# CHAPTER TWO- Literature Review

Introduction

Communication, capacity development, and organizational learning are the main themes in my research. Therefore the question that guides this chapter is: "how are these themes interrelated and what effect do they have on each other?" In answering the question, this chapter will use a constructivist lens, which highlights the role of social interaction in creating reality, to explore the literature and theories in three broad overlapping areas: communication for development, capacity development, and learning within organizations. These themes will then provide the context for the following chapters on the research itself.

Figure 2.1 Literature Review Themes
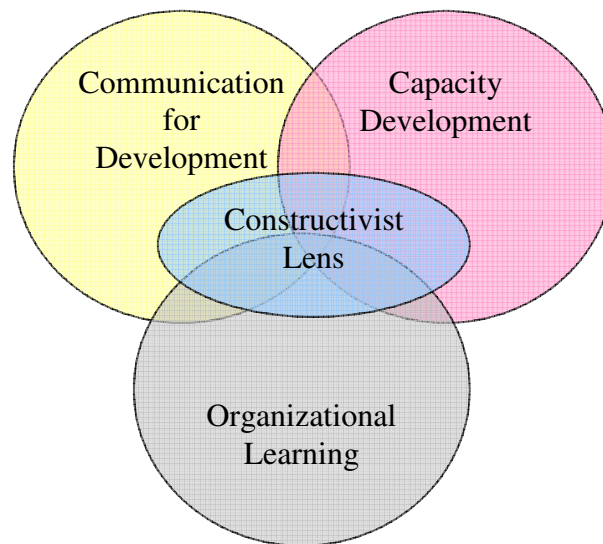
Theories, in general, try to express the relationships between variables in order to describe observations and predict future results. Theories are used to explain the causes and nature of a given situation; this diagnosis is then translated into strategies and specific recommended courses of action for interventions (Waisbord 2001). Generally, "theories shape the landscape

of facts by guiding thinking. They tell people what to expect, where to look, what to ignore, what actions are feasible, what values to hold" (Prange 1999; 24).

Efforts to use communication to create development are based both on theories about the nature and purpose of development as well as assumptions about how people acquire information, form ideas, beliefs and act on the basis of their knowledge (Díaz Bordenave 1977). Over the past fifty years, the concepts of "development" and "communication," as well as the philosophical thoughts underpinning them, have undergone major transformations that reflect changes in intellectual and political debates. Overlapping theories from a variety of disciplines including international development, health, education, management, agriculture, and communication have converged to create today's evolving field of communication for development.

This first section of this chapter explores the shift in thinking about communication for development that has revolved around a core difference between the meaning of communication: as a simple transfer of information or as a social process through which meaning is created and codified. These contrasting ways of conceiving of the meaning of communication have created two main branches of communication for development that can be differentiated by their core beliefs about the roots of development problems. On the one hand, behavior change communication generally focuses on the lack of information and the need for individual behavior changes while participatory or empowerment communication points to the need to change collective social processes and society wide power imbalances (Melkote 2003).

As they are closely connected, the second section in this chapter combines the two remaining themes: capacity development and learning. The first part looks at the theory and practice of capacity development. Although the phrase capacity development (or building or strengthening) is relatively new, the concept has been used in development efforts and expressed in words like institutional strengthening, organizational development, human resource development, non-formal education and training for quite some time. The purpose of capacity development is to foster an internal process of growth and development that attempts to increase an individual, group and/or organization's ability to perform, solve problems and manage current challenges in order to achieve desired results in the future.

The third and final theme of this chapter focuses on individual and workplace learning processes as they relate to capacity development. Theories of adult learning often focus on the individual. However, in this case situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger 1991) provides the basis for exploring how individual learning can be transferred into organization-wide learning and long-term changes that can improve organizational performance. During the learning process, the organizational hierarchy and the political dimensions of communication have the ability to constrain or enable individual access to knowledge and skills (Coopey & Burgoyne 1999; Keyton 2005), which in the long-term affect the quality of the overall pool of talent that the organization can draw from.

