a summary of all the issues, you get a list of about 100 issues, for example the medics think that general managers are a waste of time, the ancillary grades think that there isn't enough consultation.

We then ask them to do a causal analysis. You take all these 100 issues and you analyse for the causes underlying these issues: what are the key dynamics operating in this organization that's causing the present
picture. The key dynamics differ between, for example, the Health Service and the commercial organization, or the financial sector and manufacturing. The key dynamics are management style, intergroup processes, involvement in and knowledge of strategy. I would say that most commonly, the underlying causes are to do with strategy. Structure and skills are issues—all the consultancies work on skill development. My experience tells me that everybody can do with a bit more skill, but it's not the thing that's inhibiting an organization from achieving change.

So they do a causal analysis, then we ask them, if that's a picture of the present—themes and causes, what do they want it to be like in the future? If they already have a well worked out corporate strategy, you're OK. Then it's just a question of re-adjustment... you can say, how does it need to be different? But if they had that, they wouldn't need you in the first place. Most of them don't have a well worked out corporate strategy—so you have to do a lot of work on that. Once you get that, you can then say, how do these organizational dynamics have to change in order to support the future corporate position. That's a difficult creative task to do.

Q: We were talking about a pluralism of views expressed by different players. Correct me if I'm wrong, but are you suggesting that these views can be reduced to a number
of themes, and that problems are to do mostly with a lack of strategy?

There is always a multiplicity of views, the process is designed to be a funnelling to reduce the multiplicity of views. There is a variety of mechanisms in order to do that:

- the data, if it is well composed acts as a mirror of the organization. Where views differ of the problem area, if uncertainty is caused by a lack of information, the data then serves to reduce this uncertainty.

- on the values level, I suppose in practice what actually happens is that you work in the area where values coincide, if you've got three views, we would probably end up developing a strategy that centres on the area where 2 or more power groups agree.

Q: A compromise situation?

P: It is almost a compromise, but I would say that without OD in this type of organization, no decision is made. This ability to even agree on something is in itself a radical change from the previous situation.

For example in Grampian, they've had no strategy for years. They've not known what they were doing, the organization was in a terrible situation. You still have
this medic believing that the introduction of general managers is still a bad thing, and you still have the nurse believing that it's all about politics. They still maintain their extremity of views, but what they have agreed on, is a core strategy which would move the organization significantly forward.

Our hope, our strategy, is a behavioural model to change the organization. If we can show that this works, then these extreme views would be modified as we go along. That may not always work.

You work with where your client is. If your client has dramatically different value systems, and the Health Service is an extreme example, most organizations aren't that bad, then I think you look for areas of synergy. There is an element of compromise about it, but hopefully there will be a great deal more positive energy coming out of it.

Q: You earlier defined diagnosis as involving both data gathering and analysis. What difficulties should a consultant look out for? What advice can you give?

P: Data gathering itself is an intervention. It raises expectations. An OD process in a large organization is a lengthy process. If I interview you, it is highly likely it is six months before you hear anything. So you have the problem of expectations being raised.
have the problem of being suspicious of my motives, my behaviour. Even if I tell you that what you say will be non-attributal, you have no reason to believe that, you can withhold information. However the advantage we have is that people love to be interviewed. They love to talk about themselves and their work.

The main problem is encountered when we come to the analysis of the data, if it's done by the line managers—data analysis is not something that's often done by line managers. It requires them to stand back. It requires them to put their value systems aside for the moment while they take in the data. This may take a long time. You get the traditional flight or fight type syndromes. It's a very difficult thing for a senior manager to do, to receive data about how people perceive the organization, when they are leading the organization. Often it's very personal. But you deal with that through a structured process, that's why consultants are there.

Q: How do you know where to gather data, who to interview? For example in an organization as large and as diverse as the Grampian Health Authority?

P: We work through internal consultants. If it were not for internals, we would have to develop a different methodology, or we would have to spend more time in an organization. We give criteria to the internal people,
asking them to come up with the key individuals who we should use. When we go into an organization, there are not usually consultants then. At Grampian for example, there was the head of management development and one trainer. To train them for OD work, they've had to work with us full time for the last 9 months and attend the 'Internal Consultant Development Programme' run by Price Waterhouse. They have developed enough to do particular things now. The OD work, if we were doing all of it, would be about £400,000, but most of it, three quarters can be done by them now. So we have an active and difficult role of handing over responsibility.

Q: What is your role in diagnosis? What is the clients?

P: The roles differ in quite a marked respect as to what stage you are in.

In the very first stage of contact and contracting, our role is to raise awareness of what the possibilities of the problem could be because the client almost always has a definite view of not what the problem is, but the solution. Our responsibility is to say it could be wider than that. Sometimes they're right—rarely though—so our role is to raise awareness and broaden horizons.

In data gathering, our role is simple. It's a man with a bucket, collecting loads of information. Not too much process work there, just to be able to handle the
interactions. He's a data collector.

Where the roles change dramatically is in data feedback. There are roles for the consultant, the client who let's say is the boss, and the senior management team. The consultant acts as a process facilitator in holding up the mirror to senior managers so that they have to look at it. And over the years, I've got much harder on that. I used to feed the data back and say if you're not committed to this, we'll change. It was a voluntary process, and we would carry on until something cropped up that made them take notice. Now I'm harder. I make absolutely sure that senior management listens to me. Right at the beginning of the intervention, I contract with the organization—I want 5 days of every senior manager's time altogether to listen to the data that I've collected.

The senior management's role is to act like a senior manager. I think a lot of the problems with OD in the '60s and '70s, were due to the boss pretending to be one of the group, that participation was the same as democracy, and that you throw away all the authority, roles and formality. I don't believe in that, or that it can happen effectively. You cannot underestimate the influence of the head man. The boss has to continue in his authority and leadership role, in order to generate the impetus. A successful intervention will depend on his leadership abilities, and ability to galvanize support.
and action.

I've never seen a management group that can take present state and come up with a cohesive OD change plan on their own. They say the answer is all in training, or structure... the consultant's role is to work with line management to come up with a cohesive plan.

There must be a balance between expertise and involvement. I used to think that because the problem belonged to line management, then they should come up with the plan. That's different from the traditional consultant's role which is to come up with a plan and sell it to line management. However now I'm beginning to see that our role is only as process helpers. Now I do what we're doing downstairs, which is to work in a group—with the clients, the internal consultants and the externals. I'll say, we know where we are, and where we want to go—what methodologies and techniques can we use to shift us?

One of the change themes in Grampian is management style. Now I think if you say to most clients, how can you change management style, they won't have a cohesive answer to it. So we have to input specific technologies and 'sell' it to them. Often not ones that we would do, but they will themselves do eventually. Our role there is half expert, half process consultant. I see my role over the next year as a process helper, month by month.
handing out more responsibility to the internal person. My vision is that in 9 months in the Grampian (and the same in BT and other organizations), I will be perceived as only the internal's helper, and people will be saying 'I don't know why the external's here when the internal can do it'. That's the time for me to leave and the internal will carry on.

Q: Who do you involve in the diagnostic stage?

P: In the data gathering stage we involve not just managers but non-management people.

In data analysis, we invite non-management people. Realistically it is not always possible, not when it is 'counter-cultural'. The reason being, I have only one crack at doing the diagnosis on the basis of the data. Get it wrong and you've lost your position. In an organization by involving non-managerial staff, if that's counter-cultural, that often freezes the senior managers from doing anything creative. You get a whole lot of rubbish because you're dealing with their anxieties about non-managers being present.

But more organizations are becoming progressively less hierarchy conscious. For example in British Telecom we've been collecting data in a relatively small part (1000 employees) in Plymouth and that's being fed back to 43 persons in a four day workshop of which 25 are
non-management employees. That's fairly typical with BT.

But in Grampian we could not because the politics of the situation is such that the trade unions would not approve of the involvement of their members.

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Q: Which line managers do you involve?

P: We have two approaches. In an organization where there is a real big problem, we'll normally take the top management team, and use that as a kind of gold fish bowl to look at the conflict issues. Where it's a problem and it's not enormous, and we can see the way ahead, we'll take a diagonal slice—so different levels, different functions—that works well. However if you're dealing with a high level of conflict in the organization, I don't think it will work because the people at the bottom would be frozen out of the diagnosis, because the power still lies at the top.

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Q: How do you work out a strategy?

P: My honest answer is that the consultant does it, and then involves the client in tuning it up. I would love to develop a methodology where a client could run through it, and come up with a strategy themselves, but I haven't found it yet.

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In Grampian we took the present situation in terms of causal factors and the future vision. We then asked, what
causal factors need to exist in the future in order for the organization to achieve the future vision, and how is the present situation different?

We're presently like this, and we want to be like that, and there turned out to be 17 points needing attention. We had 17 flip charts round the wall. For example, present situation- we don't have a strategic plan, desired future- we want a coherent strategic plan up to 1991. The next one said, we presently have a very poor methodology for consultation- we want a better one. So we had 17 problem statements and mini vision statements. We then took about 14 hours over 2 days with senior management to physically walk around this room with the 17 problem statements, asking 'what can be done to shift the organization' at each statement. We worked in pairs, writing our ideas on each chart, and after an hour, we go on to the next one, and the next pair will go there. So you have a group of people wandering around, almost brainstorming, you have a jumbled mass of ideas, but it isn't a strategy, it's a shopping list of good ideas. We then took that, in practice what's happened is that I've worked on it for 2 days, sorting out the good from the bad, those are my values, and I write the strategy out. Then we work with the internal- here's the strategy, what do you think? And they dramatically change that, but my strategy is still recognizable. So you can say that the consultant's values are in the strategy. But it is based on what was on the wall. There's nothing in the strategy
which was not up on the wall, only the ordering and the targeting of the strategy is determined by the consultant.

A lot of ideas are generated and although not all of them can be incorporated into the strategic plan, most are 'actioned' in some way or another. There will be a non-strategic action list, a list of things which nonetheless need to be done. Of those ideas which will not be actioned, and I don't want to overstate the problem because 95% of the ideas will be in the strategy, the Managing Director or the General Manager will talk to each individual, giving them the reasons why their ideas are not acted upon.

Q: Is this how you would hope to draw out all the relevant views?

P: You try to make it as rich as you can- it's not to say that it's fool proof. It's a time consuming process. With regards to the senior management, yes, I think we've been successful in eliciting as much as we can.

Q: What about the rest of the organization?

P: They have been involved in different way- group interviews, questionnaire survey. In the interventions that I have described to you, the numbers involved are huge... on a practical level, it is impossible to do
one-to-one interviews with all the relevant members. There is a safety net—most of what's important would have been brought up by their representatives, group leaders, union people. And when it comes to analysis, it's the same, it's impossible to involve everyone. But you have to bear in mind that, it is the support of the senior management that you want.

Q: Are all the identified issues included in the strategy plan?

P: The process is almost a brainstorming process. There will be duplication, so some people's ideas will be filtered out, but represented in someone else's. It's also not time sequenced at all. So people do accept the rationality that it needs to be integrated.

The way we avoid the accusation that we haven't incorporated someone's certain idea— is by using everyone's ideas— not necessarily in the same way. But all ideas are recognized or actioned.

There are three categories. Within these three categories, we hope to fit everyone's ideas.

1. Either they can be included in the strategy
2. Or included in a non-strategic action list— a list of things which nevertheless needs to be done.
3. Those things which are not going to be done— the MD/ general manager will talk to each individual who wrote
one of those. There are not many of them at all, giving them the reasons why they are not being done.

If we don't do this, then we would be making the error of turning participation into democracy— the fact that you as line manager write it up doesn't mean that I as the boss will accept it. I want your ideas, I want you to participate, but at the end of the day, someone needs to integrate all the ideas into an actionable plan, and I as the boss would do that.

I think that I'm overstating the problem, because 95% of your ideas will be included in the strategy. You will be so impressed and pleased that the strategy is finally taking shape, that losing 5% of your ideas is not too big a deal for you. It's better something than nothing.

Q: How or when is implementation started?

P: There are two keys:

1. The things that you do
2. The resources that you use

The things that you do would vary infinitely with the situation that you're in. There isn't a standard recipe— you do this or that first. I hope, I'm confident that it's tailored to the needs of that particular organization. I suppose on average, we would probably tend to train last and implement systems change first,
but this is very much a generalization. We pay a lot of attention to developing the resources to manage the transition. In my experience, organizational change most often fails because the amount of resources needed to manage the change is underestimated.

When we say systems, we mean two things. We say this to people in the diagnostic phase, that systems you can think of as a continuum between 'hard' and 'soft'. At the hard end, there are budgetary policies and the information system, at the soft end there are the managerial processes, communication, team building, the decision making process and the consultation system.

It's the structural things, not organizational structure, but the major hard themes that run through an organization, that I would tend to change first. The rationale for that is, if you do a lot of work on behaviour, you tend to lose all those advantages when you implement the harder systems the following year. The introduction of a change system, such as new budgetary policies, is often a painful process. In my experience, you may as well get a lot of the pain over with first, and then we cover or capitalise on that by working on the behaviour or softer end.

For example in the Grampian plan, it is referred to as installing the infrastructure. So we get the infrastructure right this year. We then turn to the decision
making process, management development and managerial style. Finally we work on training, we work on management styles. It's the infrastructure first—you build the roads first, then you put the flash cars in second.

Q: Can you describe in detail a project you've worked on, or are working on?

P: Probably most organizational change programmes that we have, have an intervention within them which is focused on the development of a corporate strategy rather than a change strategy. So an example—BT.

There's a Customer Service Area, 1000 people. They've been in an environment of stability, like most of BT, but even more so because they are in Devon, Cornwall. No competition. Over the last year a lot of competition has hit them down there—Mercury's moved in—they need to develop a strategy. Having a piece of paper that says here's a strategy on it, is a bit of a waste of time. What they really need to do, is to develop strategic thinking—that needs to reflect strategy, but the strategy is not the end-all in itself.

So our intervention has 4 chunks to it—even though it's pretty complex.

1. The development of a mission

We're using a standard human resource methodology for
data collection and feedback, team building to come up with an agreed mission with some shared values reflected in it.

2. We then move into a harder area. You've got the mission, but you don't know how to do it. What we need is some training—this is an example of doing training earlier on. Do training in strategic management—so we take the whole of the senior management of this organization onto a one week training course, and that gives them the skills of strategic management—we teach them how to formulate strategic missions, SCOOT analysis.

3. We then work with the same group for three days to actually produce a strategic plan. In between that, they are gathering data, but we then come together to do the nitty gritty, to arrive at a strategic plan.

Q: Can you recap?

P: 1. mission, 2. training, 3. strategic plan

4. Extends over a long time, they will produce performance indicators, or 'personal criteria success factors' for each individual. So the strategic plan comes out— you're my boss and in discussion with you, I'll produce 10 objectives and performance indicators. They will then be reviewed on a 3 monthly basis and at the end of the year my financial rewards will be keyed to
them to the value extent of 10%.

So what we're hoping that would do, would be by the end of the process, they will know what they want to achieve. They would have the skill, the management skill— they may not have the technical skill, they will be encouraged to, by the performance indicators, and they will be rewarded if they do, by financial and non-financial rewards— they will have group cohesion.

Although that is an intervention, that will not work on its own because there's no point senior management having all this, and the rest of the organization having no skill or the wrong resources. So it has to be seen in the context of a wider strategy, and the wider strategy includes cascading the performance indicators down, introducing a communication process, development of teams, replacement of some staff, some management staff, a review of the process of work and the development of internal resources.

So it is rare for us to have a one-strand intervention strategy. It would normally have a high degree of complexity in it.

Q: What sort of indicators do you use?

P: Well, organization specific ones are the key. We would almost always do it through people within the
organization. We get them together, and we say to them, "How would you judge your performance?" And they tell you, strange though that may seem!

So for BT, it would be a balance of three:

- customer perception— and they are lucky enough to have a system which measures customer perception. Public Relations uses a sampling process.

- quantity of telephones fitted within a particular time

- and resource usage— either revenue expended, or more likely cost reduced.

We would try to get a balance from the three measures, but that would be an area where we would not try to operate an expert role at all, but try to facilitate them to come up with sensible performance indicators. We would never try to say, we know what kinds of indicator levels would identify your performance levels— it’s too complex— that’s a kind of consultant's graveyard.

Q: You've used the terms 'strategy' and 'change plan'. What's the difference?

