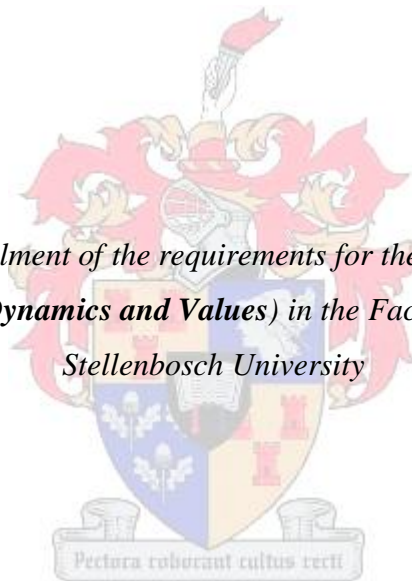# IDENTITY POSITIONING FOR TRUST:

A Narrative Analysis on Consultant Identity Construction

by

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*Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy (**Decision Making, Knowledge Dynamics and Values**) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University*

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted this thesis for obtaining any qualification.

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I

ABSTRACT

This thesis uses narrative analysis to explore the ways by which consultants seek to improve their perceived trustworthiness in initial client-consultant interactions. It is argued that consultants rely on identity-based trust perceptions by the clients and that this basis for trust can be favourably presented, within certain constraints, through narrative positioning. This narrative positioning, in the service of identity construction, is called identity positioning in the thesis.

The thesis is situated in the literature on management consulting aimed at micro-level high-contact client-consultant interactions. These kinds of interactions trade on trust and identity. The various bases for trust are described, namely identity, structural, and dispositional based trust. Amongst these three bases, identity trust is highlighted as the most dominant in the context of client-consultant interactions, especially in initial interactions where the consultant is unknown to the participants. It is to be expected in initial interactions that there will be a lot of scope for identity construction. A framework is then developed to relate identity construction and trust, which can be used as the basis for narrative positioning analysis. The framework consists of two dimensions along which identities can be positioned: social obligations and relational positioning latitude. It is argued that dispositional trust relates to relational positioning latitude, whereas structural bases of trust relates to social obligations. Identity based trust therefore indicates where the consultant fits within the structural or dispositional bases of trust. It is then shown how context moderates which of the trust bases will be dominant, and how this might manifest in the narrative of the consultant. It provides three general contexts, each leading to the emergence of a particular dominant basis for trustworthiness perceptions by the clients. The particular case analysed in this thesis correlates to a specific contexts within the framework. This context is where the consultant is unknown.

The last part of the thesis illustrates the use of the framework and context as it guides the analysis of a particular consultant's personal narrative during an initial interaction with clients. The analysis is then repeated for the consultant's software product narrative. The structures of the two narratives are then compared to show how the consultant also attempted to extend the identity-based trust to his software product.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie tesis maak gebruik van narratiewe analise om die maniere te verken waarop konsultante die persepsies van hul betroubaarheid probeer verbeter in die aanvang fase van kliënt-konsultant interaksies. Daar word aangevoer dat konsultante staatmaak op identiteit-gebaseerde vertroue persepsies deur die kliënte en dat dié basis van vertroue gunstig aangebied kan word, binne sekere beperkings, deur middel van narratiewe posisionering. Hierdie narratiewe plasing, wat in die diens van die konstruksie van identiteit is, word identiteit posisionering genoem in die tesis.

Die tesis is geleë in die literatuur oor bestuurs konsultering met die oogmerk op mikrovlak hoë-kontak kliënt-konsultant interaksies. Hierdie soort interaksies handel in vertroue en identiteit. Die verskillende basisse vir vertroue word beskryf, naamlik identiteit, strukturele, en disposisionele gebaseerde vertroue. Onder hierdie drie basisse, word identiteit gebaseerde vertroue as die mees dominante in die konteks van die kliënt-konsultant interaksies uitgelig, veral in die eerste interaksies waar die konsultant onbekend is aan die deelnemers. Dit is verwag, in die aanvangs fase van sulke interaksies, dat daar baie ruimte vir die konstruksie van identiteit is. 'n Raamwerk word dan ontwikkel om die konstruksie van identiteit en vertroue in verband te bring, wat dan kan gebruik word as die basis vir die analise van narratiewe posisionering. Die raamwerk bestaan uit twee dimensies waarlangs identiteite kan geplaas word: sosiale verpligtinge en relasionele posisionering omvang. Daar word aangevoer dat disposisionele vertroue betrekking het tot relasionele posisionering omvang, terwyl die strukturele basis van vertroue verband hou met sosiale verpligtinge. Identiteit gebaseerde vertroue dui dus waar die konsultant pas binne die strukturele of disposisionele basisse van die trust. Daar word dan getoon hoe konteks modereer welke van die vertroue basisse oorheersend sal wees, en hoe hierdie kan manifesteer in die narratief van die konsultant. Dit bied drie algemene kontekste, wat elk lei tot die opkoms van 'n bepaalde dominante basis vir betroubaarheid persepsies deur die kliënte. Die besondere geval geanaliseer in die tesis korreleer met 'n spesifieke kontekste binne die raamwerk. Hierdie konteks is waar die konsultant onbekend is aan die kliënte.

Die laaste deel van die tesis illustreer die gebruik van die raamwerk en konteks waar dit die ontleding van 'n spesifieke konsultant se persoonlike narratief tydens 'n aanvanklike interaksie met kliënte lei. Die analise word dan vir die konsultant se sagteware produk narratief herhaal. Die strukture van die twee verhale word dan vergelyk om te wys hoe die konsultant ook probeer het om die identiteit-gebaseerde vertroue uit te brei na sy sagteware produk.

III

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Social interaction between unfamiliar actors is a unique and interesting phenomenon. This is especially so if they must collaborate, share knowledge or learn. The unfamiliarity of the parties necessitates a search for, and performance of, identities. Relating to Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical metaphor, this social 'play' is needed in order for people to make sense, manage, predict, and understand those they need to interact with. This need is increased when the stakes of collaboration are higher.

These situations often manifest within organisations. People are grouped together to perform tasks and there is always some level of unfamiliarity. One situation which is found on the boundary of organisations intensifies this 'play': the introduction of consultants. By their very nature, consultants are outsiders. They are unknown actors who enter a situation where they must concede to Goffman's play. Those in the organisation that collaborate with consultants can be thought of as an audience critically observing the play. While they essentially assess the credibility and relevance of the consultants, the assessment criteria employed by members of this audience are complex. They are informed by personal dispositions, cultural background, social norms, rational deductions, legal reference and socio-political discourse. Consequently, the consultant must navigate these criteria in order to ensure successful interventions.

This scene neatly captures the essence of what is to be explored in this thesis. The ultimate goal of this scenario is of course to successfully collaborate through the performing and interpreting of identities in order to construct social stability and a status quo. The existence of this scene, however, is not newly discovered within this thesis. It has been explored by various academics and has gained significant scholarly attention. The study therefore does not intend to join the debate; the intention is rather to open up a new angle of interpreting this 'play'.

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1.2 Problem Statement

This thesis attempts to address a double-sided problem. Firstly, from management consulting literature, it is argued that the debate is misplaced. While this misplacement is already addressed elsewhere, it needs to be redirected to the fundamental social groundings of client-consultant interactions. Secondly, from discursive approaches, a functional rationale for the mentioned 'play' is ignored. The niche for this particular study is thus to be found at the intersection of these two interpretations.

The popularity of management consulting has grown over the last few decades (McKenna, 2006). Mirroring the rising popularity of management consulting was the development of a significant debate both within practice and academia. One of the core points raised in this debate is the knowledge credibility of consultants. The credibility of consultant knowledge came into question when the 'play' was investigated. The 'play' was interpreted as a front, and performance without grounded substance. A common label that is applied to classify the phenomenon is 'rhetoric'.

However, there are those who reframe 'rhetoric' as an instrument to achieve knowledge sharing (e.g. see Devinney & Nikolova, 2004; Berglund & Werr, 2000). This is a step towards resolving the debate, because it firstly draws from the knowledge management field, where 'knowledge' underpins the search for a functional rationale for 'rhetoric', while it is also represents a more socialised view of the interaction. It provides credit to the fundamental social aspects of consulting. This shift is important, as it signals a departure from interpreting 'rhetoric' merely as functional to the consultant's self-serving agenda.

But a concurrent shift in the argument is also required. It is important to place the argument at the suitable level of analysis; namely the interpersonal level, or, as Furusten & Werr (2009) label it, the 'micro level'. This level highlights interpersonal dynamics, which is crucial in understanding client-consultant interactions, and has lead to insights in the social nature of the interactions. The macro and meso levels are too far removed from the fundamental social nature of interpersonal interactions present in consulting. A more flexible interpretive paradigm thus becomes crucial to exploring the complexities found at this level.

It is clear that the debate is misplaced within the management consulting literature. Each side is fuelled for a search of rationalisation for the perceived 'play'. But there is a core mechanism within the interaction that is yet to be investigated. This is the role of trust in client-consultant interactions. Like the above views, the introduction of trust is also theorised as a functional reason for 'rhetoric'.

The intention of this study is therefore not to counter or join the debate, but rather to add a new perspective.

The concept of trust is not new to this field. It is recognised as a prerequisite for consulting interactions, and for knowledge sharing and learning. The problem is that the concept is not included in micro level conceptions of the interaction. Trust is recognised especially within the consultant contracting process, but neglected within the interaction itself. Therefore when trust is discussed, it is seen as a commodity, outside of social interaction. There is therefore a need to explore how trust is in fact established during a consulting process. This need is alluded to in the above discussion, where it is believed that the 'play' is the manifestation of gaining trust. However, there is another problem.

As mentioned at the start of this section, within social research, where this 'play' is well recorded, it lacks a distinct functional reason for engaging in these social acts. This 'play' is commonly referred to as the construction of identity. People perform their identities in dialogue with audiences. The reasons for this play are commonly referred to as a social tool for sense of self and social acceptance. However, little has been said about how the process takes place for the establishment of trust. This is especially relevant in discursive social theorising, where the positioning of identities is explored within contexts that do not offer the same challenges to those positioning, as within consulting interactions. Research has moved into the realms of organisational contexts, and even consulting contexts, but trust is still not part of the discussion.

1.3 Objectives

Based on the problem outlined above, this thesis aims to reach four objectives, each of which is encapsulated in the following chapters. However, there is one overarching goal that this study will attempt reach; namely the development of a context theory outlining the process of identity positioning for trust, and an approach to investigate it[1]. The aim of providing this contextualised view of the trust development process is highlighted by the problems mentioned in the previous section. Context theories help to specify situational effects on observed phenomena (see e.g. Rousseau & Fried, 2001; Bamberger, 2008; Michailova, 2011). Moreover, the objective is to reach a point where this research project may provide what Bamberg (2008: 842-843) describes as *'context rich descriptions [which] can provide important hints as to, if not grounded hypotheses*

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[1] Context theory will be discussed later by using the definition of Bamberger (2008) on page 56

*regarding, how context directly shapes particular outcomes or conditions particular relationship*s'[2]. This approach will provide unique insights and help bridge the gap between the acknowledged need for trust, and the apparent lack of functional reasoning for identity positioning[3]. This is the motivation for incorporating management consulting as the 'case study', because it provides a unique context to investigate the development of trust through identity positioning.

This overarching objective has three elements which warrant specific exploration. Firstly, a synthesis of management consulting literature is vital in developing a thorough understanding of the client-consultant interaction. Moreover, the review of the literature is fairly exhaustive in the search for theoretical rationales for the interpretation of identity construction. Specifically, the search for trust-related literature will demonstrate that descriptive accounts of trust in consulting interactions are lacking. Most of the available literature on trust is of a prescriptive nature. This may be directly accountable to the prevalent importance of this social mechanism within consulting interactions, as well as a search for methods to ensure trust development. Descriptive accounts of trust are limited to the rationale for acquiring consultant services. Therefore, the aim would be to highlight this limitation prevalent within the current literature.

Another element of this research project is to provide an overview of the dominant conceptualisations of trust. This is in order to review it from a contextual perspective. Delimiting the antecedents and mechanisms of trust development to a contextual concept will provide a bridging point to connect to how construction and positioning of identity by consultants might be determinant in altering their perceived trustworthiness by the clients. Related to this objective is the aim to review the conceptualisation of identity and human agency. This is how people actively alter their identities, especially in relation to one another. Again, the concept will be contextualised in terms of management consulting interactions in order to fit with the argued objective of trust.

Lastly, an attempt is made to show that narrative analysis can be a fruitful method to analyse how trust is developed within these interactions. Narrative analysis can incorporate the context of these interactions, which is otherwise ignored. This is because narratives hold rich information on the narrator and the audience. By analysing it, evidence will be highlighted to illustrate how a consultant positions his identity in relation to the clients in the hopes of appearing more trustworthy.

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[2] Brackets not original. Brackets within quotes are added for grammatical consistency.

[3] Functional reasoning relates to the need and execution of identity positioning in real world circumstances.

1.4   Research Question

Specific research questions flow from the objectives outlined above. The overarching objective provided at the start of the previous section is an approach to answer certain specific research questions. The questions are:

- *What are the most dominant antecedents of trust within the initial interaction stages between a consultant and client?*
- *What are the dimensions which govern identity positioning by a consultant in the initial interaction with clients?*
- *How can identity positioning by a consultant be connected with perceived trustworthiness by the clients?*
- *Can evidence of identity positioning for trust be found in relation to the antecedents of trust and the dimensions of identity positioning in the narrative of a consultant within an initial interaction with clients?*

The first and second question would lead into what was discussed as the context theory. This context theory seeks to answer question three. Based on the context theory, question four is then aimed at finding a methodology that would elicit evidence of identity positioning. These are the main questions that will be addressed in this thesis. The questions construct the main argument tying the study together. However, it would be naïve to state that these are the only questions in need of explication and there are certainly more issues that must be dealt with in the process of addressing these concerns. It is important to acknowledge them as such. For instance, what is the correct level of 'reality' required to address this problem? Why is trust important in this context? What are the unique circumstances within the initial interaction phase between clients and consultants? What is the best methodological tool to find evidence for identity positioning? Despite the existence of these concerns, it is believed that it would be more advantageous to focus solely on the four core questions in order not to complicate the research process and clutter the argument. The next section will outline the methodological approach taken within this thesis to deal with the delineated research questions and objectives.

1.5   Research Design

The design of this thesis is mostly a review of literature around a certain concept, followed by a review of the concept within the specific context of management consulting. Four core concepts will be explored in this way: management consulting, trust, identity construction, and narrative analysis. Each concept will be explored through the review of literature, after which an adaptation

would be developed. These adaptations lead to the development of a context theory. The theory will then be tested by using narrative analysis as a methodological tool to find evidence of identity positioning for trust in a consultant-client interaction.

1.6 Chapter Overview

Chapter two consists of a literature overview and review. The objective is to identify what management consulting is, what general theories are employed to interpret the unit of analysis, and specifically on what level of analysis this study will be focused. With an overview of the existing literature within management consulting attended to, the dynamics of trust can be explored.

In chapter three, an overview of trust literature will be provided. This will inform the conceptualisation of trust. However, the objective is to outline the most dominant contextual antecedents that lead to perceived trustworthiness. Following this is an investigation into the concept of trust when applied to the particular context of the unit of analysis identified, and what specific antecedent is applicable. With a contextual understanding of trust, the second part of the chapter will explore the role of identity within the dynamic of trust development in consulting interventions. The result of this exploration will be a framework of trust and identity that explains how consultants narrate their identity in order to improve the perception of their trustworthiness amongst clients.

Before the examination itself can be done in chapter four, a narrative analysis methodology will be reviewed in order to argue both why narrative analysis would be the preferred research method to investigate the issue as well as to identify the narrative analysis approach best suited to provide an application of the framework developed in the prior chapter. In chapter five, a case study is done in order to see whether the framework can explain trust development in consulting interactions. Various excerpts are provided as evidence of the consultant's narrative positioning in relation to the clients. Lastly, chapter six will provide conclusions and notes for further research within this field. The notes on further research stem from the notion that this study intends to provide a new approach to researching trust within management consulting. The aim therefore is not to provide a definitive answer, but rather to open a conversation on applying the proposed framework with narrative analysis.

CHAPTER 2

MANAGEMENT CONSULTING LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review of management consulting will be undertaken within this chapter. The most significant aspects to highlight are the main theoretical applications, various levels of analysis, and prevalent contentions in the field. This overview informs the conceptual argument in the following chapters.

The questions that ground this chapter are, firstly, the dominating perspectives in the literature, and, secondly, the division of the literature into three 'levels of theory' that characterise most social research (Neuman, 2000). The distinction will provide the space to position the thesis. Lastly, as this study is located within the micro level (which is contextual in nature), a description of the observed phenomenon will be provided.

2.2 Management Consulting

It is important to highlight at this point exactly what is meant by invoking the phrases 'management consulting' and 'management consultant'. There are various types of consultants and a number of situational variations. Within this thesis 'management consulting' refers to the industry of professional business services to organisations. It is therefore the industry of 'management consulting'. Management consultant(s) are those people that are contracted by organisations to deal with various problems. The process of consulting with clients itself is interchangeably referred to as 'the consulting process', the 'client-consultant interaction', 'the interaction' or 'the process'.

The specific type of consulting intervention that will be referred to is those situations where a single consultant is acquired by a company to address a certain need. This process is also temporary, and has various actors entering and leaving the interaction. More specifically, within the context of this thesis, there will be a focus on the initial contact phase of the process, where the consultant meets the clients for the first time.

2.2.1   Background

There is disagreement within the management consulting literature about the exact origins of the profession. The dispute is not specifically the time of origin, but rather what constitutes the initial management consulting practices. The first noticeable management consulting practices started near the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The practices constituted to the start of management consulting are notably the scientific management movement, the rise of management engineering, and cost accounting/financial information system advisory practices (Butler, 2008). The most prominent authors interpreting the features of these schools are Kipping, McKenna and Ferguson, respectively.

Kipping argues that management consulting started during the scientific management movement, in the search for efficiency and rationalisation after the First World War (Armbrüster, 2006). Here, pioneers like Taylor, Emerson and Bedaux consulted with companies after the rise of mass production in order to improve the efficiency of their work force. McKenna disagrees with this perspective and argues that in the 1930s the first management consultants were technically trained individuals, normally in accounting and engineering, who offered a service to those companies that did not possess the necessary internal facilities or capacity (McKenna, 2006). Ferguson, in contrast, argues that the first management consultants were not concerned with the 'costs of production' or the 'control of labour', but that they were instead focused on the field of cost accounting during the 1960s and 1970s (Ferguson, 2002). The underlying contested factor leading to the construction of three divergent opinions on the origins of management consulting is the definition of what exactly management consulting is, and when an activity can be categorized within the management consulting field.

2.2.2   Main Perspectives in Management Consulting

Despite management consulting having 'originated' as early as the late 19th century, it was only during the 1990s that it was given a significant amount of attention in research literature[4]. Although some initial literature surfaced during the 1980s, a sharp increase in research outputs is only observed in the following decade. This means that the field of management consulting is only two decades old and clearly still in its formative years.

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[4] Originate is a relative term used here, as some argue that consulting can date back to ancient Egypt with the build of pyramids. See for example Butler (2008)

The literature that emerged prior to the 1980s was focused on the role that consultants play in transmitting business techniques (Hagedorn, 1955; Higdon, 1969), and prescriptive guides to consultants' clients (Schein 1969, Argyris, 1970). The majority of literature from the 1980s came from sociology or professions. Management consulting was recognised as an emerging profession, characteristic of the broader shift taking place within industrialised economies (Stanback, 1979; Stanback *et al.,* 1981; Noyelle & Dutka, 1988). The first prescriptive literature aimed at consultants was also introduced during the 1980s (Greiner & Metzger, 1983), and the management consulting 'best practices' guide was issued by the International Labour Organisation during that same decade (Kubr, 1986).

It is only during the 1990s that the amount of literature increased significantly. The historical review of management consulting surfaced during this time with the publications of McKenna (1995, 2001, 2006) and Kipping (1996, 1997, 1999). Furthermore, a large number of publications addressing management consultants, specifically practitioners (e.g. Maister, 1997; Kubr, 1996), MBA Graduates (e.g. Wet Feet Press, 1995; Wickham, 1999) and those wanting to start their own management consulting firm emerged (e.g. Kishel & Kishel 1996) (Armbrüster, 2006). With this rise in popularity of management consulting in literature, critical literature also started to mount, pointing out the threat of hiring management consultants, while drawing attention to the dangers created to the industry. Two dominant views emerged during this increase in management consulting literature, namely the *functionalist* and *critical* schools. These dominant perspectives would provide the classification for future literature into either of the two camps. The following section will attempt to expand more on the two sides of the argument.

2.2.2.1   The Functionalist Perspective

The functionalist perspective views consultants as vehicles of knowledge. Within the functionalist view, consultants play a crucial role in the dissemination of new management techniques, strategies and concepts, as their experience ranges wider than a single organisation or industry (Werr & Styhre, 2003). They transfer knowledge between industries, companies, departments, and even from academic research (Armbrüster, 2006). Management consultants therefore play a functional role in the economy by disseminating and integrating knowledge, which improves organisational effectiveness.

The interaction between consultant and client is seen as taking place at arm's length. It is regarded as a strictly contractual relationship, where problems and goals are clear. Consultants act in a contracted capacity to address specific problems by providing specific solutions. This perspective

assumes knowledge asymmetry between management consultants and clients, where the consultants hold the superior position. In order for consultants to play a functional and viable role in a business, it is believed that this information unevenness is necessary. It is for this same reason that large multinational consulting firms are powerful. These firms have a global network that gathers information and knowledge from an array of different sources, which always assures a knowledge asymmetry in favour of the consultant. This provides the distribution and application of knowledge which cannot be equalled by non-consulting organisations (Larsen, 2001; Haas & Hansen, 2005; Hansen *et al.* 1999; Hansen & Haas, 2001).

2.2.2.2   *The Critical Perspective*

The critical perspective stems from a more socio-critical interpretation of management consulting. According to the critical view, the idea that consultants are experts and provide knowledge and analyses to clients for a fee is a narrow representation of what constitutes the consulting process (Fincham & Clark, 2003). They argue for a perspective that takes into account the social intricacies that permeates the interaction. This endeavour to highlight the social characteristics of the industry has brought on a critical wave.

Many argue that consultants have a stake in the up-and-down swings of management concepts and best practices. They therefore play an active role in controlling and utilizing them. This highlights the 'faddish' nature of management consulting, with the implication being that management consultants benefit from creating the knowledge asymmetry, even artificially, to ensure their continued legitimacy.

Most critical literature is tied together by a single dominant paradigm; a focus on the ambiguous nature of consulting knowledge, and the rhetorical strategies employed in the interaction with the client audiences (Wright, 2005). The key here is the interpretation of the phenomena as an extraneous strategy, employed for convincing clients of their legitimacy. The assumption that underlies this view is that consultants have covert intentions because of their lacking formal body of knowledge. Identifying this phenomenon as a strategy employed is actually an accurate depiction of what happens.

This is witnessed in the array of rhetoric and 'consultant's speak' techniques that are employed by management consultants (Alvesson *et al*, 2009; Berglund & Werr, 2000; Butler, 2008; Canato & Giangreco, 2011; Clegg *et al*, 2004; Devinney & Nikolova, 2004; Fincham, 1999; Meriläinen *et al*, 2004; Nikolova *et al* 2009). Berglund & Werr (2000) specifically point to consultants' 'communicative flexibility' in their use of pragmatism myths and rationality to legitimise their

approaches. They argue that consultants have seemingly unrestricted use of labels and terminology in order to lend them the ability to persuade clients of the superiority of their knowledge, and this is also attributed to a lack of authority entities, or accepted body of knowledge by which to gauge the credibility of consultants' methods and concepts (Sturdy, 1997).

The critical perspective generally may seem negative towards management consulting. As this may be true for many authors, the main thrust is a critical investigation on the taken-for-granted aspects of the industry. Much of the critical literature investigates the interactions with the aim of improve management consulting, not to discredit it entirely (see e.g. Berglund & Werr, 2000; Nikolova, 2004; Alvesson *et al.*, 2009). For instance, Czarniawska-Joergens (1990) argues that the use of symbolism, metaphors and the arbitrary use of labels open up interpretation for the client, which offers new, previously ignored insights. Jackson (1999) investigates how management consultants are able to create a pluralist approach, which from an academic point of view is difficult, yet helpful, in practice. Management consultants are able to do this because they do not have the inherent 'drawback' of scientific accountability. Alvesson (1993) argues that claims of knowledge, even scientific knowledge, is uncertain, and therefore consultants move to construct relevant accounts of knowledge claims in their own context. These constructions essentially may not be wrong and may prove to be more practical.

Critical literature nevertheless fails to recognise the economic rationale behind management consulting and therefore it offers no true rebuttal to the functionalist perspective. Likewise, the functionalist also offers no rebuttal to the critical perspective as it fails to extend its analysis to the social fundamentals within the client-consultant relationship. This then ignores the way in which consultants or the consulting firms ensure their relationship with the client in terms of legitimacy, trust or quality assurance.

With an understanding of the two perspectives prevalent within management consulting literature, it is important to break the literature up into levels of analysis. Within these levels, the functional and critical perspectives are present everywhere, and where important it will be noted. However, the focus will be on delineating the various levels and how they play a role in the development of a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the management consulting field.

2.2.3   The Three Levels of Analysis

Three broad groupings can be identified within most social research. These are representative of the level of 'social reality' that the research deals with (Neuman, 2000: 49). This distinction is also evident in the management consulting literature. Three levels of analysis, namely macro, meso and

micro can be identified. However, an examination of the management consulting literature suggests that this formulation and differentiation is largely lacking therein. The only reference to such a distinction is provided by Furusten & Werr in the research volume of Buono & Poulfelt (2009). However, their framework focuses on investigating the need for management advisory services, specifically focusing on the acquisition decision. By using this distinction of the different levels, but applying a broader focus than merely the rationale of acquiring consultants, we can summarise the management consulting research based on the level of analysis. Furusten & Werr (2009) label the dimensions as institutional, organisational and individual, which are respectively macro, meso and micro level distinctions. The general equivalents within management consulting literature are respectively institutional, client-consultant and interpersonal. The following sections will explore the literature that can be classified under each level.

2.2.3.1 Macro Level

The macro level of analysis focuses on the industry of management consulting. The questions asked are generally: why is management consulting such a large part of organisational life? What economic mechanisms can explain management consulting? What social mechanisms can explain management consulting? What dictates the acquisition behaviour of management consultants? The best summation of this is to be found in Armbrüster (2006). There are four dominant theories used to address the questions raised above. These are sociological neo-institutionalism, signalling theory, transaction cost economics, and social embeddedness theory.

2.2.3.1.1 Sociological Neo-institutionalism

Sociological Neo-institutionalism is a form of phenomenological sociology. The focus is on the combined behaviour of a large group of people. Rather than explaining individual behaviour, it focuses on the aggregated behaviour of the collective. It also argues that social rules and myths do not result from '*the fact that individuals believe them, but [from] the fact that they "know" everyone else does*' (Meyer 1977: 75).

Sociological neo-institutionalism is used extensively within management consulting literature (Sahlin-Anderson & Engwall, 2002; Kipping & Engwall, 2002) and draws on the belief that the perceived efficiency or legitimacy of a particular product or service is the result of the belief in its legitimacy, rather than from its proven legitimacy, thus determining economic behaviour (Armbrüster 2006). In other words, the perception of the effectiveness of management consulting is based on the belief in its effectiveness, rather than proven competence. The theory mainly explains the economic phenomena of acquiring management consulting services, and does not elaborate on

the particular acquisition rationale of the client. It theorises very little power to the client firm, negating economic attentiveness from the client side of the exchange, and attributes the behaviour to external factors such as norms and trends. In essence, it becomes an acquisition of institutionalised products or ideas, rather than management consultants. This is because of the institutionalisation of management ideas, which started out as fads or fashions and became the norm over time.

An example of this is evident in the management consulting 'fad' waves such as Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) or the multi-divisional organisational structure (M-form) (Armbrüster, 2006: 26, 176). Here organisations rationalised the purchase of a management consultant not based on credibility of the individual or his/her parent firm, but rather the institutionalised idea they implement. One of the key publications that Sociological Neo-institutionalism is based on are the observations of McKinsey interventions by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), which showed that interventions by the large consulting firm resulted in a number of isomorphic changes in other organisations.

Sociological Neo-institutionalism lends itself favourably to the critical view of management consulting. It fits with the doubts about management consulting legitimacy as a service (in itself), and attributes the existence of management consulting to external fads and artificial institutionalisation of ideas by a few large firms. This forces clients to acquire management consultants in order to reduce externally induced uncertainty, and to be able to conform to industry norms.

However, there is still space for a functionalist view within Sociological Neo-Institutionalism itself. Firstly, the fundamental value propositions of management consultants are their outsider and independent perspectives on the client firm, separate from the institutionalised ideas they offer. Secondly, as Strang and Meyer (1993) argue, with any such diffusion of ideas it must be preceded by some form of institutionalisation. This institutionalisation is done by a process of standardisation and commoditisation by which certain standards of legitimacy are met, especially within an industry of professionals. This is an important point, articulating that 'fads' are there for a reason, and they would not generate such popularity if they were wholly unsuccessful. Sociological Neo-Institutionalism therefore explains the macro perspective of the 'phenomena' of management consulting by specifically attributing its legitimacy from outside the client-consultant relationship, and focuses on the commoditisation of management consultant advice.

2.2.3.1.2 Signalling Theory

Signalling theory can help to alleviate the main drawback found in Sociological Neo-institutionalism, namely the complete discounting of economic deliberation by individual actors within a market (management consulting industry). At the most basic level, signalling theory provides a credible way to theorize the institutionalisation process from a more individual perspective incorporating the reality of economically deliberate actors[5]. In other words, it attempts to explain the behaviour that results in the observed phenomena. It therefore offers a slightly more (although not completely) internal source of legitimacy stemming from the actions of the client and consultant. This is because it theorises active involvement in the signalling by management consultants and selection of signals by client organisations.

Given a market where there is high information uncertainty regarding a product or service, different actors actively engage in monitoring and producing signals of status, quality and reliability. The market for management consultants incorporates these features, with the result that the certainty of a particular management consulting service or product would be very low, given no form of signalling from the management consultant's side. A typical signal would be in the form of a consulting firm's reputation, created by selective human resource procurement activities (e.g. Pudack, 2004) and would produce a perception of quality and reliability of associated products and services (Armbrüster, 2006: 219). Signalling theory is thus reliant on intangibles like reputation, which works on the same mechanism as 'fads'. As a result, it can actively be altered by the signalling agent (the source of the critical argument). Signalling theory helps to extend this conception by connecting supply and demand through proposing more economically efficient market behaviour, where Sociological Neo-institutionalism highlights the distortions from market efficiency (Armbrüster, 2006).

Signalling theory also touches more on the issue of legitimacy or, more accurately, the perception of legitimacy, for an individual management consultant as he/she is associated with a reputable consultancy firm. This theory extends further down into the meso and micro perspectives of management consulting, as signalling theory is also applicable on an interpersonal level of analysis, whilst Sociological Neo-institutionalism merely explains the macro social phenomenology.

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[5] "Economic deliberate actors" or "economic deliberation" highlight the fact that people actively and attentively reflect on economic activity. This may seem obvious but some perspectives assume little or no economic deliberation.

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2.2.3.1.3 Transaction Cost Economics

Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) departs from externally attributing influence in a management consulting transaction. Its fundamental assumption differs from the previous two theories because it posits that clients follow a rational decision making process, or at least one bounded by available information, in the acquisition of management consultants. This is instead of conforming to signals and industry norms and fads without regard for the rational calculations made by the client, as assumed by Sociological Neo-institutionalism and Signalling theory.