One of the key challenges to increasing the translation of individual learning into organizational learning is the sharing of tacit knowledge and mental models (Kim 1993). The learning that leads to capacity development is a social process that depends inextricably on the communication that takes place between different actors and the relationships that they build together (Keyton 2005; Stohl 1995).

Changing Perspectives on Communication and Development

According to Servaes (1999), it has only been in the past 15 years or so that culture and communication have been recognized as having a fundamental impact on the whole question of development. Now most experts agree that there is hardly a development challenge that can be met successfully without changes in the world-views, attitudes and behaviors of the people involved.

Communication is the basis for creating awareness, consensus building, making informed decisions, resolving conflicts, and generating participation in processes of change and development. When addressing any development context- population issues, violence, food security, use and conservation of natural resources, to name a few- it is large scale change in the way people live and work with each other that will make a difference (Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada 1998).

This communication occurs within and between formal and informal units of people. At the most simple level, communication takes place *intra*personally, that is within an individual as a stream of consciousness dialogue. Communication between two or more people referred to as *inter*personal. This interpersonal communication can take place between or among individuals and small groups; local, regional, national and international networks or coalitions; formal organizations; political units; or other groupings of people (Rosengren 2000).

Traditionally, communication efforts have tended to fulfill three main roles in development practice. First, to inform and persuade people to adopt certain behaviors and practices that are deemed beneficial to them; to enhance the image and credibility of the development

organizations involved in the efforts; and last, to enable community consultation on specific initiatives (Deane & Gray-Felder 1999). The focus in more recent years has shifted to providing a forum or platform for dialogue, debate, and participation for all sectors of society, especially those that have been underrepresented.

Overall, as theories of how development happens have moved away from top down donor driven approaches towards more participatory and community centered methodologies, so too has communication theory. Rogers and Hart (2001) now describe communication for development as social change brought about by communication research, theory and technology designed to increase people's social and material advancement.

Positivism, Modernization & Behavior Change Communication

Scientific research is traditionally based on values dating back to Aristotle and the Enlightenment, namely reasoning, rationality and objectivity (Melkote 2003). Such research is grounded in the positivist belief that there is a single truth, separate from any human observer, which can be uncovered through a rigorous application of the scientific method. Scientists from this background hold that experimental techniques yield results that can then be generalized into models and theories and applied to other situations. This way of looking at the world leads to the idea that the only factor necessary for development to occur in a given area is the simple transfer of new information and technologies to the intended end users (Jiggins & Röling 1997).

Dominant in academic circles between 1945 and 1965, the modernization theory of development, which has grown out of positivist thinking, is based on the idea that traditional cultures, often characterized by authoritarianism, in-fighting, low levels of individualism,

resistance to innovation, limited control over their environment, and a lack of formal institutions, are at the root of underdevelopment (Rogers 1969). The answer then, is the application of Western neoclassical economic development models to help post-colonial states to "catch up" with Western progress in their economic growth, political systems, education levels, and life expectancy (Rostow 1960; Huntington 1971).

Because of this context, communication for development interventions have their roots in post-World War II international aid programs as a way to get the necessary modern information to developing country populations in order to change their attitudes, ideas and values and therefore their behavior (Melkote 2003). Information was seen as the basis for development and crucial to creating the necessary social environment for development to succeed. At this time it was thought that a country's level of development could be measured not only through gross national product (GNP) but also in part through the depth of mass media penetration (Waisbord 2001).

This view of development has, in turn, informed several communication theories: diffusion of innovation (Rogers 1969, 1995), social marketing (Kotler & Roberto 1989, Walsh *et al.* 1993) and "edutainment" (Bandura 1977). In their early forms and in many cases into the present, these strategies are delivered as a mass one-way transfer of information from those who have it to those who do not. They are often delivered as organized communication campaigns directed at a selected audience for a period of time in order to reach a specific set goal (Snyder 2001). This "transmission" model assumes that unless there is something wrong with the channel (poor radio reception, bad printing, noise, etc) that the person receiving the message will get the exact information that the communicator intended them to have (Leeuwis 2004).