P: I use the phrases too loosely. When we talk of strategy in the future, we mean corporate strategy, the human aspects, we call the change plan.
So the formulation of the corporate strategy was one part of the human change plan. Often it's the other way around— the corporate strategy includes the human change plan, and that's the case in Grampian, but you have to look at the kind of environment the organization is in, to determine which is the most important, which is missing.

Our approach to corporate strategy formulation is a participative one, where we give people the skills and process help to formulate the strategy, so when the environment changes, they still have the skills to respond to it.

Now, that doesn't really work— it's all very well saying that, but the level of retention of processual skills is low, and the drop off rate is high amongst line and senior management. My experience is that, you give people the skills and they develop a very good corporate strategy this year, but next year, they've forgotten how to do it, or because the process help is not there anymore, they have difficulties in doing it.

What we must do is develop within the organization specific individuals who can act as internal consultants and operate in the process role. These individuals will gain experience and confidence with us, and provide support to the rest of the organization. What I'm advocating is the training of specific individuals who
show an aptitude for the process role. It is not possible in practice to train general line and senior managers and expect them to retain the processual skills needed to continue or adapt the intervention, and at the same time for them to continue with their daily tasks. Now, you can argue that, that is generating a dependency on internal help— but that is internal help.

Q: You've given me some examples of projects which you have been involved in. We discussed some issues concerning the initial phases of an intervention— contact, contracting, diagnosis. We've gone on to talk about strategy formulation and training. Some aspects that we haven't covered are feedback and evaluation.

P: I need to differentiate between feedback and evaluation. We put a lot of effort into feedback and project management— into the general 'how we're getting on' type of stuff. For example, downstairs I've just discussed with the Director and General Manager for strategic planning for Grampian to meet for 2 half days a month for the next 12 or 18 months when we will review the effectiveness of the whole intervention.

Q: What criteria do you use?

P: That's where we fall down. Some of the programmes within the broad intervention have well developed evaluative criteria. If we were introducing a communications
systems, we would build into it, ways of evaluating its effectiveness. If we were working on team briefing, say the 'cascade process', we would have maybe on the third brief, an evaluative message. We would use the response as criteria for re-adjustment. It's validation rather than evaluation. The same would be for any training programmes.

The two weaknesses are that it's validation and not evaluation—just because you know that team briefing works, doesn't mean that it's worth the money.

The other problem is that it is OK on formal projects like that or on systems changes, but how do you evaluate the effectiveness of the formulation of a strategy— I don't know of a way of doing that.

Now what makes that problem less intense, is that it's the consultants and academics who worry about that—clients don't seem to worry about it. Of the change strategy, clients feel that they can evaluate from just 'line management gut feel'—they reckon, they are in touch with the organization and that they can evaluate it.

In terms of evaluating the consultant's effectiveness, they never want to put any energy into evaluating it. When I say we should sit down, evaluate and look at the effectiveness, there's never any interest in doing that.
The most frequent response is, you know you're doing a good job, consultant, because I keep employing you.

I would argue that the consultant has more responsibility than that. It is my responsibility in Grampian, even though the client doesn't want me to evaluate the effectiveness of that. The problem I have, is the lack of technology, we don't know how to do it. I don't know of any consultancy which has really cracked the problem yet. We have no-one to help develop a validation and evaluation methodology for OD interventions.

Although there are numerous feedback loops, we have a problem when it comes to using the feedback— it concerns the attitude of the clients. Once clients are committed to a strategy, having spent time and resources on it, they are reluctant to give it up— to correct and alter, yes, but not stop it altogether. For example, team building— if it is not working, we still keep going on. What I would like is a more effective way of measuring the effectiveness of the intervention. Because I'm sure we've implemented strategies which are conceptually sound but have had things in them that we shouldn't have done, but the feedback mechanisms have not been sensitive enough to pick out what went wrong. I can't believe that we can formulate these big strategies for massive organizations and that we are always right. Logically, I cannot believe that, but rarely does anything get stopped.
Q: Don't you go back after an intervention is terminated?

P: We are beginning to, but the difficulty is who pays for it. A commercial organization, let's take BT. We introduced a communications process into BT. It cost them a lot of money, about £200,000. In my view, it was less than perfect. But they really liked it. Senior management thought it was great. Now through other things in British Telecom, I had a gut feeling that it wasn't working very well. I wanted to go back and evaluate the effectiveness of it formally. To do that would cost £10-20,000, and BT weren't prepared to spend the money on it. Price Waterhouse wasn't prepared to spend the money to fund it. The argument was, if you had a feeling you made a mistake, do it differently next time. So the only way commercial consultancies will move to a position where they can evaluate, is to build in the evaluation process into the initial contract. With Grampian, we're saying we won't do this unless you allow us access in a couple of years time. They pay for the evaluation now. It's the only effective way we can develop our methodology.

Q: So clients don't evaluate what they've got out of it?

P: No.

Q: How do they know it's for the better?

P: Senior management judge on very personal criteria:
-whether their team meetings are better
-whether the things they hear said over board meetings and lunch about the consultants are good things or bad things
-whether the organization 'feels better'.

It's that kind of criteria that they use. Managers aren't trained to look backwards, their whole focus is on the present, and if you're very lucky on the future.

Q: What qualities would you want to leave the organization with?

P: I wish to leave the organization with the ability that includes the skills and the framework to use process skills, to help it to respond to the changing environment. It's the old story of being more able to manage change effectively in the future.

Q: Can you summarize for me, how that is done?

P: We try to develop 2 things:

1. An internal resource who can do what we do after we're gone.

2. The education of, and awareness raising in senior managers of the complexities and skills involved in managing change. I would expect that after 2 years, the
average time we spend in an organization, the senior management team would feel that they have learnt a lot about how to manage change.

We're confident in these two things. A third thing we would try to convey, and we are getting more successful, although I can't claim is done all that effectively, is a wider cultural thing. The thing is to change the whole culture of the organization—to make the whole culture of the organization a more change responsive one—so that even if all the senior management team left, and a new team moves in, the culture would be so pervasive that they would continue to manage the change. Two years is far too short to do that. It's OK for 200 people, but for 10,000—1/4 million people in an organization, it takes a lot longer than two years.

Q: Obviously from what you've told me so far, there is an important human side to an intervention. Have you found that problems are sometimes specific to individuals?

P: In Scot Rail, we did a diagnosis. There is one key problem, and that's the boss. Everything emanates from this one person, so we are left with a dilemma. What we can do, is to carry on with the strategy, and develop processes and systems roles which can work around the boss. Or we can try and take the boss issue straight on. We can talk to his boss and tell him the truth of the situation—this guy's done things that he would be sacked
for if people knew— he's told his subordinates to falsify statistical information— that kind of thing. We could tell him we know, and that he should leave. But if we did either, it would get around the organization, and we would lose our status as process helper— it's difficult gaining people's confidence, and easy to lose it. But on the other hand, if we don't do it, we would be protecting someone who we know is dishonest, and not tackling the real issue.

Q: Although this sort of situation can be viewed as conflict, and certainly as an area of potential conflict, what can you do when conflict arises? What in your experience causes conflict?

P: We try and help by providing data to reduce uncertainty. Conflict can be caused by a whole series of things. If it is conflict over what the situation is, the reality of it, we would find out the reality. If it is real value based conflict, we would try to provide a forum in which the conflict can be hopefully acted out. For example, last week I was at a board meeting of a company whose main areas of business comprise of an insurance and a financial asset management company. There was tremendous conflict between the two boards. We made use of Blake and Mouton, for a night and a day, split the group into two, to swap perceptions: I draw a pen picture of how I see myself, how I see you, how I think you see
me, and you do the same, and we bring the two together— confrontation theory for conflict resolution. That raises all sorts of sparks. For some people that helped because it got all sorts of shadows out of the way. Some people were working on false assumptions, that you can clear. For some people that did not work, 'I now understand you, but I still don't like you'— and you still have a conflict problem. In that case, our role is to make this conflict clear to the top management, and the top management will deal with that conflict through normal managerial processes: shifting people, tying them in systems so that conflict can't emerge, or move them out of the organization. I think the role of the process consultant is to make conscious what is happening.

I see conflict caused by 'organizational dynamics' easier to deal with than value conflict. If the conflict is caused by organizational dynamics, if I'm in one department and you're in another, and we're conflicting over the use of resources, I find that most managers are able to eventually deal with these. It's never a zero sum game, there are always things to be traded. Often conflict is caused by inadequate systems. If you and I are working for the same organization, and we are really competing, and we are in conflict rather than healthy competition, there is normally something wrong with the organizational system. Often it's a punitive budgetary system. If I save resources this year, it means a reduced budget for the next.
Q: Can you sum up what makes a successful OD intervention?

P: Committed clients. There rest of it is important, but there is one central thing, OD is about changing organizations, and that happens through leadership. I used to hate this idea- I used to get fed up of all the things talked about leadership. But I think it's true. You can have great consultants, a good intervention process, wonderful data, but if you haven't a leader there, the thing won't work. The leader doesn't have to be the boss, but an organization changes only through leadership.

What's important is that the consultant doesn't operate in such a way as to take away authority or leadership. Consultants can do a lot to cause a failure. A consultant can take over leadership, a consultant is in a weird position, he is everybody's friend, he provides process help, he becomes a guru. When he leaves, the organization is dependent on him and doesn't produce the change.

The consultant should have a contract with the client to offer process help and guidance in a supportive and not leading way, and the client's role is to be the leader. Until you get it, it won't work. You have to develop it, it isn't easy, real leadership skill, enough to generate effective organizational change does not come quickly. In less bureaucratic organizations, for example charities,
if the leader, the boss, is not a born leader, he or she may be technically brilliant or good in raising funds, but no good at leadership, you can take someone in a more junior position, and he or she can be the project manager or leader of the change process. In a hierarchical organization, that often goes against the grain. People don't like the power shift involved in that. So you can't really do it. We have to use criteria about which contracts we accept, because we get a lot more people coming to us for work than we have the resources to fulfil. And I suppose the prime one is, what is the leader like? Is this a contract which will work? Often we are asked in because the leader is no good. Maybe you should say, we should go in and help the organization develop a new leader but it's a very risky thing to do that. So we go where we think we will be successful, and that's where there is a visionary leader.
John: Job satisfaction (JS) is the term used in the Civil Service to describe what people in the private sector might regard as Quality of Working Life or participation. We have adopted the term JST— it's not a term which describes adequately what we do but it's a term conjured up when the work started in the late 1960s, and it's been with us ever since. We have tried to review it once or twice but have not come up with anything else.

Q: When did it all start?

J: Work started in the late '60s and early '70s from the wish of central departments to promote a policy in government departments to involve people more in their work. It was felt that resources and ideas especially at junior levels should be tapped. Rather than saying to departments they should do this because it improves people's satisfaction at work and makes work more effective, they decided to put their money where their mouth is. A team of half dozen persons was set up which would provide help to departments to do it. It has always been a small team because the aim was not to do projects all over the Civil Service, but to do a number of demonstration projects that could then be brought to the attention of government departments generally so that they could then consider for themselves if this activity was worthwhile and either do it from their own training
resources or engage consultants to help them do it.

So that is the kind of policy we operate from. Involvement is still a major objective of the Management and Personnel Office (MPO). This team is part of the MPO, which is part of the Cabinet Office. The MPO has a joint responsibility to promoting good management practices in the Civil Service and our team is part of this effort.

Q: Who are you accountable to?

J: Since the team has been set up, its work has been steered by a sub-committee of the National Whitley Council. It is a council which represents the Civil Service trade unions on the one hand, and senior management of the Civil Service on the other. The National Whitley Council has been going for 60-70 years now and it's a joint forum for discussing issues of common interest. This sub-committee which steers our work is called the Sub-Committee for Job Satisfaction. It has on it, the deputy General Secretaries of four major Civil Service unions and also on the management side the senior managers for the MPO, and is jointly chaired by an Under-Secretary of State and an MP. It meets two or three times a year to consider reports of what we are doing, and provides general support and reinforcement for our activities at national level. They do not exercise much day-to-day control, they are interested in the general direction we will take.
Q: How is JS related to OD?

J: JS is really a means of improving people's satisfaction at work and to improve the effectiveness of organizations through employee involvement. The core of our philosophy is involving people—encouraging participation. I think the link with OD as I see it, is the way we approach the work. Our work can result in various things: jobs being restructured, procedures being restructured and it can result in total organization change, culturally and structurally, and it can result in changing management styles.

Q: How is entry gained?

J: Initially the intervention is on the people level. The way a conventional JS project tends to go is that we are usually invited to go do a diagnosis of the organization by talking to a cross section of people. We aim to get a balance sheet of the organizational climate, which reflects the positive and negative factors of the organization. It is important that initial questions are simple, to draw people out. We start with for example: what is it they would like to see changed, what is it that brings them to work, what problems are they encountering etc. We try to identify also at this stage if there will be factors which will stand in the way of an intervention.
The next step is to categorize the information under several headings— the structures, the procedures, the relationships such as that between personnel and management, the training or lack of. We then consider with the management and staff of the unit concerned, how these issues can be tackled. The core of the philosophy is to involve people, so it's finding ways of involving them. To involve them in issues which relate to their work. We get them to identify these issues and to design structures and procedures which enable them to tackle these real issues. The aim is not so much to solve those particular issues but to illustrate and to demonstrate to them how valuable it can be to involve everybody in the solution and the identification of these issues.

So we help them set up temporary mechanisms for involving people. These can be working groups and to give one example— large county court— real difficulties over the filing system. Normally if there is some difficulty in the Civil Service over a filing system, the 'Organization Methods' people would be called in. In this case we set up a clerical work group, people who were actually working in filing areas, they examined the problem, came up with solutions, implemented them.

The temporary mechanisms are staged towards what tends to happen next. In the early work— Drivers Licensing Swansea and Customs and Excise VAT Central Unit— we have found that one of the wishes has been to move from a flow line
operation where people are treated like assembly car workers to develop more team based, full job structures, and while we don't go in with preconceived notions of what should come out of this, because we believe this should not be a pre determined process but an organic process determined by the circumstances of the organization, it is in fact that in a number of areas where we have worked that the intervention has resulted in a complete re structuring of the organization- from a flow line basis to a whole job team based customer oriented organizations.

We've found that team based working where people can do whole jobs, and where they can provide a service to the customer, is one of the most effective structures you can have in terms of people getting satisfaction in what they are doing. We don't deliberately create that. The whole idea is to enable people to think for themselves about how the work is structured and organized so that they themselves can come out with solutions and test them.

Let me give you an example of an intervention which led to complete re-structuring of an organization- OPCS Southport. We did the usual diagnostic exercise of talking to staff about things. The key group of people in the organization were the higher executive officers- a Civil Service term for middle management- the people who are the link between senior managers and the 'workers'. They felt as a body that what the organization needed was
to move away from flowline operation to team work which was an idea they had not developed terribly well or articulated well, but it was just a feeling that there was a better way of organizing the work than was the case. The office when we first went there 3-4 years ago had been operating very much like it had for about 40 years. It was set up about the time of the last war and so one of the things we did there was to say, 'You think team work is a good idea. Why don't we set up one team on an experimental basis?' So a team was set up consisting of 8 clerical staff with an EO (an EO is the first level of line management in the Civil Service). So they worked on this whole job basis for 6 months with no commitment by either trade union or management side that they would seek any continuation. It was clear after a week or two that it was a stunning success from two points of view.

Firstly the staff were delighted with the method of work because they were able to do a wider range of work. People were chosen who were experts in their field - in a way training each other, so there was a learning process with that. And they were providing a service directly to customers which they were not able to do in the past because of the way work had been organized in the past. As a result they were getting feedback from their customers which helped them organize themselves better. The manager was happier because work was being done faster, the trade union was happier because it's members had been involved, and the staff were happier.
But the decision was taken, and I think quite rightly, not to change the whole organization or the traditional method of work, but to set up a number of other experimental teams embracing about 20% of the workforce. One of the reasons for having a second experimental stage was because one or two people had thought, yes, it's a good idea to have these teams but there are different ways of organizing them, and I think these thought processes were stirred by people's reaction in the organization to this one team which was in a way in a gold fish bowl situation, and so there were thoughts about alternative ways of organizing teams, and to try different ways of working, and these were evaluated.