TCE helps to theorise the make-or-buy decision-making process when tending to a particular problem (Coase 1937; Williamson 1975, 1985, 1986, 1988). This make-or-buy decision essentially entails a choice between using existing capacity or to acquire external help to resolve a problem or challenge. This decision is based on a comparison between the sums of production- and transaction costs. Production costs are all the costs directly attributed to productive capacities, while transaction costs are those costs that result from the organising of economic activity such as the costs leading up to a transaction, and costs resulting from a transaction.

Three factors influence the decision whether to source in-house solutions or to opt for a market solution: uncertainty, frequency and the asset specificity of a transaction (Williamson 1988). A transaction that is high in all of these factors will be best served with an in-house solution, as the costs of contracting external solutions would be too high. Conversely, if all the factors are low, outsourcing the transaction to the market would be better. The concept is found within Information Economics (IE) (Stigler 1961; Alchian and Demsetz 1972), where it is applied to compare the cost of information with the usefulness thereof. When an organisation hires a management consultant, they do not directly purchase information, but they rather purchase the information-gathering capacity of the consultant. In essence, the consultant increases the organisation's capacity and effectiveness for a limited period. Thereafter the need for extra capacity becomes redundant and the organisation returns to their original capacity. This would then rationalise the use of management consultants, as an organisation cannot employ people on sporadic, or on an 'as needed' basis. To a certain extent this clearly does happen, but the people employed under these conditions are trained and have a particular capacity to fulfil the timely needs of the organisation. This means that this perspective recognises that there is a functional role for management consulting.

2.2.3.1.4   Social Embeddedness Theory

Although TCE offers valuable insight into the transaction rationale behind the acquisition of management consultants, and represents a departure from Sociological Neo-institutionalism and Signalling theory, it is rarely applied in the management consulting literature. Some exceptions of this include Canbäck (1998) and Kehrer & Schade (1995) (Armbrüster, 2006: 50). Nevertheless, it has been challenged over the last two decades by Embeddedness theorists (Granovetter 1985; Powell 1990; Granovetter and Swedberg 1992; Uzzi 1996, 1997; Dacin et al. 1999).

The main argument against TCE is that social factors are ignored in the conception of economic action. It does not reject the argument of calculative attention proposed by TCE, but additionally argues that the social ties and networks in which economic activity takes place (especially in the context of management consulting) are ignored. Social ties and networks play a large role in influencing economic action in a market with high uncertainty of product or service quality and standards. In essence, all the actors that play a role in the transaction are embedded within some social network; this network dictates a large part of the acquisition decision. For instance, if a consultant is known to the organisation he or she will stand to be favoured in the transaction decision, regardless of price or technical capacity. Informal social mechanisms like trust are drawn attention to through the application of this theory. With a relative high level of trust, the trade-offs of the decision are easier to make. In other words, a client will pay a higher price in order to be able to trust the consultant.

Embeddedness theory then offers a more socialised view of the 'rational' economic behaviour proposed by TCE by adding a social heuristic to the calculation. The fact that a client knows a consultant and has trust reduces the cost of searching for alternatives so that there is very little cost consideration. It therefore becomes unnecessary to weigh production and transaction costs or to evaluate the cost of gathering information against its usefulness (Information Economics). However, such social embeddedness only plays a significant role in contexts where strong social ties are present (such strong ties are built through word-of-mouth, recommendations and reputations). The weaker the ties, the more the client will resort to rational calculation.

Although these theories extend to both the meso and micro levels in terms of their applicability, the phenomenon they investigate dictates their inclusion in the macro perspective. The 'phenomenon' that all of them investigate is the acquisition of management consulting services, regardless whether the evidence is found on macro (Sociological Neo-institutionalism), meso (Embeddedness theory)

or micro (Signalling theory) level. The point is that the phenomenon is found in the 'market' of management consulting, and therefore the macro level of analysis.

2.2.3.2   Meso Level

The meso level of analysis moves past the rationale of acquiring management consulting services and focuses on the client-consultant interaction. The general conception of this level is that of the organisational level of analysis. However, due to the nature of the unit of analysis, the client-consultant is the equivalent of 'organisational level'[6].

At this level, there is a search for a model which can explain the dynamics of the interaction between a consultant and client. The typical questions asked at this level are: how can the interaction be classified? What are the roles of the client and consultant during their interaction? What are the social dynamics at play during the interaction? Most of the literature examining this level is prescriptive in nature. This is because the key publications raising the pertinent questions on client-consultant interactions were written by consultants themselves as prescriptive guides for managing the very interactions that take place between consultants and clients. This level resultantly lacks the same theoretical grounding as offered by the macro perspective. The industry origins of the literature influenced the rise of critique against the lack of theoretical grounding (Mohe & Seidl, 2011). This led to a fundamental difference in epistemological assumptions amongst some models proposed at this level.

Four general models have been identified. These are the expert-, critical-, reflective practitioner-, and the interpretive models. The expert model originated earlier than the other models, followed by the emergence of the critical model due to its review of the expert model's conception of knowledge. The expert and critical models are focused on the consultant side of the interaction and neglects the client (Scandinavian Journal of Management, 2006). The reflective practitioner and interpretive models focus on the process of learning between both parties, rather than seeing it as a knowledge transfer interaction.

The expert and critical models correspond strongly with the functional and critical perspectives, leading to a significant amount of overlap. An examination of the literature suggests that

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[6] It can be seen as 'consultant organisation' – 'client organisation'.

distinctions between the perspectives and models are blurred[7]. The models are simplified abstracts of the general literature, as it attempts to explain certain phenomena. With a large part of the literature divided into only two perspectives, it is reasonable to expect that a significant amount of overlap will take place. Nevertheless, it is important to interrogate these models more closely.

2.2.3.2.1 The Expert Model

The expert model views the client-consultant interaction as client-*expert*. The consultant is seen as the expert in possession of resources that the client needs in addressing a certain problem (Nikolova, *et al.,* 2009). The expert model corresponds with the functionalist view of management consulting by sharing three fundamental assumptions. *Firstly*, both assume that management consultants are vehicles for knowledge transfer. This depicts the management consultant as someone possessing specific knowledge needed to solve some problem faced by the client. *Secondly*, knowledge and information asymmetry exists between the consultant and the client. Combined with the first assumption this implies that the consultant has more knowledge than the client has, and is therefore in a position of power with discretion over the proposed solution to the problem. These two assumptions also inform the rationale for acquiring management consultants. This is because the knowledge asymmetry is a result of conventional organisations not having the knowledge acquisition capacity of consulting firms (Armbrüster and Kipping, 2002; Noyelle and Dutka, 1988; Stanback *et al*., 1981; Werr *et al*., 1997), and therefore must 'purchase' the knowledge acquisition capacity. The *third* assumption is that the client assumes that the consultant has the expertise to deal with their problem. This is because there is no concrete *a-priori* measurement of reassurance for success. Therefore, the assumption of a consultants' capability is based on a belief rather than experience. This was explored earlier when the assumption was based in belief (Sociological Neo-institutionalism), social network referrals (Embeddedness theory), signalling theory and transaction cost accounting. For instance, as Armbrüster (2004: 1247-1248) states: consulting firms' '*recruitment of extraordinarily talented personnel represent a soft-factor fundament of their performance'*, which indicates exactly the type of assumptions made by client companies.

The expert model is highly influenced by the work of Schein (1969, 1987, 1999) with his three client-consultant interaction models. These are the purchase model, the doctor-patient model, and

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[7] Some also theorise it as 'images' (Werr & Styhre, 2000), as the expert, critical and interpretive images of management consulting

the process consultation model. Nees and Greiner (1986) provide a similar model with their five categories of (1) The mental adventurer, (2) strategic navigator, (3) management physician, (4) system architect and (5) friendly co-pilot. The belief underlying these models is that consultants hold universal and easily transferable knowledge without contextual limitations. The task of the consultant therefore is to bring expertise through experience and research to the client, and apply it in order to solve the problem. This expertise can be either an institutionalised management concept (purchasing role), or a roadmap for facilitating an intervention (process consultation model) (Devinney & Nikolova, 2004). Consultants seem to hold knowledge as an asset or resource, expertly applied to a particular client problem within this conception. This model is well exemplified in the scientific management wave, where Taylor, Fayol and Porter, for instance, applied previously researched concepts to the factory floor in order to enhance productivity (Kipping, 1999).

Therefore, knowledge within this conception of the interaction is decontextualised and seen as an objectively definable asset or resource. The knowledge is independent of its carriers and their interpretations, which means that it can easily be commoditised and transferred across an industry. This is evident in the management consulting fads where pre-packaged solutions, or institutionalised management concepts, like the M-form structure or BPR, were widely distributed by management consultants across different industries, irrespective of the contextual factors (McKenna, 2006).

There is also a unidirectional knowledge asymmetry, where the consultant has the upper hand. The client is passive in the interaction, merely carrying out tasks deemed necessary by the consultant. Power struggles start to surface because there is no objective way by which the individual actors in the client firm can challenge the knowledge of the consultant. The consultant has superior judgement on the required solution, which the individual actors in the client firm cannot challenge (Nikolova *et al.*, 2009). Many such power struggles surfaced during the large-scale layoffs that accompanied the BPR wave of management consulting (McKenna, 2006). The success of the intervention is ultimately dependent on the openness of communication provided by the client, the method by which the consultant communicates, and the individual actors within the client firm's openness and motivation to adhere to the consultants' prescriptions.

2.2.3.2.2 The Critical Model

The critical model holds that knowledge is socially constructed and that social interactions and symbolism offer recognition and sources of legitimacy, rather than scientific objectivity (Alvesson,

2000). The knowledge 'held' by consultants is therefore not scientific by nature, but it is rather a specific language. It is the language of managers and management consultants. In the words of Clark & Salaman (1998b: 147), it is '*a language for representing mutually acceptable ways of knowing, defining and talking about management, managers and organisations*'.

The critical model originated out of the critique of the expert model, specifically the idea that consultants actually hold the higher end of knowledge asymmetry in the client-consultant interaction (Devinney & Nikolova, 2004). The research underlying the critical model tends to focus on micro level phenomena, whereas the expert model leans toward macro phenomena. The rise of the perspective was fuelled by the critical model's observation that the social phenomena within the client-consultant interaction occurs in terms of the specific behaviour presented. Specifically, consultants' use of persuasion techniques, impression management, rhetoric and symbolism are investigated in order to gain legitimacy (Clark & Salaman, 1998a. This behaviour was consequently viewed in a negative light, especially in relation to the existent expert model literature. Consultants are regarded as opportunistic individuals, playing on clients' insecurities and uncertainties, and lobbying generic solutions to complex problems (Fincham, 1999).

Despite this approach's critical interpretation of the expert model, it is able to provide a somewhat more socialised view of the client-consultant interaction, which helps to deepen the understanding of the interaction. According to the critical model, the knowledge used and transferred throughout the interaction is much more abstract and contextual than is the case under the expert contention. Yet it is still definable through symbolism, stories and images. The codification of the knowledge is still possible through the creation of context specific artefacts (in a specific client-consultant interaction). These symbols and artefacts act as 'rationality-surrogates' and basically constitute the consultant's knowledge (Devinney & Nikolova, 2004).

There is still a unidirectional knowledge asymmetry within this model because the consultant holds the most influence on the creation of the symbols. Therefore, because of the intangible and interactive character of the interaction, clients have difficulty in evaluating the interaction objectively. Consequently, as with the expert model, there continues to be a problem of power dynamics. The critical model focuses on how consultants use persuasion techniques and impression management to calm client uncertainties, whereas the expert model ignores these phenomena.

The remaining two models move away from the consultant-centric view held the previous two to focus on the interaction itself. The reflective practitioner model can be seen as the first attempt at departure from the previous two models, which was subsequently extended by the interpretive

model through elaboration on the effects and dynamics of communities of practice. The two models are essentially quite similar, but will be discussed separately.

2.2.3.2.3   The Reflective Practitioner Model

The reflective practitioner model is heavily influenced by the work of Schön (1983, 1987). It is conceptualised as a reflective conversation between the consultant and client. This concept departs from the idea that knowledge is brought in and carried over within the exchange. It conceptualises that knowledge is created only during the interaction between consultant and client. According to this model, there are two types of consulting expertise, namely knowing-in-action, and reflection-in-action. Both of these are '*embedded in the socially and institutionally structured context shared by a community of practitioners*' (Schön, 1987: 33). By reflecting through the utilisation of stories, consultants omit and include certain details which result in unintended new meanings and insights. Consulting knowledge is therefore constructed because of individual actions within a specific social context. This is achieved through acts such as attention and inattention, labelling, sensemaking and boundary setting.

The interpretation argues that problems are not givens but that they are constructed and explored through repeated processes of reflection-in-action (Schön, 1987). Knowledge can also not be reduced to an objectively definable commodity; it is subjective and subject to framing by the parties involved. Another aspect which differs from the previously discussed models is the belief that there cannot be an objectively definable body of knowledge. This is due to the difference in the assumption of knowledge, as different actors belong to different communities and will define problems in dissimilar ways (Devinney & Nikolova, 2004).

The client and consultant therefore come from different 'interpretive communities' and see the world from different perspectives. While the expert model sees consultants transferring knowledge from their body of knowledge to the client, the critical model uses the same assumption to criticise the false use of knowledge by consultants. The reflective practitioner model on the other hand theorises that the body of knowledge is only used to provide a certain framework for reflection-in-action during the interaction.

In contrast to the previous two models, there is no one-sided knowledge asymmetry under the reflective practitioner model. The two parties, client and consultant, both possess expertise relevant for the solution of the problem, resulting in a mutual knowledge asymmetry. This is because the client can reflect in more detail on contextual factors from the organisation's point of view, while

the consultant is unable to do so. Inversely, the consultant has an outside perspective and a broad experience base on which to draw, which the client clearly lacks.

This then suggests that the problem of power dynamics is minimised, as the consultant and the client have equal weight during the interaction. This means that the client can also gauge the relevance of the consultant's input more readily than is theorised by the expert and critical models. This is because there is a reflective conversation which results in critical enquiry from both parties in the interaction that helps to flesh out doubts about the other party.

This model demonstrates the idea of knowledge as practice in that it theorises that the only relevant knowledge to the client-consultant interaction surfaces in the interaction, and is not brought from outside like ready-made solutions. Knowledge exists because of reflection by both parties. They bring different sets of expertise to the table in the hopes of producing a solution to a problem.

2.2.3.2.4   The Interpretive Model

The interpretive model also draws on Schön's ideas, arguing that the origins of the difference in understandings of client and consultant, and the difficulties with knowledge transfer between them, can be found in the existence of different 'interpretive communities' (Devinney & Nikolova, 2004). But this model goes further by elaborating on the role that these interpretive communities play in the client-consultant interaction.

The model assumes that knowledge resides in people's minds and is the result of individual cognitive processes, which are in turn embedded in a social context. As Tsoukas and Vladimirou (2001: 979) define it: '*knowledge is the individual ability to draw distinctions within a collective domain of action, based on an appreciation of context or theory, or both*'. Context can furthermore be defined as '*a collectively generated and sustained domain of action*'. As a result, any knowledge is very specific and contextual, and needs extensive and rich communicative practices in order to be shared. Knowledge thus tends to travel in a body (domain of action), is kept by a certain group (that practices in the particular domain of action), and provides the context for sharing and creating the knowledge within this body. It is therefore very difficult to transfer knowledge across disparate groups.

These groups are called communities of practice (Wenger, 1999) or communities of knowing (Boland and Tenkasi, 1995). Communities of practice are groups of similarly minded people, practising a specific body of knowledge, who share and use certain sets of concepts or languages

like stories, beliefs, myths, artefacts, norms, assumptions etcetera, to make it possible to be able to share knowledge more easily amongst each other (Wenger 1999).

The consultant consequently resides in a community of practise that generates a pool of knowledge from which he or she can draw. However, the knowledge cannot be understood by the client, as the parties reside in different communities of practice. The consultant must therefore use forms of symbolism in order to provide the client with a platform for interpretation. This is achieved through the utilisation of stories, metaphors, symbols, rhetoric and models to facilitate interpretation across communities of practice (Devinney & Nikolova, 2004). The interpretive model distinctively emphasises that the applications of these symbols are necessary in order to facilitate knowledge transfer between communities of practice. Symbols and rhetoric become tools to share and create knowledge and play an important role in the success of a client-consultant interaction. Moreover, unlike the expert and critical models where power is conceptualised to reside with one party in the interaction, the interpretive model theorises that power is a social construct. Power relations are regarded to be part of the knowledge creation process as both parties have equal knowledge asymmetry. This leads to constant reflection and interpretation between the two communities of practice.

These last two perspectives therefore take ideas from both the expert and the critical models and place them within a new theoretical framework. It uses the idea of a body of knowledge from the expert model as employed by a consultant to provide solutions to the client. However, it departs in terms of the weight it places on the value of the knowledge drawn from the consultants' body of knowledge and proposes the idea that the client has an equally valuable body of knowledge to contribute, which the consultant cannot ignore. Secondly, it investigates the phenomenon that the critical perspective focuses on, namely the symbolism employed by consultants in order to legitimise their knowledge, which is in reality a falsification of the true body of knowledge. The latter two models acknowledge the symbolism employed, but attributes a functional perspective to it in terms of its critical part in knowledge transfer and creation. Symbols are needed in order for different communities of practice to be able to communicate and reflect on each other's knowledge contributions. The latter two theories can also be placed within the social learning model of the client-consultant interaction (Nikolova *et al*., 2009). This model essentially views the client-consultant interaction as a highly social process of mutual learning where both parties have equal knowledge input.

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2.2.3.3   Micro Level

Distinguishing between meso- and micro level research is somewhat challenging. A reflection on management consulting literature reveals that both are focused on 'client-consultant' interactions. However, while the meso level constructs the client and consultant as generic entities, derived from insights produced at the micro level, the micro level itself focuses on the individual client and consultant instead of providing generalised labels to 'consultant' and 'client'. Moreover, this is a focus on particular interactions, within contextual bounds, as with all micro level research (Neuman, 2000).

The discursive character of the interaction is important at this level, as it focuses on the language used between a particular consultant and the client. This means that within the meso level, the client and consultant as individuals and social actors are ignored, along with the contextual environment in which they act. In general, meso level research is more prescriptive, whereas micro level research is more descriptive. Some theories from the macro level are also present at the micro level (including Signalling theory and Embeddedness theory). Some meso level models are also informed by phenomena investigated at the micro level (like role theory, agency theory, social network theory and the theory of otherness). It is therefore difficult to discern clear boundaries at the micro level, as micro level phenomena are the building blocks of all reality observed by the other levels. It is however possible to delineate why the micro level is treated distinctly. Micro level research is focused. Research at this level does not attempt to inform grand constructs, but rather to investigate local phenomenon in the pursuit to understand the taken-for-granted aspects.

2.2.3.3.1   Themes in Micro Level Research

Distinct streams of micro level research can be discerned through an interrogation of the literature. These themes discussed here are generic deductions and do not serve as an accurate and exhaustive breakdown of the literature regarding the micro level. It is merely employed to highlight the topics under examination. Themes like power dynamics are highlighted in the client-consultant interaction (Nikolova & Devinney, 2009; Sturdy, 1997). The main thrust is to identify the nature of power and its role within the dialectic interaction between consultant and client. Entwined with this stream of research is the theme of knowledge, as it is assumed that the possession and control of knowledge dynamics within the relationship infers power onto either party (Jackson, 1999; Berglund & Werr, 2000). The debate is based on the knowledge asymmetry or symmetry between client and consultant, with most literature theorising the knowledge advantage of consultants. From another perspective, many have seen the knowledge superiority of consultants to be based in their use of

rhetoric (Alvesson, 1993, 2001; Kieser, 1997, 2002; Leary & Kowalski, 1990, Berglund & Werr, 2000).

This connects it to another theme – that of rhetoric – which is found throughout the literature. The studies focusing on rhetoric highlight the rhetorical tools employed by consultants to legitimise their presence and practices. Also entwined within rhetoric is the focus on the role of language in altering perceptions of the other. This is evident in research deducing certain roles for clients and consultants (Sturdy *et al.*, 2008; Alvesson *et al.*, 2009; Werr & Styhre, 2003; Kaarst-Brown, 1999; Kakabadse *et al.*, 2006). This research is closely related to 'impression management' which is loosely derived from Goffman's presentation of self (1959). Another important theme relates to the process of acquiring these role positions. This research theme originated with Alvesson & Willmott (2002) through the introduction of the concept of identity work to client-consultant interactions (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2011; Styhre *et al.*, 2010; Kornberger & Brown, 2007)[8].

All of these studies highlight the discursive nature of consulting interactions and firmly anchors the study within that context. Most of the findings are picked up within the meso level in the pursuit to criticise conventional functionalist conceptions. This, as will be argued, is a biased but nevertheless an accurate interpretation of the phenomena. It is the objective of this thesis to provide another avenue, other than knowledge claims and power dynamics, which will assist in informing future research regarding these interactions. Before this argument can be made, the discursive nature of client-consultant interactions needs to be addressed.

Table 1: Micro Level Themes

Theme	Authors
Power	Nikolova & Devinney, 2009; Sturdy, 1997
Knowledge	Jackson, 1999; Berglund & Werr, 2000
Rhetoric	Alvesson, 1993, 2001; Kieser, 1997, 2002; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Berglund & Werr, 2000
Culture	Mohe, 2008
Roles	Sturdy *et al.*, 2008; Alvesson *et al.*, 2009; Werr & Styhre, 2003
Identity	Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2011; Styhre et al., 2010; Kornberger & Brown, 2007; Clark, 1998

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[8] Refer to table 1 for a summary of themes and relevant literature conducted at micro level.

2.2.3.3.2   A Discursive Focus on the Client-consultant interaction

The discursive focus of management consulting views it fundamentally as a conversation between parties. This perspective has grown in organisational science from the work of Foucault (1978), Bourdieu (1991) and Giddens (1984) (Grant *et al.*, 2004). The discursive focus on management consulting has grown in popularity parallel to the growth of a discursive focus of organisations (Alvesson, 1993; Alvesson & Johansson, 2002; Alvesson & Robertson, 2006; Berglund & Werr, 2000; Clark & Salaman, 1998; Clegg *et al.*, 2004; Engwall & Kipping, 2002; Fincham, 1999; Marshak & Heracleous, 2005; Meriläinen *et al.*, 2004; Sturdy, 1997; Sturdy, 2002; Werr & Styhre, 2003).

The following excerpt describes the argument for a more discursive focus on the client-consultant interaction: '*the consultant-client relationship is undoubtedly a complex one. It is certainly a relationship that transcends any simplistic notion of an exploited client by a consultant peddling the empty-dazzling rhetoric of the latest guru fad. (...) it is clear that consultants with their narrative will always be around. However, a better understanding of what is going on may enable parties to better manage this relationship and make informed decisions'* (Williams, 2001: 522).

The discursive approach mostly focuses on consultant knowledge, or the transfer thereof. This is because of the dominant negative portrayal of management consultants' use of rhetoric and a subsequent attempt to provide a more functional interpretation of the phenomena. Functional rationales are proposed for the use of rhetoric by Berglund & Werr (2000). They propose that consultants use rhetoric to combine concepts which are usually incommensurable in theory, but may lead to innovative insights in practice. Furthermore, theoretical approaches are used to argue for the inevitability of the use of rhetoric. For instance: the difficulties of communicating between different communities of practice (Seidl & Mohe, 2007); the differing logics between the systems of 'client' and 'consultant' (Mohe & Seidl, 2011); organisational boundaries causing different expectations from the social groups (Kitay & Wright, 2004); or because of different power roles and dynamics between client and consultant (Alvesson , 2009).

All the literature focuses on either power or knowledge as ends, with rhetoric (storytelling, symbolism, myths, metaphors, images)[9] being the means to this end. Knowledge and power are also very well interlinked by the literature. This is because the asymmetry of knowledge between client

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[9] This thesis generally refers to these as rhetoric, but within the literature, especially with a discursive focus, many similar phenomenon of rhetoric are observed depending on the context.

and consultant causes power dynamics, and vice versa – power dynamics assume asymmetry of knowledge.

This study also argues that another dynamic of the interaction is neglected. This dynamic is relatively well acknowledged, but hardly investigated, especially from a discursive perspective within micro level research. The dynamic is trust in the client-consultant interaction. Most literature acknowledges trust as an essential factor for both the success of a consulting interaction, and for knowledge sharing or creation. The following section will elaborate on the role of trust in the client-consultant interaction.

2.2.3.3.3   The Role of Trust

As stated, Furusten and Werr (2009) highlight three levels of analysis, namely macro, meso and micro. However, the focus of their article is on the rationale for acquiring management advice services, and not on the consulting process itself. They specifically look at the factors on each level that influence the decision to acquire management consultants. On the micro level, they identify trust as being a fundamental factor that influences the decision to acquire management consultants. Trust is therefore acknowledged as central to the initiation of the consulting process. However, the role of trust is not extended further than the acquisition decision. The following section will highlight the significance of trust within the client-consultant interaction.

There is general consensus that trust is an essential factor in the development of interpersonal and collaborative relationships (Axelrod, 2006). Clients have little opportunity to reliably evaluate high contact services like consulting interventions and the other variations mentioned prior to the initial hiring decision (Lovelock, 1983; Zeithaml, 1981). Therefore, when they lack this prior experience with the consultant, perceptions of the consultant's trustworthiness is critical to develop the objectives and scope of collaboration (Murray, 1991).

Trust fundamentally allows people to function in a complex social setting by being able to expect certain behaviour from other parties (Davis *et al.*, 1979). It is acknowledged that trust greatly improves benefits for the parties involved. This is the case because it reduces negotiation costs, search costs and the cost of betrayal (Thorgren & Wincent, 2010). It is therefore clear that the role played by trust in an interaction between two parties is well known. This critical aspect of the interaction between client and consultant should be investigated in order to understand how trust is established between the parties involved. With trust being a very complex concept, this thesis will delimit the study to initial trust formation, and specifically the source of such initial trust formation. In turn, the focus will be on how the consultant establishes initial trust on this basis. The next

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chapter will elaborate on this framework of trust. However, at this point it is important to clearly define the specific unit of analysis that the thesis will focus on.

2.3 The Unit of Analysis

This section outlines the unit of analysis. Clarification of why this particular unit has been chosen and the way in which the unit of analysis provides a platform to generalise the research will also be discussed. The underlying form and characteristics of the unit of analysis will make the research findings applicable to similar interactions. The generalisable unit will be labelled as 'high-contact interactions'. The following section will define high-contact interactions. Four characteristics of these interactions will be highlighted and two examples will be interpreted in relation to these characteristics.

2.3.1   Defining Management Consulting

It is tempting to simply classify management consulting as 'managerial advice given to companies for a fee'. However, it is important to provide some more clarity before settling on a workable definition, and this is especially relevant to this thesis. Additionally, '*there are almost as many definitions of consultancy as there are consultants*' (Rassam, 1998: 29). Given the fact that there is no accepted definition, it is acceptable to arbitrarily choose a definition which suits this thesis best. The study is definitively more concerned with the definition of management consulting in social interaction terms. This is because management consulting is not the topic, but forms the 'case study'. It is an area where the phenomena in question are readily found. Management consulting is a social interaction where one party[10] (consultant) enters an interaction with another party (client), which requested their presence due to a shortcoming that must be addressed by the party entering the interaction. Characteristic of this interaction is the knowledge sharing and learning that takes place. It is important to create a thorough concept of the particular interaction that this thesis is investigating. This will be outlined in the following sections.

2.3.2   High-contact Interactions

The interactions under investigation are referred to as 'high-contact' interactions. The word 'contact' does not point to physical contact between the parties involved, but is rather illustrative of

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[10] The word 'party' is used to denote that it can be (but not necessarily is) more than one person. Therefore a party can consist of many actors.

social contact in the interaction. Coupled with working in close proximity, these interactions are cognitively and discursively engaging for all parties involved. The idea of high-contact interactions originates from the fields of relationship development, psychotherapy and client relations management. An example of this concept being applied to the consulting process can be found in the study of Karantinou and Hogg (2009). In this study, they extend 'relationship development' to the consulting process because of its 'high-contact' nature, creating a fit with the field of relationship development. What makes these type of interactions unique is that they: (a) have an significant objective which necessitates the interaction between the parties; (b) have parties involved with varying degrees of familiarity; and (c) happen in close proximity with face-to-face dialogue.

The first characteristic relates to the temporariness of the interaction. This is because the interaction is initiated because of some shared objective or task, necessitating the interaction self. Therefore, the formation of the interaction necessitates collaboration between the parties involved. The second characteristic is important because it places a qualifier on the interaction, specifically in terms of trust. If all the parties were known to each other, trust would be less relevant and would not need investigation. However, if the parties involved have varying degrees of familiarity, then the process of trust development becomes necessary – the phenomenon under investigation in this paper. The third characteristic is necessary because without face-to-face dialogue interpersonal trust would never be fully developed. This is stated as a necessary characteristic because ample research has been done on trust development within virtual networks (see e.g. Jarvenpaa *et al.*, 2004). This concept must be related to client-consultant interactions.

Management consulting is by no means an unknown term. However, there seems to be no definition of management consulting that would suffice to highlight the nature of the interaction in terms of a high-contact interaction. Besides, there is basically consensus that there would be no satisfactory definition of management consulting because the practice is so extremely varied and under theorised (see e.g. Collins, 2004: 554; Rassam, 1998: 29; Sturdy, *et al.*, 2009: 3). However, when one narrows management consulting down by viewing it from a particular perspective the production of a workable definition becomes possible. If management consulting is investigated from an interpretive paradigm and viewed as a discursive practice, the contextual nature of management consulting can successfully be inferred. Therefore, using the definition of Clegg *et al,* (2004:36) '*consulting is first and foremost a linguistic activity – a discursive practice through which realities are enacted*', one can try to work towards a definition to interpret the high-contact interaction characteristic stipulated earlier.

2.3.2.1   Shared Objectives

It can be simply stated that management consulting is fundamentally a conversation between the client and consultant (Kykyri, 2008). This means that the discourse between parties is the reason for the collaboration. This places the focus on the discourse itself as being more important than the knowledge 'brought in' to the interaction. Whether consultants have the same objectives as the clients is a point of contention, especially according to the critical perspective (see e.g. Fincham, 1999). Notwithstanding this critical view, the fact remains that the acquisition of a management consultant advice infers a problem or situation experienced by the clients. In addition, the intention of the interaction is fundamentally in order to address a certain issue or situation. The interaction is thus shaped based on a shared objective which requires intense interaction. It is also assumed that these interactions would not necessarily be of low importance, or the issues addressed insignificant, merely based on the fact that the use of management consultants is a costly endeavour and the process taxing to those involved, especially so for the client.

2.3.2.2   Familiarity of Parties

One of the main arguments relating to the previous section is that management consultants are utilised in order to bring expertise from the outside (McKenna, 2006). This would mean that the consultant is, and should be, an unfamiliar party in the interaction (Sturdy *et al*., 2009). However, in reality, clients will re-use a previous consultant or firm, especially if the previous consultant left a positive impression with the client. This is offset by a consulting process involving multiple actors at different stages of the interaction. The implication is that, not only is the consultant an unfamiliar party, but different actors enter and leave the interaction during the whole process. In terms of the characteristics of a high-contact interaction, management consulting certainly qualifies because of the differing familiarity between parties, causing the interaction to be an intensive and complex discourse.

2.3.2.3   Close Interaction

Management consulting is a face-to-face interaction in terms of the quote by Clegg & Kornberger: *'consulting is first and foremost a linguistic activity'*. This infers that management consulting is done through conversation between client and consultant. However, it is a form of intensive language use, which necessitates that the parties involved are in close contact with each other. In order for management consultants to be able to communicate complex concepts and create a discourse between the client and consultant, a complex use of rhetoric, symbolism, framing,

persuasion, and convincing, amongst others, is required. This can only be achieved by successfully using the language of close interaction (Berglund & Werr, 2000).