Towards a New Paradigm

As dominant development theories began to receive widespread criticism for their Western biases and top-down approaches (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation 1975; Frank 1966; Haq 1976), in the mid-1970s several of the main thinkers from the modernization school of communication, such as Rogers (1976), began to publicly recognize the cultural biases that had shaped early thinking in diffusion of innovations, social marketing and edutainment theories (Huesca 2003). This shift in thinking was in large part due to the poor results and lack of change that both development in general and behavior change campaigns in particular were bringing about (Waisbord 2001). In particular, communication practitioners began to notice that even in cases where the message appeared to be received by the target populations without any problems, often the intended meanings were not conveyed and the expected changes in conduct did not occur (Leeuwis 2004).

Because of this, some of the basic guiding premises of the modernization theory began to be re-examined (Dube 1988; Spybey 1992). One idea that faced reexamination was that societies are fair in their distribution of resources to all individuals and groups and that all people, with just a little help and their own effort, can share in these resources. This assumption led to the idea that people who do not possess the resources or the proper attitudes to participate fully in society need to be helped and taught news skills. This "victim-blame hypothesis" fell apart as large sections of the world continued to experience a state of underdevelopment in spite of receiving much aid (Melkote 2003). Similarly, critics in Latin America noted that the outcomes of development projects often coincide with interests of the elites, indicating that development cannot be attained through simply helping the individual without addressing societal power structures (Huesca 2003).

Power imbalances were also linked to ownership of the communication channels. As mass media become more prevalent in most countries around the world, the impact of communication messages should be increasing. However, as Gumucio Dagrón points out, in Latin America, "the higher concentration of media houses in fewer hands has resulted in a loss of diversity and quality programming…local programming on social issues has disappeared from private television, leaving room for all kinds of low level and bad taste entertainment that sells well" (2003; 2). This results in a dearth of socially positive messages and an abundance of simplistic content that often contains violence, stereotyping, racism and sexually promiscuous behavior (Waisbord 2001).

Researchers such as Buchanan *et al.* (1994) and Röling (1988) began to advocate for a renewed focus on the process of communication and for using the specific local socio-cultural context as the basis for designing intervention strategies. Because of these shifts in thought, modernization theory-based communication models are slowly being adapted to become more compatible with communication theories that focus on participation, social change, learning and empowerment.

Constructivism, Sustainability and Empowerment Communication

In contrast to the positivist worldview, an alternative paradigm has evolved that recognizes that what we call truth is constructed through social interaction. This new paradigm is known as constructivism, and it holds that reality itself is made up of the stories we tell each other and ourselves and that communication and dialogue are the methods we use to bring our internal world and the external world into alignment. They are the means by which new ideas and versions of reality are jointly created, agreed upon, and transmitted to others (Jiggins &

Röling 1997).   In this view communication serves to actively construct meaning rather than merely convey it.

Since there are multiple versions of reality depending on who is asking, observing and interpreting, people often have conflicting goals, attitudes, values, aspirations and standards, the negotiation of which can be observed in the interactions between people in any community, organization or household. Human contact and communication are therefore continuous opportunities for any combination of struggle, negotiation, accommodation or agreement (Röling 1994). Because of this, new theories of development and communication hold that there are no universal approaches to creating change that can work in all situations (Huesca 2003).

While both development and communication theories were undergoing changes before the constructivist paradigm became wide-spread, this paradigm has contributed to the shift in the goals of development that has occurred over the past thirty years. Dependency theories that emerged from Latin America in the mid 1960s, argued by authors such as Baran (1957), Frank (1966) and Escobar (1995), posit that the source of the problems lies in the very concept of development that uses the West as its *de facto* model, the history of global and local politics, colonial relationships, and the manner in which colonized countries were integrated into the world economy. Dependency theorists do not believe that lack of information is at the root of development problems, but rather that underdevelopment is a direct consequence of the level of development in the Western world (Hornik 1988).