Other groups of staff—multi-disciplinary groups of staff were set up, and evaluated. It was agreed that one particular method was more suitable and a decision was taken to put the whole organization over to a team based, one job, customer oriented system.

That is what I would see as the link between OD and what we do. The spirit is essentially the same—building teams, encouraging participation, encouraging people to work together in order to develop a more efficient organization with happier members. The whole purpose is to help people step back from their day-to-day cares to think about their organization and to think about how their work is structured, and for them to think about an appropriate form of structure... if they feel a change is
necessary, to devise the means to do it with our help. We act as facilitators in a way, facilitating people in an organization to do their own organization development work. It's an all embracing thing- to have impact may mean changing the organization, changing procedures, changing management styles.

In the OPCS Southport example, the different groups of managers had never met as teams, so they thought it might be useful to have higher EO meetings, senior EO meetings. We set up workshops to enable them to start themselves off- one two day exercise to examine what their objectives were as a group.

All this arises out of an approach of loosening the organization, loosening the hierarchy which I think bedevils change in the Civil Service.

By enabling the formation of working groups. By enabling staff at different levels to sit around a table to examine issues and to be given a fair crack of the whip at having them considered. This is not usual in the Civil Service- quite unusual for the junior staff to have the opportunity to examine problems at the office and to suggest solutions. Normally this sort of thing is regarded not so much as a management prerogative but just by tradition that if such a problem occurs it is something that we as management tackle... we as management may have to bring in the experts. Whereas the
core of our philosophy is that 90-95% of the problems in any organization can be solved by the resources and expertise within it, if they are given the opportunity to tackle it, and that is the key. It's providing the opportunity by just coming in as outsiders and acting as catalysts I suppose.

Q: Can you tell me about your initial contact with the clients?

J: We have no right of entry into any organization of the Civil Service. We can only enter by invitation and the invitations arise in a variety of ways. When I first came, we had lost a very large project and that made a huge hole in our order book and I went around a few departments knocking on doors, talking to senior management about what we can offer, how we can help, and I got one or two jobs that way. Now increasingly people have heard about us from conferences, or from someone who knows about our work and the service we offer.

Q: Who do you kick off with?

J: Normally it starts off with the senior management in charge of the organization or his immediate deputy. In a lot of these organizations, the head man usually delegates after the initial contact to the deputy who has general responsibility for personnel and management matters. The latter is the operational head of the
establishment, and it is with him I will go into details with.

Initial contact is with the heads. This is usually grades 6-7 level in the Civil Service, which actually covers quite a variety of posts—Principal, Senior Principal, Assistant Secretary, occasionally Under-Secretary. We know when we go into an organization who the head man is, but we also look for other wielders of power and influence. The chap who is in charge of management and personnel is a key person to target. For example at the Paymaster's Office at Crawley, although contact is made at senior management level, the key man on a day-to-day basis is a Principal who is in charge of personnel—a key bloke who has his fingers on what is going on throughout the place, he is the client, he is the man with some influence and power in the place. It is a question of making the initial contact and then identifying other power centres and getting along side them.

Q: Are contracts drawn up in what you do?

J: It's not the sort of binding legal contract which consultancy firms might draw up because our services are free to all Exchequer departments, that is departments who get their money from Parliament. We do however have a number of repayment clients, these are 'quangos', quasi-autonomous national government organizations. For
example the British Library at Boston Spa, the Nature
Conservancy Council, these pay. When we are working with
for example the DHSS, the Department of Employment,
Customs and Excise, the Inland Revenue— we don't charge.
Last summer this was reviewed, and the current practice
of not charging was re-affirmed on the basis that if the
MPO was promoting employee involvement as one of its main
objectives for improving management in the Civil Service
and it was providing a resource, it would be a little odd if it said, right, we'll provide you with this resource
but we would have to charge you for it.

The contract is a non-legally binding agreement that,
first and foremost embraces the terms of reference. We
try to establish at the outset what it is we are going to
do/ offer.

Q: Do you know what they want?

J: Initially they have a thought, it tends to stem from
something like: output is low, productivity is not what
we would like, morale is poor. We want your help in
doing something about it, it can be as ill-defined as
that. So we then work to try to define things a little
more clearly.

Q: How?

J: Just talking to people. Why is productivity low? What do
you think it should be? What views do you have about it? Why do you think morale is low?

Q: Who do you talk to?

We talk to senior management initially and local trade union representatives. Our work is jointly steered by management and trade union committees, given the sensitivity of this work for the trade unions because some think employee involvement is a means of cutting out unions and given the Civil Service is a fairly heavily unionized organization by white collar standards, we think that it makes a great deal of sense to work with the trade unions and involve them from the outset. They have sources of information not available to management and vice versa. It's a question of canvassing views and gradually helping them define the question more clearly.

Q: Is there conflict between the different interests represented on the committee?

Usually the trade unions have a strong view of events, but I have never been in a situation of conflict. If that ever happens, I think all we could say is, OK, I can see that there are different views here. Perhaps the way for us to tackle it would be to talk to a cross section of staff and see what that comes out with.

In many ways the presence of the trade unions has made
our task easier. Because of the operation of the Whitley system in organization, where you have strong trade union representatives— they meet management regularly, probably on a monthly basis and they discuss problems, and over a period of time they reach a general view of what the ills are—poor pay, poor accommodation, whatever. If we can help we are called in.

Contrary to some public opinions, the unions are mostly realistic when it comes to their demands and what management can do. For example at the Paymaster's Office at Crawley, last year there was a problem of rapid staff turnover. The view of both management and trade unions was that the problem was caused by the severe competition for staff by other employers in that area. That area has the lowest unemployment in the country, under 4%, because of Gatwick airport and a large industrial estate on the doorstep providing a variety of employment, and in some cases offering more than what people are getting at the Paymaster General's Office. So the local trade unions and management are aware of that factor, but both realize that they can't conjure up more money and so asked us to come in to see whether there were any aspects about the way the place was organized and managed and run which might be additional factors which might help tip people over the edge of thinking of going, and to help them identify what those might be and whether they could be tackled by them locally. So there was a strong identity of view between local management and the trade unions.
Q: Can you tell me about the initial stages of an intervention?

J: At the Paymaster General's Office, an interview programme was used. A structured interview guideline was drawn up under various headings such as line management communications, job satisfaction aspects, to enable us to identify what the main issues were so that we could then feed these into the design of the questionnaire which would go to all the staff. That would be the second stage.

The core of our philosophy is to involve people, to change the culture of a traditionally hierarchical organization where there is strong central control, to one where people feel more involved and where participation is encouraged. So we try to start off by having the in-house resource join us so that we can train people to carry on the process when we have gone. Let's say as a group of people, one of my people and one or two chosen from the organization had done some interviews, we then sit down and jointly pull out the main issues. We usually feed these back in some form to the people we have talked to just to check out that we've got it right. If there is a joint management steering group, we then suggest to them ways in which these issues that have been identified can be tackled.

We then use working groups as a means of tackling
particular problems. Volunteers from all grades are called for. The JST would help them to get started for example offer them techniques for conducting meetings. A lot of the volunteers, particularly with junior staff have never taken part in meetings or committee work and may not have any idea of what it's about.

Also we try to help them to evaluate. The whole emphasis is on getting them to do things themselves, identifying problems, examining problems, testing out solutions, implementation and then evaluating the process at the end. Evaluating the process is not just "what has happened" in terms of "have we improved productivity?", "has sick absences gone down?"—these are straightforward forms of output evaluation. We also get them to evaluate management culture, in what ways is this place managed differently. We're interested in promoting cultural change. Having working groups is one way of helping them in terms of changing managing styles and cultures.

We also do quite a bit of work in the general area of management workshops by getting groups of managers together—a manager and his immediate team, his lieutenants, and having workshops for a day or two where they can examine their objectives and roles and methods of working together.

We tend to lead the team. For example in OCPS Southport,
they seconded to us a Higher Executive Officer who knew
her way around and she and one of my blokes formed the
team. They worked together as a team working towards the
client. We provide the resource for them at the
diagnosis stage. Their involvement increases when we help
them set up structures to examine particular issues—
that's when the client gets more heavily involved because
they are then committing a lot more of their own staff
resource to it and we are then acting more as
facilitators rather than doers.

Q: What difficulties do you encounter at this stage?

J: There is sometimes a problem at middle management level.
We tend to be invited in by senior management, who are
keen to involve people for various reasons. Then we start
work and the junior staff particularly get very
enthusiastic because for many of them it is the first
time they’ve been asked their opinion. First time they’ve
had an opportunity at cracking problems and helping to
solve them, and this makes middle management particularly
vulnerable because they see their role as being
increasingly marginalized.

For example this group of Higher Executive Officers at
OCPS Southport are a particularly influential group of
15 or 16 persons— a pivotal group. One of the things we
have learnt that we must do is to ensure that everybody
in the management side is involved and not feel left out.
Because if there is a group which feels that they are left out, that ground is shifting under their feet, they can quickly if not sabotage things, but lend events a sour feel. So we were delighted when this group of Higher Executive Officers themselves thought of what turned out to be the major change. That is the major problem that we usually encounter, to get middle management involved, interested without them feeling threatened- the potential threat that people can feel is something that we are very alive to.

Q: What happens after problem areas have been identified?

J: Promote employee involvement. Consider that with the client and trade union side- client might embrace the trade union, if the client is the steering group. We'll consider with them the establishment of employee involvement mechanisms to tackle these issues. It might be a working group, for example. At Customs and Excise, Southend, one of the main issues for staff, and it wasn't just at the clerical level, was the fact that the job training wasn't in their view adequate, and so they had a multi-disciplinary working group of clerical assistants, clerical officers, executive officers, where they examined a job, examined the training needs, talked to some of their colleagues in other sections and came up with a training package. They devised their own training package, set up their own system whereby certain key people would act as trainers so that when a number of new
people came in, this training team would convene and train them, and it was all done in-house, with a little help from Customs— the professional trainers.

Q: Who is involved in planning?

J: Difficult to generalise—depends on the nature of the problem, sometimes clerical staff such as with the problem of the filing system, sometimes clerical and executive staff as in the previous example of the training system, and the reorganization at Southport involved both senior and middle management.

Q: How do you know who should be involved?

J: This is where the in-house resource can be invaluable. Somebody who is at the centre of the organization, who knows their way around and how things tick. We will consult them and say, "This is an issue, which/what sort of grade do you think ought to be involved in this?"

For example at Southport, how is staff moved around the organization? That is something which needed to be clarified by people who have had the experience, who have been for some time in the organization, who knows the history well. There was a feeling right from the beginning that management had an interest in this aspect of the intervention—there were three key levels or groups of managers. Each level had particular key
interests, and so it was felt that they all ought to have an input.

It's really a question of identifying the issues, and then using the in-house resource to suggest the kind of grades that might be involved, and then checking it out with the client, for example the steering group, "This is how we think it should be approached. Do you agree?" Occasionally the trade unions themselves might want to take part in a particular working group.

Q: Can you tell me about the most common problem situations that you come across?

J: A lot of problems stem from the hierarchical nature of the Civil Service. This is highlighted by people coming in with different expectations now. Years ago when schools were in a sense also very hierarchical and much more disciplined than they are now, people were able to move from one disciplined area from school to another disciplined area at work. Now it seems that people are educated differently. There's more freedom with the way people can work at school, more emphasis on innovation, creativity. You can't expect people who were educated in that atmosphere to go into a regimented atmosphere and immediately be in tune. So people join the Civil Service with different expectations. When they are at school they are encouraged to adopt a more challenging role, not just to accept everything but to discuss and question and
argue, and I think they will take this attitude into work with them. The hierarchical nature of the Civil Service is not designed to promote that kind of attitude to work. We try to loosen the hierarchy to enable what we are trying to do to take place.

Q: And how do you do that?

J: The analogy I use for the hierarchical nature of the Civil Service, and also for the large bureaucratic organization outside is that it's rather like the geological forces which work in a coal mine where we are trying to alter or arrest the geological forces by putting in pin-props. If we are not there the activity stops. Then the geological forces—the hierarchical nature of the Civil Service will re-assert themselves. What we try to do is to set in place a culture which will keep banging the pin-props in. It is important to have one or two people who have worked with us who can keep the process going.

For example at OCPS Southport, mechanisms were retained in a slightly different form. There was a job satisfaction project Steering Committee which had representatives from management, trade unions and different grades of staff. The project officially finished September 1985, but it was necessary to maintain some manifestations that the staff could see of this cultural change which they were trying to bring about,
just to let them know that this was still on the agenda. So the Steering Committee was retained but rechristened Employee Participation Group.

Q: What role did the group play, or continue to play?

J: They have an evaluative role in discussing their achievements as a group, and the changes in managerial style and practice. They receive regular reports from individual managers about what they are doing to promote employee involvement in their organization. They also deal with specific issues—such as getting staff involved in an attitude survey for a computerization project, and played a key part in commissioning a survey of communication, or lack of, as was the case. They are the part of the organization which continues to put the pin props in.

Q: Can you elaborate on the issue (or lack) of communication?

J: Generally speaking, people got the information they need to do their jobs in a reasonably acceptable form and with a reasonable amount of lead time. Communication in that sense is quite good. Where they begin to falter is in terms of letting people know how their section fits into the organization generally, not in terms of how their section fits into their branch, but how their branch fits into the division and how the division fits into the
organization as a whole. As you go up these various levels of the organizational structure, people's view of what these bits do became rather hazy. With negative consequences. People feel alienated, and their quality of work suffers—this may seem rather 'old hat', but it's not something that we've managed to overcome yet, especially at lower levels of the Civil Service. That's a real problem for us, and we try to start off simple communication links.

You must understand that the Civil Service is a vast system, comprising of many interdependent groups, and the relationships between groups are not always as clear as we would like. For example, the work of the MPO has far reaching effects. Although it is a small outfit, relatively, it's also behind the Civil Commission, and sets the recruitment policies—basically we recruit Civil Servants. For example Basingstoke wants to know what we do, we want to know what the Civil Service college does... so at the MPO one of the things that was decided was a series of lunch time presentations where different parts of the organization set out their wares for their colleagues in other parts who come and listen to what they have to say. Other outcomes are staff newspapers, circulars, news-letters. Part of our philosophy is to improve the knowledge of one section to what the other sections of the organization is doing by improving the communication network.
Q: Before elaborating on the problems of communication in the Civil Service, you were telling me about the evaluative role of a participation group. Can you tell me more about the evaluative process?

J: The Employee Participation Group plays an important role in that from time to time they spend time at their meetings to discuss what they've got out of this, where have we got to and where do we go from here— an examination of their own role as a group and what their achievements have been.

So they do evaluate what has gone on in terms of changes in management style and practice and also they evaluate their own role. There was a more structured evaluation done by a multi-disciplinary work group of what had happened at key points that looked at output, the effect on management styles and culture.

Q: How important is evaluation?

J: It's something that we build into a project right at the outset. We say to them we believe that it's important that you should from the beginning accept that at stages in the project, you will need to step back, and consider what have we got out of this as an organization, because we put a lot into it, and there should be some return, both for the organization and for the people working in it. We usually mark that up as an agenda item at the
beginning but we don't at the beginning establish how that can be done. That becomes clearer later when the pattern of events has unfolded and we can see what has been happening. It is important for this work to be evaluated. It is necessary for us to be able to say to prospective clients it's worth doing because there are advantages, benefits and we need to know for our own purposes what has come out of it.

On the output side we monitor the effect on workflow— is the work done any quicker, the quality—are there fewer errors, and the impact on sick absences and staff turnover. On the process side—what is the effect on managerial style, culture, how is the atmosphere different, what are people's attitudes, do they feel more involved in the running of the organization, is there an improvement in communication?

We can only measure our success by the success of the intervention. I don't think we can distangle what we got out of it from what the organization gets out of it.

In terms of our approach we usually consider at the end of a project:

- how did we go about this?
- could we have done it any differently?
- what lessons have we learnt?
- what is the best way of entry?
- who do we concentrate on?
At DVLC Swansea the concentration was very much on the clerical staff because it's the dominant grouping. That set off problems at the managerial level. When we evaluated with the Director of DVLC, we agreed that were we doing it again, we would have done it differently and would have got all levels of the organization involved at the outset.

At the end of the day, our success must be measured in terms of how much of a success our client, the management, the staff and the trade union think it's been. The success really depends on whether the client and all the other involved parties think it's been a success.