The objective of this literature review was to analyse the present state of scholarship on the most pertinent issues related to the study. It has attempted to present the most salient views on management consulting and to provide an appropriate level of analysis for achieving the aims of this study.

2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is valuable to highlight the most significant insights in relation to the functional/critical views and the levels of analysis. It is interesting to note that within macro level literature, the functionalist perspective is dominant. Conversely, within meso level analyses, the critical perspective is more dominant. The meso level, like with all social research levels, act as a bridging mechanism between phenomena observed on the micro and macro levels. The meso level critically observes the micro level phenomena, specifically the client-consultant interaction. These observations do not occur in isolation, but with reference to existing literature which, arguably, lacks a socialised view of what actually happens during these interactions. Macro level research is, in turn, informed by established macro theories appropriated from economics and sociology.

The point of the review is however not to synthesise the literature, but to contextualise the study while also highlighting the shortcomings present within the current literature. This position within the literature is gained through taking leave from the critical stance framed in relation to the functionalist claims. The thesis nevertheless joins the critical perspective in its interpretation of the interpersonal interaction of management consultants, making explicit the taken-for-granted aspects of these interactions.

One example of such a taken-for-granted aspect is trust. Trust is addressed within macro theories such as social embeddedness theory and signalling theory, but neglected on the micro level. More specifically, micro literature thoroughly addresses the concept of the social construction of identity (and positioning), but no mention is made of the external objective of this agency process other than the self-fulfilment and social belonging (e.g. Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The argument is thus made that social belonging is a means to an end when placed in the context of management consulting. The next chapter will further explore the concept of trust and relate it to identity construction. Thereafter the framework and conceptualisation of the role of trust in management consulting will be developed.

CHAPTER 3

TRUST AND IDENTITY

3.1 Introduction

Trust is an important prerequisite for the functioning of social collaboration and especially knowledge sharing or creation. This generally accepted proposition will be further explored in this chapter. Before the importance of trust can be explored there is a need for a definition of trust, especially with regards to the nature of trust within the explicated unit of analysis. The concept of trust will be explored by identifying the mechanisms of trust and how trust is developed in social interaction.

With an understanding of trust, the chapter will review, in more detail, the process of identity construction. Using the concept of 'identity work' (Alvesson & Sevenningsson, 2011:161), this study will outline identity and trust. The ties between identity and trust will be captured in a framework based on McInnes & Corlett (2012), but altered by adding the dimension of trust to the positioning space available for consultants. Based on the conceptualisation of both trust and identity, this chapter's main objective will then be to provide a link between trust and identity. Based on this link, a context theory will be developed that attempts to inform future research dealing with this phenomena.

3.2 Defining Trust

There is little agreement on the precise meaning of trust (Hosmer, 1995). For instance, earlier works have criticised the definition of trust for being paradoxical (Golembiewski & McConckie, 1975: 131). Luhmann, (translation by Davis *et al.,* 1979: 8) criticized the work on trust as being '*theoretically unintegrated and incomplete*' (as quoted in Hosmer, 1995: 380). The conception of trust is to be found in everyday discourse and is therefore well-known and seemingly not in need of serious reflection (Barber, 1983). Nevertheless, trust was, and still is, a central concept in most social research. This has unfortunately led to the serial defining of 'trust' by many authors, with the resulting definitions often having little in common (Zucker, 1986). Shapiro shares the same sentiment when stating that: '*the conceptualization has received considerable attention in recent*

years, resulting in a confusing potpourri of definitions applied to a host of units and levels of analysis' (1987: 624).

Apart from what trust *is* there is also a discussion about what trust is *not*. After a review of literature Mayer *et al*. (1995) discusses three things that trust is not. These are cooperation, confidence and predictability. They argue that although trust can result in cooperation between parties entering a trusting relationship, trust is not a necessary precondition for cooperation. It can however be argued that trust is an antecedent or contributing factor to the cooperativeness of parties. However, cooperation and trust are not directly linkable. This is because parties may cooperate fully whilst having no trust or even mistrust of each other.

Mayer *et al.* (1995) and Davis *et al.* (1979) argue that trust is not the same as confidence. Trust is different from confidence because it requires a decision or action on the part of a trustor. Without a decision or engagement into a trusting situation, it would merely be confidence. Confidence is therefore more like routine (although trust can also become routine) and does not rely on attribution and perception of a situation. For instance, note the example that Luhmann provides; taking a weapon every time we leave the house (Davis *et al.*, 1979). We do not actively perceive and attribute the dangers facing us every time we leave our houses, and therefore we do not attentively make a decision to take or not to take a weapon as protection. The automatic decision not to take a weapon is confidence in that the dangers would not become reality for us.

Trust has furthermore been connected with predictability. This means that trust is extended only within the bounds of being able to predict future behaviour. If one were not able to predict future circumstances, trust would not be extended. However, as Mayer *et al*. (1995) and Deutsch (1985) argue, trust must be extended beyond predictability in order to be meaningfully interpreted. Firstly, if we could have predictability, we would not have the need for trust. Trust is clearly a result of risk (which is, by definition, the absence of predictability). Furthermore, when equating the two, it can be argued that a person who consistently breaks trust and ignores the interests of others and predictably stays self-interested can be trusted, because the individual's behaviour is predictable, and therefore trustworthy.

Trust is a very complex concept and is interpreted differently in different contexts. There is also an overall lack of research undertaken on trust in certain fields, as it is a taken for granted mechanism of social collaboration. The terminology surrounding trust can also be somewhat confusing, leading to the obfuscation of the concept itself by diverting the argument to sub-factions of trust. It is for these reasons that it is an established norm to approach trust as consisting of more than one element.

This approach provides a more dynamic explanation of what trust is and enables the production of an analysis wherein the requisite variety can be interpreted more meaningfully.

It is generally agreed that trust consists of the dual conditions of risk and interdependence (Mayer *et al*., 1995; Rousseau *et al*., 1998; Luhmann, 2000). Risk arises when a person enters a situation characterised by imperfect information, therefore making future outcomes unpredictable and possible loss or harm outcomes may result (Chiles & McMackin, 1996). When a person is faced with such a risk situation it is natural to seek mitigation options or strategies in order to reduce the amount of risk. This is where interdependence plays a role. It manifests when part of the mitigation option or strategy involves relying on another individual to help mitigate the risks, therefore creating interdependence between the involved parties. Risk is essentially reduced through collaborative efforts between the parties. Importantly, the person relying on the other individual actually relinquishes control over the mitigation of certain risks in the hope that the individual keeps the status quo in mitigating the risk. Only if the person has reasonable assurance about their partner keeping the status quo will he or she extend trust. If the person has reason to think that the other party will not hold the status quo of sharing in the mitigation of the risk, trust would not be given. The level of trust between two parties also depends on the level of risk and therefore the level of need for interdependence (Sheppard & Sherman, 1998). If there is low risk, strong trust is not needed, as parties would be able to cope with the risks. However, the higher the risks, the more people are in need of collaboration for risk mitigation. This discussion describes initial trust formation or tentative trust; it is trust that is formed on perceived trustworthiness, instead of acknowledged trustworthiness. Acknowledged trustworthiness is developed over time between two parties in situations that necessitate trust, where after it is concluded that cooperation was beneficial for both parties.

The focus on initial trust formation is important. Most of the literature theorises trust as an accumulative 'commodity' that manifests after repeated reassurances given by parties keeping the status quo (McKnight *et al*., 1998). This then infers that trust between particular parties must have started at a lower level in order to build over time through the repetition of interaction. However, some empirical evidence contradicts this by having shown that initial levels of trust were higher than expected (e.g. Berg *et al*., 1995; Kramer, 1994). The implication of this is that initial trust formation is more important than previously thought, especially in the context of a consulting interaction where various parties have not had previous contact with a consultant and trust is needed to carry out the interaction in a productive manner. These types of interactions are usually done

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with low prospects of repeated interaction, which changes the dynamics of how trust is developed and the overall need for trust.

In returning to the overarching literature, it is important to note the use of trust in the framework provided by Furusten & Werr (2009). Trust is identified by Furusten and Werr as an essential factor in the decision making process of hiring a management consultant and it is only one form of trust applicable during a certain stage of the consulting process. Certain risks were involved in the decision making process that are mitigated by the decision to trust (or extend tentative trust) to the consultant. However, new risks arise during the consultation process, because new parties get involved who also need to trust the consultant. These new parties have different criteria for trust in a particular situation and therefore the trust extended during the acquisition would not necessarily be shared by the new parties involved. Furthermore, as alluded to in the concluding remarks of the previous chapter, the mechanism of trust within the client-consultant interaction is widely ignored throughout management consulting literature. It is thus important to address this issue through exploring trust during a client-consultant interaction.

The specific situation that will be focused on in this study is the initial interaction between the consultant and client, after an acquisition decision was already made. At this point, new parties enter the interaction, and others leave. This means that there are some elements of institutional trust (trust in the acquisition decision) present. But this is not a permanent state of affairs and a more interpersonal form of trust would need to be developed. The next section incorporates an attempt to illustrate the different bases of trust and to illustrate how they play a role in the management consulting process.

3.3 Importance and Uniqueness of Trust

To develop a concept of trust within client-consultant interactions, two aspects need to be discussed. These are the importance of trust, from both an interpersonal and knowledge sharing (interaction success) perspective; and the uniqueness of trust within a management consulting interaction.

3.3.1 Importance

On a global scale, the importance of knowledge intensity is creating a strong need for and reliance on trust between parties that seek to share knowledge (Adler, 2001). Along with the acceleration in knowledge intensity is an associated increase in connectivity and therefore people are left with more sources of information than before, but less personal interaction with those sources (Adler, 2001). The result is that 'reflective trust' is relied on more than 'blind trust' (Adler, 2001: 227). This

means that people more actively engage with their decision to trust than before. Previously, little connectedness meant that the information source networks were better known and therefore could be blindly trusted to a greater degree.

Trust is a crucial element for the successful intervention of consultants. Trust develops social relations between parties, which makes fine-grained information sharing possible. This is because the identity of a person providing the information is just as important as the information itself. Trust makes an information source credible and interpretable (Uzzi, 1996). Blau (1964) and Lewis and Weigert (1985) also state that trust is an essential factor for any stable social relation. In this same vein, Hirsch (1978) argues that trust is a public good, essential for economic transactions. This can be extended to include any transaction, including information and knowledge 'transactions' between parties. Tsai (2002) elaborates on this point and states that information and knowledge carry risk in terms of accepting or rejecting it, and therefore social interaction that leads to trust is an essential factor in dealing with the risk of uncertainty about information.

Trust is also an antecedent for positive attribution errors in group work. This means that people attribute credit or blame on others based on their trustworthiness. If someone trusts another person it becomes more probable that in the event of something going wrong, it would be seen as a technical problem instead of a mistake (e.g. Cramton, 2001; Piccoli & Ives, 2003). This relates to Dirks & Ferrin's (2001) moderation model of trust. They find that high levels of trust will cause the trustor to hold positive attitudes about the trusted party[11]. Trust therefore affects how one assesses another's previous, present and future behaviour. Low levels of trust or distrust in group work therefore would result in negative or hostile relations between group members.

In keeping with the argument developed in the previous section, trust is not co-operation, prediction or confidence, but it would lead to these outcomes. Trust can help improve cooperation between parties; it can help predict the future behaviour of an actor; and it gradually builds confidence in a well-trusted party. All of these are essential factors in any collaboration effort between parties.

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[11] The 'trusting' party is the person that is to extend trust; it does not infer that trust is already extended. It is phrased in this way here to ensure clarity of communication. The same holds for the 'trusted' party by inferring that it is the party to be trusted.

3.3.2   Uniqueness

An important distinction to make in order to highlight the uniqueness of trust in the context of this study is that trust is not a static and one-dimensional product. It can be reduced to low and high degrees of trust, while it can also be negative high or low trust (distrust). Both positive and negative trust is trust; they work according to the same mechanisms. Negative trust (distrust) is trusting that a party would not act favourably. Moreover, as already pointed out, trust is not either existent or not – there is a form of established trust, tentative trust, and perceived trustworthiness. This is the view expressed earlier by empirical studies showing that trust is a gradual process of perceived trustworthiness, which leads to initial or tentative trust development – and through repeated interaction trust would be present (Berg *et al.*, 1995; Kramer, 1994, Jarvenpaa *et al.*, 2004). This procedural nature of trust is what is important in temporary groups.

Research on trust in such temporary groups has already been undertaken. The concept of temporary groups was developed by Goodman and Goodman (1976) to explain the unique dynamics of temporarily created groups (or systems). They define a temporary group as '*a set of diversely skilled people working together on a complex task over a limited period of time*' (1976: 494). A key characteristic inherent to these groups is that many members of the group have not worked with each other before and have little prospect of doing so again (Goodman & Goodman, 1976: 495). Another important aspect of temporary groups is that members must keep interrelating with each other in order to try to arrive at a solution to the complex and ambiguous tasks (Goodman & Goodman, 1976: 495). It is this constant interrelating which necessitates the high need for trust development. The third key characteristic in such groups relating to the development of trust is that these groups have short time-spans and therefore conventional models of trust would not be sufficiently applicable. Between the three characteristics mentioned, the third is a point of contention in terms of developments within trust research. This relates to the mentioned high initial trust levels within groups reported on by example Berg *et al*. (1995) and Kramer (1994).

Trust in these temporary groups has developed into a term called 'swift trust' (Meyerson *et al.*, 1996). This is trust developed under time pressures in groups of parties, varying in familiarity, which have been constituted to deal with complex tasks. However, the notion of time pressures is less of a concern within the context of management consulting; the characteristics and complexities of tasks and varying degrees of familiarity are more important. The only time constraint relevant within management consulting is that of the temporariness of the interaction. The idea of swift trust is thus not entirely relevant within management consulting, as trust need not be 'swift'. Furthermore, within management consulting, the nature of group dynamics differs. The focus on

trust extension rests not with group members, but rather with one person from outside the group. The differences and similarities between management consultancy interactions and temporary groups are highlighted in table 2.

The differences between temporary groups and management consulting interactions are that temporary groups have strict and short time constraints and trust must be extended among everyone in the group. In management consulting interventions, the time constraints vary and are not as stringent. Additionally, most of the trust to be extended is towards the consultant. This changes the context and therefore the notion of swift trust. Swift trust is in essence an extension of institutional trust. This is where participants rely on embedded networks and rules to govern the other participants. This reduces the risk of other participants acting in self-interest, and therefore trust is extended in this way. This conception of trust development is largely accurate, but neglects individual agency within the interaction. Trust is extended on an institutional basis, but where a person fits into such institutions is reliant on the trusted party's identity position. Notwithstanding this fact, there are some contexts that result in very little space for people to 'position' in the institutional bounds, including actors in roles like pilots, surgeons and various other highly structured temporary interactions.

However, as argued by McKnight *et al.* (1998), initial interpersonal trust might be a strong indicator of overall trust and people tend to settle on trust in terms of their initial expectations of another person. Moreover, it can be argued that the level of trust is mostly settled with first impressions of a person, after which any additional information about the person updates the level of trust and the strength.

Nevertheless, some aspects of swift trust are relevant. This is because both temporary groups and management consultancy interventions have varying degrees of familiarity and the group have low prospects of working together after the task is completed. This means that trust must be established anew in some way. Trust is essential for the process to be a success, but not necessarily high or established trust. It is only necessary that sufficient trust is present in order to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration to complete the task. Having established a contextual conception of trust within the specific unit of analysis, the dynamics of trust can be explored in the next section.

Table 2: Temporary Groups vs. Consulting Interactions

Temporary Groups	Management consulting interactions
Participants with diverse skills are assembled by a contractor to enact expertise they already possess.	Participants are also diverse skilled, but not necessarily as a function of the gathering. Only one participant is contracted based on specific expertise to enact.
Participants have limited history working together.	Most participants have a working history; however, the consultant does not. However, the consultant may have a working history with some of the participants.
Participants have limited prospects of working together again in the future.	The majority of participants will work together in the future. However, the consultant has limited prospects to work with the majority of the group in the future, or at least with the specific collection of participants.
Participants often are part of limited labour pools and overlapping networks	Only the consultant is from a limited labour pool, and does not specifically share an overlapping network like the rest of the participants.
Tasks are often complex and involve interdependent work	Tasks are mostly complex (necessitating the contracting of consultant), and involves interdependent work.
Tasks have a deadline	Tasks have a deadline, however less stringent.
Assigned tasks are non-routine and not well understood	Assigned tasks are non-routine and not well understood. However, the consultant's task is to make sense and communicate the group tasks to further coherence.
Assigned tasks are consequential	Assigned tasks are consequential. Especially for the consultant (reputation).
Continuous interrelation is required to produce an outcome	Continuous interrelation is required to produce an outcome

3.4 The Dimensions of Trust

Adler (2001) provides an overview of the different dimensions and components of trust. The different dimensions are sources, mechanisms, objects and bases. Sources of trust are the sources by which a person receives information for trusting another party. The different components are familiarity through repeated interaction; calculation based on interests; norms that create predictability and trustworthiness (Adler, 2001).

3.4.1 Sources

By repeated interactions between parties, they learn more about each other, and therefore their trustworthiness. They develop a predictable idea of each other's future reactions and behaviour, based on experience of previous trusting situations. Calculation based on interest is trust sourced

from another person's interests. This is when one party feels that the other shares the same interest in a particular situation, and the trusting party can then infer the trusted party's actions. The trusting party will believe that the trusted party will not act in self-interest because they share the same interests. Therefore, if the trusted party were to act in self-interest, it would nevertheless benefit the trusting party. Norms that create predictability and trustworthiness relate to shared norms between a trusting and trusted party (Ring, 1996). This means that the trusting party would infer the future actions of the trusted party on the norms that govern the interaction. This means that there are relevant social norms, which keep all parties acting within the same social situation to certain standards, and therefore all taking part in the social interaction may infer that the other would keep the status quo.

3.4.2   Mechanisms

The next dimension, mechanisms of trust, deals with the mechanisms that carry the information and rules from the sources to the trusting party. The components of this dimension are: direct personal contact: reputation and institutional context. These three mechanisms all support each other in order to provide a mechanism or means by which trust is developed (Coleman, 1990). Direct personal contact is the primary mechanism by which information about the trustworthiness of another party can be gauged. This is where rich information is gathered by trusting parties about the trusted parties in order to infer trustworthiness. Reputation is a mechanism by which trust is gathered by receiving 'packaged' information about a person's trustworthiness from various sources. This mechanism is transferred in anecdotal fashion within social interaction (personal contact). Institutional context, offers a mechanism for trust development in that it acts as a vehicle for rules and norms to be transferred to all those that act within the bounds of a particular institution. The trusting party can extend trust to those within the same institution as the partaking in the institution infers those partaking in it abides by the rules and norms that subject to partaking.

3.4.3   Objects

The third dimension is that of generic objects of trust. Objects are the different components that have agency within the trust dynamics of social interactions. Therefore, a trusting party can have trust in the object, which is in individuals, systems or collectives. Individuals have agency within trust relations, as they are the primary extenders and receivers of trust within an interaction. Individuals develop criteria for trustworthiness and interpret other individuals on the bases of the criteria for trustworthiness. Research within this domain is mostly done within the field of social psychologists (Bigley & Pearce, 1998). Systems act as objects because a system has agency within

a trusting dynamic. This is because a system carries rules and norms and develops these criteria and standards to which individuals and groups adhere. Individuals can also place trust in systems, when 'systems' are conceptualised as 'abstract systems' (Davis *et al.*, 1979; Giddens, 1990). However trust within these systems usually reflect confidence more that 'trust'. Collectives also have agency, as many rules, norms and criteria for trustworthiness are developed in a collective manner. The collective provides amalgamated interpretation of certain behaviour, by which the individuals infer trustworthiness. Therefore, trust can be given to a collective as an agent or object.

The last dimension of trust is 'bases' which is the 'criteria' by which people assess other's trustworthiness. In other words, bases are the features of the 'objects' that cause people to place trust in them. The dimensions are consistency / contractual trust, competence, benevolence / loyalty / concern / goodwill / fiduciary trust, honesty / integrity and openness. Consistency or contractual trust is mostly from the source of repeated interaction between parties (Adler, 2001). This means that the trusted party acted in a consistent manner and kept the contractual status quo within all the repeated interactions. Competence is a criterion by which people infer whether a person is classified to provide a trusting service. This means that if a trusting party perceives the trusted party as incompetent, it would mean that the trusted party does not have the capacity to decrease the level of risk that the trusting party has, and therefore would not be trusted.

The other bases are largely overlapping (Adler, 2001)[12]. However, there is a core theme within the various lists within the literature. Benevolence, loyalty, openness and honesty etcetera, are all forms of 'goodwill' trust (Sako, 1998). These bases of trust will be elaborated on further in the next section.

Table 3: Trust Sources, Mechanisms & Objects

Sources	Mechanisms	Objects
Familiarity through repeated interaction.	Direct personal contact	Individuals
Calculation based on interests.	Reputation	Systems
Norms that create predictability and trustworthiness.	Institutional context	Collectives

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[12] benevolence/ loyalty/ concern/ goodwill/ fiduciary trust/ honesty/ integrity and openness

As argued there is a need to develop an understanding of trust in a specific context, and these dimensions provide a framework to highlight the specific contextual characteristics of the phenomena studied in this thesis. The specific context this thesis is interested in is the conversation between consultants and clients in the initial meeting phase of the consultant and the specific clients in a consulting project.

Firstly the object that trust will have to be place in is the individual and not in systems or collectives. It would be based on an individual. Secondly, the source cannot be familiarity because of the temporariness of the interaction[13]. Therefore, the source would be mostly the shared interests of the client and consultant, and to some extent, norms by default because it plays a role within all social interaction. Thirdly, the mechanism of trust must be interpersonal contact.

The only dimension that is omitted, for now, is that of bases. This is because this will form the key argument of this paper and needs more elaboration. Bases of trust are the criteria that people use to infer the trustworthiness of an object. Because of delineating the object to the individual via the mechanism of interpersonal contact, using interest and norms as sources, the bases become the focal point. This is because the question of how consultants establish trust within consulting interactions relies on the bases that they provide the trusting party on which to assess their trustworthiness. Therefore, the following section will expand on bases of trust.

3.4.4   Trust Bases

There are various bases of initial trust formation identified in the literature. As mentioned before, Adler (2001) offers consistency, competence, benevolence, honesty and openness as bases. But this list is not the exhaustive. For instance, there are many others which consider disposition as another base of trust – specifically from the trustee's side (e.g. McKnight et al., 1998; Lewicki et al., 2006; Williams, 2001; Mayer et al., 1995). This means that some people tend to trust more readily than others do. A more exhaustive list is nevertheless provided by Kramer (1999), who describes six bases: dispositional trust, history-based trust, role-based trust, rule-based trust, category-based trust and third-party trust. Each of these offers a possible basis for trust formation between two parties. These will be explored more in-depth in the following paragraphs.

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[13] Many consultants have repeat business with clients, but the aim of this study is the context where consultants meet for the first time, and all consultants had to meet respective clients for the first time

Dispositional trust is the propensity for someone to extend trust to another party. This base of trust is somewhat independent from the rest, as it is actually a mediating mechanism for all other trust bases (McKnight et al., 1998). This means that a person can extend trust on any basis such as history, or identity, however, it is always mediated by the propensity of the person to trust in general. Therefore, if a person has a low propensity to trust, the other bases of trust would be very sensitive to interpretation by the trusting party.

History-based trust is a form of acknowledged trust. It is trust that evolves through trust-related experiences with a particular party. This means that there was repeated interaction between particular parties, which established a trusting relationship. If the client used the consultant previously they would have history-based trust. However, there is always the possibility that new parties who have not previously had a trustful collaboration with the consultant will enter the process, resulting in the requirement for trust to be extended on a different basis. This base is more relevant with familiarity as a source, and reputation as a mechanism.

Role-based trust, on the other hand, uses the role of the potential trusted party within the context of society or social setting to decide to extend trust, and therefore trusting that they have the knowledge and capacity to competently perform their particular role (Meyerson et al., 1996). The same basis that people use for role-based trust in the context of management consulting may even cause mistrust because of the negatively perceived role of a consultant in popular business culture (Bloch, 1999; Armbrüster, 2006). Role-based trust is grounded in expectations of certain roles, and that those who occupy the roles will fulfil their fiduciary responsibilities (Barber, 1983).

Rule-based trust is trust developed based on the rules that govern a situation. This corresponds closely with trust within systems or collective objects and within an institutional context as a mechanism of interaction. People trust in the rules to govern other people's behaviour and it therefore makes the parties involved more predictable. In turn, this reduces risks. Rule-based trust is sustained in an organisation through the socialisation of the structures and rules, rather than through an explicit contract (March & Olson, 1989). Category-based trust is trust derived from a trusted party's membership in a social or organisational category. This might be categories like male or female, manager or accountant. If individuals within a certain category enter into interactions necessitating trust, they would be more readily able to extend trust than they would to those outside of their category. For instance the study done by Orbell *et al.* (1994) shows how female judges expect female prisoners to be more cooperative in the prisoners' dilemma. Role-based and rule-based trust is more relevant within a context supposing the trust mechanism of institutional context.

Third party-based trust is perceived trustworthiness developed through a conduit of information sources 'vouching' for the trustworthiness of a certain party. Trust developed on this basis is a type of 'second-hand' trust (Kramer, 1999: 575). This type of trust is rather complex and difficult to rely on. This is specifically because people only relay partial information about a 'to-be-trusted' party (Burt & Knez, 1995). However, a study done by Uzzi (1997) showed how third-party trust plays a crucial role in developing trust relations within a fast-paced industry. Reputation is one such form of third-party trust, where people use public information on the person in order to assess whether to trust his motivations in the future. Third party-based trust is closely linked with the trust mechanism of reputation rather than personal contact[14]. Identity-based trust stems from social identity theory, suggesting that we use social comparison and classification to gauge whether others are similar to ourselves (McKnight et al., 1998; Meyerson et al., 1996). We use the identity of the person to assess whether we share values and goals. This form of trust is also grounded in attribution theory. It explains how people make sense of others' actions by assessing their decisions and behaviour, and using individual level cues to make inferences about their character and identity.

It is important to draw attention to the underlying assumption regarding why trustworthiness can be based on a person's identity. Identity acts as a signal of ascription to socially constructed preconceptions of society. Strictly speaking, identity based trust is thus also an external source of information for perceived trustworthiness. However, the role of human agency in constructing identity within prevailing discourse is what separates it as an important basis of trust to focus on. Within interpersonal interaction people can alter their perceived identity – a process that happens discursively. People are therefore reliant on the narrative to deduct information as to where a person fits into the larger discourse which creates the other bases of trust. This means identity is an underlying trust-base mediating perceptions of all the other trust bases.

A person can mediate information about him or herself by highlighting certain facts rather than others in order to stand in favour with the party that has to extend the trust. For instance, when a trusted party consults with a group of accountants, the fact that he or she is a manager can be downplayed, while the fact that he or she was trained as an accountant can be emphasised. This draws on the category based trust that was mentioned earlier. Consequently an active process of positioning oneself within all the available bases exists in a social interaction. The following section

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[14] Except history-based trust. However, history-based trust is developed over time, and the focus of this study is initial trust development.

discusses the role of identity. It will move towards explaining how people adapt their identity to a certain situation by using identity work.

3.5 Identity

Identity, it is argued, plays a critical role in the chances of a person being considered as trustworthy. In addition to this general notion, a management consultant must actively adjust or portray his or her identity to ensure that he or she is assessed more favourably by the clients. To be able to argue that a person is able to alter perceptions of his or her identity by using narrative, one has to adopt the assumption of the constructionist view of identity. The constructionist view regards identity as a constructed phenomenon or a co-constructed product of context and actors within a specific situation, rather than a subjective internal creation of the individual (LaPointe, 2010).

Other theories of identity view it as a private, essential and cognitive construct that exists irrespective of expressed narrative and contextual factors (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In other words, speaking about oneself does not influence one's identity, as identity is possessed and fixed by an individual. It consists of attributes, values, beliefs, decisions, motives and experiences, which sets a fixed identity for interpretation by others (Schein, 1978). However, within discourse-based identity theorising such as according to the constructionist view, identity is created and given meaning by social and cultural practices (Gergen, 1991). Moreover, identity is not coherent or unitary in nature and may be interpreted differently and given different and even contradictory meanings over time (LaPointe, 2010). A person's identity is continuously changed and adapted to social dynamics and cultural practices and it can actively be altered by the individual in order to adjust to the context, even if it contradicts previous identities of the person. The next section will discuss what is referred to as identity work. Identity work is the investigation of how people narrate their identity and position themselves in a social environment.

3.5.1   Identity Work

Identity work is a concept used to describe the process of individual identity construction in order to align with a sense of self and social acceptance. The concept has recently been adopted quite widely, but has hardly pinned down (Watson, 2008). The term is used in broad social science by amongst others Cohen and Taylor (1978), McDermott and Church (1976) and Stewart and Strathern (2000). Nevertheless, it was only with the work of Svenningson and Alvesson (2003) that identity work was been given a definite conceptual pinning. Identity work is seen as the process of being continuously '*engaged in forming repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness*' (Svenningson &

Alvesson, 2003:1165). The conception of identity work developed by these authors was mainly focused on self-identity or personal identity. In other words, identity work is a process of managing one's sense of self. Watson (2008) regards this conception to be helpful, but lacking. He posits that identity work is done for both personal identity and social identity. Social identity work is done by managing identity with reference to the prevalent discourse in which a person acts. This extension of identity work to include the referral to the discourse governing an interaction holds a strong correlation with the conception of 'impression management' as discussed by Goffman (1990). Down and Reveley (2009), for instance, highlight the lack of '*Goffmanesque*' (2009:383) influence on the conceptualising of identity positioning of individuals in constrained discursive contexts.

The act of identity work can therefore be framed with two dimensions. Firstly, to have a sense of self, people engage in identity work. Secondly, identity work is employed in reference to contextual discourse deriving from the available social identity positions. Identity work therefore provides a framework to investigate how people position their identities through narratives in a social environment. However, most identity work literature focuses on career identity, with a specific focus on how individuals engage in identity work to cope with the shifting boundaries of careers, jobs or tasks (LaPointe, 2010). Identity work is regarded as a means to an end, where the ends are personal gratification and social acceptance. Personal gratification is sought by establishing a sense of personal identity and consistency between interpretations of self. Social acceptance is gained by aligning one's identity to the social context in order to be accepted. Identity work has hardly been connected to management consultants, except for the empirical study undertaken by Alvesson and Svenningson (2011). Their study, however, only focused on consultants' self-identity and not the discursively referred social identity work. Therefore there is a need to incorporate the extension of discursively referred identity positions into the context of client-consultant interactions.

3.5.2   Identity Work in Management Consulting

Based on observations of various papers investigating identity work in career identity McInnes and Corlett (2012) conceptualised a helpful model to express the available space there is for a person to do identity positioning in a certain context. In their article, two dimensions are identified, namely inherent social obligations and interpersonal positioning latitude (McInnes & Corlett, 2012). These aspects work on a continuum between free and open positioning, to closed and narrow space for identity positioning. Obligations for identity are the obligations a person must fulfil when positioning identity in a work or social context. These are expectations created for a given role that one fulfils in a working environment. They can be communicated as duties, rights, roles or titles and one is expected to conform to these obligations when doing identity work.

Interpersonal positioning latitude is the space where a person positions his or her identity in relation to others, and essentially portrays what his or her identity 'is' for others in relation to theirs (McInnes & Corlett, 2012). As with most other research on this topic, the investigation is focused on 'career identity' as the unit of analysis, whereas for this paper's purpose, the analysis is shifted towards a consulting interaction. This has certain implications as there are some fundamental differences between the contexts.