In development theories in general, there is growing recognition that the focus must shift to meeting human needs and fostering environmental sustainability rather than securing rapid

economic growth or blindly following a Western model of development. According to Engel (1997), this type of development can only be achieved where people have worked out ways to live with each other; in fact, adequate social organization maybe a prerequisite for sustainable development. Many new road maps for development including the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals call for a restructuring of political and economic systems for a more equitable distribution of benefits, personal and communal freedom from oppression, and empowerment (Melkote 2003).

The new focus on learning and social and structural change began to evolve into a branch of development theory in the 1970s that called for participation of the people in defining, analyzing and coming up with tactics for addressing their problems. Development planning processes underwent a transition from a reliance on blue-prints designed in a central office or implemented in another part of the world to more process orientated situation-specific approaches (Korten 1980). Some development workers began to claim that participation in decision-making is a basic human right and one that can only be carried out through on-going communication (Melkote 2003).

Participation theorists such as Beltrán (1976), Díaz Bordenave (1977), and White *et al.* (1994) also criticized modernization approaches for confining local people to the role of passive receivers of messages telling them what to do rather than active participants capable of shaping their destinies using their own knowledge. This lack of participation is seen as the principal reason behind the failure of many communication interventions, which has led to some measure to the abandonment of communication for persuasion models.

Empowerment communication is another school of thought born of dependency development theory. It acknowledges that while knowledge is generated collectively, the knowledge of those with more power is often perceived as more legitimate than the knowledge of those with less power (Melkote 2003). The emphasis on media penetration as an indicator of development ignored questions about who owned the channels of information and controlled access to what could be said on them. These critiques imply that what is necessary in development is not more information but rather social and structural changes in order to redistribute access to power and resources (Waisbord 2001).

Paulo Freire (1921-1997), an educator who worked on literacy projects in slum areas of Brazil during the 1960s and 1970s, has been one of the most influential thinkers in the areas of popular, informal empowerment communication, with what he calls conscientization: the development of a critical consciousness that has the power to transform reality. Freire viewed most development projects as superficial, authoritarian and in opposition to the interpersonal communication processes that can help people to develop a critical perspective on their situation, resulting in a sense of ownership over their lives and collective responsibility for their own liberation from oppression. He believed that the distance between teacher and student, expert and community member, researcher and researched should be narrowed so that all parties can begin to reflect on their roles and co-learn (Huesca 2003).

According to Freire (1970), communication should be used to provide a space for dialogue; exchanging views, identifying common problems, exploring solutions, reflecting on community issues and mobilizing resources. The concept of dialogue is based on repeated and reciprocal information exchange between people; it involves not only the physical acts of speaking and listening but also is embodied in the relationship between the participants. And,

unlike mass-mediated dissemination messages, dialogue is generally oral, live, immediate and bound to a physical context (Peters 1999).

Several studies have shown that members of marginal groups in society actually prefer face-to-face or small group dialogue rather than mass or one-way communication (Waisbord 2001). These ideas have led to a surge in small community-based projects using theater, music, storytelling, video, photography, and radio to share ideas among local people without the need for external experts (Gumucio Dagrón 2001a).

While communication proponents have become aware of the importance of planning and implementing well-designed communication interventions to support development goals, often there has not been a corresponding increase in support from funders, project planners and other development workers. So in an effort to garner support, as well as to reflect the shifts in thinking from behavior change to empowerment theories of communication, a plethora of names for communication efforts have appeared, from media advocacy, to strategic communication, development support communication, communication for human development, participatory communication, and communication for sustainable agriculture (Bessette 2004; Waisbord 2005). While the field is broadly known as communication for development now, there is a new movement towards communication that fosters social change (Riaño 1994; Servaes *et al.* 1996; Wilkins 2000).

Communication for Social (and Environmental) Change, while clearly based on participatory and empowerment communication theories, is a "distinct way of doing communications- and one of the few that can be sustained…largely due to the fact that ownership of both the message and the medium- the content and the process- resides with the individuals or

communities affected" (Deane & Gray-Felder 1999; 4). This model prioritizes local content

and media ownership so that the voices of those previously unheard can be amplified and

channeled into existing public and political debates, thereby allowing them to set their own

agendas and make them known in regard to political, economic and social development;

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the approach.