We are constantly learning, we can't afford to be complacent because we have to feel that we are in a learning process because the kind of places where we work exhibit such bewildering variety— the Civil Service is an extraordinarily varied animal. There are always new problems coming up, we must be flexible and fast on our feet.

Q: So far you have described several job satisfaction projects to me. These appear to me to be mostly directed at the techno-structural level of an organization. Are interventions conducted at a more human-processual level?

J: From time to time we find ourselves doing a bit of
individual counselling for managers. These are usually managers who can't accept what we are trying to do. We try to talk to them and try to reassure them. There are other managers who accept what we do but feel threatened, and are not sure of what their role is in all this, so we have again to work on that.

There's also been a certain amount of group counselling. In one or two departments where some groups aren't sure of what they'll get.

The human problems we get stem from uncertainty. The one thing about the hierarchy system in the Civil Service is that people know where and what their position is. However when you come in and start talking about involving people, then the old certainty starts to look a bit shaky and people feel the ground shift under their feet. Their security is disturbed, the hierarchy is not as stable as they once thought, and you've got to be aware of that, and you've got to offer a bit of advice and support.

Q: We discussed the issue of conflict earlier—either in the daily operation of the Civil Service, or as an issue in the process of intervention. The impression which you've given me is that conflict is not something you come across a lot.

J: Yes, it may be something to do with the culture of the
Civil Service. The culture of the Civil Service puts the emphasis on agreement and consensus. This will not always be the case, as we are now filling up with better educated school leavers-a new generation of staff who have different expectations. This has led the Civil Service to embark on a deliberate policy of managerial change-one of which is the "Financial Management Initiative", designed to push authority and responsibility away from central departments to the operational units. Managers will have clearer objectives, and will overall have greater control over the resources to meet these objectives. This may bring about more conflict, only time will tell.

Q: What do you mean by clearer objectives? And how does the conflict arise?

J: Clearer in the sense that they will have responsibility over the achievement of targets-and these targets will be customer linked. Operational units will be more in tune with their environment, and with less centralized control, hopefully there will be greater flexibility. This raises complex issues. For example much of the work at certain departments is seasonal, such as at Cumbernauld. It is foreseeable that that may bring problems.

Also conflict may occur in areas where managers on the one hand might see that their role is changing from one
of control to one of encouragement and support and that can cause problems because they've been brought up and trained to manage in a particular way and now they feel they're being asked to do something that they are not trained to do, particularly if they feel that they've managed the organization in a way that does the job perfectly well.

Power conflict may be a problem where we set up teams, and the teams are given a reasonable degree of autonomy and authority, which can appear to undermine traditional management prerogatives. You can get a conflict of authority. It's a question of training management into a new role.

Q: What advise do you have on what makes a successful intervention?

J: If people at all levels of an organization feel that it has been worthwhile in terms of leaving them with better jobs, where they have much more satisfaction at work, where they feel they are part of the outfit, that their views and experience are respected no matter what level they're at, that they do have the opportunity to speak up and be listened to, and that they are working for a more effective organization.

Q: What in your experience has caused an intervention to fail?
J: Being far too ambitious, for example where they set themselves a target of interviewing 600 people—initial diagnosis with an initial interview of massive proportions. The start off took too long and management got fed up. Not matching what you want to do to resources.
Question: Tell me about your background.

Anne: I joined an OD unit of four existing people— they claimed to be OD specialists and change consultants. That was not what I found that they were doing. What I found that they were, were various aspects of personnel and training people— so no behavioural science base, no conceptual approach at all... a hand holding approach. A great need for that existing group to be a cloning conformist group— which they articulated positively: their use of the word "clone" was a positive use— "one must clone"— no purpose or intent expressed. Cloning— a closed statement— was good.

I was quickly confused: they weren't what they advertised themselves to be, that is a great deal of theoretical and professional expertise, that they were in the open systems business. I found they couldn't actually define what they meant. This was not even their terminology, they as consultants had employed other consultants to do their front, their advertising work.

Two of the four had been in Shell for 5-6 years in that unit. My first discomfoting piece of information I was getting back from the client base was that their names were not known, and nobody knew what actually they did. So for five or six years there had been no personal or professional impact on the client base.
Q: Tell me about the client base.

A: The client-base I was working with was quite interesting and lively, and not wholly resistant. It was the Exploratory sector, and by Shell standards, it was the most entrepreneurial and the newest. The client-base was engineering led as opposed to the rest of Shell which was a manual-led and personnel-led business.

So I discovered that I could not even find out what my colleagues had been doing for the past 4-5 years, because my client was saying, 'We don't know them, we had lunch with them but we don't know what they do. They've made no impact on us.'

Q: How is contact established?

A: My first impression was that we were always having to knock on doors, to sell ourselves. The one success, the one impact in 5 or 6 years before I got into Shell, was that the MD of Exploration Shell, quite openly, Scott, had a great interest in the development of general management skills and the strategic awareness for his sector, had looked around and asked if we had an OD unit and wanted to speak to him or her. Having been called in by this pro-active international manager, the OD consultants concerned did not know what to offer, at all, if anything, except for this hand holding approach which engineering people did not have the patience for— they
are action people.

The task they wanted done, had to be done by a certain date, scheduling was very important to engineering people. My colleagues went to an external consultant firm. This firm offered immediately in an opportunistic way, an attitude survey, 'We will give you the American company we used, it's all modelled, scheduled— you just have to apply it.'

This firm was Sheppard Moscow— Colin Sheppard and David Moscow— a small consultancy firm of about 12 employees plus some associates. Been around the OD world 12–13 years. Great dependency between this unit and Sheppard Moscow.

So here you had external consultants who had much higher energy and expertise and vigour that the internal consultants, who masked the marginality of this unit, because they (Sheppard Moscow) came in and offered an appropriate tool— there is some question whether that is an OD approach. They bring in good quality tools through high quality trainers. The attitude survey will keep this particular sector going for about a year and keep the internal consultants busy with something to do.

Q: Can you explain what contracting means to you?

A: Through Andrew Pettigrew, I was vigorously schooled in
the basic principles of contracting—having gained entry, you discussed and then contracted. I was used to contracting, and especially in Coopers and Lybrand, where contracts were drawn in scrupulous detail because the money that's being paid over is in thousands of pounds.

I was in Coopers for a year or two after I left Andrew, and before Shell. So with Andrew I had been used to making very clear contracts, quite ethically based contracts, so that everybody knew where they were, where they were intending to go, and at what points you would be monitoring, and if in any way deviating from the contract. In Coopers that (contracting) was also quite rigid because there was so much funding involved.

This OD group caused concern and confusion because there was very little in terms of contract written at all, and when I began to work with clients and to observe them work, I noticed that contracts were made as diffuse and woolly, as undefined as possible.

As months went on, I wondered why? If they knew that without a contract, you could not have a purpose, or method— you would just be there holding hands or chatting, smoked, masked by public sector attitude maybe. My style was still to make a very clear contract:

-what I can offer
-what they want
-to outline any ambiguities so that those could be borne
in mind and discussed

to carry out a time scaling

So I was carrying out my style of contracting while my 2020 colleagues pressurized me that I shouldn't be doing it like this, this clearly, because one couldn't control the clients if you made too clear the contract, they would not be as compliant.

If you are looking at it from a public sector view (all but one of my colleagues were ex-public sector), the public sector has a very paternalistic authoritarian view of its clients or patients, and my colleagues were very authoritarian, the clients had nothing to offer but their 2030 stupidity, that was the clear implication. It was impossible not to question the ethics of what was going on.

Q: Can you illustrate with an example of what you mean by that?

A: At a meeting of 12 senior engineering managers, a question was put by one of them, "How much was this survey costing us?" Before I could answer, my colleague 2040 gave an answer which was about half the actual cost. You see, at the end of the account year, no money passed hands, but the amount passed over the account books. As that wouldn't happen for some time, the person would have to remember the exact amount and check up the following
March or April. Later, I asked, "What was the basis of the calculation? Are we working on different principles?" He replied: "I don't want my clients to know exactly how much we are costing them."

I was also being pressurized by this "cloning" process— you conformed with this cloning group. The politics of influence was an important aspect of their work. Personally, I felt their use of influence was unethical. It was also a very silent and unarticulative group: the pressure to conform and compromise was highly dysfunctional.

Q: Can we talk about the intervention the group was involved in while you were there?

A: I worked with a consultant from Sheppard Moscow, and not my colleagues. We had a very open and discussive relationship with the client.

This (project) had started about a year before I joined. I assumed I had some role to play. I asked my superior: "Have you contracted with the clients and with each sub group of the client?" In particular, I was referring to the ones I was going to work with —"Have you got any purposes?"

He never came back to give me my purposes, anybody's, whether anything was wanted, had been understood mutually by him or by the client.
The only person I found out who had any discussion with my colleague was the MD. He did not know much about OD but was willing to learn. In his discussion with the MD, all he said was that it would be a good idea to have an attitude survey across the whole of the sector, then we'll have a lot of data and we'll be able to do something about it. There was no hypothesis in scientific terms which was being tested.

Q: Was the survey used diagnostically?

A: No, the engineers did not want to know what was just wrong, but why. They were quite prepared to have a diagnosis of the current situation of the sector. However before I came in, it had only been in the very soft terms of "how do we all feel" in the sector. I brought in the harder areas such as the technical areas, the business, how do we define the business area— which means what had been done before, was different to what I did.

So there were methodological flaws already coming in. This could have been corrected during the long time span, 18 months or more.

Q: What did the attitude survey lead to?

A: There was feedback, discussed very much with senior management. One of the personal objectives I had was to use this as an opportunity to open doors, as I had just
arrived in the company. Instead of having to knock on doors individually, I had access to the whole sector.

The Sheppard Moscow method was a top down approach—so you worked with the directors. My colleagues had always stayed at that level, they had never worked throughout the sector. My objective, because of my style, my background training and experience, was with the consent of these key clients to work throughout the organization, so that I become assessable to everyone in the organization.

Q: Where and how was data collected?

A: My choice was to use focus groups throughout and across the sector because I did not just want the top people to feature. They were very important, and it was with them I did one-to-one interviews with, but then again it depends on how much of the top you actually took. I did want to work the whole way down, so that you actually saw the most minor clerk, anyone who was a full time staff.

Q: Tell me more about the survey methodology.

A: Having been briefed, I then shared what I had learned from the key clients. We then decided on further aspects of the method:

-who they wanted to have involved
-the number of hours
They had a choice:
- either they devise the questionnaire— a top-down approach
- or they encourage the whole of the organization through focus groups, discussion groups, brainstorming, in a representative form

It was important that the representatives at the focus groups, usually about 7-8 persons, represented a good 40-50 persons, throughout all the levels of the organization and all the different salary groupings.

Q: What happened at the focus groups?

A: Brainstorming comments— not necessarily stressing the negative— under as many headings as possible. What are the key issues in each area, for example, communications area, recruitment area, technology area. A tremendous response, unexpected because Shell people are chosen for being sheep-like, but were very participative, very much so. Some said, "We hope somebody does want to listen to us because we do have something to say, nobody usually asks."

It was middle management who showed some hesitancy, if not at that stage then later as the feedback was taking place. The feedback showed that there was a very sharp division between the very top layer in their intentions, assumptions and purposes and the rest of the
As I said earlier, I saw this as a vehicle for meeting people. Issues were coming up which I found had particular significance. So as well as continuous interviewing, I was going back to the key clients and reflecting back something, saying to them, "I think we have an OD issue here which we can if you like discuss, which we can look at as an issue separate from the attitude survey." For example, an issue which arised out of the interviews was the implementation of computerization. So what was happening was that I was causing great disturbance by getting more involved than I was expected to by my colleagues, and getting known personally.

My colleagues did not like this. Let me give you an example of something, of his consulting style. He would sit in a meeting, very quietly, making notes. At the beginning of the meeting he would say, "We've arrived to talk to you because we gather you have a problem," -that's all. He would then clam up, and start taking notes, anything the client uttered- verbatim, in sentence form, and then he would get it all typed out, and give these great long lists of what the client had said back to him. No attempt at any analysis. As a result, the clients who were more honest with me said, "We don't get anything out of him, he is boring, he does not provide any action or recommendations or spirit. We won't have
him back." And so the door closed, marginalizing even further this OD unit.

Q: How long has this OD group been going for?

A: The OD group in one form or another has been going on for about 14 years. It's been variously placed, sometimes in different parts of the UK. These particular people were there 5-6 years prior to my arrival.

Q: Did this group have much contact with other OD groups in Shell? For example I hear a lot about David Mungall and Wendy Pritchard.

A: They were very credible, but we did not get the chance to work together. We have different bases, the group I was with worked with Exploration. Wendy Pritchard tried to network with our group, by perseverance she managed to come to some of our group meetings, but was dropped from our mailing list! Let me tell you something, we reported to a Personnel Director, Central Services UK Division, which was the hub of the personnel wheel in the UK. It was one of the most overmanned, out of date manualized personnel departments I had come across, it had no vigour whatsoever. The reporting was actually to the next room, to a man, I can't dignify him with the title, Personnel Director, he did not know much about personnel, unless he had the manual with him. It was personnel management circa 1970: just refer to the right page in the manual,
if you come across a problem!

Now Shell has to complicate things. There are three main sectors: there's Exploration, there's Oil, and there's Chemicals. Chemical and Exploration were the two client groups of our five colleagues. Oil would have nothing to do with us, he was two floors down the building but refused all requests to come and meet us.

Q: Why?

A: The feeling I got was that nobody wanted to know our group... that we were so marginalized, we have no impact, we had no real reason to exist, we weren't of any help.

But then if there is no conceptual or theoretical base or any kind of vigour or discipline, what good can you give, except to be the odd person you can have a gossip or natter with... which can be quite helpful, quite therapeutic, but we should not be titled "consultant" then because consultancy is something different.

Q: What do you mean by "no conceptual base"?

A: I don't mean Sheppard Moscow Associates, but they were external. I never heard any of my colleagues mention a theory or model, and in fact Sheppard Moscow Associates were very tactfully trying to bring in very simple
models that I've been aware of for about 20 years, for example mechanistic models of organizations, input, output models, the concepts of feedback loops... very skillfully because it was a delicate thing teaching so called consultants absolute basics. And these were obviously very new concepts to all but one colleague. I had one very interesting colleague. He was not based in our London office, but fortunate enough to be based in our Aberdeen office. He had an education background (trainer). He had a theory base, but he kept it to himself, any theory tended to be threatening to these people who were trained a long time ago.

Q: How do you make contact initially with client(s)?

A: I sometimes make a cold contact, someone I don't know at that time, but more probably someone I have worked with before. I go back 2 or 3 years later, as I am for instance with the police management development work—this isn't initiated by them, I'm contacting them at the National Officers Training College. I'll just ask, pointing out that I'm interested in doing consultancy work with them, could I go and have a word? It take 2 or 3 visits. While that warms up, I usually meet different people, some of whom I spark off with, some of whom would say that what I offer matches their needs.

Sometimes I get approaches from prospective clients. This is, I have to admit, because of my past association
with Coopers. There, we had a wide client base. It would be because they have heard that Coopers had done something similar to what they had in mind, and that I had been involved.

Q: Tell me about your relationship with clients.

A: Apart from the first contact - that may not be my choice, I would rather make my visits on-site. It would depend on how I feel about what they present as a problem or interest area, as to whether I will contract on that. I might be prepared to just use a client's data, if the brief is clearly defined, but I rarely find that to be the case, that there is a clearly defined brief. Clients are very dependent on the initial presentations that potential consultants might give. Coopers will be giving their presentation with other competitors such as Price-Waterhouse, and clients will actually use that competitive situation to get the problem area more defined in their own minds. It is very rare for a client to know what exactly their problem is, if they have that picture, they don't need consultants, they could do it themselves or use internals.

I think that OD consultants are not very well understood, and that a client may very well think that an OD consultant is bound to be interested in personnel problems. If I perceive that that is not the real
problem, then more time is spent on discussions before a contract is drawn up. This is quite often the case.

At Shell, it was a non-collaborative approach. But then there was a lack of things going on— a load of diffuseness, fog, my colleagues would sometimes hint that they preferred it that way, it kept people in the dark.

Personally, I don't immediately stress that there is something wrong— a problem-oriented approach. I would more often stress that I would like to help them get a current situation picture which will have pros, cons, strengths, weaknesses, restraints. I would also try from very early on to get the client to be happy for me to speak to a wide variety of people. If the client doesn't want that, I would go with it for the time being, but it is important to try to broaden my access to other parts of the organization later.