Within management consulting, the identity work of a consultant may be more functional of external recognition of trustworthiness (social acceptance), than personal identity construction. It might also be a more active process within management consulting interventions. In other words, in normal contexts like career identity work, an individual wants to satisfy both personal gratification and external acceptance (Down & Reveley, 2009; Davies & Thomas, 2008). However, management consultants may focus more on external acceptance than personal gratification when doing identity work. They also have to do it more intense, because of the nature of the interactions. This is, because consultants are naturally outsiders and work with clients on a temporary basis. Therefore they need to focus more on positioning their identities favourably within the social discourse provided by the clients, and less on self identity. This does not mean that self identity work is not present, it is merely less crucial for effective collaboration. To illustrate this point, take the case from Alvesson & Svenningson (2011) where consultants engaged in self identity work. The case data was based on interviews post-consulting intervention, and therefore were reflections of the consulting process. It can be argued that any identity work at this point would be focussed more on sense of self, by constructing ones identity retrospectively within the past interaction. This is because the nature of the data is so that the audience during the reflections was the researcher. It is the contention of this thesis that during the consulting interaction, there is less of a concern with self identity consistency within the consultant's identity work, and more of a focus on positioning in terms of the social discourse available.

This is because personal gratification restrains identity positioning freedom as people are heavily constrained by their own sense of consistency between positions of their identity. This is not necessary for a consultant during a consulting interaction. Therefore, identity work might even be more evident in this particular unit of analysis, which differs from the analysis of career or job identity in organisations between co-workers.

Therefore, the pursuit of social acceptance by the consultant is more important than personal identity consistency, and this resonates within a large body of consulting literature, mostly in the critical camp. This however ignores the functional aspect of what is usually called impression

management and the negative view on rhetorical wordplay by consultants. To counter this it is important to add the trust dimension to the framework provided by McInnes & Corlett (2012).

3.5.2.1   Identity Work and Trust

The main difficulty in tying identity work and trust together lies in the way in which both are generally regarded in the literature. Identity work is mostly theorised as a construct of self and other, whereas trust is generally theorised in terms of other and self. To make it more concrete; identity work is what an individual does, and trust is what others do. To juxtapose the two; the potential trusting party does not have to do identity work, but the potential trusted party must, in order for trust to emerge (trust or distrust). Therefore, the trusted party must favourably position his or her identity in reference to the social discourse in order to be extended trust by the trusting party.

To proceed towards a framework of identity positioning and trust one must first investigate the two proposed dimensions of identity work (social obligations and relational positioning latitude). With elaboration on these dimensions, the bases of trust can be incorporated into the framework in order to gain insight on the interplay between identity positioning and trust development.

3.5.2.1.1 Social Obligations

Social obligations are constraints that are derived from the structural arrangements of social collectives like organisations and institutions (McInnes & Corlett, 2012). This means that, within social collections, there are rules, norms and roles that govern the way people interact. These structural arrangements are socially constructed, and represent the discourse in which people can position themselves relative to those with which they share the collective. These same social structural arrangements are what can be seen as role and rule based trust. This is trust extended on the basis that a person 'fits' the identifying role from which trustworthiness is inferred. Alternatively, a person's positioning within a certain rule-based context which governs actions within the context provides information about the trustworthiness of the person.

Role, rule, category and third-party based trust are all bases of trust derived from an external source. The sources can be another person, conventional knowledge, etiquette, reputation, rules, norms, or an array of such derived bases. They are socially constructed guides within discourse, which helps people ascertain the trustworthiness of others. All of these are dependent on the construction of the identity of the potentially trusted party, whether it is the person directly or other channels. Trust therefore developed in terms of social obligations are dependent on the social context, but is developed on identity subscription to those obligations. Examples of this are job titles and role

responsibilities which are shaped by broad discursive notions of what those roles should entail (Simpson & Carrol, 2008; Svenningson & Alvesson, 2003; Thomas & Linstead, 2002). Race and gender (which are category-based trust examples) are other examples of where people who subscribe to a certain group will have their trustworthiness referenced in terms of the prevailing perceptions of the group they identify with (see e.g. Essers & Benschop, 2007; Ezzell, 2009).

3.5.2.1.2 Interpersonal Aspect

Whereas positioning within social obligations is seen as negotiating identity in terms of norms, rules and roles, interpersonal positioning is the negotiation of who an individual 'is', which lies within who the people in the audience 'are' (Beech, 2008). Interpersonal positioning or 'relational positioning latitude' (McInnes & Corlett, 2012) is more focused on identity positioning between individuals, separate from the overarching social discourse. This means that people position themselves based on interpersonal cues. When seen from the bases of trust, this seems to be corresponding solely with dispositional-based trust. This means that in an interpersonal interaction people position themselves in terms of the trust predispositions of the audience in order to gain trust. This is much more complex than merely positioning within a social context, which is open and relatively easily navigated for positions.

People's predispositions to trust are a more unknown space in which to position. Each trusting individual holds specific trust predispositions, which the trusted party must infer through interaction. These predispositions are also embedded within the social context, but outside of the structured rules, norms and roles. A trusting party may infer his or her own predispositions to trust from the larger discourse. However, it would not be the same as the rules, norms and roles that make up the discourse. This might manifest itself in the situation where, within a consulting interaction, a manager (client) may only extend trust to the consultant in terms of his or her professional validity (social context position) but does not extend personal trust because he might be not meeting the dispositional criteria of 'being friendly'. When this happens, the interaction may never be fully successful. This is because the manager will always second-guess information received from the consultant.

Usually within dialogue between parties, this can be remedied by the consultant rationalising why he or she is not friendly, or changing behaviour altogether towards being more friendly. This process of dialogue is well documented in identity work literature. Watson (2008) explores the co-construction of identities between co-workers, which are separate from the identity positions available within the organisational context. Furthermore, Garcia and Hardy (2007) and Snow and

Anderson (1987) explore how, in dialogue, the identity positions of the 'other' can fix the identity position of 'us'. They indicated how identity positions are based on the rejection of the values of an 'other'. The more fixed (less free) interpersonal identity positions are, the less dialogue will be focused on interpersonal identity positioning. The next section will develop a framework combining trust and identity work (social obligations and interpersonal positioning latitude) which would provide a perspective on how consultants should establish trust.

3.6 Identity and Trust Framework

There are similarities between identity work and the development of trust within discourse between various actors. However, what identity work literature lacks is firstly the functional objective of why people would want to position their identities, and secondly, how this framework would explain initial interactions found in temporary groups characterised as a high-contact interaction. The assumed answers would respectively be that trust is a core reason why people position their identities within social discourse and interpersonally, as this offers collaboration. There is also an initial stage of free social obligations and interpersonal positioning latency. However, there is a flow towards more constrained space, regarding both
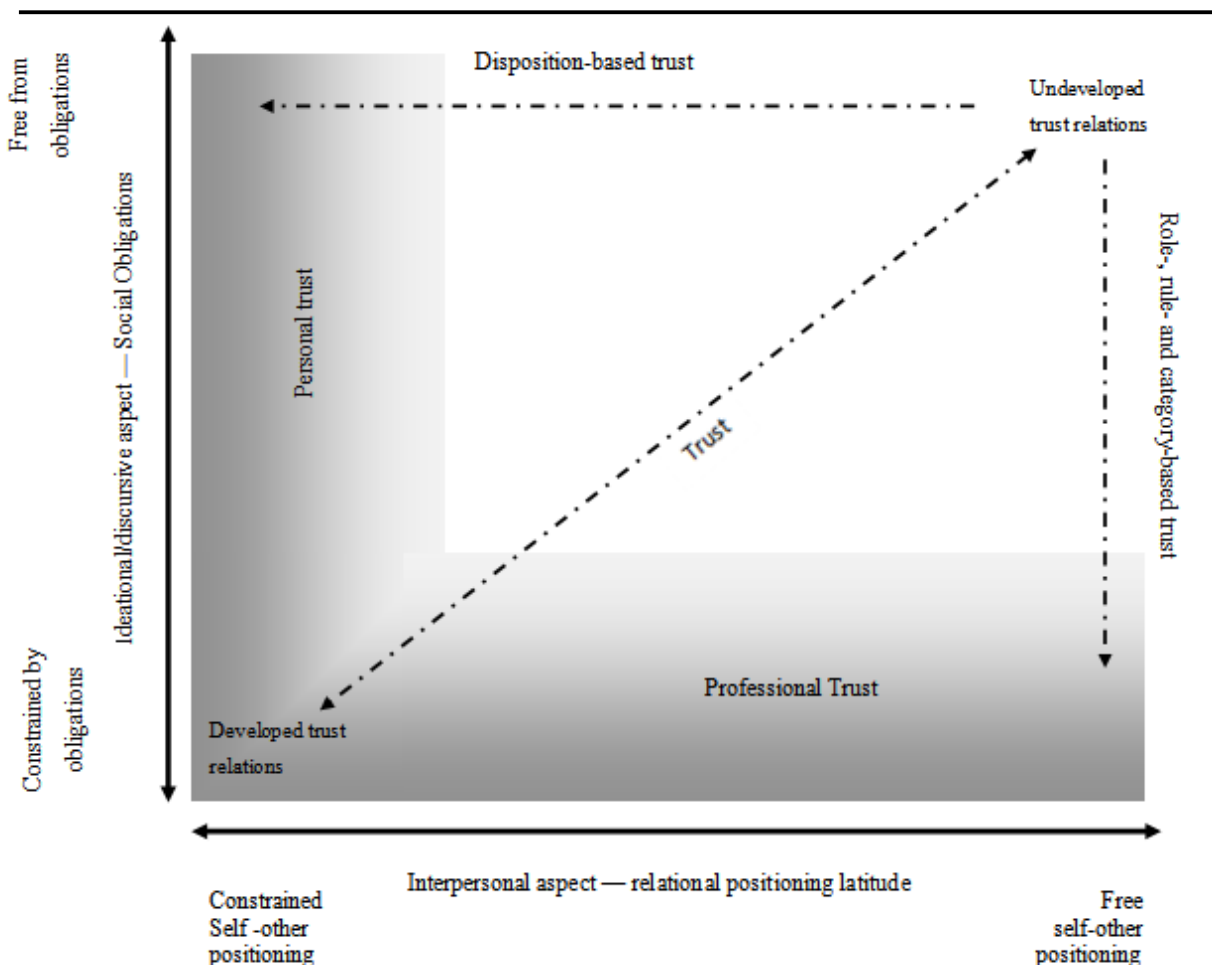
Figure 1: Trust & Identity Positioning Framework

dimensions as a trusted party develops a sense of identity in relation to the audience. This constrained space is characteristic of a historical based trust relationship.

Therefore, by adding trust as a third dimension to the framework provided by McInnes and Corlett (2012) it would offer a more dynamic framework in order to analyse identity positioning for trust. See figure 1 for the illustration. The framework is a visualisation of incorporating the various trust bases with the concept of identity work. The vertical axis called 'ideational/discursive aspect – social obligations' is representative of the positioning space available to people instilled by the social discourse. The horizontal axis represents the 'interpersonal aspect – relational positioning latitude'. This is the interpersonal positioning space between individuals in an interaction. Both these dimensions have a continuum of free to restricted identity positioning space.

The dotted lines represent the addition of trust bases to the framework. The vertical dotted line is the various external source bases of trust. These bases of trust correspond to the social obligations dimension. The horizontal dotted line corresponds with relational positioning latitude, and is representative of dispositional trust. The diagonal dotted line represents the continuum of undeveloped trust towards developed trust relations. The shaded areas represent the space where trust is extended either on a personal or professional basis. The professional space corresponds to trust developed based on institutional bases, sourced from identity positioning within social obligations. The personal space corresponds to dispositional based trust extension by interpersonal identity positioning.

The identity of the trusted party is not in the framework, as it is to be plotted on the framework based on the position the individual takes. The following section will explore underlying context theory that will inform how identity positioning will take place in client-consultant interactions. This is needed to complete the above framework, because in different contexts different identity positions will be needed.

3.7   Towards a Context Theory of Trust and Identity

This section is an attempt to develop a context theory of the above framework. A context theory is a theory that specifies how surrounding phenomena or temporal conditions directly influence observed lower level phenomena (Bamberger, 2008: 841). Context theory is an elaboration on the contextualisation of theory. This means the context in which phenomena is investigated form part of the theory, instead of just providing contextual details in which the theory is developed. Various authors have called for the contextualisation of research. For instance, Roberts *et al.* (1978: 6) call

for the narrowing of research focus on observing and explaining behaviour within particular, specified contexts. Cappelli and Scherer (1991: 56) stated that context is surroundings that are associated with phenomena, which highlight the particular phenomena. Johns (2006: 386) regards contexts to be situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of behaviour. Moreover, Bamberger (2008: 840) encourages the use of context theories for studies aiming to explain individual behaviour in organisations, where situational factors such as broad social or normative factors influence the observed phenomenon.
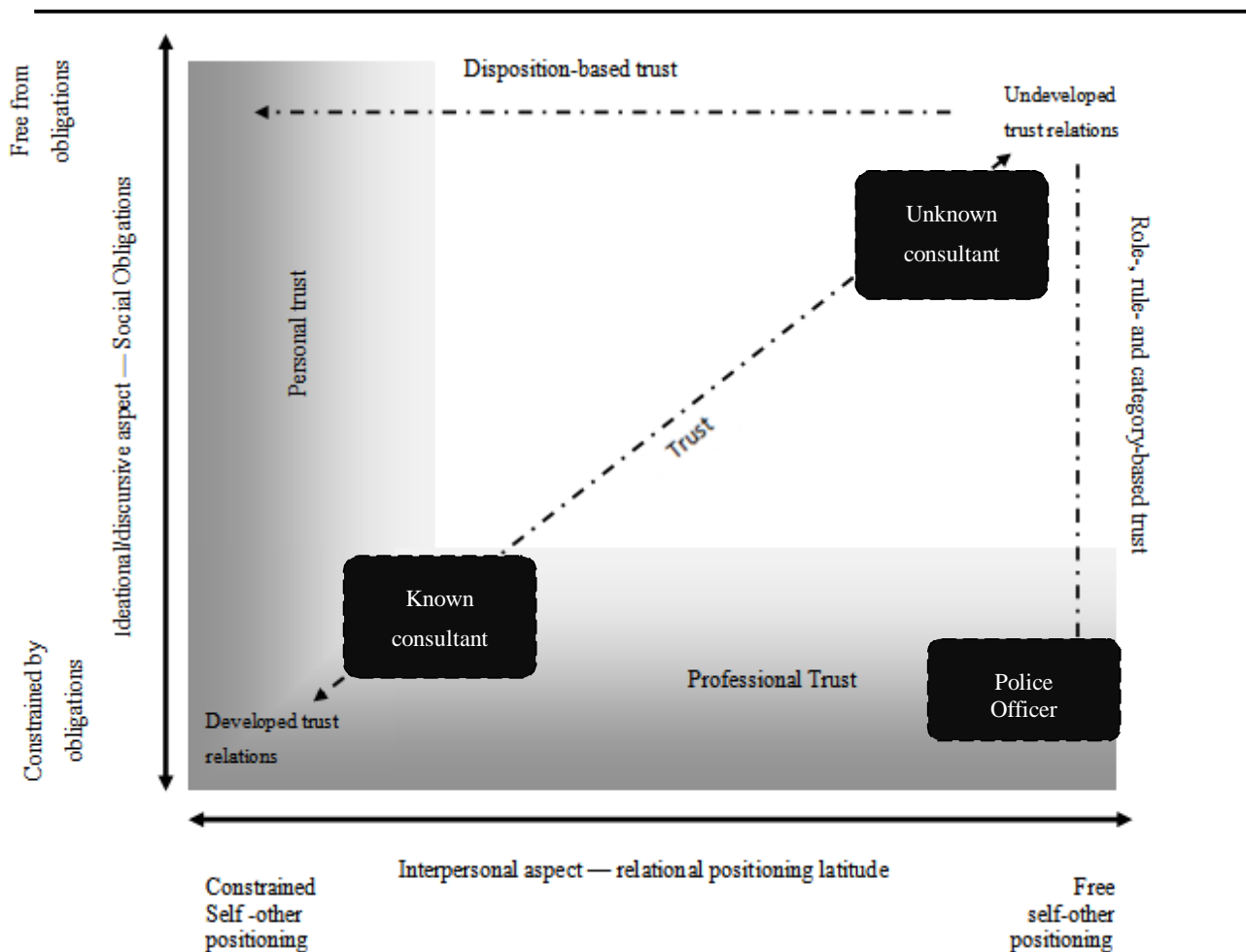

Figure 2: Trust & Identity Positioning Scenarios

The objective of developing a context theory is to explain the contingent nature of positioning for trust in consulting interactions. Trust is contextualised by adapting it to the nature of a temporary interaction where one person is to be extended trust by many and the many are known to each other and the

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trusted party is unknown. This causes trust to be viewed as a heuristic based on the perception of the trusted party's identity. Moreover, the concept of identity is also adapted to the nature of the interaction, where sense of self is less of a concern because of the objectives of the interaction. The nature of the interaction causes social perceptions of a consultant's identity to be more of a concern for the consultant than keeping a sense of self-identity consistency.

To proceed towards developing a context theory highlighting the extremes in the context would suffice in providing an idea of the theory. If a consultant is well known by clients in a particular interaction (after being previously engaged), they have developed trust. The basis on which the trust is established is that of history-based trust. As a result, in this particular interaction, there will be little identity positioning, as everyone has a good idea of the various identity positions. This would also mean that the consultant is very constrained with positioning identity because trust is based on the historical consistency of the consultant's identity, and any strong departure from that particular identity position would cause a loss of trust. This scenario is illustrated in figure 2. On the other extreme, if a consultant has had no prior contact with the client, apart from that which was established in the acquisition decision, trust would not yet be established. This then means that trust has yet to be established within the interaction (when meeting for the first time), and the basis for trust development would be the identity of the consultant. This is if the consultant does not have an official title, a reputable institution to be tied to, or any such institutional identifiers which would provide information about the consultant's trustworthiness. If these contextual factors are present the clients would have to rely on face-to-face interaction in order to interpret the consultant's identity. This is a more tentative form of trust, which would gradually move over to a more established form of trust as the consultant's identity is constructed in terms of more structural positions. Therefore based on the two extremes one can start to paint a picture of how this would fit in the framework of McInnes and Corlett (2012) in figure 2.

With the two scenarios placed within the framework, the positioning leeway available to the consultant can be inferred. For instance, when a consultant has been extended history-based trust, there is little leeway in positioning identity. To take a different example, if a consultant has a reputation and an official title, role or rule based trust would be more active. This may be because there is trust in the role that the consultant fits in, and all the social obligations that are tied with the role of for example a 'university professor'. This then indicates that the clients have expectations of the consultant that limits the freedom of social obligations. Nevertheless, the consultant is still free to position in terms of relational or interpersonal identity. An example of this within identity work literature can be that of Davies & Thomas (2008). This investigated the narrative work of police

officers, specifically how they were constrained to position between certain identities because of general perceptions of the role they fulfil as police officers. However, they are still able to position themselves in relation to individuals, which can range from fluffy policeman policing to hard policeman. There are many such social identity positions. Watson (2008: 131) provides a helpful breakdown on some of the possible social identities that can carry information (see table 4).

Table 4: Social Identity Examples (Watson, 2008: 131)

Social Identity	Examples
Social-category	Class, gender, nationality, ethnicity, etc. (upper class, female, Asian, Hindu, Scottish)
Formal-role	Occupation, rank, citizenship etc (manager, cleaner, captain, an Italian citizen)
Local-organizational	An old-style Nottingham professor, a Boots pharmacist, a GPT operations manager (there will be other versions of this: a local-community social-identity, for example: Ryland estate youths)
Local-personal	Characterizations which various others make of an individual, in the context of specific situations or events (life and soul of the purchasing office, a good Co-op customer, the Beeston branch clown …)
Cultural-stereotype	A garrulous Frenchman, a boring accountant, a devoted mother.

The context of the interaction is therefore very determinate of the dominant basis of trust in the interaction. The dominant base then naturally leads to the amount of freedom or restraint for positioning agency by the consultant[15].

Thus far the context theory holds that the familiarity and presence of institutional cues causes certain trust bases to be used when assessing the trustworthiness of the consultant. Moreover, dependant on the trust basis, the consultant has certain positioning leeway or restraint in terms of positioning identity. The last step in the theory is to infer how this restriction or freedom manifests itself in the consultant's identity work. This will naturally manifest in the form of narrative by the consultant.

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[15] Obviously the consultant can still position his or her identity even though it is highly restrained. However this action runs the risk of breaking trust, or sabotaging trustworthiness perceptions because the consultant's identity is inconsistent.

To use the two contrasting scenarios from earlier; when the consultant is known after repeated interaction, and history based trust is used, causing restricted positioning space. It can be inferred that the effect on the narrative would be that it would be short and focussed on the situation at hand.

Table 5: Context Effect

Context	Trust base	Identity Positioning space	Effect on narrative
Repeated interaction between particular consultant and client. Internal consultants	History	Restricted/constrained positioning space in both social obligations and relational positioning latency	Short or non-existent self-narrative. Narrative focussed situation at hand.
Consultant with an academic title like Doctor/Professor. Consultant from a well-known institution like a university or large consulting firm. Consultant with a strong reputation in an industry	Structural (role, rule, category, third party)	Restricted or constrained positioning space in terms of social obligations. However, largely free or unrestricted in terms of relational positioning latency.	Noticeable evidence of self-narrative, however short and focussed on relational positioning with clients.
Unknown consultant Known only to few participants that had an input in the acquisition decision	Identity	Unrestricted or free in respect to both social obligations and relational positioning latitude.	Lengthy narrative, both self and contextual discourse narrative.

There would be little evidence of identity construction by the consultant, if any. In contrast, if the consultant in a particular interaction is unknown to the participants, causing them to perceive trustworthiness based on the consultant's identity. This would provide freedom for the consultant to construct an identity favourable to be trusted. The effect on the narrative of the consultant would then be that it would be extensive and focussed on constructing an identity relative to the social context. These scenarios are summarised in table 5.

In order to explore the accuracy of this framework, such an initial interaction must be investigated. More specifically, narrative analysis should be used in order to explore the positioning of the

consultant. The next chapter will explore the methodologies available within narrative analysis, in order to develop a suitable methodology for this papers purpose.

3.8 Conclusion

The previous chapter concluded by identifying the need for a discursive focus on the client-consultant interaction and to extend trust past the acquisition decision within the micro level of analysis. The core purpose of this chapter is to connect trust with identity. In order to do this, trust was initially explored and contextualised in terms of the specific setting of management consulting interactions. This was followed by the exploration of the concept of identity and how individuals have agency in constructing their identities. The motif of this agency of identity construction is juxtaposed with the importance of trust in management consulting, which provides a contextualised framework that can investigate the interaction.

The main contribution made by this chapter is to provide a point of investigation, along with the required methodology in order to achieve this. This point of investigation is the specific context of an unknown consultant with free space for identity positioning. To find evidence for this argument, the study will use narrative analysis, because the context and trust basis has an effect on identity positioning which manifests in the narrative of the consultant.

CHAPTER 4

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Based on the conclusions drawn from the literature in chapter two, it can be stated that there is a need for a discursive view of the client-consultant interaction. This need informs the conceptualisation of trust and identity in the pursuit of connecting the concepts within client-consultant interactions in chapter three. At the end of chapter three a context theory was developed that informs confirmatory research of the connection of identity and trust. It was then established that because of the discursive nature of the interaction and the construction of identity, narrative analysis is the preferred method to find evidence for the argument. This chapter will therefore aim to outline what narrative analysis is and the various advantages it provides as an analysis tool.

Narrative analysis can offer analytic advantages because trustworthiness is developed on the perceived identity of a trusted party. The perceptions of the trusted party's identity are sourced from the consultant's narrative utterances[16]. The assumption that individuals can influence their perceived identity is central to this argument. Individuals strive to construct identities consistent with the prevailing discourse. Therefore, personal identity construction is informed by social discourse, and if trust is the objective of influencing identity, it would be positioned favourably within that discourse[17].

This chapter develops a narrative analysis methodology. The concept of narrative is initially defined by establishing what it is and subsequently exploring the characteristics of narratives through a review of the structures. This is followed by a review of how narratives can be analysed. Secondly, since narrative analysis can be conducted in various ways, specific methodological suggestions will

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[16] Obviously, there are more sources of perceptions of trustworthiness; however, as highlighted in the previous chapter, there are situational/contextual circumstances that promote identity as a more important base of trustworthiness.

[17] To put it succinctly, a person will not develop an identity separate of other people. They would want to develop an identity relevant to the social context in which they act.

be made. This can only be established after a short synopsis of the available approaches within the field of narrative analysis. Finally, the focus will shift back to the core argument of the thesis. Evaluating the model of identity positioning for trust with the insights from narrative analysis will lead to a more robust methodology.

4.2 Narrative

In order to reach an understanding of how narrative analysis will be operationalised, it is important to primarily identify what a narrative is, and secondly, to identify the role that the concept of narrative plays within literature. Following this will be a breakdown of the structure of a narrative.

4.2.1 The narrative turn

This thesis is related to the so-called narrative turn (Riessman, 2005, 2001) or literary turn (Czarniawska, 2004); the process of discovering narrative knowledge within various fields and professions. The fields that it has influenced include history, anthropology, folklore, psychology, sociolinguistics and sociology (Riessman, 2001). It also brought on a different perspective within various professions like law, medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, social work and organisations. Narrative influence on organisational science has been investigated by Czarniawska (2004) and Boje (2001), amongst others. This study is situated within an organisational context.

4.2.2 Defining Narrative

Labov, one of the major thinkers on narratives, defines it as '*one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which* [it is inferred] *actually occurred*' (1972: 359-360). Other definitions differ only slightly from Labov's (Franzosi, 1998). The essentials contained in the conclusion date back to Aristotle via the Russian formalists, notably Propp (1971) and Tomashevsky (1965). The core theme that is drawn is the distinction between story and plot. Preliminary, one can see plot as a sequence of events or actions connected with the selective motive of a story. The story is built around comments on actions or events in the plot. The actions or events that make up the plot are relatively (within the confines of the plot itself) stable and unchangeable (or not up for debate). To use an analogy from a scientific research perspective; the plot is the reported statistics from an empirical study and the story is the theory, which comments on the statistics. The distinctions between story and plot have relative synonyms in the literature, namely *sjuzet* and *fabula* (Hiles, 2007), which originates from the Russian formalist distinctions of *fibula* and *sjũnet*, or the French version of *histoire* and *discours* (Franzosi, 1998).

There is one more relevant dimension inherent to a narrative in developing a concept of what it is; the medium. The medium is the device that carries the narrative. Bal (1997) conceptualises it as the text. Narrative exists from text, or as Bal (1997) states, it is the medium through which a narrative is signalled or uttered. Examples of mediums include dialogue, monologue, paintings, art, poems, modern historical texts, film and printed media. The plot and story can be deduced from the text. To tie the three aspects of a narrative together Bal (1997) proposes three terms: words, aspects and elements. Words correspond to the text or medium of the narrative, whereas aspects correspond to the story, and elements to the plot[18].

These three elements are the building blocks of a narrative, with the story being the most important in terms of defining something as a narrative (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983). Two sequential events in a plot are not classified as a narrative. When logical connections are made between the sequential events it can be defined as a narrative. Consider the following example:

Craig finished his thesis on the 20th.

Ross finished his thesis on the 22nd.

These are sequential events, which do not have a logical connection constituting a narrative. However, if this is followed up by a comment on the events like 'Craig and Ross were in competition to see who finishes their thesis first', then the events are logically connected by a story and it becomes a narrative. Nevertheless, the logical sequence of events captured by the plot remains an important part of a narrative because it is also a point of interpretation. Events constituting a plot can be included or excluded by a narrator, which also provides insights. The narrator decides what events are included in the plot.

With an understanding of what the concept of 'narrative' means, or perhaps more accurately, what it consists of, one can move toward developing an idea of what 'narrative analysis' as a study is. As will subsequently be argued, there is a difference between narrative analysis and the analysis of narrative. Each of these is however based within the 'literary turn', making it useful to provide a concise point of distinction between the two. The next section will provide the distinction, followed by the different approaches to narrative analysis.

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[18]In this thesis. text, plot and story are the preferred terms that will be used.

4.3 Narrative Analysis

The distinction between narrative analysis and the analysis of narrative are not explicitly dealt with in the literature for the simple reason that it is not conceptually necessary to make the distinction. However, for the aims of this study to be realised, it is very helpful to clarify the approach taken.

4.3.1   Analysis of Narrative & Narrative Analysis

The 'analysis of narrative' can be seen as the methodologies used to analyse texts. It is the investigation of text to provide insight into narratives found in various fields. For instance, Czarniawska (2004) and Boje (2001) explore how the analysis of narratives within organisational sciences leads to various insights. This is based on the assumption that narratives hold rich information about the context in which they are conveyed. This is because analysing narratives in an organisational context, based on what stories are told and how stories are told, provide insight into what conceptual constructs are dominant within the organisation. It also sheds light on what the motives of the narrator are, as well as an array of interpretations dependant on the question behind the analysis (Czarniawska, 2004).

A narrative analysis, on the other hand, has broader relevance. Narrative analysis uses the theoretical developments learnt from analysing narratives and applies it to a 'master narrative' as Riessman (2005:1) calls it. More specifically, non-narrative (in the conventional sense) constructs or 'stories' like paradigms or theories are analysed from a narrative perspective. This can be crystallised in the term 'x as a narrative' where 'x' may be something broad like 'paradigmatic views' (e.g. Morgan, 2006) or something narrower like 'strategy' (e.g. Barry &Elmes, 1997). This is when the concept of narrative is used as a theory – as in 'narrative theory' – employed to deal with observed phenomena.

Apart from the slight difference in approach, both narrative analysis and the analysis of narrative are essentially the same practice. It is the practice of analysing narrative to develop insights where one is based on texts, and the other on mental constructs themselves represented by texts. Nevertheless, the term to be employed here is 'narrative analyses'. This study is furthermore concerned with 'personal narrative'. This is a departure from a general form of narrative. Personal narratives are narratives about the self of the investigator, narratives from the field, media portrayals of events, or 'master narratives' of theory and paradigms (Riessman, 2005:2). Personal narratives can be about an entire life story, usually found in research in the fields of history and anthropology. Good examples are studies conducted by Myerhoff (1978) and Kaminsky (1992). Myerhoff constructed the life stories of elderly Eastern European Jews living in Venice, California. She

constructed it from various sources such as interviews, observations, and documents. She then interpreted the life stories from her own constructions and sequencing, highlighting themes that are central to the studied objects' lives. Kaminsky (1992) followed suit with an alternative interpretation on Meyerhoff's work from the concerns of performativity. It can also be based on short narratives as a response to a question, which explores people's experiences around events. Studies like these have notably been done by Labov (1982), Labov and Waletzky (1997) and Riessman (1990). Finally, personal narratives can be investigated in a longitudinal method in order to explore the changes to narratives across time and space. Notable research in this regard has been done by Mishler (1999) and Bell (1999).

This thesis will have a slightly different 'personal narrative' to investigate. The investigation will be undertaken on the narrative of a consultant during a professional interaction with clients. The consultant and clients do not know each other, and the consultant is thus prompted to provide a personal narrative. The personal narrative is instrumental in constructing an identity conducive to trust development. It is therefore not a reflection of a life story in the way that is observed in the studies of Myerhoff and Kaminsky. The personal narrative nevertheless takes the shape of a life story. What makes the narrative studied in this thesis different is that it is not prompted by a researcher, but rather emerges out of the instrumentality of constructing a favourable identity in relation to the audience.