Table 2.1 What is Communication for Social Change?

Communication for Social Change is a process of public and private dialogue in which people define who they are, what they want, and how they can get it. Social change is defined as change in people's lives as they themselves define such change. This work seeks to improve the lives of the politically and economically marginalized, and is informed by principles of tolerance, self-determination, equity, social justice and active participation for all. This approach attempts to rebalance approaches to communication and change by shifting the emphasis…

1. Away from people as objects of change… and towards people and communities as agents of their own change.

2. Away from designing, testing and delivering message… and towards supporting dialogue and debate.

3. Away from the conveying of information by technical experts… and towards sensitively placing new information into the dialogue and debate.

4. Away from a focus on individual behaviors… and towards an emphasis on social norms, policies, culture and a supportive environment.

5. Away from persuading others to do something… and towards negotiating the best way forward in a partnership process.

6. Away from outside technical and communication experts dominating the process… and towards the people most affected by the issues playing a central role.

Adapted from Deane & Gray-Felder (1999).

The complexities of modern development problems have heightened the awareness of how

disease and poor health are linked not only to poverty and inadequate nutrition levels but also

to prejudice, social dislocation and political, social and economic inequalities. This

awareness is leading to broader calls for social and political change, which can only emerge

from vigorous public debate within and between societies. Such debates depend on

communication: within families, within communities, through public discourse, in short "the

capacity of people to communicate is intimately bound up with their capacity to effect

change" (Deane & Gray-Felder 1999; 14).

Models and Functions of Communication

Two models for visualizing the flow of communication have been developed based on

participation and empowerment theories. The original modernization-based one-way flow of

information from sender to receiver model was later modified to include the pre-existing

knowledge that both the sender and receiver possess from their personal histories and life

contexts. Because of this, the sender should study the receivers' frame of reference in order

to anticipate how to attune the messages to them. While this "subjective" model is an

improvement over the one-way linear model it still does not explain why receivers may still

ignore or refuse to accept the meanings conveyed in the messages (Leeuwis 2004).

The "social network" model on the other hand, tries to capture the myriad of prior and

simultaneous communication that is occurring for both the sender and the receiver. Meaning,

therefore, is not just constructed between the sender and the receiver but also in dialogue

with the broader social context. The social network model also takes power into account by

acknowledging how political interests, personal aspirations, social status and interpersonal

relationships influence the construction of meaning. In practice all three models (one-way

flow, subjective and social network) are implicitly or explicitly still in use to some extent in

communication for development interventions (Leeuwis 2004).

Several authors (Calvelo Ríos 2003; Díaz Bordenave 1977; Leeuwis 2004; Ramírez &

Quarry 2004; Rosengren 2000) have explored the "function" or intention that underlie

communication action. This reason for communicating is different from the actual content of

any single message (see Table 2.2). Communication functions that seek to persuade, control or simply transmit information may have their roots in the behavior change paradigm. On the other hand, efforts to explore views, facilitate social bonds or raise consciousness may be based on empowerment communication models. Often one or two functions tend to dominate the thinking or overall motive behind a communication effort.

Table 2.2 Communication Functions

	Calvelo Ríos (2003)	Díaz Bordenave (1977)	Ramírez & Quarry (2004)	Rosengren (2000)
Communication function	Manipulation	Communication as persuasion	Policy communication	Control function
	Information	Transmission of information	Time-sensitive communication	Informative function
	Self-expression	Personal expression, social interaction and relationships	Social or facilitative communication: participation and debate	Expressive function
	Communication	Instrument of social and political change associated with authentic development	Educational communication: making things known, sharing knowledge	Social function
	Education		Communication for learning: feedback	
	Training			
	Recreation			

Criticisms of Participation and Emerging Approaches

Overall, participation, empowerment and social change theories hold that effective communication takes place on the interpersonal (rather than mass media) level as a two-way exchange of knowledge and learning. Rogers (1995) describes communication as a process through which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. This definition implies that communication is a process of convergence (or divergence) as two or more individuals exchange information in order to move toward each other (or apart) in the meanings they ascribe to certain events.