While at Coopers, that is in the larger consultancies, you tended to go in on large projects. It is less personal— often data is gathered using questionnaires and so on— which is not my preferred way. My preferred way is interviews or group work— personal contact is crucial. Building trust is crucial. In Shell, I was involved in large group working sessions, brainstorming, independently from my colleagues, with clients that I have got to know well. I don't think such sessions work unless there is an amount of trust amongst the members.
and the consultant is trusted as well. The confidentiality aspect of the consultant's work is very important there. So that before I am able to obtain information from various individuals or sub groups, I had to build up a trusting relationship between the members and myself, and between themselves. If the trust was there I could encourage the exchange of this information in a direct way with me as the enabler because no way could I pass on the information without their knowledge.

Q: What roles do a consultant play?

A: The external's is simpler. The external brings an objectivity and a breadth of expertise and knowledge of what is happening in other sectors. This takes you out of the self perpetuating circumstance, gives you a bird's eye view, which is quite important.

Bringing in some technical skills. Without some kind of technical base, I think you are going in as missionaries or hand-holders.

Nearly all the organizations I have come in contact with, have focused all on the operational day-to-day level, even the directors of Shell are focused on the day-to-day, very little managerial work going on. Virtually nothing on the strategic level, which is where stress comes in because they don't know how to. I go in on a very simple questionning level, for example, what do
you think the key issues are, and I will divide that upper
personnel, finance, marketing etc to get a fuller picture.

A particular interest area of mine is the developmental
model— the different characteristics of the start-up
organization, the mature organization, or the decline/
retrenchment organization. There are obviously different
problems, strains and stresses and advantages to each.
But most UK public or private sectors are in the mature
or declining areas.

I don't favour a quantitative or statistical approach, I
tend to be on the 'humanist' side. On the other hand, I
would not go in and look at just one area of the
organization— just the people and not the financial
status or technology or environmental concerns. I favour
a holistic approach. Something which I have always found
useful for the past 12 years is the Tavistock model—
viewing the organization as a socio-technical system.

Q: What happens after you obtain the current picture?

A: I do a fair bit of thinking behind the scenes, on my
own, and then take it back to the key client(s).

Q: What are you looking for?

A: It depends on the sector. Say the police, I know that
there would be certain tensions there which will be linked to the diversity of the expectations of the police role—there is a marked discrepancy between what is defined as the main role and what is actually happening. In that case I'm making a short cut, but it's easy to close down, and I have to be careful to keep options open.

In something like the hospital sector, NHS for instance, you have quite different stresses and pressures, you have the political pressures and the financial pressures, they are usually spearheaded by the medics who are absorbing all the resources.

Working with Exploration, they have 10 good years to go while the resources are still there in the Western world. There are other parts of the world, like the Far East, Russia and Africa, where there are plenty of resources but we'll never get our hands on it. So we are being pushed out of the geographical areas. I know that mature businesses on the decline have different harvesting and managing needs.

It's this kind of thing I have in mind when I look at the data. But of course, it is never expressed to the client like this—it sounds too pat. People have been at their jobs all these years, putting a lot of energy into their work. They feel belittled, if it is put forward like this. Shouldn't they have known it?
Q: What can you do then?

A: Try and share it- slowly. We start a process, and it's quite a long one:

- of feeding back the present and validating it
- the present picture as I objectively see it
  (and I stress 'I')
- let's check out how you see it

This becomes a learning process, they begin to 'shift'- to see how an outsider sees the organization, the 'man from Mars' view. As they begin to get the picture of what they are, they start asking themselves:

- why are we like this
- should we be like this

and it is possible to begin moving the impetus from the past and present to the future. In discussing the future, in using the future model, it is important that they have control over deciding what they want to include.

Q: Is there agreement?

A: That is the difficult bit. This is why final decisions have to be made by the persons involved, not me. No matter how much I want to run that organization in a certain manner, that's where the consultant has to be ethical and back off. If I don't agree I can only still try and present the different views, making sure that the
value system to each option is explicit and matching.

What happens next depends on the organization. You fight out the value bit, or don't as the case might be.

Q: Can we discuss a specific instance?

A: OK. I'm not an expert on Shell culture—some employees have been there 20-30 years. But I think that Shell is an organization that denies conflict—yet it is highly, ruthlessly, political. In the Engineering sector, there were two persons who could not have disagreed more as to how you could get the rig started. They would pretend, each with the other, that they got on superbly, they won't bring this out in the open—this was a major management dysfunction because these were two senior managers.

Part of the consultant's role is to defuse such situations. I thought so, but my colleagues thought differently. I thought that the thing to do was to go to my colleague, and tell them I have a problem, give him the evidence, try a little role play, and to work out between us a strategy which could be sensitively presented and used with these senior managers. I only got as far as the explanation— he never spoke to me again, I don't know why, he never spoke to me again. I think giving him a potentially political situation, where we can play an important role, was too big for him to
handle. Here were these powerful guys, we were mere consultants. If that was how I am expected to behave, then I should have been given a clear strategy of how not to consult, to creep around quietly with no impact.

Impotence and denial are two adjectives I apply— they (my colleagues) were terrified of power, conflict and power were evaded and denied. The situation never moved on. I could see the different standpoints of the engineers, what I didn't like was the way the situation was prevented from being resolved.

One of them, the Director of Engineering eventually transferred, to take over the Nigerian operation. He had suspected that something was wrong. He said that I was the first person who's let this out of the bag, he also asked why didn't I do something? He also said that he could see that Howard was not getting on with me and that despite everything he thought highly of me. Howard had been going behind my back asking my clients what they thought of me, and inferring that the other clients did not think highly of me, that "Anna" did not spark off with the other clients.

If you don't have mutual support in a consultancy group, it's absolutely scappered— it becomes a vulnerable position for the group to be in and certainly for the individual. It's not easy for an internal to work to his/her values.
Q: Is this why you're going freelance? You want to do things your way?

A: What I've been telling you is how I've been doing it according to other people's methods and expectations, my superiors'. It might be useful if I answer your questions in the way that I feel is the right way, as an independent consultant.

Carreras Rothmans- that was one of the companies I chose as a declining company in my work with Andrew Pettigrew. The market was declining, the products were declining, but I found that this was denied by quite a number of senior managers. It was still a mature organization they argued, with years to go, and new markets to face, and new products. They were out of phase with the environment. It was a denial of the change in attitude towards smoking. There were a lot of incongruities. That was the company where I had the most diverse responses to my questions- I had tended to use the same set of questions in interviewing across the same company- responses were almost contradictory. So the picture I had was one of considerable internal stress in the organization, with individuals' different functions having wildly different objectives to the company, and very little understanding between individuals. This was because of a mismatch- they saw their present situation as entirely different to what it actually was, and therefore in terms of what their future will be, that
projection was way off.

It gave me a different picture from what I got at other companies. At other companies, such as ICI, I was getting a consistent picture. This inconsistency at Rothmans was a marked feature. That meant that as a consultant I had to work with it – the temptation is to look at the key clients and then decide which part of the inconsistent picture he is working from, and then give him only what he can understand, but that misses out quite a lot.

Q: Did you help them reach a consensus?

A: It was almost impossible to do that. One of the reasons, something I talked over a lot with Andrew Pettigrew, the conclusion that we jointly reached was that there were some clients who were so confused and diverse that the timing is wrong for any intervention to really have any impact. The best you can do is to drop seeds. The company was so diverse that it couldn’t get itself together – it was biggish, but also it had a political external management in South Africa – five owners – five brothers. And that meant however coordinated the UK bit was, it was still going to have an incompatability with the directorate – the brothers in S. Africa who were absolutely ruthless and who were going to sell the company down the river as soon as their interests in the gold mines of S. Africa overtook their interests in a now
dying company.

Another example, the Health Service—working at both district and regional level to provide a strategic group view of either the district or regional health authority with a particular emphasis on general management implementations.

There are very high technical skills in the Health Service and a very high level of political activity spearheaded by the medical staff who are looking after themselves. Very little in the way of managerial skills and that includes at the political end of the governing body. It was acknowledged that the intervention would be a slow one because although you have bright people there, everything was clouded by the political situation—the status quo was very firmly held by the medical function. They can pick up and implement the managerial skills which one can develop quickly, for example the nursing sector was very quickly able to take on management skills because on day-to-day and operational terms, the nurses have been doing that for years.

The political factor was the main factor you couldn't control. That depended very much on the personalities involved. Some would wish to see change and would therefore encourage it or at least not stop it. If you had a couple of very strong medics, there was nothing in the world you could do but wait until they dropped dead.
It's a very autocratic profession, it's the most paternalistic is the medical profession. It depends very much on some main personalities. It would almost mean a brain transplant—some were so close minded. A consultant can only be quite shrewd and back out gently at certain times. It is always possible to be invited back, later, even a couple of year later, and then consolidate the process. Time and timing are important features.

Q: If you've identified some problem areas, what next?

A: If I've identified some problem areas that the client hasn't acknowledged, then I would want to check them out with him. If there is a resistance to acknowledging the problem areas, you can only give them the information, then give them again the information, if there is still a denial, then it's the wrong timing.

For example, the police force. There is a great deal of pride and ego in the police world and there is a great deal of reluctance to see some of the most awful errors—a lot of rationalising and excusing goes on. There is no way that most police officers are ready to acknowledge that as quite a serious problem area—negativised by a lot of other things such as political pressure. You can say it until you are blue in the face.

I can take the problem area they accept and work on that. However I will still take that closed area with me,
hoping that an opportunity would come up with one or two people ready to take it on. Depending on their status in the organization, they may be able to keep that ball rolling.

To have a confrontation at that sort of closed mind level is highly stressing. I know a lot of consultants will only go with what clients say, and forget that they have seen other areas. I do take it with me, but I believe that human beings have times when they are not ready. People won't hear what they don't want to hear.

The people in Shell were denying a lot of things, for example conflict. They will not hear, you can remind them... I said this last week, you said that, we didn't hear you say that, we didn't even notice it happened. People will keep on denying. It's part of the psychology.

Q: If some agreement is reached over what the problem area is, what happens next?

A: Depending on who my client is, preferably my client will be at the top of the hierarchy, given that we work in hierarchies. Because the client is there, the power will be there hopefully.

In the Health Service, the people who have the tasks don't often have the power. There's a formal and
informal top. In a public sector there is always an administrative head and a political head, and you've got to work with the two.

As you get to know your formal client, if that's the person you build up trust with, you can then discuss and be supportive to that person in relation to his role. You can't always do it. It depends on the trust that person's prepared to give to you.

If you find the top person is just a titular head, you have to be careful because the person who has the real power is going to do the pushing around. So you've got to somehow be working with that person as well.

Q: How do you know that person?

A: Everybody gives you that information as far as interviewing goes. It will come out fairly early on, people lower down the organization will give it in a tentative way, but people at the top will say of course it's..., they would be very honest about it, providing you've laid the ground with everyone you've spoken to, that nothing they say would be used, that you would check with them before information is publicly passed on.

Q: How do you work out ways to improve the problem situation?
A: By working with the top person or persons. The person who is your client, you have to work with him, the contract is with the client.

The client may have a number of shadows, a number of people with whom it is important to build a relationship with. It is with these shadows that the client may want to at least discuss ideas with first. I will build up a relationship of trust with that client, and with the shadows, a relationship which allows me to help them test out a lot of their ideas, of what is really happening, their hunches of what will happen.

I will also ask them, who else I can talk to— who do they feel confident about? Is there anyone else that they want to involve? Do you work as a group, and this depends on their preferred style. Some prefer that you talk to people and you bring information back, using some discretion. Some will want to bring in, as my Shell clients did, a group of the people they trusted, and they will build up their own power base, no, that is too ruthless a word, a problem solving unit, a support group. Quite a lot of communication will go on, quite a lot of team building with you as consultant asking them how they would want to use you because you know how your main client will want to work with you, but when he or she gets a group that's something I keep on re-checking. But the client is the person I will go back to first and clear everything with.
Q: What would they be working on?

A: The intangibles, who they can trust, who they can't, what their main problems are because the matter of prioritising is very difficult, particularly bearing in mind most of the people in the organization aren't dealing with the strategic, they are still pottering about among the operational stuff. Because they haven't got the awareness, and the skills and the perspective to do it from the top down approach and delegate everything downwards.

Some of the aspects I would like to be working on, with their permission, is to build up their techniques and their skills up to that strategic level in quite a conscious way:

- defining what the operational is
- defining how that operational level needs managing
- defining how the manager needs strategic planning into the future.

These very simple terms are usually not in existence. They are so simple that once people have been able to play about with the ideas, they've suddenly got a lot of new skills, skills they had inside, but can now tap consciously, helping them focus on different levels. They can begin to shift out the staff they have working with them, in particular the top ones who have complementary
skills, who can run that bit, how they can deal with a
certain area of the organization that needs changing,
either expanding, running down or re-vamping—other areas needing maintaining begins to separate.

Learning and unlearning are concepts I have at the back of my mind. I assume that when a client asks me in, he may want to learn something. Alternatively he may want the consultant to do it for them.

Do they want me to do the job for them? Give them a recommended prescriptive report or set of plans they would look at—human, processual, technical, business or environmental? The whole gamut is open—concentrating on one or more or all of the issues. So I will test out what sort of consultancy they want.

I will probably say to them that my preferred style is a client-centred one—give them some examples of my work. I want to transfer skills to them, so that when I leave they can carry on by themselves.

Q: What skills do you want to transfer?

A: Some of the processual things are very misunderstood. Process to one group was the production process. It also means being able to work out meanings given by individuals, differences between behaviour and articulated intention. The educational process closes us
down to acknowledging other people's meanings and sometimes our own. We are no longer honest enough to acknowledge what we see and hear— I use the context of the office or buildings to pick up a lot. I would like to share that— not impose that but ask, do you want some comments on what's happening?

For example, in Carreras Rothmans, if you sat in an office, not a phone rang, not a person moved, all the indications of decline, they've been pushed out, the world was going on here and they were there.

Or you'll get an office where you're taking to the MD and he's continuously interrupted by the phone, by secretaries, by people wandering in, on operational minutiae, you can say, "Haven't you got anyone that can deal with that level? Couldn't they decide what amount of stationary to order?"

Reflecting back to people what their styles are, if they want that.

If they want a quantitative prescriptive report, I will then decide, probably by saying to them that this isn't normally my preferred style, you may be better off using so and so.

In Coopers that was easier, you could say a colleague of mine would suit your needs better, or I think you want an
accountant, and that he would do the job better.

Or if I am curious about the organization, something's interested me, or if it is important for me to have a foot through the door, I would then do it in the prescriptive way, hoping that once the information has been collected and I'm back with my report, we could go into more depth. I work on the values they have and reflect them back. I will also reflect back where I differ. I will make a distinction, look, this is mine and it's based on... this is what I gather your financial director's values are, or personnel is this. Is there a clash? Or is there a complementary understanding that you have with each other? I find that actually intrigues people. If I had a client who at that stage said, "I don't want to know the reasons why, how you get the assessment", then I would say, "Look I don't think I'm the sort of consultant you want." I've never found that to happen but I'll be quite prepared to do it.

Q: Can you tell me about the time-scheduling on projects?

A: Actual time- how long is a piece of string?

In Shell, I was working, not my colleagues, on chunks of time- that's how Engineering preferred it, and that's my preferred way too. So that if I'm contracting with a long term client, one with whom I can build a relationship with, as in Shell, I will hopefully succeed with having 3 month stretches. That's what I can deal with
comfortably, and I will negotiate for that.

As an external consultant with new clients, I will go for shorter spans, something like six weeks, and then review, and a possible re-contracting, is what I aim for.

Q: You’ve told me about the start-up of projects— the identification of problems, the discussion of different ways to tackle them. Can you tell me about implementation?

A: Because of my preference that there should be a learning process, and this should be something wanted by the client— I will discuss that aspect at intervals. I have to ensure that the intervention, the teaching process is at their pace, and matches their needs, that I'm not wasting their time, that it's stuff they already know or don't wish to know.

By the time I get to the implementation stage which I hope to have a time scale for. I certainly had tight time scales which were not inflexible, but it's something I have to work with... so that we know where we were, what our goals are, we could re-work them backwards and forwards, according to how things were going, taking into account that things do come up unexpectedly.