4.3.2   The Reading of a Narrative

With an understanding of what type of narrative will be investigated, elaboration is now needed on how texts can be 'read'. This is an important distinction, because there are different ways to interpret texts of narrative. Czarniawska (2004) argues that the hermeneutic triad of Hernadi (1995) is a starting point on how texts can be interpreted. There are three conceptual ways to read texts based on the triad, namely: explication, explanation and exploration (Czarniawska, 2004: 16). Although not mutually exclusive, any of these approaches can take precedent over the other in order to address the research objectives.

4.3.2.1   Explication

As discussed previously, plot and story are the components of a narrative. The analysis of the narrative is firstly the identification of each component and secondly the process of sensemaking of the relationship between plot and story, followed by the interpretation of the narrative. Depending on the objective of the analysis, either can be highlighted in order to gain insight. This process of

favouring either plot or story within an analysis can be extended to explication and explanation, respectively.

Explication is the process of focusing on the plot itself. With the plot containing the facts or actions of a narrative, there are obviously omissions and inclusions of actions or facts by the narrator. This, naturally, leads to an investigation of what is omitted and included, and furthermore, of 'what really happened' (Czarniawska, 2004). Explication stands equal to the concept of the naive or semiotic reader of Eco (1990). In this view the narratologist does not intend to interpret the story, but rather the plot, which makes the story possible. There is not direct interpretation of the narrative itself (the way the narrator says things), but rather an interpretation of what is said. For instance, if a person narrates a story about an event, the event will not be covered in totality. This means that there are certain facts and actions taken by characters within the story that is omitted from the analysed narrative. This omission or emphasis of inclusion of actions reveals something about the narrator. There is an objective behind omitting details of a story. However, some might argue that no story can be remembered and narrated in totality, as people have limited capacity to memorise events. Nevertheless, the selection to remember certain details and omitting/forgetting others still has bearing on the intentions of the narrator.

4.3.2.2   Explanation

Explanation of narrative texts is concerned with the interpretation of how a story is told. This mode of reading focuses less on the plot and more on the story. The focus turns to the comments that the story has on the developments within the plot. The facts or actions that make the plot of the story is regarded as fixed within the bounds of the story, but the comments around the facts or actions made by the narrator is important. This is because there is an array of interpretations/comments that can be made on a particular fact and the choice for a given comment provides insights about the narrator.

Explanations, as opposed to explication, is more involved in exploring the interpretations of the story and is therefore a much more critical and semiotic role taken up by the analyst (Eco, 1990). Instead of merely relaying interpretations from narratives as is done through explication, explanation seeks to develop interpretations, and create novel readings by deconstructing text (Czarniawska, 2004). Deconstructing narratives, according to Norris (1988: 7) leads to '*a text draw[ing] out conflicting logics of sense and implication, with the objective of showing that the text never exactly means what it says or says what it means*'. (as quoted in Czarniawska, 2004: 23). Explanation, however, combines explication with explanation by asking the question of what is

said, and why. Furthermore, there is a danger of over-interpretation within this approach. This is because double interpretation of what is said takes place. There are an indefinite amount of interpretations [although not infinite (Eco, 1992)], and only a few have real merit in providing insights to the narrator and narrative.

4.3.2.3 Exploration

Exploration is concerned with standing in for the author (Czarniawska, 2004). This means it is a process of constructing a story about a story, specifically extending the intentions of the narrator. It is an exploration of meanings of the story and an investigation of the possible insights captured within a narrative. It is concerned with both explication and explanation, and extends the insights to a wider meaning. This is evident in most conclusions of any research, where the authors move beyond their own developed narrative and draw further conclusions by providing avenues for further research and insights from the papers narrative that might be expandable to a broader field of application. A narrative analysis employs all three these modes of reading a narrative. Although with varying degrees, certain objectives and texts calls for different modes, as does this study's case. In order to develop a mode and method of analysis, the available typologies will be explored within the next section in order to reach a preferred model.

4.3.3 Narrative Analysis Approaches

There are several typologies that outline types of approaches to analysing narratives (e.g. Cortazzi, 2001; Mishler, 1995; Riessman, 2005). Each approach combines certain characteristics of explication, explanation and exploration. However, they provide a more methodical approach to analysing narratives. The main approaches are thematic, structural, interactional and performative. Each will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

4.3.3.1 Thematic

This approach is concerned with a focus on the 'told' rather than the 'telling' (Riessman, 2005). This is very similar to the mode of explication, because it focuses on the plot or the actions/facts of the narrative. Thematic analysis is specifically focused on identifying themes within a narrative. This means that the selection or emphasis of certain themes in a narrative provides insight into the mentality of the narrator. It is also very useful when there can be a cross case analysis that compares themes between different narrators, or of a single narrator over time, much like the longitudinal research undertaken by Mishler (1999) and Bell (1999). Other examples of such research is the study of narrative genre amongst individuals with arthritis (Williams, 1984) and the study by Cain

(1991) about identity acquisition amongst members of an alcoholics anonymous meeting – and how they develop certain patterned plots amongst themselves. This approach is therefore not concerned with interpreting the narrative itself, but rather just with the themes that exist within the narrative. The wider context in which the narrative takes place is usually not of concern.

4.3.3.2   Structural

Structural narrative analysis moves the emphasis over to the way the narrative is told (Riessman, 2005). Thematic content is still relevant within this model; however, the structure of the narrative becomes more important. This is because this approach considers the narrator to have an objective with the narrative. That is not to say that this is not the case within the thematic approach. Instead, it merely highlights the context and type of narrative that is studied, where the narrator may have a more persuasive objective. This tends to the function of a narrative as identified by Labov (1982), with the implication that there are clauses within a narrative that comments on the plot in order to provide an interpretation and to consequently persuade the audience.

The structural approach improves interpretation of narratives by breaking it down into generic parts, which are part of any narrative. These are called functional or idea units (Labov, 1997; Gee, 1991). These units delimit pieces of a text that qualifies as narrative. The units can be broken down into, for instance, stanza and line, where stanza carry a theme over multiple lines and lines are ideas or actions (Gee, 1991). Lines can also be classified as bounded and unbounded motives (Herman &Vervaeck, 2005), where bounded motifs are fixed in the story, and if changed or moved will alter the story. Unbounded motifs are not fixed and it provides the story's content. These correspond to the *sjuzet* and *fabula* respectively, where the *sjuzet* is the form of the story, and the *fabula* is the content.

4.3.3.3   Interactional

The main difference within interactional analysis is the shift in focus toward the co-construction of narrative. The thematic and structural aspects are still used within this approach as a method to break the narrative down into manageable parts. However, dialogue becomes more important under this approach (Riessman, 2005). Additionally, this approach is dependent on the text and research objective because the conversation is necessary in the text in order to analyse an interaction. Certain research questions furthermore necessitate an interactional analysis. For instance, in order to analyse the attentiveness of medical practitioners during patient consultations (Clark & Mishler, 1992), the transcript needs to include the questions of the doctor and the narrative of the patient.

Without the interaction within the text, the objective of investigating attentiveness would not be reached.

Interactional analysis may still be used by breaking the narrative down to structure in order to analyse the plot and story and therefore what is said, and how it is said. However, the emphasis is on what and how it is said between different parties. In the same sense, thematic analysis can also be used within an interactional narrative by identifying themes between various parties in a conversation. For instance, Bell (1999) compared the illness narratives between two women, focusing on themes of the narrators.

4.3.3.4   Performative

The performative approach is based on the interactional approach, but it moves beyond the spoken word of the narrative (Riessman, 2005). This is a movement into an analysis of 'doing' rather than just the 'telling', but it does not necessarily imply physical action by the narrator. The narrative is seen as an act in itself as it aims to persuade, involve or move an audience. In essence, storytelling is an act of persuasion of an audience. This type of narrative ranges from dramaturgical to narrative-as-praxis (Riessman, 2005). This means that the narrative may be a dramatic story with the aim of being informative or entertaining. Alternatively, narrative may be praxis, meaning that it has a social action. This is when people use narrative in order to achieve a social effect like performing identity, or persuading political sentiment (Riessman, 2003). Narratives are often labelled as 'involved', with the implication that the construction of the narrative is much more intentional, necessitating performative analysis. This type of narrative is much more contextualised than normal narratives because it does not only involve the context of an overarching discourse, but also the specific discourse between the particular parties involved in the narrative. Moreover, there is a rich interaction between narrator and audience because the narrator has a stake in the narrative itself (Langellier, 1999). The context, narrator and audience thus have strong influences on the narrative.

In performative narratives the narrators intensify words and phrases, enhance segments with details, reported speech, appeals to the audience, paralinguistic features ('uhms') and gestures (Bauman, 1986). To analyse such performative narratives, the analyst must focus on the positioning between the narrator and audience. Much like interactional narrative analysis, the interaction between narrator and audience is important. However, the performative narrative is more focused on the narrator than the audience, as the audience provides a discourse within which the narrator must be positioned. Performative analysis moves beyond the spoken word and critically investigates the motivations and agendas of the narrator (Langellier, 1999). What is central to analysing

performative narratives is to take into account the rich context and dynamics between narrator and audience (Langellier, 1999; Riessman, 2008, Defina & Georgakopoulou, 2008). These approaches requires a close examination and illumination of the immediate context of the narrative as well as the wider socio-cultural context, which 'sets the stage' for the narrative performance (LaPointe, 2010: 4).With an overview of the various modes and approaches, it is now possible to introduce this study's narrative case study in terms of these typologies. This will provide a starting point to develop a chosen methodology.

4.4   Context for Selecting an Approach

As Riessman (2005) proposes, there is no universal methodology for analysing narratives. The selected methodology should be moulded around the contextual specifications of the case study. This means that the nature of the narrative under investigation should be taken into account. Moreover, the specific objectives of the analysis should also be regarded when developing a methodology. The reason for taking each into account is to ensure that the approach would be able to elicit the right insights from the particular narrative, and for the objective of the study. There is differentiation amongst narratives, including life stories (Kaminsky, 1992), personal narratives (LaPointe, 2010), dialogues (Fairclough, 1995), group narratives (Alvesson & Svenningsson, 2011) and organisational narratives (Czarniawska, 2004). Some approaches would be able to accommodate a better analysis of certain narratives than others. Additionally, the researcher has certain objectives in analysing narratives; be it to elicit discursive identity construction (Snow & Anderson, 1987), reflect on themes across multiple narratives (Myerhoff, 1978), or the interpretation of occurrences (Labov, 1972). Each one of these has a distinct need for a certain mix of approaches. The selected case study will be explained in more detail in the following chapter. However, it is important to firstly highlight certain characteristics of the particular narrative text and the research objective.

4.4.1   Narrative Text

The selected text is based on an initial interaction between a consultant and the executive management board of a large public organisation. The text was developed for organisational record keeping and not specifically for this research project. This means that there is no influence from a researcher prompting narratives and influencing the process, making it a more objective reflection of the narrative. This makes it a particularly valuable text for analysis, as it is a purer reflection of the interaction between consultant and client.

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The dialogue revolves around a distinct topic, creating an opportunity for interactional analysis. Prior to the dialogue, there is however a lengthy personal narrative by the consultant after being prompted by a particular board member. The board member requested an introduction from the consultant, as few of those present knew him. A long conversation follows the personal narrative, which might necessitate a thematic analysis in order to deduce manageable insights. This conversation is on the topic at hand, after the consultant produced a personal narrative. Therefore this section of the text is not directly applicable to this thesis.

Based on the above, a particular analytic approach can be identified. The use of a personal narrative by the consultant necessitates a performative analysis. Whilst a performative analysis is the most dominant approach given the nature of the text, a thematic approach is suitable in supporting it in order to highlight themes and topics in the text. These themes and topics are important in identifying what the consultant focuses on in trying to position his identity.

4.4.2   Analysis Objective

The research objective is to investigate the process of identity construction. Identity construction narrative is a well-researched topic within narrative analysis and is mostly investigated through interactional and performative approaches (Riessman, 1993, 2001, 2003; Langellier, 1999; Hiles, 2009; Georgakopoulou, 2005; Czarniawska, 1997, 2004). There is consensus that identity is a narrated construction, more specifically a co-construction. Bamberg puts it: '*selves and identities are 'projects' (…) constantly under revision (…) tested out by interactants*' (quoted in Riessman, 2003: 8). The construction of 'who I am' is an on-going activity that has a limited range, is context specific, and is a practical project of everyday life (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000).

Identity can be investigated through narrative analysis by analysing it as both performative (Riessman, 2008) and interactional (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Analysing narrative as a performance is important as the objective of identity development within a narrative is an act with a specific purpose. Interaction is also a significant aspect, as identity is created in relation to an audience and the interaction with the audience is a key part of the context informing the identity developed. Foucault's notion of identity construction within discourse analysis argues that it is developed in relation to the dominant discourse present between narrator and audience (Czarniawska, 2004).

Specifically, identity development is researched as 'identity positioning' (Hiles, 2007; Jorgenson, 2002; Riessman, 2001). This is the positioning of the narrator within the narrative in relation to the discourse in the social setting. The specific methodology developed to study identity positioning

(notably Hiles, 2007) is done using the *sjuzet* (story) and *fabula* (plot). Here the *sjuzet*, as the comment on the *fabula*, provides insight on the narrator's identity. For instance, note the following two fictional narrative examples:

Narrator A:

> [*Fabula*] Hitler has died.

> [*Sjuzet*] It is such a tragedy.

> [*Fabula*] He was found in a bunker, after taking his own life.

Narrator B:

> [*Fabula*] Hitler has died.

> [*Sjuzet*] It is such a relief.

> [*Fabula*] He was found in a bunker, after taking his own life.

The *fabula* corresponds to what Herman and Vervaeck (2005) call a bounded motif, which also corresponds to the plot: the recalling of a series of events. The *sjuzet*, however, is a comment on the event containing the information for the narrative analyst to interpret the possible identity positioning of the narrator.

Within the above examples, it is clear that narrator A and B are talking about the same event (the *fabula* is the same in both). However, narrator A comments on the event as a tragedy, whereas narrator B states it as a relief. Much can be deduced from the single difference within this short narrative. One can deduce the identity of each as positioned at opposing spaces within the space provided by the plot or discourse. 'A' can be seen as a Nazi soldier, whereas 'B' can be seen as an allied soldier. Moreover, the same narratives can be interpreted completely differently when a context is introduced in terms of an audience. So much so that narrator A and B can be the same person in different interactions, where A might be in a leadership class highlighting the ultimate leadership of Hitler and B was in a political science class reviewing World War II. Therefore, the context is just as important as the analysis of the narrative itself.

4.5 Approach

This thesis will use the insights from all the above approaches when analysing the text. The structural approach will help to process the text into a manageable format. The thematic approach

will be helpful by highlighting the themes and topics from the narrative text. The interactional approach will inform the idea that the consultant is in conversation with a social discourse, which highlights important insights. Finally, the performative approach will influence the analysis of the rhetorical strategies that the consultant employs in constructing and positioning his identity.

Following the structural approach, the text is processed by identifying parts, themes, topics, stanzas and lines in descending order. As far as possible, the original text is kept intact in order to preserve the flow of the narrative. The parts are distinguished by the modes of the narrative, there are certain parts that are personal narratives, and other where there is dialogue. There are various themes contained in the respective parts. These themes are outlined around the general thematic content of the text. In turn, there are various topics contained in the themes. The topics sometimes combine to form a theme. Within each theme or topic, there are multiple stanzas. These stanzas are idea units. Idea units are built out of various lines which each hold an idea which combined, eventually develop a unit. The text is numbered per part, theme, topic, stanza and line, example:

1. Part
   1.1. Theme
       1.1.1. Topic
         1.1.1.1.   Stanza
             1.1.1.1.1.   Line

Although this thesis will not explicitly use the methodology of identifying plot and story lines of Hiles (2007), the interpretation of the text is informed by the method. This is by way of identifying the general plot of the narrative and how the consultant positions himself relative to the plot. The most important approach when analysing the personal narrative of the consultant is performativity. The performative approach is an attempt to highlight the underlying intentions of the narrator. These intentions are to construct an identity positioned favourably in relation to the audience. The analysis of the text will highlight such positioning strategies by the consultant.

The focus of this analysis is not on the conversational parts of the text; however some parts are highlighted. The interactional typology helps to illuminate the importance of accounting for the interaction between the consultant (narrator) and the clients (audience). Within this analysis, there is an unspoken interaction with the social discourse based on the context of the interaction. This prompts the consultant to include certain themes in his personal narrative, and to take certain stances on the plot provided by the discourse.

4.6 Identity and Trust Framework Revisited

In order to proceed to the analysis in the following chapter the identity/trust framework has to be reviewed from a narrative perspective. This is what the following sections attempt to provide.

4.6.1 Identity Positioning For Trust

It is necessary to briefly revisit the framework developed in the previous chapter highlighting the positioning space of consultants within a consulting interaction. The space is made up of two dimensions, namely social obligations and relational positioning latency. Social obligations are derived from the context of the interaction, like etiquette when going to a formal dinner party. One is expected to behave in a certain manner according to rules and roles that govern the interaction. If one keeps to those rules and roles, the other actors that take part in the interaction will gradually extend trust.

On the other hand, during the same interaction, there are a different set of positions made available by the participants of the interaction. This means that all formal dinner parties have more or less the same etiquette; however, not all have the same conversation between people. This conversation is where interpersonal trust plays a role. In stark simplification, there is a set stock of identities within any interaction, some have already taken up a position from the positions available and those coming in afterwards need to take positions in relation to those that already exist. It is important to note that the reason for phrasing it as someone entering after positions was already taken is the nature of the interaction that will be analysed in this study, namely a consultant entering an interaction from the outside.

The term 'social obligations' can be conceptualised to encapsulate two sub-dimensions (as learned from narrative identity), namely social space, and obligatory positions. The social space is provided by the plot, whereas the obligation is provided by the discourses that govern the interaction. Take the exemplar of the Hitler narratives. There are social obligations to comment on the passing of Hitler, specifically in a certain position (for or against it). However, certain interactions might oblige the narrator to refrain from commenting at all. For instance, in a history class, there should be no comment on the passing of Hitler, merely a recounting of the actions or events. This means that there is a certain 'etiquette' that governs interactions, which provides the obliged identity positions to be taken by the narrator. If the narrator fails to ascribe to those positions, the audience will interpret it as an act outside of the rules that govern the interaction and therefore not extend trust. This means that the audience does not trust the narrator in his or her capacity to act in the

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proposed position during the interaction. This corresponds to a common feeling of unprofessionalism within organisational interactions.

The second dimension is relational positioning latitude. This dimension corresponds to dispositional trust bases. It therefore relates to the 'audience's' predisposition and personal criteria for trusting another. One's predisposition and criteria are embedded within one's own identity and someone with a relatable identity is more probable to be trusted[19]. To use the dinner party analogy, this is the different personalities/identities at the table. To make it more concrete, consider a young man going to dinner with his girlfriend's parents for the first time. There are certain identities that are already taken up which are to be navigated by the young man. This is in contrast to the general etiquette to which he has to adhere. He has to position his identity very differently than he would at a dinner party with his girlfriend and his own parents, or with colleagues.

This means that a consultant must traverse two levels of positioning, namely in relation to the interaction itself (an overarching discourse) and in relation to the individuals' (or group's) identity positions. This corresponds to the conception of how identity is developed discursively by Hiles (2007). He proposes that identity is developed by two distinct dimensions, identity positions and subject positions. Subject positions are a reaction on the social obligations of the interaction, whereas identity position is a reaction to the existing identities. Together this develops a person's identity. Moreover, as, he states:

'Narrative offers us the capacity to organize our experience, actions and self, by constructing a temporal configuration, by relating successive parts to the whole. Using our narrative intelligence, we choose what matters to us, and we participate in the construction of our own identities. Through the stories that we construct, we establish our identity positions.' (Hiles, 2007:36).

This relates to the construction of individual identity, however, by now evident, identity is a co-constructed exercise. It means that it moves away from an individual being the primary source of meaning and owner of the narrative, to collective meaning development and the interaction being the owner of the narrative. Moreover, as LaPointe (2010) states, '*master narratives and discourses position individuals and construct their identities in the interaction between narrator and audience*'. This strengthens the development of the two dimensions of identity creation, where a

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[19] Do note that 'relatable' refers to being sub-ordinate (in relation to a dominant figure), superior (with people that are sub-ordinates) or equal (with peers or colleagues). It does not just infer a similar identity, but rather the most favourable position in relation to those already taken.

person has agency in developing his or her own identity, but it is done in relation to a social discourse and other people's identity positions. In summation, identity can be positioned in terms of dominant discourse (and the positions available within that discourse — social obligations), and interpersonal discourse (in relation to the identities of the audience).

4.6.2   The Interaction Context

The context within which the interaction takes place is important to take into consideration when analysing the narrative. As explicated in the previous chapter, there are certain interaction contexts that may provide insight into how the narrative will take shape. This is done by considering the context of the interaction to range between repeated interactions amongst the particular involved parties, to an interaction where all parties are unfamiliar with the consultant. This context provides a precedent by which one can deduce what type of trust basis will be most relevant during the interaction. Dependant on the hypothesised trust base that is dominant in the particular interaction, there will be a range between restricted to unrestricted positioning space for the parties that need to position their identities.

If all the parties had previous interactions, then history-based trust is extended. Firstly, the positioning space that exists will be highly restricted, as trust was established on prior identities, secondly, there no explicit need for elaborate identity positioning by the consultant. This is because all the positions are already taken up by everyone, and any act of repositioning will cause perceptions of untrustworthiness (because of inconsistency, and clash of identity roles). The last connection between restrictiveness of positioning space and the effect on narrative must still be discussed. Therefore, if there is no positioning necessary, the narrative within the interaction would reflect little or no personal narrative, and performative identity positioning.

On the other hand, given that there is low familiarity, meaning the parties from the client side does not know the consultant. It would lead to a reliance on identity based trust. This would in turn lead to firstly, free positioning space for the consultant, as there is no prior information Secondly, the consultant would have to construct an identity in order to position it relative to the audience. If this scenario is present, it would reflect in the narrative of the interaction by showing personal narratives by the consultant and also strong performative aspects within the narrative.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter's objective was to outline a narrative analysis approach as the method to find evidence for consultant identity positioning for trust. A Labovian approach to what a narrative is was

highlighted. A narrative is seen as consisting of text, plot and story, where the plot and the story is the most important for analytical purposes. With an idea of what a narrative is, the chapter outlined three general modes of analysing narratives. These were explicating, explanation and exploration. In order to reach a methodological approach to analysing the narrative, a typology from Riessman (2005) consisting of four approaches was discussed. Each approach provides a unique analytical lens for investigating narratives. From the straightforward thematic analysis, concerned only with what is said, towards the performative approach, focussed on why things are said.

For the purposes of this thesis, it was concluded that each approach to varying degrees will be taken into account. However, the performative approach is central to this thesis, as it asks the question as to why the narrator says something. This 'why' was explored in the previous chapter, where the argument was that consultants (given the unique interaction context) have to position their identities (a narrated practice) for trust (the reason for performance). The next chapter will be the analysis of the narrative text. It will be done with the insights from all the previous chapters in order to provide evidence of identity positioning by the consultant for trust, especially given the context of the interaction, which is a main focus of the context theory discussed at the end of chapter three.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter constitutes the analysis of the narrative[20]. However, it is intentionally labelled a 'case study' because the narrative text is not the only focus. As highlighted within the context theory developed in chapter three, there are certain contexts that would have an influence on the narrative to be studied. Therefore, part of this 'analysis' chapter is the context of the particular narrative. The chapter will firstly highlight this important context of the narrative. This context is imperative for analysing the narrative as it constantly interrelates. Once the context is provided, the chapter moves onto defining the hypothesis to test within the narrative. This hypothesis is based in the context, and developed by the context theory from chapter three. The chapter will subsequently analyse the narrative in pursuit of evidence for identity positioning by the consultant.

5.2 Case Study Context

The case study is based on transcripts of a real interaction between a consultant (designated as Mr. C) and an executive management team from a large organisation (designated as Devcorp) within the public sphere of South Africa[21]. It is not a public organisation, but it is owned by government, making it a parastatal. It facilitates governmental services specifically from a financial capacity. Therefore, the environment within which the organisation resides features strong political undercurrents.

The reason for acquiring the consultant is two-fold. It is firstly for guidance and training in a certain strategic facilitation software package (designated as Stratsoft). Secondly, as the nature of the software dictates, the consultant is also being consulted on strategic development processes. These two dimensions of the consultant's objectives result in the main topics of the interaction. Mr. C is a

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[20] The complete narrative text can be found at annexure A

[21] All identifiers in the text are replaced with pseudo names.

globally renowned consultant for this particular software package, but his social circles are limited. He is primarily a strategic process expert. Since Devcorp already owns the license for Stratsoft he was not selling the product in this particular interaction. He was introducing the organisation to its use, and usefulness. Therefore, Mr. C was taking on two roles, namely a strategic consultant for the organisation and an expert on Stratsoft. It is important to note that the consultant, within this instance, was providing his time free of charge as a good will gesture.

Furthermore, this interaction is only temporary, with some prospects of repeat interaction. However, the objectives of the interaction are of high importance. Within this interaction, there is detailed information that must be transferred in terms of both Stratsoft and strategic processes in general. The specific topic of discussion is that of the strategy for the National Healthcare Initiative (NHI), and Devcorp's role in reaching the aspired goals. The people attending the interaction from Devcorp are those that were specifically tasked with developing a strategy in respect to the NHI.

5.3 Context evaluated

The case study must be placed within the context of this thesis' argument. Firstly, the interaction must be interpreted in terms of its classification as a high-contact interaction, specifically focusing on the particular dynamics of cognitive engagement and strong discourse. Furthermore, the context of the interaction must be placed within the trust/identity framework developed in this thesis which highlights the argument of the interaction context leading into trust basis. This in turn influences the available positioning space, dictating the nature of the narrative.

High-contact interactions are characterised primarily by their high cognitive and discursive engagement between participants. It is therefore not just an information exchange situation; there is knowledge transfer and learning taking place. This demands cognitive attention and involvement. In addition, as thoroughly documented within the literature (Davis *et al.*, 1979; Adler, 2001; Axelrod, 1984; Lovelock, 1983; Zeithaml, 1981; Murray, 1991; Thorgren & Wincent, 2011: Uzzi, 1996; Blau, 1964; Lewis &Weigert, 1985; Hirsch, 1978; Tsai, 2002, Berg *et al.*, 1995; Kramer, 1994; Meyerson *et al.*, 1996), trust is important in such interactions. If trust is not established, especially initial trust, knowledge sharing and learning will be sub-optimal.

The described case study has these characteristics. There are two main avenues of knowledge transfer and learning present within the described interaction. This is in terms of both Stratsoft and strategic processes insights from Mr. C. The type of knowledge development and learning is around a complex subject matter (strategy development process), and it is contrasted against various models politically highlighted within the discourse. It is therefore important that the consultant

develop initial trust amongst the participants, as the knowledge to be transferred is not only complex, it is also situated within a political discourse.

The discursive aspect to these interactions is also important. However, as argued in the previous chapter this is not the discourse specifically with the individuals in the interaction, but rather the discourse that they represent. This means that Mr. C is 'in dialogue' with the political identity of a public organisation in South Africa. This affects the complexity and novelty of identity positioning. In this context, various discourses influence the way in which the actors interact. This is contrasted against interactions where there is not such a strong overarching discourse, although still cognitively engaging. This is for instance in an undergraduate class, where there is knowledge transfer and learning taking place, but no strong discourse influencing the way the lecturer will have to navigate around certain topics.

This overarching discourse highlights certain topics, and downplays others. It also provides the available positioning space within the interaction. Specifically, the idea of familiarity and social context is argued to play a role in the intensity of discursive influence on identity positioning space. The argument of familiarity argues that the more familiar people are with each other, the less freedom there is for positioning, and the less familiar they are, the more space there is for positioning. The socio-political context provides a higher-level discourse within which the actors find themselves, which also has an influence on positioning, and this corresponds to the adapted framework of McInnes & Corlett (2012). This means that all the actors involved deduce social positions from an overarching discourse, for both themselves and others (Snow & Anderson, 1987; Beech, 2008). In terms of the provided context of this case study it fits well within this dimension. This is because there is a clear indication of familiarity aspects between the actors involved, as well as a strong overarching political discourse within which they interact, which is provided by the political involvement of the organisation.

5.4 Hypothesis

Before the analysis can be done, a hypothesis must be explicated. This is done by using the argument captured in table 6.

Table 6: Context Effect on Narrative

Context	Trust base	Identity Positioning space	Effect on narrative
· Repeated interaction between particular consultant and client. · Internal consultants	History	Restricted/constrained positioning space in both social obligations and relational positioning latency	Short or non-existent self-narrative. Narrative focussed situation at hand.
· Consultant with an academic title like Doctor/Professor. · Consultant from a well-known institution · Consultant with a reputation in an industry	Role & Rule (third-party)	Restricted or constrained positioning space in terms of social obligations. However, largely free or unrestricted in terms of relational positioning latency.	Noticeable evidence of self-narrative, however short and focussed on relational positioning with clients.
· Unknown consultant · Known only to few participants that had an input in the acquisition decision	Identity	Unrestricted or free in respect to both social obligations and relational positioning latitude.	Lengthy narrative, both self and contextual discourse narrative.

The argument is that, given the context of the interaction (in terms of familiarity and overarching discourse), trust will be extended according to the context. Reliant on the trust basis that is to be extended, the trusted party will have certain identity positioning space freedom or restraint. This freedom or restraint of positioning space will naturally have an effect on the narrative of the trusted party. Therefore, in order to find evidence in the narrative, one must first define and explore the context.

The context is already defined in the previous sections but needs to be interpreted in terms of the role of 'context' in the above argument. To do this, consider the following narrative extract from the transcripts.

Part 1 – Introducing the consultant

   1.1. Theme – Introduction

     1.1.1. Introducing Mr. C

      (Mr. A):

        1.1.1.1.   In terms of introduction I think everybody knows Mr. C

1.1.1.2.   or do we need to give some background?

1.1.1.3.   The best person is probably Mr. B,

1.1.1.4.   he's known Mr. C *the longest,*

1.1.1.5.   do you want to say a few words?

1.1.2. *Introducing Mr. C (2)*

(Mr. B):

1.1.2.1.   Well, I think Mr. C's *reputation,* Mr. A, *precedes him quite strongly.*

1.1.2.2.   My association with Mr. C, *well, it started in the media*

1.1.2.3.   when I used to hear him speak a great deal and

1.1.2.4.   often being referred to as almost a standard thinker outside of the box.

1.1.2.5.   But he's been a person who's chaired a lot of very significant strategic workshops and meetings,

1.1.2.6.   including at the World Economic Forum.

1.1.2.7.   I think he's got a very interesting systems thinking approach

1.1.2.8.   which is not always very conventional,

1.1.2.9.   if you think about the way some of these disciplines are thought of.

1.1.2.10.   But I'm not going to try to go too deep into this,

1.1.2.11.   but I'll just say that he's somebody I've known for several years.

1.1.2.12.   But it might be good to know what his very early years were

1.1.2.13.   probably I know very little,

The first person, Mr. A (the CEO of the organisation) states in line 1.1.1.1 that he thinks everyone knows the consultant. However, he immediately asks in line 1.1.1.2 whether a background should be provided. This may be because his statement in line 1.1.1.1 was wrong based on the reaction he received. He then in line 1.1.1.3 states that the best person to provide the background is Mr. B, because as per line 1.1.1.4 the reason is that Mr. B knows the consultant the longest.