However, critics of participatory models such as Cooke & Kothari (2001) contend that there is no universal definition for participation, nor do the expected outcomes of empowerment, equity and social change have operational definitions (Morris 2003). Additionally, opportunities for participation can be co-opted by local elites thereby maintaining or even deepening power inequities.

Additionally, there are different ways in which people can participate in a project (see Table 2.3 for an example of different levels of community participation in water management) and some are more participatory than others (Arnstein 1969; Pretty 1994). Participation is more relevant at some stages of development projects than at others. Furthermore, some people maintain that the concept of participation itself comes from outside of local cultures and can therefore be seen as a top-down approach that pushes for certain goals that the community itself did not define and prioritize (Waisbord 2001).

Table 2.3 Levels of Community Participation in Water Management

Low level of community control	The community is asked to contribute labor, or locally available materials, community pays for water service
↑	The agency delegates certain management or operation and maintenance tasks to the community and provides training for these tasks
	The community is involved in discussing various options during the planning phase of the project, but final decision making power remains with the agency
↓	Options are discussed and decisions are jointly made. Compromises help to adjust the project to the community and agency realities.
High level of community control	Final decision making and authorization rests with the community. The agency provides technical support and advice upon request from the community.

Adapted from IRC (1988).

Critics argue that participatory methods can be too slow; if development requires a redistribution of power then it will necessarily require longer term interventions then those needed to change individual behavior. Since almost all communication campaigns are subject

to funding agency procedures, pressure from donors for quick results often leads to the claim that empowerment and structural changes are impractical and that results are not easily evaluated (Huesca 2003; Leeuwis 2004). Furthermore, the most important indicators are often not quantifiable. For example, the number of people participating in a social network is relatively unimportant compared to the quality of relationships and dialogue within that network (Byrne *et al.* 2005).

However, the problem of measuring results is not unique to participatory communication strategies. Regardless of the type of intervention, it is often difficult to gauge the long-term impact of development interventions and to determine causality in a complex web of diverse influences. This persistent problem of measuring impact also reflects the lack of a common consensus on what the 'right results' are and what 'development' should look like. There continues to be tension between approaches that measure results in terms of behavior change and those that prioritize the long-term building of community capacity (Waisbord 2001).

Communication for Social Change proponents suggest that factors such as increased public and private dialogue and debate, increased accuracy in the information that people share with each other, access to the means for people to feed their voices into the debate, as well as increased leadership and agenda setting by disadvantaged people are all ways in which long-term goals may be measured incrementally. The creation of networks between people who would not otherwise be in contact is another important indicator (Deane & Gray-Felder 1999).

Waisbord (2005) indicates several key ideas that have emerged from communication studies over the years. First, power relations play a central role in communication- from who has

information to who owns the means of accessing it to who initiates the conversations. Communication should help people to negotiate complex power relations and increasingly make decisions for themselves. Communication interventions should integrate both top-down and bottom-up approaches so that the increasing focus on community empowerment does not lead to a misunderstanding about the role of governments and other centralized institutions in shaping an external context in which local empowerment can take place.

Third, several authors (Waisbord 2001; FAO 2002) are advocating a "took-kit" approach that strategically combines different communication approaches, from the interpersonal to the multimedia, from the local level to the national, depending on the context, the needs of the community, and the priorities of the funder. For example, there may be critical health or emergency situations in which a large number of people need to be reached quickly in which case a social marketing approach might be appropriate. On the other hand, to address deeper structural problems, other longer-term approaches would be required. McKee (1992) has argued that the most successful communication strategies have merged together various approaches by using media to stimulate interpersonal communication with peers around certain topics so that the messages have the opportunity to enter everyday discourse.

Capacity Development and Workplace Learning

This section explores the intersection of capacity development with learning, power and mental models within the context of organizations. Modernization-based development assistance generally focused on investments in physical and financial resources linked to technical training. It was assumed that the transfer of technology and the investments would automatically lead to development. Occasionally this did occur, but more often resources were not invested appropriately and countries became dependent on aid money.