By the time implementation comes up, I would hope to have imparted enough to the client to give him greater
ownership, much more ownership than at the beginning. In a sense my ownership. By that I mean, because of the certain things that I brought in with me—models, theories, knowledge of what is happening in other companies, it's easy for the client to feel that I have ownership of the problem(s)—that's not the case.

So I know that at the beginning of a project, I have greater control. This I should not lose, but throughout the project should instead aim to gradually pass it over.

Actually as you get to the implementation stage, the clients get more interesting, because they are starting to argue with you. They are starting to be more pro-active, calling you into the office because they had an idea, or they've seen something work in the way you've been describing to them. They are much more exciting and stimulating people, there's more of their own energy and power there.

Q: Can you describe what happens during implementation?

A: It depends on their style, it's at that point that sometimes the difference strikes them—how I would do it and how they decide to do it may be completely different.

As an illustration, I was involved in the implementation stage of a health sector intervention in a big London Health Region. A very lively new General Manager who
was honest and secure enough to say that he had major qualms as to whether he could fill the role this way, it was too big a task for him. He didn't know the stuff, he moved from a district to a region, which is a big jump, and he had moved from a different area.

By the end of a period of three months, during which there were quite a lot of staff meetings of different sizes. Some of them including all his managerial staff which were 80 odd people, where he discussed what he would like to do, and asked other consultants and me to similarly input ideas.

By the end of this time, he had got so much confidence he was taking up a lot of the recommendations I was giving him. One of them was there should be a communications person or body or unit of some kind, because it was the weakest area of the Health Authority. Nobody knew what anybody was doing and therefore nobody knew what the General Manager was doing or expecting. He actually decided in quite a coherent strategy to head hunt for somebody quite senior as a communications person.

That kind of thing was quite stimulating to see. The man had said, 'I don't think I can do the job, I'm only giving it a try', but within 3-6 months, he had become confident. He had become very credible with his senior staff. He was being heard, he was beginning to implement
changes, not radical, but clear changes with a clear strategy.

You can't believe when people begin implementation. You can't distinguish between their ideas and what you suggested to them, because they have taken on-board such a number of things. The learning process has been successful.

Q: What attributes should be left with the client?

A: A feeling of greater confidence, greater self awareness, greater powerfulness— the ability to have impact and constructive impact, to change, to maintain, to have the ability to have flexibility amidst change.

Q: How do you improve flexibility?

A: Some you can't, you have to work around the inflexibility in a lot of people. You give them good complementary support— support staff— multi-disciplinary project team approach— using the strength and interest of that inflexible, but crucial person, and getting the flexibility from the outside. That's an ideal because the flexibility is not always accepted. Increasing the confidence of people, enabling them to try out with you, to rehearse what they would like to say... you are almost role-paying. That is important. When people aren't confident, then they are at their most inflexible and
most fearful. Confidence in themselves. One of the things I did not like about my Shell colleagues' style was that they were aiming not to increase the confidence or skills level of their clients, they always wanted to be depended on by them.

Q: Isn't skill transference one of the aims?

A: Not at all, that's not the general consultancy style. In the large consultancies, such as Coopers, they don't have that as their aim. They tend to be prescriptive, they will go off and do their work and come back with the results— that's their way— you can accept it or not. It's as if they approach consultancy like accountants. "Paul" (Price-Waterhouse) is very authoritarian in his style— he's a good match to general consultancy, he will give a very clear prescriptive report.

I have a preferred style and I'm best at that— talking from a client-centred approach that I would distinguish from a prescriptive approach. The latter is consultant-centred, 'you-have-the-knowledge' approach which is expected by a lot of clients.

A lot of what Coopers give is excellent prescriptive advice which is used to a greater or lesser extent quite well by clients. I'm not downgrading that sort of approach— providing it is ethically conducted— and I have to say that the contracting is very good in Coopers.
But that is not my favoured approach— I did it then, while I was with Coopers. I felt that there were aspects which were being missed. We could work longer and deeper with clients— but that was not encouraged and that was not always what the clients wanted. Raising the confidence of the client was not one of the aims at Coopers, or increasing the learning of the individual or the organization, and the de-learning and the flexibility.

Q: How much importance do you attach to evaluation?

A: Such a subjective thing that!! My honest answer is there is very little evaluation done by me or by anyone concerned.

Evaluation as you go along— monitoring as the intervention goes through, checking out with the client the direction as you progress through a project— yes. But when you come to the finish of a project, there’s no evaluation after that by the clients, by consultants, by any objective observer.

Talking from experience, there is always such a rush to get onto something else, that my honest answer is there is very little of it going on. There should be more, but that’s a vacuous statement. But by whom, is it by the client, the recipients, some objective bodies, for example the business schools, or maybe by the
consultants? Can the consultant be objective? Should consultants take the time, which will cost money. The question arises where does that come from?

I did try in my phasing of a project to set points with the client—4 weeks time hence, 3 months time hence—when we would monitor, evaluate, review—but that was more to keep in tune with how I was feeling things were going. It was to mark points where it was possible to exchange the consultant's views and the clients views, rather than the general philosophical questions of how useful this is, does it work, is it successful, can it be done better another way? This is a sticky area, it is a very difficult one.

By talking to other consultants, some form of evaluation takes place through the sharing of experiences. In a way when something goes wrong, it is easier to recognize that than when something goes right. Quite soon you find out if you've made a mistake, other consultants are always making comments, and negative feedback is quick when clients are unhappy or when things aren't working, or when people are feeling woolly or uncertain where the intervention has got them. It's more difficult to accept success— it's difficult to believe, and there's no such thing as being sure for a consultant.

For example you get very different reactions coming back from the same overall group: some will be saying, 'I want
you to push me further', others say, 'I'm asleep with this.' You are dealing with them in the same way, using the same approach, the same data. You can't work at everybody's optimum pace or optimum depth, you can't deal with everybody's optimum depth at the same time. You have to focus at an almost mythical point - it's usually your key clients, you keep on checking it out with them - the pace, the focus.

You are always having to ask for feedback, you are always having to put in, instead of getting answers to your questions you have to try and get at the answers by asking more questions. It's not objective, you have gut feelings, this feels right, this feels wrong.

Q: How often are the problems you encounter human problems?

A: 99% of the time. Even if I haven't specialized in OD.

For example computerization: it's not a difficult technical innovation but because of all the human misunderstandings and ambiguities, it's made it an absolute nightmare in every company and business.

Communications - the leader knows first of all what he or she wants, but imparting that knowledge is a different thing. So that people have a mission, so that they know the direction or the task, that's the difficult part.
Q: Can you tell me about the cause of conflict.

A: Manifestation can be very different from the cause. The answer is a bit abstruse. I tend to see two things. Firstly what is linked to my preferred style, and secondly what might be a cultural thing, a UK cultural thing or an English thing— I'm not English.

There is a difference of approach in the first place. You can say, I will do it differently, I see it differently, perhaps you see it differently for the very good reason that your technical discipline has enabled you to see it differently. Viewed that way, the merging of the different perspectives could be very useful.

Where you have a culture, the English culture, where there is always a pretence, that everybody sees things the same way, that what they see is the mythical middle line/ middle view, then there's a denial that there is any conflict.

Q: What is OD's role in this?

A: I have a naive view of this. My view of how OD can help is that if one reflects sensitively back the differences, and also try to get a valuing of the differences, you should be able to broaden the general view in which conflict is held so that it can be constructively used.
I like different points of view and different cultures, but then I'm not English, the English don't like that, the English like people to be the same.

Q: Is conflict always as positive as that?

A: An OD person can help with unintentional conflict— for example improving communication, clearing up misunderstandings, blockages and such like.

My way of dealing with intentional conflict, if I had no restraining colleagues, it may be a woman's way and a non-English way, would be to talk confidentially to each of the actors, two in this case. There is a lot of range for discussion behind them and the comments I had were honest and not without anguish. I would talk to each confidentially and ask each how do you want to handle it, I would also have said that I was talking to the other. It is not an easy thing to do, and there is a right time and a wrong one.

Talk to both of them, try to work through each perspective. I would do a bit of separate development there, because the last thing I want, would be that this conflict become personalized. The minute people turn away from each other it becomes conflict at an organizational level. In this example, there was so much wariness, the whole of the function was involved in this. I've found that people will usually work towards a more
constructive situation.

You do have some pretty negative people around, perhaps I'm naive in that I don't realize how much pleasure people such as the more ruthless in Shell get out of destructive fighting.

I can't believe people enjoy that. However, there is a lot of lying and deceit going on behind backs, and maybe I might have to come to the more mature conclusion that some people revel in that.

Q: What can OD consultants do then?

A: I think if I feel there's nothing that I can do, then that approach will preempt a lot of my work, my beliefs and the work of OD consultants. But then some so-called OD consultants I've worked with were happy to acknowledge that it was like that and to behave like that, so I can't conclude for them.

Q: What about unrecognized conflict?

A: If it's a senior-junior thing, than it depends again in your key client. This is the stuff of OD, or I thought it was the stuff that I assumed OD was like. My experience in Shell has somewhat undermined my confidence in that view, and now post-Shell maybe I have some thinking to do over the nature of my work. Things like
different values, different assumptions, different meanings, different disciplines and backgrounds were all the areas I liked working in, but I got hammered by my colleagues—those were not things that one saw—you pretended that they were not there and you pretended that you were cloned. It has been quite a traumatic experience—a form of professional abuse to me, I couldn't believe I would meet colleagues like that.

For me I hope things would be different, the fact that I'm working on, it is positive in its way. However that group in Shell is still there working like that.

Q: Have you tackled conflict situations in the course of your OD work?

A: I think you do that everyday as an OD consultant, it's not a thing that you come across rarely. Conflict used in its most constructive sense, people seeing things differently. I think that it's a potentially very constructive area to work in. What the OD consultant can do is to value the differences and build up a pooling of resources of the differences as opposed to a viewpoint that one of the differences is right and the other wrong—which I couldn't go with. Differences between male and female, between finance and personnel—if you put them together constructively the potential is incredible where $1 + 1 > 2$
Q: Have you been in situations where no agreement is possible?

A: I don't think you necessarily have to agree. I think that is almost simplistic. As long as you can acknowledge that the other person's view is different and deserves respect. That goes a long way. I would fight for anybody's right to put forward their opinion - I would then fight for my right to give them the data and so on to change. But I would be damned, I would, to have them quietened, or to have them pretend, that they agree with my viewpoint.

Q: You mentioned senior-junior conflict? What do you mean, and what do you do?

A: That happens a lot in organizational work, that's one of the manifestations of disease. As soon as you go into an organization, and see the group that I call the 'Cinderella' group - the low status groups like the nurses. Those you can only work on slowly, because if your personal views get too much portrayed, you will build up very quick resistance.

Some of the groups I worked with in Shell, such as groups in the Personnel Department. Sometimes as a consultant, you can get them to air these views, their feelings that they've been badly treated. You can at least get them again to articulate feelings which they
have had, feelings which they've stopped airing because no-one is listening to them. You can at least empower them again in that sense, by just making clear that you feel their argument is reasonable given the context, empower them to make their own efforts again. To give them a certain amount of heart.

You can also help in more tangible ways. Communication links... or if they empower you... do at least a bit of message taking, but only a bit because you don't want to be their intermediary. But to at least test out things, and to take back to them what management said. More often than not it's a misunderstanding, because time has gone by, and with changes of personnel, the situation is now more amenable to change.

You have to be ethical, you have sometimes to work with people whose views you don't follow, but you have to give them the equal amount of weight.

Q: What in your mind contributes to the success of an OD intervention?

A: Quite a clear definition from the outset of what your aims are, otherwise you can't know if you've got to them.

Quite a lot of integrity and professional ethics. I think you are dealing with a vulnerable area, handling a lot of trust and confidences of people as well as the
system that people set out.

You've also got to have high technical expertise, higher technical expertise than your clients, otherwise the clients can be doing it better. I'm talking from an organizational theory side— I can't see that I could have done a good consulting job, before I had done Tavistock training and an MBA. I've had a lot of work experience, but you get locked inside the tautology (sic) of your own experience. So I don't think 8 years back, I would have done a good job, or had an impact— the questioning of myself, the ability to question it with my client, how good do you think the impact is, how do you want to change it.

Q: What do you have to watch out for?

A: Being drawn into a collusive relationship with the client, which may or may not be based on fear of them— some of the higher clients can be quite overawing (sic).

It's more important to beware of that if you're internal, from my experience, because you are also built into the promotion and hierarchy structures. It's easier from the outside.

One has to be aware of unethical practices— like not giving straight answers to straight questions, like how much it costs or what resources you are using.
Certainly many projects will be defined within a certain area. But as part of the analytical process, one should be defining the environment as well—so you can't ignore things which may seem outside your brief. Situations are too complex, if you do you won't be thorough. Part of the task as I see it, is to ensure that the client becomes aware of this... but that may be the MBA speaking out, and I won't necessarily vouch that sentiment for other OD consultants. In practice, often you have to prioritise non-brief items lower, but they are not to be ignored.

Q: What in your experience has caused failure?

A: Basic causes are not perceiving who the client is, or what the real business is. You may see that later, in retrospect, and think that I've been working to the wrong brief really, or to the wrong client. I'm not sure whether that's failure, just human error, you can't see it at the beginning, but then you must have the honesty and courage to say later on that you are now going to change tract— that is very important.

Q: Isn't that part of the monitoring process?

A: It can and should be, but you can miss easily these things, for example who is your client? Because that's when you become involved in the politics. In one project, there was a formal client, but there was also a very strong subsidiary client who was going to be there longer
because the other one was being promoted, and I should have taken more notice of that person earlier on, but all I had found out were the weaknesses of my colleagues—that I wasn't going to get any kind of support there.

It is very easy to forget to ask yourself the basic questions: who is/are the client(s)? Who/what is/are the target? The people I was working with in Shell were not asking themselves that at all. You can sometimes ask the questions, go through a check list, and then forget or won't at the right time ask yourself the same questions again. You've got to keep on re-asking the questions because the situation is changing all the time. It's continual change and ambiguity—that management of ambiguity is something you've got to do as a consultant.

The worst time is when you go into an organization—the ambiguity is very high: you don't know the organization, the personalities and the intricacies. It's constant ambiguity that you are handling—even when you've found out a lot about the organization, things are in a constant state of change.

You have to make some mistakes. You have to make some errors. You have to check out something with the wrong person sometimes. Which is why you need very good back up systems—you need contacts to give you objective advise, who know the sector you are working in, who know you.
Question: What does the term 'organization development' mean to you?

Mike: I tend to look at the word development as the operative word, and organization development is only one part of development. If you take an eagle's eye view of any organization, there are a whole lot of processes which go on within the organization, and development is about improving the performance of the whole organization, both through the performance of the individuals within it, and through the framework within which they are operating. So there's an overall process, which you can argue starts with the recruitment of the individual in the organization, new starters. At whatever they may start—new graduates or new process operators or general workers. They start in the organization, they work within it for a period of the time, and then eventually they will leave because they will retire, or because they are no longer able to work for health reasons, or because they decide to work somewhere else.

Overall it is about organizational structure, about selecting the right people, about following through their careers, about the culture, certainly something to do with training and development, certainly something to do with the whole purpose of the organization.

Q: Can you tell me about your job?
M: It's easier to talk about me. I started as a mechanical engineer. Started as very much of a specialist, working on stress analysis, and through my career at ICI, I worked through a number of different jobs which if you look at them, have moved me progressively away from a technical role, and increasingly towards a behavioural role. And if there's a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is technical and 10 is behavioural, my job is about 8 on that scale.

The job I'm doing evolved primarily because of the growing interest that I have personally in the behavioural aspects of organizational change. When my predecessor retired, they had the opportunity of combining the job that he was doing, which was by its nature to work very closely with the senior management team, with the developmental aspects of the job which I now bring to it, and the job continues to evolve.

I have many interests. The two principal ones at the moment are to do with working practices, and the move towards the year 2000, and a full range of changes which are associated with changes in working practices, and they start with some organizational concepts (See line 3508)

Historically ICI has been organized on two mirror image organizations. One at an operational level has been to do with running a chemical plant, and the other half has
been to do with the maintenance of these plants. We had senior engineers, senior operating people, at the very senior level, who were responsible for a similar geographical area but had with different duties within that area. If we are going to move to a new way of getting work done, we need to believe that organizationally there need to be some changes at the senior level. The sooner you say something like that, the way you select people, the way that you train them, the criteria for appointing becomes different. That's important. At a more junior level, the traditional role of the supervisor has to become more different. At junior levels, the historic association of workers with individual unions and different ranges of tasks, that needs to change.