This is followed by Mr. B providing a background on the consultant. He states in line 1.1.2.1 that the consultant's 'reputation precedes him quite strongly'. This hints that Mr. B 'should' be well known, and further elaborates on his ability – as referenced by others – '...*being referred to as a standard thinker outside the box...*' (1.1.2.4). However, Mr. B eventually states that he has known him for several years, but that'...*it might be good to know what his very early years were because probably I know very little...*' (1.1.2.11; 1.1.2.12). This means that he has known about him because of his reputation, because he '...*used to hear him speak a great deal...*' (1.1.2.3) and '... *he's a person who has chaired a lot of very significant strategic workshops and meetings*' (1.1.2.5), but he

does not know Mr. C on a personal level, nor does he carry any knowledge of Mr. C from before he met him in a public setting several years prior.

As background, Mr. C was very active in government before he moved into the private sector. This means that most of Mr. C's significant work was done before Mr. B had met him. This means that they actually know very little about Mr. C and the only person that was in a position to know a lot about him, could not elaborate sufficiently. Mr. C was consequently able to take the opportunity to provide his perspective. Evidence of this is to be found in a self-narrative that introduces himself to the group. This illustrates the notion that Mr. C is rather unknown by the clients in this situation and would therefore have to provide illustrations of his personal identity in order for them to gather information to be able to trust him. The following section analyses Mr. C's subsequent self-narrative.

This provides the context for the familiarity of the consultant among the representatives from Devcorp. He is not well known amongst the participants, and therefore when considering the hypothesis based on the context of the interaction, the majority of trust extension will be based on the identity of the consultant. This means other trust bases like historic, role, rule and category are less relevant during this interaction. It does not mean, however, that these bases are not relevant; it merely highlights the dominance of identity as a trust basis. This is due to the fact that the consultant was not from a reputable institution like a consulting house. If he were from such an institution, role- and category-based trust would have been more appropriate. Academic titles such as Doctor or Professor play similar roles in prompting such preconceptions – and Mr. C has no such titles. Identity thus merely constitutes the primary base for Devcorp members to draw cues about Mr. C.

Along these lines, if identity-based trust is extended, it means that the consultant has relatively free positioning space and needs to position his identity inside the available positions. In the words of McInnes and Corlett (2012), the consultant has relatively free space in terms of social obligations and relational positioning latency. However, this is only valid within the particular interaction. There is an overarching discourse governing certain positions within the interaction that the consultant must take note of when positioning. These are the various political discourses existent within the organisation – and in the country in general.

The nature of the narrative to be studied is based on the positioning freedom of the consultant. It will have strong and elaborate positioning evidence within the interpersonal level and throughout the overarching discourse. The narrative will also be of a personal nature, focusing on constructing

identity. However, as noted by Riessman (2005) and Foucault (1984), and argued in the previous chapter, people are able to have agency in the construction of their identities, but identities are not developed in isolation as they are co-constructed between actors through discourse. Specifically, as argued in the previous chapter in relation of the interactional typology of narrative, the personal narrative within this case study is not so much part of a dialogue with the other parties present as it is with the discourse that they represent. Therefore, the positioning of the consultant happens in a relatively free space, but to develop trust, the positioning must nevertheless eventually be placed in a very constrained space. This constrained space is navigated by the consultant during his personal narrative. This process will be illustrated in the following section.

5.5 Narrative analysis

This section will consist of the analysis of the case text. Firstly the consultant's personal narrative will be analysed using a fine-grained approach. Secondly, the software narrative will be analysed. Correlations are then drawn between the two narratives to show a novel finding.

5.5.1   Personal Narrative

Following the revelation that Mr. B actually knows very little about Mr. C, he sets the stage for Mr. C to expand on his identity through a personal narrative by stating that '*it might be good to know what his very early years were*' (1.1.2.12). Following this, the consultant elaborates on his 'early years'. Evidence for personal positioning (relational positioning latency) and social positioning (social obligations) will be extracted from this personal positioning. Consider the following excerpt:

Part 2 – Consultant Personal Narrative

(Mr. C)

2.1. Theme – South African

2.1.1.   I think you've got to say that.

2.1.2.   But in any event, I'm South African

2.1.3.   by birth, by avocation and by continued residence

In the above extract a clear theme is exposed, namely Mr. C's identity as a South African citizen. Interestingly, he provides three classifications or comments on the fact (plot), namely that he is firstly a born South African, secondly, he is South African by 'avocation', and lastly by continued residence (2.1.3). Being a born South African would usually be enough to classify and solidify someone's identity as 'a South African'. However, he extends this by positioning himself as a more

nuanced South African. This is done by stating that he is South African by avocation, which means that he has a particular involvement with South Africa (RSA), and is not just a passive citizen. He then furthers his ascription to being a South African by stating that he continues to reside in the RSA. This final criterion may seem unnecessary in the light of the previous two, but it is important to note the following excerpt:

> *2.2. Theme – Global Presence*
>> *2.2.1. although I suppose like most people in the world today,*
>> *2.2.2. if I'm able to be three weeks in one place at one time that's something approaching a miracle.*
>> *2.2.3. So I'm on four continents every month and on five, many months*
>> *2.2.4. and I spend an enormous amount of time running back and forward.*

The consultant moves over into a second theme relating to his personal identity, but it is still related to the previous theme. He states in line 2.2.2 that '*if I'm able to be three weeks in one place at one time that's something approaching a miracle*' and in 2.2.3 '*So I'm on four continents every month and on five, many months*'. These lines can be seen as the plot of the story. These claims constituting the plot are reserved by the comments on the plot found in 2.2.1 '*although I suppose like most people in the world today*' and the criteria in line 2.1.3 of '*continued residence*'. This creates an interesting identity; that of an active South African citizen with a global presence, yet still rooted in his home country.

A third aspect that can be highlighted from this second theme is the value of his time. He develops the perception of a very busy schedule, with global commitments, and therefore his time is valuable. This can be interpreted as a personal position as well, as he is a valuable consultant in high demand. A fourth aspect can be highlighted that speaks more to the social context. This is the downplaying of his global presence and value by stating, '*although I suppose like most people in the world today*' (2.2.1). This means that he tries to relate his identity to a broader class of people fitting such a description. It is rather obvious that having a global presence '*like most people*' is inaccurate as the vast majority of people in the world clearly do not follow lifestyles similar to that of Mr. C. He is therefore actually talking about the people within his social context.

The following theme develops on his professional and vocational background. From a narrative structure perspective, it is interesting to note that there is a rather straightforward plot. This would prompt an investigation into what is included and excluded in the plot. However, to do this is problematic, as retrospective over interpretation is hard to avoid. Nevertheless, when relating the

theme to the context of the interaction some interpretations can be made, especially when the subsequent theme is taken into account. Note the following excerpt.

> *2.3. Theme – Professional History*
>> *2.3.1. I was originally trained as an economist and as a lawyer.*
>> *2.3.2. I very early on, from 197[#] to 198[#] I was actually a South African diplomat.*
>> *2.3.3. I served in the Middle East based in Iran,*
>> *2.3.4. covering the area between the Indian sub Continent, Turkey and the Arab side of the Gulf,*
>> *2.3.5. I was in the United States from '7[#] to '8[#].*
>> *2.3.6. I was in what is now Namibia from '8[#] to '8[#]*

The theme is intentionally labelled professional 'history' instead of professional 'identity' as it takes the form of a classic historical narrative investigated by structural narratologists. The consultant chronologically states his professional history, starting with his training (2.3.1), proceeding to his stationing in Namibia (2.3.6). It covers 15 years of his career as a South African diplomat (the specific dates are removed for identification purposes). He served in the Middle East, the United States, and Namibia.

What can be inferred from this stanza is, firstly, that he interestingly notes that he was trained and not 'educated'. Furthermore, he provides two titles for himself, namely, an economist and a lawyer. He does not state that he was trained in economics or law, which would have provided background on his 'knowledge'. By providing titles, he invokes preconceptions of those titles of 'an economist' and 'a lawyer'. This provides more information on his personal identity by making available deductions from other social discourses and playing on trust bases other than role, rule and category.

After providing a historical overview of his professional dealings he elaborates on only one during the next theme. This is his stationing at Namibia. The decision to elaborate on this particular stationing is an act of positioning in terms of the overarching discourse of the interaction, and therefore through the utilisation the social obligation positions available. Consider the following excerpt:

> *2.4. Theme – Political Activist*
>> *2.4.1. Where I caused quite a lot of trouble in the best sense of the term*
>> *2.4.2. because I took* (a freedom fighter) *out of prison and*
>> *2.4.3. released 21 other political prisoners,*

2.4.4. put together the first round of talks between SWAPO and the other political parties.

2.4.5. And started the process that became known as the Transitional Government of National Unity

2.4.6. which accelerated the process towards independence of Namibia.

To contextualise the above, South Africa's political history is rather important. This is the history of the apartheid regime and specifically 'the struggle' against the regime by those oppressed by it, mainly non-whites. The specific context of Namibia is that it was under the rule of the apartheid government and after a war against Swapo (South Western Africa People's Organisation) the then, South West Africa was given independence and became known as Namibia. In present day South Africa, the apartheid discourse is still very strong, and the above extract relates to this discourse. Mr. C starts out by stating that he '*caused quite a lot of trouble in the best sense of the term*' (2.4.1). The first idea is that he '*caused quite a lot of trouble*' with the comment of it being done in '*best sense of the term*'. This is a vague idea, as it can be interpreted in many ways. However, in the light of the following actions, the meaning is brought to light. He stated that he caused trouble

'*...because I took* (a freedom fighter) *out of prison (2.4.2), released 21 other political prisoners (2.4.3), put together the first round of talks between SWAPO and the other political parties (2.4.4). And started the process that became known as the Transitional Government of National Unity (2.4.5), which accelerated the process towards independence of Namibia (2.4.6).*'

With this he developed both a personal identity position and positioned himself within a social space. The personal identity is that of an influential negotiator and political activist. This is because of his achievements in freeing a freedom fighter and 21 other political prisoners, which necessitated a skilled negotiator. Moreover, he initiated the talks that led to the independence of Namibia, which speaks to his experience with negotiation.

The social position that he took is that of an anti-apartheid character within the discourse of South African history. This is done in the light of the statement of causing trouble '*in the best sense of the term*' (2.4.1). He caused trouble for the apartheid regime by executing all those actions, and identifies himself in an anti-apartheid position that is part of the social discourse. Another interesting insight within this stanza is that he only speaks of 'I' and not 'we'. Again, it is reasonable to infer that he did not singlehandedly achieve all those feats:

'I took (a freedom fighter) *out of prison and [I] released 21 other political prisoners... [I] put together the first round of talks... [I] started the process that became known as the Transitional Government of National Unity which accelerated the process towards independence of Namibia.'*

This is evidence that he is focusing on his personal identity within the overarching discourse of what happened during that time. He is talking about his own role in the processes and ignoring all other actors that played a role in this process. This becomes evident in the next theme, where he introduces 'we' for the first time, and juxtaposes it with a 'villain'. Consider the extract:

> *2.5. Theme - Leaving Government*
>> *2.5.1. I left government in 198[#]*
>> *2.5.2. because I thought that P W Botha had gone crazy,*
>> *2.5.3. because what we trying to do in Namibia was the opposite of what he was doing in South Africa at that point in time.*
>> *2.5.4. He'd put troops into the townships*
>> *2.5.5. and had reversed himself in respect of the original "Adapt or Die" speech that he'd made in 1979,*

He starts off by stating that he left government in 198[#] (which is after the 15 year span from the 'professional history' theme). He follows this with a reason for leaving government and attributes it to a single actor within the discourse, namely P.W Botha, the South African President at that time. He states that he left government because '*I thought that P W Botha had gone crazy*' (2.5.2), where '*gone crazy*' is attributed to explain his actions of putting troops in the townships (2.5.4) and reversing himself in respect of the 'Adapt or Die' speech that he made in 1979 (2.5.5). He also takes a position against P.W Botha by stating that '*because what we trying to do in Namibia was the opposite of what he was doing in South Africa at that point in time*' (2.5.3) and therefore also strengthening the social position made in the previous extract.

More insight can be gained from noticing the fact that Mr. C was in fact in the service of the apartheid regime for the 15 year span and that he is taking a position against his 'organisation'. Nevertheless, it can be interpreted that, in this stanza, he is also rationalising the fact that he stayed in government until that point in time. This is done by saying that P.W Botha '*reversed himself*' from the original idea which he stood for. The audience is to believe that this prompted Mr. C to exit government, because only at that point did he see that P.W Botha '*had gone crazy*' based on his actions, and left government. What is also noticeable is that Mr. C does not make the apartheid government the antagonist or even mentions 'apartheid' for that matter; this might be because he

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was in fact an employee within the apartheid regime and he therefore omits certain details and highlights others within this piece of the narrative.

Another interpretation that can be made here is the sudden shift from the use of 'I' to 'we' found in line 2.5.3. Contrast this with the previous extract. This might be because of the collective identity of opposition against characters symbolising the apartheid regime, therefore the use of 'we'. Therefore, he develops a sense of shared identity and solidifies his social position within the discourse amongst a group of people similar to his stance. The next theme (2.6) ties in with the previous one, because it acts as a prelude to the identity of the company Mr. C started after leaving government.

2.6. Theme – New Profession

 2.6.1. and proceeded to set up a series essentially of American style think tanks

 2.6.2. that would address policy issues in a cross disciplinary format.

 2.6.3. And that's the origin of one company that's still called [Strategy Process].

 2.6.4. That by way of background.

The previous theme (2.5) started with the line '*I left government in 198*[#]', with the rest of the stanza being aimed at providing the circumstances and reason for him leaving government, and the sentence is continued within the subsequent theme through stating '*and proceeded to set up a series essentially of American style think tanks*' (2.6.1). He thus implies that his reasons for leaving government also formed the basis for his motivation to enter a new profession. This is evident in the line '*And that's the origin of one company that's still called [Strategy Process]*' (2.6.3), stating that the previous identity position in theme 2.5 is tied to the origins of the new company. Therefore, the company he represents in terms of his strategic process knowledge was developed out of 'nobly' abandoning a corrupt government.

Theme 2.6 ends with '*That by way of background*' (2.6.4), signalling a tentative end to his explicit personal history, and therefore his personal narrative. However, he proceeds to elaborate a bit further on his own company and provides a position for it in the same manner that he did for himself. Consider the following themes.

2.7. Theme – Problem, insight & solution

 2.7.1. Topic - Problem

  2.7.1.1. We subsequently did a great deal in respect of international risk management.

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2.7.1.2.   I discovered at an early stage that we had a curious phenomenon in sub Saharan Africa

2.7.1.3.   which was mirrored in the Andean region of Latin America, in Central Asia and in parts of East Asia.

2.7.1.4.   But all of these areas actually produced real returns of more than 25% in respect of FDI

2.7.1.5.   but attracted less than 1% of global FDI flows.

2.7.1.6.   Now it seemed clear that there was either a market failure or something very curious happening.

He provides a small narrative on his company in the form of a case study with the aim of positioning the type of work he does. He does this by breaking the story down into three topics, namely problem, insight and solution. Within the problem topic (2.7.1) he starts off by stating what they do, namely international risk management. However, he then highlights a certain case that is specifically related to sub-Sahara Africa (2.7.1.2), thereby giving the same positioning that he proposed for himself. This builds on his impression of being internationally knowledgeable, but focused on Africa. Furthermore, he states that '*we*', as in Africans, and more precisely him and the participants from Devcorp, encountered a '*curious phenomenon*' that he, ('*I*'), discovered, and moreover he did this at an '*early stage*'. This speaks to his ability to pick up high level strategic problems quickly and accurately (2.7.1.2). After relating to Africa, he then returns to the global aspect in the following line (2.7.1.3) by stating that the phenomenon was '*mirrored*' in other regions around the world.

The above paragraph focuses on Mr. C's personal identity positioning by using his company as a proxy. He manages to continue his personal identity construction in this way and build his technical credibility. However, the topic (2.7.1) also highlights a social positioning in relation to Devcorp's political identity. This is done by highlighting this particular problem, but stating that it is a '*curious phenomenon*'. By doing this, he paints an optimistic picture about his interest in development in Africa. The phenomenon that he identified is that of the area (sub-Sahara Africa) offering 25% real returns on all foreign direct investment (which is high), but only attracting less than 1% of total global foreign direct investment (which is low). This relates to an optimistic problem-solving dilemma, which Devcorp might find itself in, especially when the reason for this phenomenon is made clear in the next topic. In the next topic (2.7.2) he provides the insight that he had regarding the problem.

2.7.2. Topic - Insight

    2.7.2.1.   And it transpired that the fundamental reason for this was

    2.7.2.2.   because the loading of the premiums associated with both the debt component of any investment and of the political and commercial risk insurance associated with it, produced a circumstance where

    2.7.2.3.   if you needed a 15% hurdle rate you actually had to have better than 25% real returns in order to meet the hurdle rate.

In line 2.7.2.1 he states that the fundamental reason for this phenomenon essentially stems from structural problem brought about by political effects. This means that, due to political reasons, a structural financial system was constructed that caused the curious phenomena. The evidence is provided in line 2.7.2.3, where he states that '*if you needed a 15% hurdle rate*', which is the technical requirements for investment in sub-Sahara Africa; you '*actually had to have better than 25% real returns in order to meet the hurdle rate*'. This situation is purportedly brought about by the global political events. This topic highlights that the region faces an ungrounded and unnecessary problem and that, if solved, it would bring about positive results for the region. The next topic is the solution that Mr. C's company developed and their credibility to solve these types of problems.

2.7.3. Topic - Solution

    2.7.3.1.   And so we developed a variety of methodologies

    2.7.3.2.   that were subsequently taken up by the [__] and by [___]

    2.7.3.3.   that enabled us to be able to overcome some of these problems.

    2.7.3.4.   And we've done lots of different things in respect of many of those spaces.

    2.7.3.5.   [Mr. A] has, I think, a copy of the CV

    2.7.3.6.   so anyone who wants to read the rest of the detail is more than welcome to it,

    2.7.3.7.   but that at least provides some sort of backdrop.

Mr. C does not elaborate on the specific solution, but merely states that '*we developed a variety of methodologies*' (2.7.3.1) that '*enabled us to be able to overcome some of these problems*' (2.7.3.3). He also states that the methodologies were '*taken up*' by two reputable organisations, which provides evidence for the credibility of the solutions. Another positioning insight that can be made in lines 2.7.3.1 and 2.7.3.3 is that he firstly states that 'we' (his company) developed the solutions, enabling 'us' to overcome the problems. Here the 'us' he is talking about is him, and Devcorp, and specifically sub-Saharan Africa. The topic is ended by again stating a closure to his background by saying '*that at least provides some sort of backdrop*'. This highlights the previous point, made after

the personal narrative in theme 2.6, with '*That by way of background'* (2.6.4) he had actually not concluded his personal narrative, but rather used his company as a proxy to further position himself.

The above concludes the consultant's personal narrative aimed at constructing his identity and positioning it within the available space during the interaction and overarching discourse. However, when the transcripts are investigated further, there is still a narrative being produced by the consultant, about the Stratsoft tool. It might be possible to identify personal identity positioning within the narrative, or even more positioning activities using a proxy (like with his company).

In spite of this, it is interesting to consider the idea of positioning software in the same way as a person positions him- or herself. This could be done by providing a voice for the software and subsequently constructing its identity in the same way that a person would service his or her own. This relates to most consulting interactions, where it is not just the consultant that is to be trusted, but also his accompanying ideas, models, artefacts, or software in this case. These are usually identified on their own, independent from the consultant. However, it is still part of the consultant's identity during the interaction. If the consultant and accompanying artefacts are to be separated in terms of trust development, the artefact would be extended third-party based trust, which might be weaker, especially because the consultant is only extended tentative trust. This therefore treats the artefact as another person in the interaction and constructs an identity which is positioned for trust. The artefact would consequently enjoy more buy-in. To illustrate this phenomenon, the following section will provide examples of such identity construction for the software by the consultant, and specifically positioning it in terms of the interpersonal space as well as the overarching discourse.

5.5.2   Software Narrative

This section does not make use of the same fine-grained analysis utilised during the previous section. The focus is more on the themes and topics that emerge from the narrative. It is also interesting to note that this 'software narrative' is much more extensive and lengthy than the 'personal narrative'.

The first theme (3.1) to be interpreted within the narrative is that of the credibility of the tool, specifically where Mr. C was first introduced to it. He recollects that he was first introduced to it by the CEO of a large international car-manufacturing consortium where they used it extensively (3.1.3 – 3.1.7). He also states '*they had used it quite extensively'* (3.1.7), '*as a mechanism for bridging the gap'* (3.1.9). He follows this up by stating that what he calls this gap is '*the extreme weakness of thinking in the qualitative realm'* (3.1.11). This introduces the use of the Stratsoft tool as bridging the gap between the quantitative and qualitative realms in organisations.

In the next theme (3.2) he elaborates on the topics related to the quantitative realm (3.2.1), the qualitative realm (3.2.2), and the significance of said gap (3.2.3). During the discussion on these topics, he criticises the fact that organisations model quantitative decisions, but fail to do so in the case of qualitative ones (3.2.2.3) (3.2.1.2 – 3.2.1.3). This is of concern, because the most important decisions are the qualitative ones (3.2.3.2 – 3.2.3.3).

He starts the 'personal narrative' of the software during the next theme. The narrative's main theme is the origins of the software (3.3). Within topic 3.3.1 he gives an introduction as to where the software was created, but sets up for a narrative by stating '*And it started in a very curious way*' (3.3.1.4).

The consultant starts by outlining a plot where a group of physicists were meeting around the 'tea trolley' (3.3.2.1). They proceeded to have a discussion about knowledge and what it meant (3.3.2.2). He focuses on a quantum theorist and a cosmologist in the group (3.3.2.3) (3.3.2.4) (3.3.2.5) and proceeds to elaborate on their debate about what knowledge is, and the dilemma that they ended up with, and that they cannot find an answer. This follows into the next topic (3.3.3) where the search for the answer ends up with the eventual development of the Stratsoft tool. Therefore, Mr. C positions the tool as the answer to a problem faced by highly regarded and smart individuals, as well as the answer to an everyday, taken-for-granted organisational problem. He then summarises the problem of the complex world that organisations operate in (3.3.4), and states that humans on their own cannot deal with the complexity (3.3.5), and therefore the Stratsoft tool is developed specifically for this dilemma (3.3.6).

The subsequent theme (3.4) is an exploration of the finer details of what causes the incapacity of humans, and therefore organisations, to deal with the selected problem. This originates with the topics of data, information and knowledge (3.4.1 - 3.4.2), where knowledge is conceptualised as a difficult but important aspect of organisational life, distinctly different from information and data. The latter two are easy to capture and transmit, but it is very difficult to do so with knowledge. He elaborates on this problem during the next two topics which are used as examples. One of these is more general (3.4.3) and the other is more specific (3.4.4). In the general example topic, he develops a story to illustrate the problem, which is common in the working lives of the audience from Devcorp. Mr. C addresses the audience with: '*Think about what you ordinarily do. All of you when you assemble in formats like this*' (3.4.3.4 – 3.4.3.5), '*probably generate some new knowledge*'. By stating this, he extends the abstract example into the current situation and subsequently points out the problem by stating that meeting minutes or PowerPoint slides are made and distributed with the aim of capturing the insights produced during the meeting (3.4.3.8 –

3.4.3.9). However, the essence of the knowledge generated is broken down and made ineffective in the process (3.4.3.10 – 3.4.3.14). He focuses this example onto an interpersonal level during the next topic (3.4.4) by stating, '*You did that*' (3.4.4.1), signalling out an individual. He again elaborates on why knowledge transfer is not possible in those types of formats. Following this personal example, in the next topic (3.4.5), he connects it with the rhetorical question '*are we capable of learning something significant from that*' (3.4.5.3), ending with his own answer of '*no*' (3.4.5.6).

After this, Mr. C elaborates extensively on cognitive science and the shortcomings of the human mind (3.4.5.10 – 3.4.5.61). He subsequently introduces the strengths of the capabilities of the human mind in the next topic (3.4.6), where he again starts with a rhetorical question (3.4.6.2). The answer to this question is that visualisation is the way we can deal with it (3.4.6.22). Furthermore, within the next topic, he states another rhetorical question based on the limitations of the previous answer '*by bringing the visual cortex into play we solve one part of the problem*' (3.4.6.22). He asks, '*what else can we factor into this equation*' (3.4.7.1) and posits concept mapping and contingency analysis as the answer. In the next two topics (3.4.8 & 3.4.9) he acknowledges Stratsoft as the incorporations of the previous answers into a software package.

The narrative was an extensive rhetorical process of highlighting a problem in all organisations and subsequently positioning that problem on an interpersonal level with those present. This is followed by an exploration of why the problem exists. This is further broken down to rhetorical questions and answers. Thereafter the answers are placed as incorporated into the Stratsoft tool. This narrative has a loose correlation to the consultant's personal narrative flow, namely from origins, to unique historical becoming, to highlighting client problems, to tying the uniqueness and value of the software/consultant to the problems of the clients as the solution. Consider the following table for a summated illustration of this narrative structure.

There is more to be analysed in terms of the 'software narrative'. However, the above attempt will suffice in illustrating the process of the consultant narrating both his own identity and also the artefacts that he brings into the interaction in order to gain trust from those that are present. It is therefore important not to separate the consultant from the accompanying ideas, concepts, models, tools, software and etcetera, that are employed by the consultant to help the clients. Trust should be established in both the consultant and the accompanying artefacts for a successful interaction. This is because within any particular interaction the consultant's identity is that of him- or herself, including the accompanying artefacts. They are not regarded as separate by clients.

Table 7: Narrative Structures

Narrative structure	Consultant	Stratsoft
Origins	• South African citizen • Global knowledgeability	• Debate on knowledge
Unique historical becoming	• Anti-apartheid stance • Skilled negotiator • Strategic expert	• Search for tool that can fulfil the search for knowledge capture • Bridging the gap between quantitative and qualitative
Problems of the client	• Financial context in sub-Sahara Africa	• Capturing complex knowledge development • Endemic human shortcomings
Solution to the problems	• Developed methodologies which solved similar problems • Accredited by big names adopting methodologies	• Captures complex strategic processes for distribution • Fulfilling shortcomings by visualisation, cognitive mapping and contingency tools

5.6 Conclusion & Discussion

This chapter set out to provide evidence of identity positioning by the consultant during his initial interaction with the clients. This was done through the context theory: if the consultant is an unknown individual to the clients, he would have free positioning space and this would be reflected in the narrative. However, the pursuit of trust by the consultant required him to position in relation to the audience. This was very evident in the claims the consultant made (freedom of positioning), and how he positioned himself in various roles that would relate to the audience (South African, anti-apartheid activist, African renaissance advocate etc.).

An interesting phenomenon was also highlighted in terms of the structure of the consultant's personal narrative and that of the 'software narrative'. Both narratives follow the same structures, namely: origins, unique historical becoming, problems of the client and solutions to those problems. This alludes to an interesting insight: that identity can also be constructed for artefacts, like software, and that it would also have to be extended trust if the clients are to use the software. This however falls outside the scope of this research, but it proves that the conceptual underpinning of the analysis potentially has a wider appeal than just to consultants.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide answers to the research questions outlined in chapter one. This will be done by considering to what extent the findings from the previous chapter serves as evidence for the context theory developed in chapter three. The implications of the findings are extrapolated to address the expressed problem identified in chapter one. The process will be a retrospective review of the various chapters and how they relate to the four research questions identified at the start of this study.

This chapter also includes a discussion of the various limitations of this research project, both from a practicality and scope perspective. Unfortunately, the core objective of the thesis does leave certain questions unanswered – but also creates additional questions. This is because the objective is to find a starting point for future research by adding the concept of trust as a lens through which to interpret Goffman's (1959) perceived 'play'. The limitations of the study create various unanswered questions which could prove to be fruitful soil for future research.

6.2 Findings & Discussion

The four core research questions identified in the beginning of this thesis need to be addressed in light of the subsequent findings. The first question of '*what are the antecedents of trust in the initial interaction stages between a consultant and client*' relates to the findings in chapter three. The different dimensions of trust antecedents were discussed, where after some dimensions were excluded based on the contextual realities of the studied context. This left the bases of trust as the main antecedents relevant to the perception of trustworthiness. It is argued that identity-based trust is the most dominant basis by which trust can be extended in the initial stages of the client-consultant interaction, and therefore the most important antecedent for trust.

The second research question is also addressed in chapter three. The question asks what dimensions govern the construction and positioning of identity by consultants in the initial interaction phases of

the client-consultant interaction. This was answered by using insights from the field of identity work and impression management. The general consensus in the field is that the construction of identity is done through discourse. This means that identities are co-constructed in social interactions and is inferred by the use of positioning labelled as 'identity positioning'. Positioning an identity refers to the availability of positions which are created and constructed by social rules, norms, culture, power dynamics, and various other social mechanisms. It is argued that within the context of management consulting. Two dimensions from the literature are relevant as positioning space for identities, namely social obligations and relational positioning latitude. Identity construction within the initial stages of the client-consultant interaction is governed by social discourse providing positions, and relational positioning that individual actors in an interaction are engaged in.

The third question is addressed by combining the previous two insights. Knowing that the most dominant trust basis is identity-based trust, and with knowledge of how identities are positioned in this context, the two can be combined. This means that identity construction and positioning by the consultant is done with the objective of altering perceived trustworthiness by the clients. Trust is extended within this context based on the consultant's identity, and the only source of identity is the consultant's narrative, which consists of identity positioning in relation to the socio-political context of the case study. This also answers the fourth question concerning the need to find evidence of identity positioning towards favourable positions within the social context.

The fourth question is whether evidence can be found for identity positioning by a consultant. The previous chapter's objectives were to find evidence of the consultant actively positioning his identity. There were various examples highlighted in the narrative of the consultant as to how he uses rhetoric in order to create certain perceptions about his identity. He navigated a strong political discourse which is evident in the context by aligning himself in the grand narrative of South Africa's unique history. This alignment is interesting to observe, especially when it is done by creating a specious narrative recalling his actions taken against the apartheid regime. This recalling of his personal history is an instance of identity positioning that is elaborated and constructed. These elaborations are evident throughout the narrative and stand as evidence for active identity positioning in relation to the audience.

There is evidence suggesting the positioning by the consultant in terms of the social discourse. However, little evidence is found in terms of interpersonal positioning. This might be because it will only surface during a dialogue, which highlights mutual positioning by consultant and clients. This means that during the personal narrative of the consultant, no individual identity positions

were available to position in relation to. Therefore the only identity that the consultant can position in relation to is the group identity of the executive committee. Evidence of positioning in terms of social obligations is more evident.

An important paradox must be highlighted and explained at this point. The context theory hypothesis hold that the more unknown the consultant is, the more freedom there is for positioning. However, the narrative that emerges seems rather restrictive in the positioning space that the consultant can take, especially if he is unknown. This is why trust is an important mechanism in the equation. Trust is a strong objective in the positioning of identities and makes it necessary for the consultant to adhere to certain obligations in order to be perceived as trustworthy. This does not mean that the consultant is constrained in what he can portray as his identity, but rather that if he wants to be perceived as trustworthy, it is obligatory to do so. Inversely, if a consultant is known to the clients, he will have to keep his status quo identity position in order to preserve his perceived trustworthiness. The evidence that is found is therefore consistent with the context theory. The theory hypothesised that because of the unfamiliarity factor of the consultant, he will be able to construct an elaborate identity which can be positioned favourably for the creation of perceptions of trustworthiness.

What is interesting to note at this point is the contradiction of what is theorised by the model of swift trust. The theory of swift trust holds that, given high unfamiliarity of parties, time constraints, and the importance of collaboration, trust is extended on the basis of structure. This means that people base their perceptions of trustworthiness on the structural rules and norms that govern their interaction. However, as argued in this thesis, these bases of trust play a secondary role to perceived trustworthiness. Identity is seen as the primary basis of trust perception. This is because the perception of another person's ascription to the structural rules and norms that govern the interaction is based on the identity that that person provides which places him or her in that structure.

It is therefore evident that the positioning of identity by consultants can be seen as motivated by the need for favourable trust perceptions. This is related to what was identified in the problem statement. The problem identified in the literature was that the phenomenon of rhetoric is seen as being motivated either by an inadequate body of knowledge causing consultant's loose use of terminology, or by the process of mutual sensemaking in order to transfer or share knowledge. It is posited here that trust is a core motivation to be investigated in this context.

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An unexpected finding from the analysis of the narrative was that the consultant not only constructed and positioned his own identity, but also that of the software that he is facilitating on. Using thematic and structural analysis, it is shown that both the personal narrative and the software narrative are constructed in the same way. This indicates that the software is also given an identity and positioned in the interaction. What makes this finding important is the implications of the idea that artefacts like software can be given an identity by consultants, and also need to be trusted by the clients. Some consultants, like Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) consultants, are almost synonymous with the artefacts they bring to organisations. In the initial phases of introducing the ERP to the clients the same situation can be envisaged, where the consultant must construct an identity for the ERP so that the clients will trust it and use it correctly. This can be extended to the training sessions where end users are introduced to the software and must place trust in the system.

6.3 Limitations

The most prominent limitation of this thesis is that the case study provides no proof that trust was actually extended towards the consultant. The thesis therefore worked on the assumption that trust is a desired outcome of the positioning, rather than a definite outcome. It cannot therefore be argued that the strategy highlighted for altering perceptions of trustworthiness is a preferred or practically viable way to gain trust. It can be reasonably inferred from the success of the particular consultant that he is good at earning trust. Nonetheless, this remains speculation.

Another limitation of the study is that only one context highlighted within the context theory is explored. There are other situations where consultants are more known to the clients, or they have a strong reputation, or they have a recognised title or affiliated company. These contexts would cause other bases of trust to be more dominant in influencing the perceived trustworthiness of consultants. Despite this, highlighting this one context was instrumental in arguing for the importance of identity in trust perception as well as for the use of rhetoric as a functional means for trust development.

Evidence of positioning in relation to individuals did not emerge during the analysis. As mentioned before, this is because the evidence for it may only be present within the dialogue between client and consultant. This thesis did not employ discourse analysis and could not extend the examination to cover the dialogue part of the narrative text. Extending the analysis to the dialogue was outside of the scope of this thesis.

The last limitation that is identified is that this thesis focuses exclusively on management consulting as a unit of analysis. There are however other interactions which offer similar characteristics for application. Such interactions can be found in communities of practice, innovation networks, ERP

implementation and project teams, amongst others. All of these examples share characteristics like varying familiarity of parties, temporariness of interaction and a strong need for collaboration, learning and knowledge sharing. This is why the concept of high-contact interactions was highlighted in chapter two. The defining of this particular type of interaction is to be able to extend future analysis towards these other contexts. Nevertheless, within this thesis, these contexts were not included.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the limitations and findings discussed above, this section will recommend research avenues that can be pursued further. The first recommendation is to empirically test trustworthiness perceptions of clients in a similar situation to the one that was explored in chapter five. This will supplement the argument put forth in this thesis by acknowledging whether trust was actually extended or not.

The second recommendation is to do more research on different contexts highlighted by the context theory. This is because only one context was focused upon in this thesis and research on more contexts would help to prove the soundness of the theory across different contexts. This means that research should be done on the narrative of consultants within an interaction where they are known to the clients, or even internal consultants. This is the opposite side of the spectrum to the one examined in this thesis. It would be expected that most identity work research within the organisational context of job and career identity would reflect the same findings. More specific research would be needed to analyse a context where the consultant has some identifiers that play to the structural bases of trust development, like a title, reputation or reputable affiliate firm.

Similarly, research can also be extended to other interactions like client-consultant interactions, which qualifies in terms of being a high-contact interaction. For instance, this would be through investigating identity positioning for trust within an innovation network between two organisations or departments. Similarly, the analysis can also be extended to the realm where swift trust is applied to examine whether the contradiction highlighted earlier is evident.

It is specifically recommended to do more research on the creation of identity for artefacts like software. This research should focus on how consultants create an identity for the software they are required to introduce or implement for the clients. The end users of the system must be able to trust the software to use it. This is especially the case within ERP consulting, where ERP's govern large parts of the organisation's processes. If the end-users are to confide in the system, they need to trust

it. The consultants introducing or implementing the system are therefore the initial 'face' of the system and are responsible for creating an identity for it.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to provide a closing argument for the thesis. It has shown that the four research questions have indeed been answered. Moreover, a basis is set for further research incorporating the lens of trust, and the connection is made to identity positioning as the means to alter perceived trustworthiness.

To conclude, the 'play' introduced in chapter one is explored throughout this thesis. It is placed within the context of management consulting as an effort to highlight novel insights around the phenomenon. It is shown how this 'play' can also be interpreted as a process of establishing trust by placing it in a specific context. In this way, a starting point is reached to bridge the gap between identity positioning literature and the importance of trust in organisations. The study could potentially start a discussion that emphasises the necessity of a novel way of looking at how trust is developed within organisations and how it can inform practical understanding of this process.

With a contextual analytical tool for investigating and understanding trust in organisations, specifically how the trusted party actively alters perceived trustworthiness, much can be learned about the process. It can enable organisations to have a more socialised and contextual perspective on trust development. It can also result in trust being regarded as more central to organisational behaviour in explaining specific phenomena.

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APPENDIX A

Part 1 – Introducing the consultant
1.1. Theme – Introduction

    1.1.1.   Introducing Mr. C

    (Mr. A):

        1.1.1.1. In terms of introduction I think everybody knows [mr. C]
        1.1.1.2. or do we need to give some background?
        1.1.1.3. The best person is probably [mr. B],
        1.1.1.4. he's known Sean the longest,
        1.1.1.5. do you want to say a few words?

    1.1.2.   Introducing Mr. C (2)

    (Mr. B):

        1.1.2.1. Well, I think Sean's reputation, [Mr. A], precedes him quite strongly.
        1.1.2.2. My association with [Mr. C], well, it started in the media
        1.1.2.3. when I used to hear him speak a great deal and
        1.1.2.4. often being referred to as almost a standard thinker outside of the box.
        1.1.2.5. But he's been a person who's chaired a lot of very significant strategic workshops and meetings,
        1.1.2.6. including at the World Economic Forum.
        1.1.2.7. I think he's got a very interesting systems thinking approach
        1.1.2.8. which is not always very conventional,
        1.1.2.9. if you think about the way some of these disciplines are thought of.
        1.1.2.10. But I'm not going to try to go too deep into this,
        1.1.2.11. but I'll just say that he's somebody I've known for several years.
        1.1.2.12. But it might be good to know what his very early years were
        1.1.2.13. probably I know very little,

Part 2 – Consultant Personal Narrative
    (Mr. C)
2.1. Theme – South African
    2.1.1.   I think you've got to say that.
    2.1.2.   But in any event, I'm South African
    2.1.3.   by birth, by avocation and by continued residence
2.2. Theme – Global Presence
    2.2.1.   although I suppose like most people in the world today,
    2.2.2.   if I'm able to be three weeks in one place at one time that's something approaching a miracle.
    2.2.3.   So I'm on four continents every month and on five, many months
    2.2.4.   and I spend an enormous amount of time running back and forward.
2.3. Theme – Professional History
    2.3.1.   I was originally trained as an economist and as a lawyer.
    2.3.2.   I very early on, from 197[#] to 198[#] I was actually a South African diplomat.

    2.3.3.   *I served in the Middle East based in Iran,*

    2.3.4.   *covering the area between the Indian sub Continent, Turkey and the Arab side of the Gulf,*

    2.3.5.   *I was in the United States from '7[#] to '8[#].*

    2.3.6.   *I was in what is now Namibia from '8[#] to '8[#]*

2.4. Theme – Political Activist

    2.4.1.   *where I caused quite a lot of trouble in the best sense of the term*

    2.4.2.   *because I took [freedom fighter] out of prison and*

    2.4.3.   *released 21 other political prisoners,*

    2.4.4.   *put together the first round of talks between SWAPO and the other political parties.*

    2.4.5.   *And started the process that became known as the Transitional Government of National Unity*

    2.4.6.   *which accelerated the process towards independence of Namibia.*

2.5. Theme - Leaving Government

    2.5.1.   *I left government in 198[#]*

    2.5.2.   *because I thought that P W Botha had gone crazy,*

    2.5.3.   *because what we trying to do in Namibia was the opposite of what he was doing in South Africa at that point in time.*

    2.5.4.   *He'd put troops into the townships*

    2.5.5.   *and had reversed himself in respect of the original "Adapt or Die" speech that he'd made in 1979,*

2.6. Theme – New Profession

    2.6.1.   *and proceeded to set up a series essentially of American style think tanks*

    2.6.2.   *that would address policy issues in a cross disciplinary format.*

    2.6.3.   *And that's the origin of one company that's still called [Strategy Process].*

    2.6.4.   *That by way of background.*

2.7. Theme – Problem, insight & solution

    2.7.1.   *Problem*

        2.7.1.1. *We subsequently did a great deal in respect of international risk management.*

        2.7.1.2. *I discovered at an early stage that we had a curious phenomenon in sub Saharan Africa*

        2.7.1.3. *which was mirrored in the Andean region of Latin America, in Central Asia and in parts of East Asia.*

        2.7.1.4. *But all of these areas actually produced real returns of more than 25% in respect of FDI*

        2.7.1.5. *but attracted less than 1% of global FDI flows.*

        2.7.1.6. *Now it seemed clear that there was either a market failure or something very curious happening.*

    2.7.2.   *Insight*

        2.7.2.1. *And it transpired that the fundamental reason for this was*

        2.7.2.2. *because the loading of the premiums associated with both the debt component of any investment and of the political and commercial risk insurance associated with it, produced a circumstance where*

        2.7.2.3. *if you needed a 15% hurdle rate you actually had to have better than 25% real returns in order to meet the hurdle rate.*

    2.7.3.   *Solution*

        2.7.3.1. *And so we developed a variety of methodologies*

        2.7.3.2. *that were subsequently taken up by the IFC and by Omega*

        2.7.3.3. *that enabled us to be able to overcome some of these problems.*

        2.7.3.4. *And we've done lots of different things in respect of many of those spaces.*

2.7.3.5.   [Mr. A] has, I think, a copy of the CV

2.7.3.6.   so anyone who wants to read the rest of the detail is more than welcome to it,

2.7.3.7.   but that at least provides some sort of backdrop.

Part 3 – Software Narrative

3.1. Theme - Credibility of tool

    3.1.1.   I was introduced to what we're going to talk about today, [STRATSOFT] *today,*

    3.1.2.   what used to be [Cogutillity], as [Mr. A] has said, actually

    3.1.3.   by [Mr. U]

    3.1.4.   when he was still running Daimler Chrysler and

    3.1.5.   before the sort of - sorry, Daimler Benz rather,

    3.1.6.   before re-chart to Chrysler.

    3.1.7.   And they had used it quite extensively

    3.1.8.   in what was then [___] – [___] in [___] Aerospace,

    3.1.9.   as a mechanism for bridging the gap

    3.1.10. between classic econometric and statistical modelling and

    3.1.11. what I would call the extreme weakness of thinking in the qualitative realm.

3.2. Theme – The gap

    3.2.1.   Topic - Quantitative realm

        3.2.1.1. Now let's put that into context very quickly.

        3.2.1.2. All of us in all organisations rely on classic statistical modelling

        3.2.1.3. for all sorts of purposes in the quantitative realm.

        3.2.1.4. Literally from basic Excel spreadsheets through econometric models, through risk models, through complex derivative instruments

        3.2.1.5. and a variety of other things as you all know,

        3.2.1.6. used for risk hedging in financial institutions.

    3.2.2.   Topic - Qualitative realm

        3.2.2.1. However, the truth of it is that when we operate in the strategic space,

        3.2.2.2. in the vast majority of cases, decisions are taken based on a combination of prior experience, instinct and prejudice.

        3.2.2.3. We don't model qualitative decisions,

        3.2.2.4. we don't have instruments for modelling qualitative decisions.

        3.2.2.5. We don't have mechanisms that enable us to bring anything resembling the same degree of rigour and systematic thought to complex qualitative issues,

        3.2.2.6. that we conventionally assume are necessary when we're dealing in the statistical realm.

    3.2.3.   Topic - Significance of gap

        3.2.3.1. And that's curious

        3.2.3.2. because the vast majority of decisions that have profound significance are

        3.2.3.3. in fact the judgements that we make in qualitative terms,

        3.2.3.4. sometimes based on some of the numbers that we've crunched in getting to that particular point.

3.3. Theme - The Origins

    3.3.1.   Topic - Introduction

        3.3.1.1. Now the origins then,

        3.3.1.2. I'll leap directly into the tools themselves,

        3.3.1.3. the origins then of the set of instruments and the associated methodology now called [STRATSOFT], came out of the Max Planck Institute for Physics at Starnberg in the

latter part of the 1980s.

    3.3.1.4.   *And it started in a very curious way,*

3.3.2.   Topic - The nature of knowledge (a story within the narrative)

    3.3.2.1.   *quite literally a group of physicists who were working at Starnberg were meeting around the tea trolley.*

    3.3.2.2.   *And there was a discussion about what it meant to know, what did knowledge mean.*

    3.3.2.3.   *And two actors,*

    3.3.2.4.   *both of whom are quite well known but are irrelevant for these purposes,*

    3.3.2.5.   *one a cosmologist and the other a quantum theorist,*

    3.3.2.6.   *actually leapt into the debate very enthusiastically.*

    3.3.2.7.   *And the cosmologist raised the question about whether it was possible within his discipline to know anything at all and if you think about it,*

    3.3.2.8.   *bearing in mind that what cosmologists study, i.e. stars and the like, are light years away and in some cases thousands of light years away from the earth,*

    3.3.2.9.   *you don't even know whether those objects still exist.*

    3.3.2.10. *You know they existed thousands of light years ago because you can see them,*

    3.3.2.11. *but you don't know whether they exist today.*

    3.3.2.12. *So knowledge quite clearly in the context of cosmology is an uncertain entity.*

    3.3.2.13. *In quantum physics knowledge likewise is not we assume it to be under ordinary circumstances when we operate in conventional terms*

    3.3.2.14. *because at the simplest level*

    3.3.2.15. *the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle postulates,*

    3.3.2.16. *and I'm trivialising,*

    3.3.2.17. *that one cannot know mass and velocity simultaneously.*

    3.3.2.18. *Now if you can't know mass and velocity of a particle simultaneously, then what does it mean to say that you know anything?*

3.3.3.   Topic - The commissioning of Cogutillity

    3.3.3.1.   *Now out of that,*

    3.3.3.2.   *a member of that particular group whose name is Albrecht von Mueller*

    3.3.3.3.   *decided that it would be interesting to put together a research team on a multi-disciplinary basis,*

    3.3.3.4.   *to go and have a look at what knowledge meant*

    3.3.3.5.   *and how one could in fact grapple with this particular issue.*

    3.3.3.6.   *And he came to the conclusion that knowledge was a highly specific quality,*

    3.3.3.7.   *it wasn't data, it wasn't information, it was something else.*

    3.3.3.8.   *And that under those circumstances it was necessary to think about it in particular ways.*

3.3.4.   Topic - Complex World that needs a tool to deal with it

    3.3.4.1.   *Now, again I'm going to summarise dramatically,*

    3.3.4.2.   *but in very simple terms*

    3.3.4.3.   *the conclusion was that the acceleration of technological process that has characterised the last 20 years or so,*

    3.3.4.4.   *associated with increasing inter-connectivity on a global scale*

    3.3.4.5.   *associated with this phenomenon we describe as globalisation,*

    3.3.4.6.   *has brought about a tremendous increase in both complexity and in the speed of change.*

3.3.5.   Topic - Because humans can not

    3.3.5.1.   *Now everyone of us experiences this in our daily lives,*

    3.3.5.2.   *we don't need to think about it too profoundly*

3.3.5.3. *but it was an important thought at the end of the 1980s.*

3.3.5.4. *The difficulty is that human reasoning skills do not adapt to these particular challenges.*

3.3.5.5. *And the result of that is that we fail to be able to grasp the meaning of the rapidity of change*

3.3.5.6. *or the excessive complexity that is now being engendered by this high degree of connectivity*

3.3.5.7. *and the consequence of that is that there's a rapidly growing gap between what we have to bring to bear*

3.3.5.8. *in terms of our cognitive apparatus,*

3.3.5.9. *and the challenges that we face in many dimensions on the global scale today.*

3.3.6.   Topic - Reintroduction of the tool as the solution

3.3.6.1. *So the research task that was set for this interdisciplinary group was to come up with tools*

3.3.6.2. *that would actually thinking in an appropriate way.*

3.3.6.3. *And curiously*

3.3.6.4. *at a very early stage of the project two propositions emerged.*

3.3.6.5. *The one is that when we address complex qualitative issues we only perform a very limited number,*

3.3.6.6. *in fact four cognitive operations.*

3.3.6.7. *And we keep on doing it.*

3.3.6.8. *We do it iteratively, we do it sequentially, we do it partially, we do it comprehensively,*

3.3.6.9. *we do it in all sorts of different ways*

3.3.6.10. *but we only use four cognitive operations.*

3.3.6.11. *The second thing is that if you tackle this challenge of actually examining knowledge in an appropriate way,*

3.3.6.12. *and if you find ways of systematising the process by which we capture knowledge,*

3.3.6.13. *it then becomes possible to store knowledge as knowledge.*

3.3.6.14. *I'll explain what that means in just a moment.*

3.3.6.15. *So the tools, and that's essentially what you'll have the opportunity of assessing as we go through the day,*

3.3.6.16. *are basically a knowledge management application*

3.3.6.17. *that firstly enables us to capture knowledge more efficiently*

3.3.6.18. *and secondly, to manage complexity in a more useful way.*

3.4. Theme - Expanding on technical terms

3.4.1.   Topic - Data & Information

3.4.1.1. *Now we've used concepts like data and information and knowledge in that discussion*

3.4.1.2. *but I just want to elucidate very quickly.*

3.4.1.3. *Data we all know.*

3.4.1.4. *They're facts and figures,*

3.4.1.5. *let's say12º centigrade.*

3.4.1.6. *If I contextualise that data and I say that at 8.15 this morning outside the [Stratcorp] Academy at the [Stratcorp] the temperature was 12º Celsius,*

3.4.1.7. *I'm then conveying information.*

3.4.1.8. *That information may be correct or it may be incorrect*

3.4.1.9. *but I am conveying information.*

3.4.1.10. *I have contextualised data*

3.4.1.11. *and I have thus provided information.*

3.4.2.   Topic - Knowledge

3.4.2.1. *Knowledge, however, is something a little bit more complex than that.*

3.4.2.2. *Knowledge is systemically integrated information that enables intelligent action.*

3.4.2.3. *So the definition of knowledge*

3.4.2.4. *in practical terms*

3.4.2.5. *is systemically integrated information comprising contextualised data in part, that enables intelligent action.*

3.4.2.6. *It enables us to understand relationships, explore potential evolution of issues, evaluate alternatives, predict likely developmental paths,*

3.4.2.7. *and in summary, as I've said,*

3.4.2.8. *enables one to act intelligently.*

3.4.3. Topic - Practical Example

3.4.3.1. *Now in order to deal with that*

3.4.3.2. *we have to find ways firstly of bringing about that systemic integration in a fashion that is sustainable*

3.4.3.3. *and of capturing that information in its integrated format as knowledge, in a way that enables us to retain it.*

3.4.3.4. *Think about what you ordinarily do.*

3.4.3.5. *All of you when assemble in formats like this,*

3.4.3.6. *provided you're talking about a topic about which some or many of you know quite a lot about,*

3.4.3.7. *probably generate some new knowledge in the course of an extensive debate.*

3.4.3.8. *The problem about it is that what you then do is you ask somebody to prepare a Minute of it or you put it onto a set of Power Point slides.*

3.4.3.9. *And then if you distribute that to other people*

3.4.3.10. *you have disaggregated the knowledge that was generated,*

3.4.3.11. *and presented it in the form of information.*

3.4.3.12. *Because what is presented in a word document or what is presented in a Power Point slide is no longer systemically integrated and interactive,*

3.4.3.13. *it is the information substrate of what was knowledge at the time of its generation.*

3.4.3.14. *And that's one of the key problems that we have when we are trying to sustain learning.*

3.4.4. Topic - Personal Example

3.4.4.1. *You did that,*

3.4.4.2. *I've seen your presentation on essentially the new development mandate in respect of the [Devcorp].*

3.4.4.3. *And you refer in part within the framework of that, to the sort of rather disastrous history of development economics since the '50s,*

3.4.4.4. *in terms of having paradigms and throwing over the paradigms in successive waves on an almost accelerating curve.*

3.4.4.5. *Now the truth of it is,*

3.4.4.6. *because development by definition is an immensely complex topic,*

3.4.4.7. *it is exceedingly difficult to wrap one's mind around it in its totally.*

3.4.4.8. *Because you are dealing with highly complex interactive dynamic systems.*

3.4.4.9. *And you are seeking to make policy interventions into those spaces in ways where necessarily,*

3.4.4.10. *given the complexity of those systems,*

3.4.4.11. *you get unexpected and unintended consequences and sometimes perverse consequences.*

3.4.5. Topic - Begging the question

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3.4.5.1. That's endemic.

3.4.5.2. The question is,

3.4.5.3. are we capable of learning something significant from that,

3.4.5.4. so that we are in a position to be able to capture the insights generated out of one particular cycle of experience,

3.4.5.5. in such a way that they appropriately inform the next cycle of experience.

3.4.5.6. And up to this point in time the argument would have to be no,

3.4.5.7. we simply shift paradigms and we tackle things in different ways.

3.4.5.8. But we do not systematically incorporate the learnings out of the prior experience.

3.4.5.9. Now there's a reason for that,

3.4.5.10. and there are two very simple functions of the way in which the human brain works today at this particular stage of its evolution,

3.4.5.11. that constrain us and make it very difficult for us to deal with extremely complex issues.

3.4.5.12. The first one is that the way in which we process information when it enters through our aural-neuro networks and is processed by the auditory cortex,

3.4.5.13. is necessarily linear and sequential.

3.4.5.14. You have to listen to what I'm saying, hear when I have completed the clause before you can process the significance of the thought.

3.4.5.15. And the capacity to be able to articulate clearly in appropriate syntactical terms is a necessary function of communication precisely

3.4.5.16. because we can only understand what we hear in linear sequential formats.

3.4.5.17. Now that in its own terms might be alright,

3.4.5.18. but we also have very limited RAM,

3.4.5.19. we have very limited short-term working memory.

3.4.5.20. So the only way that you can process complex inputs in a linear sequential format

3.4.5.21. is by throwing out everything that went before.

3.4.5.22. This is one of the reasons why no student,

3.4.5.23. except one who understands the entirety of the topic in question,

3.4.5.24. is capable of getting through a year of lectures without taking notes.

3.4.5.25. Because you can't absorb it, process it and deal with it,

3.4.5.26. without shifting it out of the short-term memory into the long-term memory and then recontextualising it.

3.4.5.27. So one of the primary difficulties that we have as a consequence of this linear sequential processing via the audial channel and the limited short-term memory that we have,

3.4.5.28. is we have to rely on heuristics, we have to rely on,

3.4.5.29. what I called earlier, prejudices.

3.4.5.30. Now they may be well founded prejudices

3.4.5.31. but they are pre-judgements.

3.4.5.32. They are based on our past experience

3.4.5.33. and there are a whole series of well documented,

3.4.5.34. very classic stuff,

3.4.5.35. Tversky and Kahneman did a tremendous amount of work

3.4.5.36. and got the Nobel for Economics in 2002 for the work they've done in this particular realm.

3.4.5.37. There are a tremendous number of very uncomfortable heuristics that we use routinely in order to make sense of complexity

3.4.5.38. because we lack the cognitive apparatus to be able to do so effectively.

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3.4.5.39. Now this is fine as long as the future's like the past,

3.4.5.40. but if you are dealing with a world characterised by increasing complexity and accelerating change,

3.4.5.41. then quite a lot of times the future is not going to be like the past

3.4.5.42. and you are not going to have had proper experience of the issues that you are required to address in the next six months.

3.4.5.43. So the heuristics will, by definition, be inadequate in respect of it.

3.4.5.44. Now how do you deal with that problem.

3.4.5.45. This is a given,

3.4.5.46. every single human alive lives with these particular problems,

3.4.5.47. we can't do anything about it.

3.4.5.48. Our minds are not going to evolve highly significantly,

3.4.5.49. evolution is an unbelievably slow process.

3.4.5.50. Current thinking in neuro science is that the capacity that we utilise for complex reasoning today was actually developed about 50 000 years ago,

3.4.5.51. at the point at which man learned to hunt in groups and throw projectiles.

3.4.5.52. Because the level of hand/eye co-ordination necessary to throw a spear occurs in approximately one eighth of a second and requires a completely different set of synaptic linkages to those which existed prior to that particular point.

3.4.5.53. These interestingly seem to be associated with the particular synaptic linkages that are associated with the calculation of costs and benefits in terms of sharing and utilising resources for unselfish benefit.

3.4.5.54. And those are the areas of the brain, the areas of the brain that process those particular capabilities

3.4.5.55. are the areas of the brain, that if you look at what happens in the brain using functional magnetic resonance imaging, when somebody is dealing with a complex problem, those are the areas of the brain that light up in that particular regard.

3.4.5.56. Now nothing much has happened,

3.4.5.57. nothing has happened anatomically

3.4.5.58. and practically nothing has happened physiologically in the course of recent history

3.4.5.59. to change our capacity to deal with those issues.

3.4.5.60. So that's what we're stuck with,

3.4.5.61. that's where we are.

3.4.6. Topic - Visualisation is the solution

3.4.6.1. So the question becomes:

3.4.6.2. how do we get past that, how do we get to a better way of dealing with those particular issues?

3.4.6.3. Let me take a simple one, here's a very simple question.

3.4.6.4. There are the facts, there is the question, right?

3.4.6.5. Now this is very simple.

3.4.6.6. Everything you have to deal with in development issues is much, much, much more complicated than that,

3.4.6.7. but you probably can't do it.

3.4.6.8. But if we do that, and then just do that, (illustrates),

3.4.6.9. which is just presenting the same information in a different way,

3.4.6.10. that's a visual representation of the information contained in the previous paragraph,

3.4.6.11. then you can see immediately.

3.4.6.12. And the reason why you can now see it immediately is because the visual cortex processes information holistically, whereas the audial cortex processes it in linear

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sequential format.

3.4.6.13. *This is the origin of this cliché, "a picture's worth a thousand words".*

3.4.6.14. *A picture is not worth a thousand words*

3.4.6.15. *but the use of the visual cortex enables understanding and enables us to process information in ways we cannot process it when we rely exclusively on audial inputs.*

3.4.6.16. *So some combination of visual and auditory input is critically important when we're dealing with these issues.*

3.4.6.17. *Curiously, in terms of cognitive psychological studies no human being has ever been tested who is capable of dealing with more than four relational variables simultaneously.*

3.4.6.18. *No grand master has ever played a game of chess that constituted moves more than three variations outside of standard gambits.*

3.4.6.19. *So this, there appears to be a hard wired limitation in terms of our ability to process complexity that is at around about four variables interacting with one another.*

3.4.6.20. *The problem is that everything we have to deal with is much more complicated than that,*

3.4.6.21. *and as a consequence we're stuck with the heuristics.*

3.4.6.22. *But what we found in the first instance is that by bringing the visual cortex into play we solve one part of the problem.*

3.4.7.   Topic - Plus concept Mapping

3.4.7.1. *The next question is: what else can we factor into this equation?*

3.4.7.2. *At a very early stage of the research project they came to the conclusion that there were in fact only four things that we did when we grappled with complex issues.*

3.4.7.3. *The first one was what is described here as an analysis of the interactions between the different components of the complex issue.*

3.4.7.4. *Now let's assume that you've got yourself into trouble,*

3.4.7.5. *let's make it very simple.*

3.4.7.6. *Something's gone seriously wrong in respect of,*

3.4.7.7. *let's say your personal life at a particular moment,*

3.4.7.8. *and it looks as though the world is going to come crashing down around you.*

3.4.7.9. *A certain amount of those things are happening in the political space at the moment so it's something that everyone is talking about.*

3.4.7.10. *What do you do?*

3.4.7.11. *Well, the first thing you tend to do is you say who's who in the zoo, who's doing what to whom,*

3.4.7.12. *what are the causal linkages within that particular system,*

3.4.7.13. *what are the feedback loops and what does it look like.*

3.4.7.14. *If you understand that,*

3.4.7.15. *whether you're dealing with something as trivial as that which I've just described on a personal level or whether you're dealing with a more complex issue,*

3.4.7.16. *you understand a great deal more than you did before you started that particular enquiry.*

3.4.7.17. *Your presentation is all about that, it's about analysing the relationships between different components at different levels within the parameters of what constitutes under-development.*

3.4.7.18. *So every process that we identify as being complex, we start out by analysing a series of interactions in order to draw certain conclusions.*

3.4.7.19. *If we've done that, very frequently we then employ an heuristic,*

3.4.7.20. *because we then conclude that we understand the issue and we leap from top left to*

bottom right and we make a decision.