Q: What changes do you mean? Change what?

M: There is a need for a first line manager who might have a job that is different from the job that a manager and a supervisor separately identifies with at the moment. We see a need for someone who is a leader of a team, and with the team he is accountable for all aspects of the day-to-day operation of a chemical plant. He is clearly accountable for the whole of the operation. Historically he would not have been. He would have been responsible for keeping the plant operating reliably. He would be responsible for the day-to-day operations but not the maintenance of it.
Within ICI on Teeside, a plant manager would be accountable to two different senior managers. One would be to the business within which that operation exists—that's the commercial side—he would be responsible to the business for satisfying their needs for tonnage, quality, reliability, and secondly he would be responsible to the other senior manager—he would be responsible for safety and other than management matters.

Q: You seem to be suggesting that there is a lot of change going on, or about to take place in ICI. What lies at the centre of all this change? What's causing it?

M: There is no doubt that the environment has a very, very strong influence. It's also a very complex influence because on the one hand, there's the new Industrial Relations Legislation which has had its effect right across the country. There is also a strong factor in the high levels of unemployment, particularly in Teeside. The fact that ICI is seen as a good employer is very, very important.

The number of people we employ these days is much less that it used to be. Within this factory we employ something less than 5,000 people, whereas back in the 1940s, it was 20,000. The number of people here will continue to fall. I believe that our employees here have a much better idea of the business than ever they had before. They understand the economic reality, the
possibility of going out of business if we can't compete. Our fertilizer business, after many years of contributing very large profits to the company, is facing some particularly difficult problems at the moment along with the other companies producing fertilizers. It's just become a very tough place to be at the moment. All employees working in fertilizers at the moment are very aware of the problems of their companies right now.

We've put a lot of energy into telling them about the business. We've been running a lot of business courses. It is in fact a feature of the developmental work we've been doing on Teeside. We spent a lot of time with employees at a junior level telling them about our business, telling them also about how our business works—what is the meaning of profit. So now we feel much more comfortable about telling them about the impact of raw materials or the impact of higher labour costs or how we compare with our other competitors.

Q: I've read that ICI employees have an expectation of a job for life. Pettigrew has referred to this as an unwritten contract. Does this hold much truth now?

M: I don't think that's as true as it used to be. There was a time when a job with ICI was a job for life, and it was an unwritten thing. I believe it was a belief rather than an unwritten contract. There are still many people who have worked their whole lives with ICI, I have.
Increasingly we are telling people not to expect a career for life, and a number of things have been happening to underline that. Last year on this site we lost over 20% of our employees.

Q: How has this affected morale? Is there much evidence of it being lower?

M: I don't believe so. There's no evidence of low morale. There has been some discussion in some joint consultation meetings. Some of the employee representatives are talking about low morale, but I believe that to some extent low morale would be represented by a lot of people leaving the company to take jobs in other areas, entirely on a self motivated basis. It would also be reflected in a very high level of sick absences, a high level of industrial dispute. We haven't seen any of that.

We have reduced our numbers quite substantially, and the way that has happened is by a variety of techniques where we can offer voluntary settlements. We offer very good terms for people who leave the company. We put a lot of energy into training them to do very different kinds of work. We use secondments a lot, we actively encourage people to try their hands at a variety of jobs both within ICI and outside. We've done all those things in order to encourage people to move around. We believe in developing people to a higher level of skill.
Q: This is a belief which stems from economic necessity?

M: It's also more than that. It's also a cultural change, and I said earlier on that I had two principal interests, working practices is one, the other one is individual development, particularly in a course which I ran with Dennis Bumstead—we jointly ran Life Business Workshops (LBW).

The underlying concept behind the LBW is individual development: everyone has talents and skills beyond those which they are currently using. They all have energy which they are probably under-using. It is worth while their spending some time, in terms of one LBW, it is a total of 4 days, to reappraise their careers. Not just their careers, but their whole lives, their hobbies, their job within ICI and other voluntary work they are currently doing, and to try to put that within the context of what is their real purpose in life.

Q: What are you trying to put into motion with the LBW?

M: The LBW is, I believe, the starting point for a series of interventions which include things like personal development workshops, career investigation courses which all our employees can take part in. So we have workers who will take part in a personal development workshop, and that is an examination of the concepts behind a career. The traditional impression of a career
is that you start at the bottom. You walk up a ladder, and depending on how strong you are and how much of a head you have for heights, the higher up you will go. There are other concepts of a career - you can change jobs side-ways, and build up your experience, and that can be as exciting as climbing upwards. A career can still be upwards, but it might be spiralling through a number of different disciplines. It doesn't always tend to be vertical. It is quite acceptable for some people, depending on their personal circumstances, to actually conceive of a career that takes them into a different field. We don't all have to follow a narrow track which says that because you were brought up an engineer, you have to stay an engineer.

Q: What is the purpose of the LBW?

M: It is something to do with individuals taking charge of their lives. I think a lot of people who come into industry, into big companies imagine that those companies will look after their careers. It's not like that. To some extent there's a bit of company input, but if you work for a big company and you have some ideas of where you want to go, the man who is in charge is yourself.

Q: Is it like career consultation?

M: It's not judgemental. There are some underlying principles about LBWs, in that whatever goes on within
the workshop is confidential. The important features are: first of all, it's voluntary, and secondly, what goes on in there is confidential to the individual, but the most important is that what he gets out of it is a plan which he owns and he takes charge of what happens as a result of it.

Q: Have you experience of other on-going OD interventions?

M: There was a great deal of work done 10 or more years ago which I would describe as brokering— that was the word which was used by the people involved in it. There were large areas of ineffectiveness in the company on this site which were the result of major groups of people not understanding the people who they relate to.

For example, it could be the construction management people and the contractors who were responsible for building new chemical plants. In another case, it was to do with the central engineering resource and the customers responsible for the production plant. The third example was the management and the trade unions. A lot of activity took place in getting groups of people off-site to talk to each other in an open systems way, in order to deal with the cross-group conflict. Mostly by taking significant groups of employees or representatives off-site, spending time in a hotel with consultants as facilitators, talking about issues in a relatively unstructured way, developing understanding.
Some of the facilitators were external, but had spent a lot of time with us over a number of years. We developed a number of internal facilitators, either in the personnel function or in line-management, who were selected because of their individual style, values and acceptability. Interestingly some of them have left to become independent consultants—do you know Dave King?

Q: Not personally. I've heard of him from the OD network. So some of the internally developed resource has left. How much importance do you attach to the development of internal consultants?

M: I think external consultants have a particular difficulty. Because when they come into a large organization like ICI, it takes a long time for them to get to know the organization, to get a feel for the culture, to get to know where the key points of influence are.

An internal consultant is probably aware of all those things but has a disadvantage in that he does not have the particular feature of being an external which is associated with distance, the sense of not having a personal axe to grind, like his own career or his association with management.

So particularly in larger organizations, I think there is an important role which is around the relationship
between an external and internal consultant. I think they work very well together. It is that much better for having both around. If you just have an external, he is likely to be that much more ineffective, simply because of the amount of time it takes for him to get to know the organization well, and if you don't have the external but just the internal working on his own, the internal consultant will be relatively ineffective.

Q: Can you describe the roles which you envisage for internals and externals?

M: The way ICI is going, we are getting an organization which is becoming slimmer and slimmer. The number of levels within the organization is reducing. Individual jobs are getting bigger and bigger. External pressures like safety legislation and environmental legislation are putting more and more specific pressures onto management at all levels to work professionally. I would suggest that the level of professionalism among managers today needs to be in order of magnitude twice that of 20 years ago. That also means that managers have an incredibly full day, but very little of that is spent on thinking and reflecting. Thinking space is important. Yet line managers don't have some sort of stimulus for doing that. They need someone who comes along to say, have you thought of this crazy idea, or what do you think about this, or where are we going to be in the year 2000? They won't generate new thoughts on their own.
I'm constantly looking for time to spend with groups of managers which they can't afford. Managers are resisting very strongly the pressures to spend time on strategic thinking because there is so much time spent on day-to-day thinking.

That is where the internal and external consultants come in. The internal consultant is a change agent, a change agent to spark things off. One of the things the change agent does, is to make connections to spot activities in one place and relate that to other things happening somewhere else. I believe that change is not something which is to do with the day-to-day activity, which is what a catalytic process suggests to me. A catalyst is about promoting change as it happens and making it happen faster. I think a change agent has a role that is much longer term. It's something to do with ensuring that there is some clarity about direction, building up concepts, having a sense of vision, and making sure that what is happening on a day-to-day basis is consistent with that vision. It is also keeping that vision under review, because no matter how good you are at visioning, there is always room for improvement, to add to the vision, and that needs to be added at the appropriate time.

Q: The vision is kept under constant review... it is an on-going process. Where/ how do you fit in? How can you help?
M: It is working through a number of senior managers. If I go back to the overview, the eagle's eye view, I think it is part of my job to get involved to some extent with all the processes which I can see as part of contributing to the excellent performance of this organization. Which is why I mention selection and recruitment, training and development, organizational change, strategy and vision, redeployment, reappraisal systems. The internal systems that support those, like keeping records, working with senior managers and the way in which they respond to the environment- and I don't believe you can leave out any part of that total map- the whole of that picture, needs to be consistent with that same self purpose. The organization as a whole needs to have a purpose, and those two need to fit in together, they need to be pointing in the same direction.

There is a current example. On Teeside we have brought together the operation of three different factories under one management. The three factories were much more autonomous in the past than we are today, and the cultures associated with the three factories are different.

Billingham, this factory, has probably the longest history of OD, has developed a culture in which people have a very high level of importance. We are much more influenced by behaviour, by concepts such as purposefulness, the process of organic change.
The Wilton factory, over on the other side of the Tees, is much more task oriented, has much less of a focus on people, much more of a focus on technology and the business, and I believe has tended to see the people as secondary to that.

The third factory is North Tees, and the culture there is different again. There the organization is much smaller, they tend to be much more traditional, much more directive. It is very much managed from the top and the values that apply are much more the values of the senior manager and his immediate supporters.

The three cultures need to be brought together and that is a problem. The way in which we are doing that is by getting the senior management to spend a lot of time together, and we will in the next few months be spending some time talking about what our organizational purpose is, and what our managers' are. A way in which we can increase the chances of success in this process is by identifying the key stakeholders, identifying where individuals are in terms of their association with the different cultures and values, and through that, I believe we can influence the way forward.

First of all the aim is to get the people to talk to each other. Part of this process is the arriving at a joint statement of purpose, and a joint statement of values. Also in order to improve the chances of success,
you need to encourage those individuals whom you see as having a stronger affiliation with the sense of vision, to assert themselves in discussions.

One can do that in a variety of ways: by talking with individuals, by the way you put together the agenda for the teams, the way you get groups together. That could be deemed devious, but you have to provide opportunities to those people with a different view to things to react, to respond in an unthreatening way and maybe they could improve the end result.

I think that one of my beliefs is that you can never be certain of what might happen when you come into an exercise. You need to be a bit flexible yourself, a bit pragmatic.

Q: You seem to deal with a variety of people. How do you reach potential clients?

M: Your client group is very wide when you've worked in a place for 10 years. Your ability to operate depends very much on your integrity, how you are seen by other people, how you work with them.

I think I'm seen as almost part of the furniture, unthreatening, generally helpful, someone who can be trusted with confidences.
It's not uncommon for me to be approached at a fairly personal level by different people who are involved in the same sort of interaction, so I'll see both sides of the feelings within a particular exchange.

I think people trust me in a number of different ways. I sometimes wonder if I should be more assertive than I am. When I've tested that, people have suggested that by being maybe not as assertive, you can be more influential—by seeding the environment with ideas, without seeming to own the ideas yourself. So maybe the need to be assertive is something more personal than something to do with the role, and maybe the role is better supported by somebody who is not unduly assertive. It's about pushing one's own ideas, and I think that's maybe better served by being less overt.

I've tried asserting myself to clients in terms of soliciting work in two different areas.

One was with respect to the fertilizer business. I explained that the fertilizer business was not doing well, and I approached the senior managers of the fertilizer business and said, I detect some dissatisfaction, can I help? I spent quite a lot of time, working with them in an area which was to do with organizational change, business change, as well as structural change. I find it very difficult to assess the value of the work I did there. There are still some
problems, so I tend not to think that it was an outright success.

The other area where I tended to be a bit more assertive in terms of influencing things, was to sell some creativity techniques. That has been relatively low key, there has not been a lot of it, but what I've done has been quite useful. What I try to do is to take people through a process, not to sell them a package, but to guide them through a technique in order to address a particular problem. I'm helping them with an issue which they own, and generating a higher level of imaginative thinking than they would apply on their own.

Q: You've mentioned that certain businesses are not doing well. Is this a measure of the change in the environment? Do you have a role to play in the management of this change?

M: One of the particular features of the job I have, is that I'm involved in a lot of routine senior management meetings which I attend as secretary and facilitator. In the course of those meetings, various problems will be discussed, and from time to time, one of those problems will be picked out for special attention. Occasionally it may be a technical problem. More often than not, it will be something to do with organizational change, or something of that kind. I will then be involved with sub groups of those senior managers who have been co-opted to
work on those problems.

An example, which is more at the technical end. There's a meeting which my secretary is currently setting up for me which is about engineering auditing. This is a response to an environmental change, partly to do with safety legislation which is putting greater pressure on us to make sure that the integrity in the choice, location and assembly and running of the hardware of chemical plants is of the highest possible level. But it is also a reflection of the business pressure. It makes good business sense to make sure that the plants are reliable, to make sure that the plants are properly designed, and to make sure engineering maintenance is done before you have to do a lot of work. So there is a lot of work at the moment going into engineering auditing. I've been asked to organize that group. To some extent, I will be using my engineering background, but it will also be an opportunity for me to facilitate that process at the other end of the exercise.

Q: You mentioned that this site is undergoing a lot of changes. And that this site has a culture which values people more than for example at Wilton. Is the two related?

M: I find that a difficult question. I've been doing this job specifically for the past 3 years, but for quite a few years I've been involved specifically with change.
What I find is that there is a comparatively small group of people who have been continuously promoting change within Billingham for the last 20 years. It is people who make the change, who drive changes, a small group of people usually in fairly influential positions.

Another point is that change is continuous. Twelve or thirteen years ago, I was involved in some discussion of where we were going in the long term, and at that time we wanted to tackle working practices. But having spent some time discussing that, we decided that we couldn't do that yet. What we had to do first was to address a lot of other issues first. One of them being that a very large number of people wouldn't understand what we definitely need.

So a feature of the people I'm talking about, a small number of people who influence change is that they can think in very long term chunks. They can think 10-15, 20 years ahead, they are visionaries.

Another thing is that change is slow. It is in small steps. It is an evolutionary process, rather than revolutionary. The only time you ever get revolution in an industry is when you have a crisis— for example a plant or factory will have to close down unless certain changes take place. On the whole, change is about changing people's mind. That is slow. Technological change is fast. We've had our share of technological
change in terms of the use of computers and automation, mechanization, the growing sophistication of error analysis, electronics.

Q: Earlier you described to me how you reach potential clients—can you elaborate?

M: Usually through established routine contact. The nature of my job day-to-day, means that I frequently see senior managers throughout this factory, as well as senior managers in other factories in ICI. The contacts arise from closely working with them and knowing what they are doing.

Q: What sort of working relationship do you have with them?

M: On the whole I see them as colleagues. I work closely with them. I have an open comfortable relationship at all times with them.

Q: Is the client clear about what you can offer?

M: I don't think he always is. There's a general sense that I would provide help. He is not always clear about how that help is provided. He might not always be clear about what his preferred outcome is.

Q: Are you clear about what you offer?
M: Because I've worked closely with them over a large number of years previously in other jobs, I have an established relationship with them. They know the sort of thing I've done in the past, even though I've been doing different jobs. The involvement in change goes back a long time.

Q: Is there a formal contract?

M: No.

Q: Is there accountability?