3.4.7.21. *We evaluate choices and we say that's the best way to go forward,*

3.4.7.22. *that's how you concluded your presentation. You said given all of this, given where we are today,*

3.4.7.23. *this is what the Devcorp should be doing going forward.*

3.4.7.24. *So top left to bottom right is the standard way in which almost everybody does these things on a routine basis.*

3.4.7.25. *It may be well done, it may be badly done,*

3.4.7.26. *it may be done with adequate inputs, it may be done with inadequate inputs,*

3.4.7.27. *it may rely too much on heuristics, it may be exceedingly well researched,*

3.4.7.28. *but that's how most things are done.*

3.4.7.29. *Sometimes you want to go a little bit further than that and you build in a certain degree of contingency analysis.*

3.4.7.30. *You do a certain amount of 'what if' assessment,*

3.4.7.31. *you do sensitivity analysis if you're doing it in classic statistical terms.*

3.4.7.32. *What happens if the government doesn't provide funding in respect of this, what happens if the capital markets are constrained under these particular circumstances, what happens if the competitive space changes materially and it is no longer possible to apply the reasoning that we've applied up to this particular point in time?*

3.4.7.33. *So you may in certain circumstances,*

3.4.7.34. *most people don't do it,*

3.4.7.35. *but you may decide that you want some contingency analysis associated with that.*

3.4.8. Topic - Optimally Think Tools

3.4.8.1. *Optimally, however, what we'd all like to be able to do is to take our understanding of the present situation and then to extrapolate that out into the future,*

3.4.8.2. *both exogenously where the factors that constitute the present circumstance are not within our strategic span of control*

3.4.8.3. *and endogenously where the factors constituting the present circumstance are, and explore alternative futures.*

3.4.8.4. *Now when we're exploring the endogenous futures we are developing alternative strategies,*

3.4.8.5. *that is exactly what strategy development is about.*

3.4.8.6. *You identify the factors that are present in a particular situation,*

3.4.8.7. *that are within your span of control,*

3.4.8.8. *you explore interactions between those and you develop strategic alternatives.*

3.4.8.9. *When you are exploring exogenously you are looking at the factors that are not within your span of control and how they might interact with one another.*

3.4.8.10. *And that is what we call scenario development.*

3.4.8.11. *But optimally what you'd really like to be able to do, is you'd like to be able to run your strategic alternatives against scenarios so that you could in fact define strategies that would be robust against a variety of scenarios,*

3.4.8.12. *or so that you could optimise a strategy for a particular scenario if you saw that scenario emerging.*

3.4.8.13. *Assuming you could do all of that,*

3.4.8.14. *you'd still have to make a decision about what you were going to do because you're always going to be confronted with scarce resources.*

3.4.8.15. *And you will always have to apply those efficiently and cost effectively in pursuit of the Institution's objectives.*

3.4.8.16. *You will probably still want to do a certain amount of contingency assessment.*

3.4.8.17. *The factors that constitute the present environment will change over time and*

3.4.8.18. *the model needs to be kept alive in such a way that you're in fact capable of learning continuously*

3.4.8.19. *and making a transition from what I call long range planning into continuous strategising.*

3.4.9. Topic - The answers

3.4.9.1. *Now all that then happened in the tools, is the tools were developed to support each one of those particular cognitive functions.*

3.4.9.2. *We're going to use several of them*

3.4.9.3. *so I'm not going to discuss them in great depth at this particular moment,*

3.4.9.4. *but the essence of it is that the tools support those functions.*

3.4.9.5. *They enable us to do better by using visualisation and the power of the micro processor for computation to do better, what we try to do ourselves.*

3.4.9.6. *They take us to some degree at least out of the realm of heuristics, they bring us some way further towards a more rigorous and systematic approach.*

3.4.9.7. *They cause us to think a little bit deeper*

3.4.9.8. *because we have to answer tougher questions rather than simply gliding over them.*

3.4.9.9. *And they enable us to capture the reasoning that we employed for that particular purpose in architectures but it allows us to continuously revisit it, re-interrogate it, change inputs, change relationships, change values and see what the conclusions are.*

3.4.9.10. *It's no different in effect,*

3.4.9.11. *provided you recognise that you're operating here in a qualitative space rather than a quantitative one.*

3.4.9.12. *It's no different to having an econometric model but you're capable of updating as new data becomes available.*

3.4.9.13. *That's the underlying logic behind the process.*

3.4.10. Topic - Simplicity of software

3.4.10.1. *So in the simplest of terms, they're a modular set of tools that emulate the cognitive processes.*

3.4.10.2. *They make complex issues more manageable through visualisation.*

3.4.10.3. *They allow for the application of powerful analysis techniques and they're used to support qualitative reasoning on complex topics.*

3.4.10.4. *Classically, they're used in –*

    3.4.10.4.1. *information and intelligence analysis and modelling,*

    3.4.10.4.2. *analysing global and regional dynamics,*

    3.4.10.4.3. *creation of knowledge backbones,*

    3.4.10.4.4. *strategic reviews,*

    3.4.10.4.5. *integration of departmental and divisional strategies,*

    3.4.10.4.6. *making the transition from long range planning to continuous strategising,*

    3.4.10.4.7. *restructuring investment decisions,*

    3.4.10.4.8. *decisions on critical interventions,*

    3.4.10.4.9. *controversial strategic policy issues,*

    3.4.10.4.10. *development of negotiation strategies,*

    3.4.10.4.11. *detailed risk assessments,*

    3.4.10.4.12. *virtual future scenario development.*

3.4.10.5. *And the useful thing about them is you can use them off a notebook,*

3.4.10.6. *as I'm going to do today,*

3.4.10.7. *or you can put them onto LANs*

3.4.10.8. *or you can operate them across corporate intranets*

3.4.10.9. so that you can have different portions of the Institution doing work in different areas,

3.4.10.10. all of which is then capable of effective integration.

3.4.10.11. That's just an indication of the sort of range of clients who've been served.

3.4.11. Topic - Reservations

3.4.11.1. What you need to evaluate today,

3.4.11.2. because these are the only claims that I make for them,

3.4.11.3. they make qualitative decision making more rigorous and systematic.

3.4.11.4. They complement our own reasoning capabilities with visualisation and the power of the computer.

3.4.11.5. I just want to emphasise, there are no black boxes here at all,

3.4.11.6. you can look at every relationship in every issue and change those relationships if you don't agree with them.

3.4.11.7. You constitute the arbiter of what represents an appropriate relationship.

3.4.12. Topic - Transparency is reason for reservations

3.4.12.1. The transparency of the process,

3.4.12.2. as I've just suggested,

3.4.12.3. facilitates consensus and makes decisions more robust.

3.4.12.4. This helps minimise prejudice,

3.4.12.5. it helps enable us to get to the point where a decision once taken is implemented on a sustainable basis because everybody understands why the decision was made.

3.4.12.6. It takes the politics out of it to a certain degree.

3.4.12.7. You can't exclude subjectivity by definition

3.4.12.8. but you can get to a point where it becomes possible to make clear the assumptions on which everything has been based.

3.4.12.9. And then by storing knowledge and enabling it to be interrogated at any time,

3.4.12.10. they allow us to review strategies on a continuous bases, re-assess them and modify them as appropriate.

3.4.13. Topic - Conclusion

3.4.13.1. So that's the logic behind it and that's the basic approach that we're going to seek to take in respect of it.

3.4.13.2. There's tons more and if anyone wants to see thousands more slides on the topic we can easily do that but that's not the reason that we're assembled here today.

3.4.13.3. So are there sort of issues?

3.4.13.4. I'd like to in a certain sense dispense with the methodology at the beginning of the process so that we don't have the methodology intruding on the substance as we go forward.

3.4.13.5. But if there are any questions that anyone would like to ask in respect of any of the issues

3.4.13.6. I'd love to deal with them now.

3.4.13.7. Shoot.

Part 4 – Dialogue

4.1. Theme – Facetious Q&A

(Mr. D)

4.1.1. So are you saying that

4.1.2. for the development impact we'd want in the country right now,

4.1.3. would be to buy this for government, the Presidency and all our key stakeholders?

(Mr. C)

4.1.4.   No,

4.1.5.   you have it,

4.1.6.   you own it,

4.1.7.   you have a national licence,

4.1.8.   there's.

(Mr. D)

4.1.9.   No,

4.1.10.   I mean,

4.1.11.   for us to then contribute it to all our –

4.1.12.   so if the government have this and it helps with our thinking,

4.1.13.   can we see the -

(Mr. C)

4.1.14.   Alright,

4.1.15.   I guess, what I'm saying is two things

4.1.16.   and I understand that you were being facetious,

4.1.17.   but let me say two things

4.1.18.   seriously

4.1.19.   about it.

4.1.20.   On the occasions when government has actually gone through this particular process

4.1.21.   and it's being run out of the Policy Unit,

4.1.22.   [Mr. J] is the champion and the owner of it.

4.1.23.   It's located within DST, Science and Technology,

4.1.24.   because it was somewhat naively perceived that they had the capability as it were of managing it effectively within that space.

4.1.25.   But on the occasions when they have applied it they've actually done immensely systematic and quite sophisticated work.

4.1.26.   The difficulty unfortunately is that the relatively weak institutional capacity at a variety of levels,

4.1.27.   which you know more about than I do,

4.1.28.   I mean, I know enough about it not to wish to know too much more.

4.1.29.   But that weak institutional capacity means here very frequently that the strategic insights gained, fall flat in the implementation phase.

4.1.30.   So this is not a panacea by any stretch of the imagination.

4.1.31.   But if you bring to bear to the necessary rigour to consider carefully the relationships between different components

4.1.32.   and go through a systematic process,

4.1.33.   the policy that emerges is in practice and in theory a better policy than it would have been otherwise.

4.2. Theme – Human cognitive capacity inquiry (digression)

(Mr.E)

4.2.1.   [Mr. C], I think it's quite a revelation,

4.2.2.   I guess for me and some of the things that you have said,

4.2.3.   intuitively you almost understand,

4.2.4.   it makes perfect sense.

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4.2.5.   One statement however that kind of surprises me

4.2.6.   unless I misunderstood you,

4.2.7.   you seem to be saying that the ability of the human mind,

4.2.8.   human person to increase their capacity to store information or to learn is actually either finite or has reached a level where it can't develop beyond that.

(Mr. C)

4.2.9.   [Mr. E], let me tell you,

4.2.10.   the answer is yes, it is finite, very definitely.

4.2.11.   And it's finite for a very specific reason.

4.2.12.   When a child is born the anatomy that it has in respect of its cerebral cortex is actually quite remarkable.

4.2.13.   Everything is linked to everything else.

4.2.14.   It is the most dense network imaginable at the time of birth.

4.2.15.   The problem about that is that a child at birth or anybody outside of a subject area that they know anything about, have no convenient, rapid pathways to process information effectively.

4.2.16.   Now think child at birth and think a novice in a particular discipline.

4.2.17.   Let's take something I know practically nothing about.

4.2.18.   I know almost nothing about mathematical topology.

4.2.19.   I have sat on several occasions with people who are absolutely world class in this particular regard and listened to them for up to 35, 40 minutes at a time and understood practically nothing.

4.2.20.   You have to understand a great deal about the subject matter to be able to make sense.

4.2.21.   Now let us take one of those experts and me and put both of us side by side in an FMRI, a Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine

4.2.22.   which enables people to examine what is happening in our brains when we are now presented with a complex topology problem.

4.2.23.   So each one of us is given the same problem,

4.2.24.   I'm looking at it and the expert is looking at it.

4.2.25.   What will happen in my brain is roughly what happens in the new-born baby's brain. Almost everything will light up because I will be thrashing around,

4.2.26.   this is metaphorical,

4.2.27.   desperately trying to make sense of this thing,

4.2.28.   looking through the description to see if there's anything that I can make sense of, that I can recognise, that I can get a grip on.

4.2.29.   And because I don't know how to process that particular information I am using almost the entirety of my neural apparatus for that ...

4.2.30.   The expert will have a tiny section at the parieto occipital lobe

4.2.31.   which is used for the processing of complex mathematical material

4.2.32.   because he knows exactly what he is doing and he is addressing the solution to the problem.

4.2.33.   So when we start out we have this infinitely dense network

4.2.34.   but it's inefficient.

4.2.35.   Think about the idio sarvonne *to take another example.*

4.2.36.   The idio sarvonne*, all of the ones who are highlighted quite frequently have possibly phenomenal memory capability,*

4.2.37.   are capable of memorising the entirety of the telephone book and repeating each one of the

telephone numbers in sequence

4.2.38.   *but they can't cross a road.*

4.2.39.   *The reason in the vast majority of cases here once again is the pruning of this neural network didn't happen.*

4.2.40.   *As a consequence the capacity to be able to utilise it for extraordinary storage is unlimited.*

4.2.41.   *But the ability to be able to process it in order to deal with the signals and the external environment that all of us take for granted and have learned how to use is non-existent.*

4.2.42.   *So the story of human progress in any individual life is pruning this enormously dense network of neural synapses down to a more efficient network that is appropriate in respect of the life experience that you have and the learnings that you have undertaken up to that point in time.*

4.2.43.   *The trouble is that when you're –*

4.2.44.   *I'm using it very generically,*

4.2.45.   *many of you are much younger than me –*

4.2.46.   *but when you're our age in the generic sense of the term,*

4.2.47.   *that's happened already,*

4.2.48.   *you've got what you've got.*

4.2.49.   *You can't at that stage of your life go and reverse the process,*

4.2.50.   *you can't re-grow the synapses.*

4.2.51.   *You follow the paths naturally,*

4.2.52.   *that's what the heuristics mean because that's what you've always done.*

4.2.53.   *You have to discipline yourself dramatically to step back from it and do something different.*

4.2.54.   *It's not the way we behave naturally.*

4.2.55.   *So there are two reasons for the finites to mention.*

4.2.56.   *The one element of the finite to mention is the neural pruning.*

4.2.57.   *The second is the well established pathways and the heuristics that we bring to bear.*

4.2.58.   *Can you extend it?*

4.2.59.   *Can you improve your memory?*

4.2.60.   *Can you learn more?*

4.2.61.   *Of course you can, of course you can,*

4.2.62.   *there's very little, limited limitation in respect of the ability to improve things.*

4.2.63.   *But you can't transform, it's fundamentally finite.*

4.2.64.   *And the curious thing about it,*

4.2.65.   *the most significant one is the inability to process complexity.*

4.2.66.   *Because you see, the human mind has been optimised in evolutionary terms for rapid decision making under pressure.*

4.2.67.   *It is not optimised for processing complexity.*

4.2.68.   *I can show you models where there are 2 950 000 permutations and you can run them very quickly.*

4.2.69.   *Using genetic algorithms you can run them in about 7 or 8 seconds and you'll get parieto-efficient optimisation of the outcomes of those particular models.*

4.2.70.   *So in many complex circumstances that we have to address,*

4.2.71.   *there are millions of permutations that are endemic in the situation.*

4.2.72.   *But the truth is that the way humanity has survived is that when the bullets start flying, it's fight, flight or play dead.*

4.2.73.   *That's how we've survived.*

4.2.74.   *So as a consequence of that,*

4.2.75.   *we're not optimised to process millions of permutations.*

4.2.76.   *We're optimised to make decisions rapidly under stress.*

4.2.77.   *And if you go and take almost any CEO of a Fortune 500 company you'll find that where these guys get their kicks from is standing up with a telephone jammed against his - setting up behind his desk with a telephone jammed against his cheek making rapid fire decisions about critical issues in real time.*

4.2.78.   *That's what we're optimised in.*

(Mr. F)

4.2.79.   *Excuse me,*

4.2.80.   *I'm sure you're probably digressing*

4.2.81.   *but I'm just interested to know,*

4.2.82.   *I understand in the one lifetime you've got what you've got.*

4.2.83.   *But if mankind is still around in a million years from now,*

4.2.84.   *will that evolution of our minds and the way the minds work, would it have gone to a point where it can perhaps ... (interjection)*

(Mr. C)

4.2.85.   *Ja,*

4.2.86.   *entirely plausible.*

4.2.87.   *I mean there is nothing as far as we can see.*

4.2.88.   *I mean, neuroscience is like every form of knowledge,*

4.2.89.   *is at a pretty rudimentary stage of its potential for development.*

4.2.90.   *But in terms of anything that can be seen today,*

4.2.91.   *there is absolutely no reason,*

4.2.92.   *given the enormous density of the neural networks that exist at the point of birth,*

4.2.93.   *there is absolutely no reason why there couldn't be a whole variety of different capabilities.*

4.2.94.   *But that's not what we've got now.*

4.3. Theme – Challenging the software on its claims about normal approaches

    4.3.1.   Topic - Challenge

(Mr. G)

4.3.1.1.   *On your 2x2 matrix structure processing,*

4.3.1.2.   *I missed out on how you were interpreting the sequence,*

4.3.1.3.   *starting from one area to the other*

4.3.1.4.   *and the implication of short circuiting the full set of four.*

    4.3.2.   Topic - Highlighting the normal approaches

(Mr. C)

4.3.2.1.   *Well, let's look at sort of the two things that are endemic in that.*

4.3.2.2.   *The first thing that's endemic in it is saying simply,*

4.3.2.3.   *(I'm sorry, this is probably easier to see if I change those colours, let me do that very quickly).*

4.3.2.4.   *The first thing that I think is important to understand is that what normally happens, what humans conventionally do is if the issue is perceived to be complex, they try and understand it.*

4.3.2.5.   *Very few people just lurch into an issue,*

4.3.2.6.	*if the issue was perceived to be complex.*
4.3.2.7.	*The reason that I was taking that particular presentation to Board as an example is because it's a splendid example of exactly that.*
4.3.2.8.	*You start out by unpacking the development concept.*
4.3.2.9.	*You say, how does this work.*
4.3.2.10.	*You say, why do we get these outputs.*
4.3.2.11.	*And then you think about a number of layers associated with those particular issues, right.*
4.3.2.12.	*So that's the conventional way.*

4.3.3.   Topic - Providing precedence why the conventional model is wrong

4.3.3.1.	*Let's just, in case everyone isn't sort of thinking of exactly what I'm saying at the moment,*
4.3.3.2.	*let me just pull up what I'm talking about.*
4.3.3.3.	*That's where you started.*
4.3.3.4.	*You say there's all of those elements and they're all connected in a whole variety of different ways.*
4.3.3.5.	*And then you said, but if you think about it in a more structured way, there are basic courses, intermediate courses, immediate courses for particular a manifestation.*
4.3.3.6.	*Now I'm not*
4.3.3.7.	*- I don't want to open a debate about the correctness or otherwise of that paradigm.*
4.3.3.8.	*That doesn't matter for the present purpose but it's an excellent illustration of an attempt at saying that what we are trying to do is understand the issue in a way that enables us to understand the interactions.*
4.3.3.9.	*You are specifically spending a significant amount of time and many slides exploring the interactions.*

4.3.4.   Topic - Better ways

4.3.4.1.	*There are better ways of doing it, as I'll show you in the tools but the important thing about it is that that's what you were doing.*
4.3.4.2.	*When you had finished that, when you had gone through that process, when you have finished that and you go into the wider process,*
4.3.4.3.	*you then start talking about what should change.*
4.3.4.4.	*And you draw that conclusion based on in the first instance an understanding of development which you unpack over here,*
4.3.4.5.	*and then a discussion of what roles you should play on an institutional basis.*
4.3.4.6.	*Where are you; what's your agenda; and how should you evolve.*
4.3.4.7.	*So it's a classic illustration of top left to bottom right.*
4.3.4.8.	*It starts out by saying, how does it work,*
4.3.4.9.	*and it then draws certain conclusions from it.*
4.3.4.10.	*That's the standard way in which almost everybody does everything.*
4.3.4.11.	*The difficulty about it is that you didn't allow*
4.3.4.12.	*and can't allow*
4.3.4.13.	*in those types of processes for any degree of true dynamism in terms of those particular sets of interactions.*
4.3.4.14.	*And unless you allow for dynamism in respect of those particular sets interactions,*
4.3.4.15.	*you have to take a static, arrayified perspective*
4.3.4.16.	*and base your strategy on arrayified perspective.*

4.3.4.17.	*So you can't do what I was suggesting we optimally like to do*
4.3.4.18.	*which is to project an understanding of those particular interactions out into both a strategy space and into a scenario space,*
4.3.4.19.	*enabling us to explore the interactions between these.*
4.3.4.20.	*You can't in that particular model build in an assessment of which of these factors are under your control and which of these factors are exogenous to your span of control.*
4.3.4.21.	*You can't develop a strategy which aligns effectively what the Presidency or particular clusters need to be undertaking,*
4.3.4.22.	*what individual departments charge with executioning particular areas needed to be undertaken;*
4.3.4.23.	*what role the Devcorp should be playing in that particular framework;*
4.3.4.24.	*what role private sector actors or external DFIs need to be playing on that particular framework.*
4.3.4.25.	*You can't unpack that additional level of complexity in a static model.*
4.3.4.26.	*That's all, it's not a criticism of anything.*
4.3.4.27.	*It's simply saying that in reality if you want to introduce into the modelling of complex qualitative issues,*
4.3.4.28.	*the degree of dynamism that is characteristic of the reality that you're trying to model, you have to have dynamic instruments for that purpose.*
4.3.4.29.	*That's all.*

4.4. Theme – Opinions

4.4.1. Topic - Type one and type two problem question

(Mr.B)

4.4.1.1.	*I just wanted to get your opinion on a particular question*
4.4.1.2.	*and the question is, you classically can refer to problems as being a type one problem or a type two problem.*

(Mr. C)

4.4.1.3.	*Ja.*

(Mr.B)

4.4.1.4.	*And type one is upstream,*
4.4.1.5.	*getting the direction, the decision making right.*
4.4.1.6.	*A type two problem would be downstream as you've got the decision right,*
4.4.1.7.	*you've got the direction right but the execution fails.*
4.4.1.8.	*And it's a classic debate always*
4.4.1.9.	*as to whether a strategy is successful or not.*
4.4.1.10.	*Many people will say, well, the strategy was right, you just did it wrong.*

(Mr.C)

4.4.1.11.	*Ja.*

4.4.2. Topic - South African strategy challenge question

(Mr.B)

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4.4.2.1.	*Now you've talked about South Africa.*
4.4.2.2.	*You said that there's been a lot of attempt to use this in a structured way*
4.4.2.3.	*and [Mr. D]'s come in to ask,*
4.4.2.4.	*is there a gap upstream?*
4.4.2.5.	*Are we suffering from a type one problem, broadly speaking,*
4.4.2.6.	*or are we suffering from a type two problem?*

(Mr.C)

4.4.2.7.	*Short answer's both.*

(Mr.B)

4.4.2.8.	*And I'm just raising this because you'll find that the Devcorp is very engaged downstream*
4.4.2.9.	*trying to address*
4.4.2.10.	*what is perceived as being*
4.4.2.11.	*a type two problem.*
4.4.2.12.	*And the whole country and the whole government tends to be very much in the frame of mind that the bulk of our problems are downstream and it's type two.*
4.4.2.13.	*And it just brings me to the question around your view of co-ordination and alignment.*
4.4.2.14.	*What's your sense around how to deal with the problem of co-ordination and alignment?*
4.4.2.15.	*Because when you talk about the dynamism being the critical component and our framework,*
4.4.2.16.	*obviously for ease of purpose being relatively static,*
4.4.2.17.	*and the proof of the pudding is in the dynamism,*
4.4.2.18.	*as you say,*
4.4.2.19.	*and we all know that.*
4.4.2.20.	*But we know that dynamism is so problematic*

4.4.3. Topic - Questions about other models (ideologies) dealing with the challenge

4.4.3.1.	*because of the co-ordination challenge and that's where ideologies come in and we have communist states who choose to have a planning function to deal with the co-ordination.*
4.4.3.2.	*And then we have market economies who use the pricing signals and then the market mechanism to co-ordinate.*
4.4.3.3.	*So I'm just curious*
4.4.3.4.	*because you'll find a lot of people around this table who are very much trying to deal with this whole question of dynamism, type two errors and co-ordination downstream.*
4.4.3.5.	*Alignment;*
4.4.3.6.	*just some kind of view from you on that because you've been here and you've*

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been in other parts of the world.

4.4.3.7.	*Asia in particular has been very famous for having found ways to deal with this co-ordination challenge in ways that we haven't in Africa*
4.4.3.8.	*and South Africa's also trying to make sense of its situation.*
4.4.3.9.	*Some commentary would be -*

4.4.4.   Topic - Examples of other models

(Mr.C)

4.4.4.1.	*Let's tackle it iteratively,*
4.4.4.2.	*if I may.*
4.4.4.3.	*Let me respond crisply now and then let's revisit that topic at the end of the day.*
4.4.4.4.	*The crisp answer is that the reason why the Asian Development Model and*
4.4.4.5.	*in particular those of Singapore and in the early stages, mid '80s to mid '90s,*
4.4.4.6.	*Malaysia was another good example,*

4.4.5.   Topic - Why these models prevail – Value system

4.4.5.1.	*the reason that they were highly successful was because there was a very specific, highly focused commitment to the execution of particular strategies in the context of well-defined values.*
4.4.5.2.	*So the interplay between a clearly defined value system that had a high level of buy-in and strategies that were specifically directed towards living those values*
4.4.5.3.	*was probably the prime reason for that particular success.*
4.4.5.4.	*Now by definition if there had not been an adequate pool of institutional capacity and an adequate pool of human capital it would have failed downstream.*
4.4.5.5.	*But the fundamental reason why the type one problem, using that topology, was adequately addressed was because of the alignment between values and strategy.*

4.4.6.   Topic - Values lacking in South African model

4.4.6.1.	*If I were to argue about the problem in South Africa,*
4.4.6.2.	*I would say there was a very poor understanding of the alignment between values and strategy,*
4.4.6.3.	*a series of compromises that are undertaken on a consistent basis in those areas.*
4.4.6.4.	*The adoption of a significant amount of policy*
4.4.6.5.	*- Trevor will be very cross with me for saying this*
4.4.6.6.	*but the adoption of a significant amount of policy*
4.4.6.7.	*which was in fact derived from classic Washington Consensus thinking in the context of the GEAR*

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4.4.6.8.	*and a misalignment between the adoption of those particular policies and the underlying ethos that informed the ANC-led Alliance.*
4.4.6.9.	*So the tension that we find coming back at Polokwane has been there all the time,*
4.4.6.10.	*it's just been managed by the Presidency in a particular way up to this point or up to that point in time.*
4.4.6.11.	*And as a result of a whole series of circumstances*
4.4.6.12.	*we don't need to discuss now,*
4.4.6.13.	*over the last two, two and a half years,*
4.4.6.14.	*it blew up.*
4.4.6.15.	*So the critical issue on the sort of type one level is that you have to get an appropriate alignment between values and strategy.*
4.4.6.16.	*You have to understand why strategy supports the delivery of goals that were informed by the values.*
4.4.6.17.	*And you have to ensure that you then have external reference points that enable you to assess both outputs and outcomes in ways that are appropriate within that framework.*
4.4.6.18.	*I don't think we've got that.*
4.4.6.19.	*So as a result of that,*
4.4.6.20.	*there's been an unfortunate habit of finessing things and cutting corners in a whole variety of areas*
4.4.6.21.	*and progressively creating more and more tensions within the system.*
4.4.6.22.	*Almost everything that needed to be understood was understood.*
4.4.6.23.	*Policy unit, at least at the level of Joel, and some of those responsible for the clusters understood all of the issues.*
4.4.6.24.	*I was very, very satisfied in 2005/2006 that post the early phases of the Midterm Review we did a systematic exercise.*
4.4.6.25.	*I was completely satisfied that the issues had been adequately delineated*
4.4.6.26.	*and that the nature of the dynamic interactions was well understood.*
4.4.6.27.	*But there were huge tensions built into that and they weren't adequately resolved*
4.4.6.28.	*and the tensions were pre-eminently between values and strategy.*

4.4.7. Topic - Drawing the issue to the topic at hand

4.4.7.1.	*Let me now show you*
4.4.7.2.	*- the way this is described at the moment is context that I can bring elements up in greater focus at any point in time.*
4.4.7.3.	*But I want you just to see the totality of it.*
4.4.7.4.	*It's defined in respect of context in the first instance.*

4.4.8. Topic - Reservations on level of insight on topic

4.4.8.1.	*And simply because of the research paper around health issues that I had first*

sight of in this particular regard and recognised,

4.4.8.2. *I do not for one second pretend that I understand everything that you know in respect of these issues.*

4.4.8.3. *So I am necessarily,*

4.4.8.4. *given the time constraints in this regard,*

4.4.8.5. *going to trivialise elements*

4.4.8.6. *and then look to you to fill in the gaps.*

4.4.8.7. *So forgive me for that, it's a given unfortunately in the nature of the system.*

4.4.8.8. *I'm not quite as bad in place as I am in terms of mathematical topology*

4.4.8.9. *but I certainly don't pretend for one second that I understand everything that you know.*

4.4.9. Topic - Personal background to topic

4.4.9.1. *But because of the way in which the health resource paper,*

4.4.9.2. *which was the issue that I first saw was designed,*

4.4.9.3. *I've simply taken as a point of departure,*

4.4.9.4. *just to give you an illustration of the material that we don't have to spend time on today to any appreciable degree,*

4.4.9.5. *of how one would deal very quickly with some aspects of the issues that were perceived to feed into the nature of the challenge.*

4.4.9.6. *So I've looked at the Millennium Development Goals,*

4.4.9.7. *I've looked at ASGISA,*

4.4.9.8. *I've looked at the recommendations of the High-Level Panel*

4.4.9.9. *and I've looked at the output of the Cabinet Lekgotla in January*

4.4.9.10. *which was announced in the State of the Union Address by the President in February.*

4.4.9.11. *Just as policy as frameworks,*

4.4.9.12. *nothing to do with health per se although each one of them impacts on health,*

4.4.9.13. *each one of them depends on health, e*

4.4.9.14. *ach one of them is part of a wider frame of policy reference that includes health.*

4.4.10. Topic - Illustrating the challenge in the tool

4.4.10.1. *But I just want to show you a few illustrations of that.*

4.4.10.2. *Then, one of the advantages of the tools is,*

4.4.10.3. *you can have everything live inside them.*

4.4.10.4. *So there is the set of documentation that [Mr. A] let me see in respect of the health issues.*

4.4.10.5. *If we need to refer to any of the documents, we don't need to go somewhere else,*

4.4.10.6. *they are actually all living there in various formats including Jay's presentation to Board.*

4.4.10.7.	Then we have the characterisation of government health initiatives,
4.4.10.8.	the current status,
4.4.10.9.	the impact of HIV/AIDS on that particular dilemma.
4.4.10.10.	And these are simple, schematic representations of the argumentation in the paper itself.
4.4.10.11.	And I haven't gone outside of the paper at this point in time,
4.4.10.12.	I'm just illustrating to you what you can do when you start looking at them in that way.
4.4.10.13.	Then I have left, I've deliberately not gone into the descriptive detail,
4.4.10.14.	as it were,
4.4.10.15.	of what is defined within the paper itself in that regard but there are then ex Table 3 from that particular paper,
4.4.10.16.	what were described as the major challenges for the health sector and possible interventions.
4.4.10.17.	So I've just left that there as something that's lying on the table as a point of departure for this.
4.4.10.18.	And then I'm going to say to you,
4.4.10.19.	with those issues then framing the question and with your mission, vision and strategy as a backdrop,
4.4.10.20.	and this one I've simply taken off the website because it's your public statement of that at this point in time.
4.4.10.21.	It may or may not be the most currently representative one
4.4.10.22.	but that's the one on the website.
4.4.10.23.	Then I'm going to ask you,
4.4.10.24.	what are your goals in that health space?
4.4.10.25.	What do you want the Devcorp to do?
4.4.10.26.	Not, how much you do it but what do you want the Devcorp to do.
4.4.10.27.	Because if you don't define what your goals are in that particular space it's meaningless thinking about strategies.
4.4.10.28.	And the answer might be,
4.4.10.29.	you don't want to do anything, okay?
4.4.10.30.	Do you understand?
4.4.10.31.	Right?
4.4.10.32.	Or, it might be you want to do A, B, C
4.4.10.33.	or it might be you actually want to do A, B, C, D, E, F and G.
4.4.10.34.	But that's your decision
4.4.10.35.	because you can't actually think about strategy until you've clarified what it is that you actually want to do in that particular space.
4.4.10.36.	Once you've got that,
4.4.10.37.	then as a mechanism to enable consideration of what your strategic options

might be,

4.4.10.38.	*I'm going to try and push you to identify what the key success factors are in respect of each one of those goals.*
4.4.10.39.	*Because the key success factors that have to be achieved are in fact the basis on which one reflects on strategy.*
4.4.10.40.	*You don't reflect on strategy directly back onto the goals,*
4.4.10.41.	*you think about what you have to achieve in order to enable the goals.*
4.4.10.42.	*And that will then enable one to start thinking about what the strategy might be.*
4.4.10.43.	*Now in the rest of the process you would then go through a process of evaluation.*
4.4.10.44.	*We'd actually, ordinarily if we were doing this in a fully systematic way,*
4.4.10.45.	*we would have external scenario analysis as well,*
4.4.10.46.	*we'd integrate strategies with scenarios.*
4.4.10.47.	*We'd then feed that back into a strategy evaluation process*
4.4.10.48.	*which is reliant on the definition of the goals in the first instance to evaluate the relative efficacy of the different strategies.*
4.4.10.49.	*We take that out,*
4.4.10.50.	*we do risk assessment and then talk about a high-level implementation strategy.*
4.4.10.51.	*We're not going to get there today.*
4.4.10.52.	*It's not realistic,*
4.4.10.53.	*given the amount of time that we have to get through the entirety of that process*
4.4.10.54.	*but I've sketched the architecture for you in a way that shows you what the baseline approach would be.*
4.4.10.55.	*And around about lunchtime what I'll do is, I'll show you some illustrated uses of tools within these particular frameworks*
4.4.10.56.	*to enable one to think about how to play with them.*
4.4.10.57.	*It's not difficult, it's very easy if you know the topics.*
4.4.10.58.	*You just have to invest the time and the effort required in order to be able to do it.*
4.4.10.59.	*And as I say, fortunately you don't actually even have to buy anything in order to do it*
4.4.10.60.	*because you do in fact have licences.*
4.4.10.61.	*So it's a simple mechanism.*