M: Not formally. I suppose in the end, my authority to operate, my continuing work in this sort of role, depends on my ability to deliver. If I don't do a satisfactory job, people will stop asking me for help.

Q: Deliver what?

M: I suppose at the end, a sense of satisfaction with what's been achieved in a joint way.

Q: Is it possible to discuss in a more detailed manner the process by which you conduct a project — from contact with potential clients to delivery.

M: The initial approach may come from a particular senior manager. The next step may often be a meeting with a
group of managers, sometimes including the same senior manager but not always. I will find myself working with a group of fairly senior people on a particular issue or problem, and we will meet until we are satisfied that we have done enough.

The initial meeting is often a clarification of the problem. It may be to decide what the process should be. Very often it will generate some sort of idea of what the desirable outcome might be. Very often once that first meeting has taken place, there will only be intermittent formal contact between me and the clients.

The main hurdle is having to work through a particular group, not always the client. The client may well be managing a group of people, and I will work primarily with that group of people that he manages. Sometimes with the senior manager as well.

Q: How is data gathered?

M: Not often in the form of questionnaires or surveys. I frequently use interviews as a way of collecting data, usually soft data about views, sometimes hard data. Views on how things are at the moment, how people would like them to be in the future, views of feelings, about existing systems and procedures, existing styles, culture. It can vary tremendously depending on what sort of problem you are tackling. Data gathering occurs after
an initial meeting with a client and before a meeting with the management group. Data allows you to know where to start.

To take an example, there was a set of feelings that a particular meeting was not working well. I was asked to make some recommendations for ways in which it may be improved. So the work I needed to do was to talk to the participants of the meeting, in order to collect some views about how they felt the meeting was going, why they felt that way, and what they felt the purpose of the meeting was. I found that there was almost a total lack of any clarity of what the purpose of the meeting was, everyone had different views.

Managers will frequently express a problem when there is none. For example, they will say there's a problem with internal communication. If you ask the question 'why', they will be rather vague, we don't know why, but we've just got a feeling we could do it better. No one actually asks the recipient of the communication how they actually feel about it. There are some people who felt it is quite good.

Q: What can you do to help in the diagnosis?

M: There has to be challenging questions you have to ask initially—two sets of questions.
Firstly, what is the evidence of the problem, and probe to identify where the manager's feelings stem from. Very often the feelings come from one or two messages only. If someone says that morale is low, the manager will just echo the view—so and so said it's low, it must be low, we have a problem. It's often like that in an organization. My role is to ask why, who else says that, why is it bad, what is the evidence?

Secondly, I have to check if I'm addressing the real problem and not a solution because very often what people will propose are solutions. For example, a report came through from a process team that a pump is faulty. The maintenance team strips the pump, reassembles it, tests it and hands it back. This happens three times. Finally maintenance asks the pertinent question, "How do you know the pump is not working?" Answer, "When I press the button, the amp meter doesn't show the current taken by the pump." The problem was with the amp meter, not the pump. If you like, this is an analogy and an example of someone proposing a solution before identifying the problem, and someone else accepting it. You've got to ask the questions, if I had a solution to this problem, what problem will be left behind. You try to backtrack to the root cause of the problems rather than dealing with the symptoms.

Q: How do you know that the information you are working on is accurate?
M: I think it comes back to the matter of trust. Being an internal consultant, you know people very well, and there are some people you know well enough to believe everything they say, and there are some people whom you trust less. When someone you don't trust comes to you with a problem, you can back check it with someone else, or try to seek some verifying data.

Q: Can problem areas be clearly defined?

M: Taking a long term view of the organization, it is less clear what the objectives are. There are some things that are focused on the relatively short term, where precise solutions are possible. There are some things which are softer and longer term. We are not quite clear about where we are going but we have a sense of direction. We get disagreements, we always will. That's why we're working on this purpose statement. If we don't have disagreement we won't have a problem.

The purpose statement will provide a framework, it will provide some sort of guiding principles which will clear some of the undergrowth away, but people will always continue to have differences. There are some fundamentals we will put down. British Airways actually put their act together a lot better when they realized that they were in the business of transporting people and not flying aircrafts.
Q: You mentioned disagreements. What you mean by disagreements?

M: A very good example of that is the debate about working practices. We have two major interventions going on in parallel to each other. One is a quality initiative which is operating in some of our businesses but not all of them. The other one is the initiative on working practices which is going to operate in all of our businesses. The working practice initiative is likely to have a significantly lower cash return than the quality initiative, but the two initiatives are going to make demands on the same resources. So we have the people who take very different positions on the relative importance of those two initiatives in the first place. They will make different value judgements about each of them and in some cases, individuals will be totally opposed to pursuing for example the working practice initiative. The problem is compounded because the underlying purpose behind the working practice initiative is still not clear: are we doing it to reduce our costs, or are we doing it because we have a vision of a more rewarding future for our employees?

Q: Once a problem area has been identified, what happens next?

M: Depends very much on the problem. I don't think that there's a standard procedure, a standard method. I think
that it depends on who that problem comes from, how it is identified, what my own feelings for it are.

I think that any one who is involved with development has a network of contacts, he has a tool box of techniques, he knows of intervention, causes, other strategies, and he needs to choose the right one for the particular situation.

I lead a small meeting which takes place once every couple of months. There are five of us currently who attend that meeting. Those are the five concerned with change. It's an unstructured, informal meeting. We will talk about anything that is currently a problem to us. So that is an opportunity to bounce ideas and problems off others who are involved with this sort of process. I also have a network of people outside ICI and in other companies.

Q: Can you describe the activities which constitute the planning stage of an intervention?

M: We're using a critical path network for some work. We're currently involved in 50-200 tasks. It's all part of the same exercise, it's all got to be integrated, to follow some sort of logical sequence, we can't let some parts run ahead. I suspect we don't use planning as much as we should. On the whole, the rate of progress depends on what is down in people's diaries, and the frequency that
I can get hold of them in order to work things through.

Q: As opposed to the timing or sequencing of activities, what about the actual activities themselves? You said that you had to ask certain questions—challenging questions, I think—in ensuring that you are addressing the problem. What happens after that? How do you generate some relevant ideas?

M: Kick around ideas of organizations and systems... We find that it's easier to represent these with pictures and diagrams. The conventional way of representing organizations is with hierarchical family trees. We've been looking at different ways of representing different aspects of doing work, and we have four different models. There is one model which shows how a particular group of activities relate to other activities within the operation. That's written in such general terms that it would apply to any manufacturing operation within this factory. The other models include "work" which identifies what a person is required to do, the second identifies what he needs to know, that is the skills and knowledge which he requires, and there is "training" which is something to do with how he acquires the necessary skills to do the job that he is expected to do competently, and how he might develop himself or future career opportunities.

We were using the term "generic" model because the
process we are going through is generated from first principles. The principles or concepts are the ones that are captured in the model which is why I refer to them as conceptual because they are expressions of a set of concepts rather than something that you would see expressed on an organizational chart. We use these models in order to think what our objectives are, not for next year, but for some years ahead, as a benchmark for making comparisons with what we have at the moment. These models complement each other, and are used simultaneously.

Q: What do you mean by "written in general terms"? Can you illustrate?

M: For example the manufacturing operations within this factory are very different. Some of the processes are continuous with very small numbers of people, they run for a year or two without interruption. Some are batch processes which operate during the week and shut down for weekends. The model that we've drawn up for the way in which such an organization relates to the support functions applies to each of those plants irrespective of operations. Likewise the training model shows the sort of accumulation of skills which are required. It doesn't specify what pattern of skills is required in each area because they will be different, but it does define a process if you like, a system which ensures that anyone who is working within a particular operation has the
necessary skills to make his contribution effectively.

Q: Can you give me some examples of projects?

M: Projects lean more on the side of human processes, more than on the technical side. Although in the sort of business we're in, the technical side is obviously very important, so is the human side. Because the business exists for the human beings, all its employees, its customers, its shareholders, its community. If an organization like this exists without human beings, then it ceases to have any purpose at all. One of the fundamental purposes of an organization like this is to do with the people and we believe that one should consider people as individuals rather than as conglomerates.

Q: What sort of problems does the human side pose?

M: It's a particular problem of the process industry, that we require a high level of discipline and a high standard of performance in the operations, but it's perhaps easier to understand if you put it in the social model of big major industries.

It's only too easy to de-humanize man, you are using a man as a robot, we wish people to be treated very much as human individuals to contribute to their jobs from their hearts, from their souls. At the same time there are some
areas of their work which we cannot afford to allow any freedom. If you are operating a chemical plant, there are some safety features which cannot be avoided. For example, if a man has the job of discharging a toxic chemical into a road tanker, we cannot allow him to connect that to the plant in such a way that it might come undone. Or we will not allow a system to exist which allows the driver to drive away while the hose is still coupled up. So that's an area where we cannot afford to compromise standards, which means probably we still have to have technical systems that stand between a man and his expression of free will.

I think that individuals have an enormous potential which can only be expressed if they have a degree of freedom. People will only be creative if you give them space to express it. That is the dilemma which we as an organization and as consultants are faced with: on one hand, the necessary rigid rules governing behaviour and on the other, the rights and potential of individuals.

Q: What are your views on conflict?

M: Conflict is a very natural healthy thing. Differences of opinion is itself creative. It needs to be channelled, it needs to be encouraged in some places, it needs to be confronted. It doesn't need to be suppressed: if you suppress conflict then you lose the creative potential which comes out of it. But at the same time I don't
believe we should actually cultivate conflict in some areas. There are some kinds of conflict which are an expression of bad management. Typical industrial relations conflict where you get people going on strike is usually an example of bad management. Misguided information is another typical example.

Then there is conflict you must confront. I think you must confront differences of opinion. There are some situations where you have to come to a consensus or arrive at a decision where you eventually suppress one opinion. That sort of conflict is part of the creative process. Management must be aware of the feelings of a subordinate group. I've been in meetings where the senior manager has said, here's the problem, this is what we're going to do. Now if someone who disagrees with that and doesn't say so, or if you have the kind of management which is coercive to the point of saying this is the way something's got to be done even if you disagree with me, then you have a very unsatisfactory situation. You must at least allow that person to air his views.

You remember I said earlier on, the whole business of performance improvement is to do with making sure that you have everything right in every area. One of the reasons for having a set of values is that when you're appointing people you have to be clear that the people you are appointing to management positions on the whole support the sort of values you have. And it's not a
question of appointing "yes" men, but you've got to have a particular style. One of those values should be about listening to others, allowing other people to express their disagreement even if at the end of the day, we're saying to these people, we hear what you're saying, but we cannot accept it. We are going to do something which you will disagree with. We do value differences, ultimately you've got to generate a creative environment where difference is healthy, but in the end you've got to address it, in the end you've got to make a decision.

You get out of healthy conflict the opportunity to put alongside different ways of addressing problems, different solutions. For example you might have three technical solutions to a particular problem. They might all have certain features which make them good. In order to get at the best we have to look at each in an analytical way and arrive at a consensus about which one is the best. The two individuals whose suggestions have been rejected are not going to feel upset because their suggestion was not accepted because in the end they've contributed to a process which has arrived at a better solution.

Q: What are your views on participation?

M: If there isn't participation, the probability is that I wouldn't get very far. If I were to propose an intervention and organize some sort of training course,
nothing will come of it. In order to make something work, I would have to consult with other people. I will look at the stakeholders in a particular problem or change programme and involve them.

For example, in a plan which will be used to control and monitor a number of activities, I'm involving a group of senior managers in the detailed design of the plan. One of my frequent processes is to produce a plan or draft that people can kick around. Usually the framework of what is produced survives. Some people are closer to a particular problem, some people have a different angle, some have a particular experience. I like to give them the opportunity to influence what is done. Participation is a device for bringing people on board who otherwise will not be involved, and a device for refining.

Q: Can you give me your views on evaluation?

M: One of the difficulties is that at any one time there are probably many different things going on and it's impossible to identify a particular outcome with the intervention.

For example, you might simultaneously be reducing the number of people you employ, introducing new technology, going through a programme of training, working with a consultant on the organizational structure. If your profitability goes up by 10% in that time, what caused
it? It could be the price of oil, the change in Deutsch Mark, or it is Christmas time. I think it is almost impossible to arrive at a hard evaluation. There has to be something positive, whatever's going on has to be seen as contributing to success, but quantifying what that contribution is, is almost impossible.

I think that there has to be an on-going commitment to change, the investment of a small number of salaries in individuals like myself. I want to improve the performance of ICI on Teeside, I want to help generate a better quality of life for individuals. You learn from mistakes, you learn also a lot about yourself.

I'm not sure there's such a thing as OD. There's a box of tools, there's a group of people around who use tools and the end result is a better organization. The people who are using the tools and the tools which exist, some of them are in the management block, some in training, some are to do with psychology, some are to do with work study and management services, some to do with communications. If you put them together and call it OD, then you get an amorphous state to do with performance improvement.

Q: Isn't it something more than performance improvement?

M: If we don't change, someone else will at a faster rate than we will, and if that happens, we go out of business. So in a sense improvement is to do with keeping up with
the others at least, if not being better. It's something to do with competition. If we can't make our products to satisfy our customers both in terms of quality, price, reliability, delivery, then our customers will go somewhere else. If the customers are not satisfied, we go out of business. If we go out of business, 10,000 people will lose their jobs.

We try to improve our flexibility all the time. We've changed our shift patterns in recent years. This is as much to do with a response to the environment as to developing a less rigid organizational pattern. We had a 40 hour week, while some people in this country had a 37 hour week. Our monthly paid staff were on a 37 1/2 hour week. Our weekly paid staff on a 40 hour week. One of our principles is to move towards greater equality in our terms of employment. That was one of the driving forces. Another driving force was that other organizations in this country have a shorter working week. Because of that we had some pressure from the shop floor as well.

The 'working practices' drive is about flexible working. We've looked for different ways of working so that people get a wider range of jobs and acquire different skills... restructuring the organization, that's what the formation of 'Chemicals and Polymer Group' has been. There's almost no area which has not been a subject of change.
Q: Can you sum up for me your views on OD?

M: In a sense I think that OD is one of those things which make people suspicious. If you talk about OD, if you talk about consultants even, there are people who react negatively to those words. On the other hand, we as an organization have been involved very much with change for a long long time and I believe we have been using consultants both internal and external consultants to act as brokers, agents for change and facilitators, and you can argue they are OD consultants.

Between us, we have used a variety of techniques and interventions which depend on our individual skills, and these have ranged from relatively general facilitation skills working within groups of people, to very specific interventions like training packages or events, projects with a specific focus. At the same time we're looking at what other companies are doing. We look at a whole range of external consultants, we've dabbled with them and employed others in a major way.

We've done a lot of work internally as well. I believe this site is probably a national leader in turning around a very large organization in a very traditional industry, and realising some of the potential which comes out of drawing out the talents of particular individuals. We've worked at it for 10-15 years, but I think we have a long way to go yet.
You've got Life Business Workshops, Career Investigation Workshops and Personal Development Workshops, which are all examples of interventions that focus at an individual level, encouraging people to change their concepts about careers, to take charge of their careers, to give them data so that they can make some better judgements.

Another intervention which I would describe as OD was to re-examine our appraisal system, which has been in existence for some time but has tended to be very much a review of the past year's work and has not sufficiently addressed the issue of an individual expressing his or her wishes around the future.

We are also doing some work on re-structuring, with Chris Schumacher. We're using a 'total quality approach', a genuine OD intervention which addresses the context in which people are working, how they work, how they relate to other people, what are their performance standards, what they are expected to achieve. There's a book by Philip Crosby on total quality.

We've also had a major organizational change in the formation of the Chemicals and Polymers Group with an enormous reduction in the numbers of senior managers, a total restructuring of business and functions within what is outwardly a matrix organization.

There are a lot of smaller things which are going on
within senior management groups which are shorter term, which are to do with sorting out our long term objectives, our strategy.

There's the working practices project: our purposes, our values, what are the models for work in the future, what training do we have to put in, in order to support that. What are the communication needs? What are the consultation processes which goes with that? There is a lot of technological change going on which we need to address in a reactive way, but there is also a proactive element in that we are looking at approaches to process design.

We are also looking at selection and recruitment processes, using some competency models which we learnt about from an organization in the States. We're looking at the competency required by an individual in order to do a job excellently. We are looking at different behaviours that distinguish an excellent performer in a job from an average performer. We're using those competencies in selection and appointments and also training.