In the current context of decentralization and shrinking aid budgets, more development initiatives are focusing on building local capacity to design, manage and maintain development efforts for the long term, after external agencies have pulled out. Unfortunately, the success of many capacity development efforts has been hampered by a continued focus on resolving technical factors to the exclusion of facilitating social and political processes that also affect the ability of people and organizations to achieved desired goals (Horton 2002, Trist 1981).

Capacity Development

Despite the concept of capacity development holding a central place in many development projects, "people everywhere struggle to explain exactly what capacity is or what it comprises. Virtually all discussions about the subject begin with an effort to agree on a definition" (Morgan *et al.* 2005: 8). However, as Gumucio Dagrón points out, "it is better to use wide definitions that enable [us] to add experiences, rather than tricky straight and narrow concepts that only contribute to exclud[ing] many interesting… processes" (2001b; 4).

In that spirit, the common features among several definitions of capacity development that have been identified by Horton *et al.* (2003) will be used as a guide for this discussion; that it is an on-going process; that its goal is to increase an organization's ability to perform its functions and achieve its objectives; that it increases the ability of an organization to learn and solve problems; and that it aims to create the ability to manage current challenges and perform well into the future. Since capacity development involves changes in roles, power,

access to resources and shifts in relationships at all levels from the individual to the societal, it is not surprising that politics often feature prominently.

Capacity development can be viewed as a means, a process and an end in itself. As a means it serves to strengthen the ability of an organization to carry out specific activities related to its mission. As a process it enables the organization to continually reflect and adapt its purpose in response to change and learning. And finally as an end it strengthens an organization's ability to become self-sustaining, survive and fulfill its purpose (Gubbels & Koss 2000; Morgan *et al.* 2005).

Horton *et al.* (2003), identify four main areas that determine an organization's overall capacity: organizational performance, internal capacity, internal operating environment and the external operating environment. Organizational performance is related to how effective and efficient the organization is at delivering programming, how relevant the activities they choose to do are to the mission and stated goals, and the degree of financial stability experienced by the organization. Organizational capacity is made up of the resources, knowledge, and processes used by the organization. The internal operating environment is composed of incentives and rewards, organizational culture, history and traditions, leadership and management styles, acceptance of organizational mission by all stakeholders, and the organizational structure. And finally, the external environment is made up of the administrative and legal system, national and local policies and political systems, economic trends, and the overall social and cultural milieu.

Many authors have broken down the idea of capacity into different areas. For example there are hard capacities that are more physically tangible such as resources, infrastructure,

technology, finances, and staff; and soft capacities that are less concrete such as management styles, planning abilities, goal setting, delegation of responsibilities, allocation of resources, transference of core values over time, strategic leadership, process management, and motivations. (Morgan *et al.* 2005; Horton *et al.* 2003).

Capacity can be visualized as a collection of specific abilities distributed among various levels of the organization from the personal abilities and competencies of individuals, to the overall capabilities of the organization, to the connection of individual and organizational attributes with the external operating environment (Fukuda-Parr *et al.* 2002; Horton *et al.* 2003; Morgan *et al.* 2005). This view of capacity leads us into an inquiry into how competencies are transferred and codified in the various levels.

The Nature of Organizations

Bolman & Deal (2003), Morgan (1997) and Morgan (2005) have each identified metaphors that can be used to conceptualize and understand organizations. Metaphors provide insight into certain areas of an organization. However, they can also distort and limit what is perceived, and because of this the metaphors are not mutually exclusive and there is no 'correct' metaphor for an organization. Those highlighted here and woven through out the rest of this chapter conceive of organizations as structures, as systems, as human resources, and as political arenas; their characteristics are summarized in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Metaphors for Understanding Organizations

Metaphor	Characteristics
Organizations as structure	Rules, policies, procedures, and hierarchies are what shape diverse interests into a single unified strategy
Organizations as systems	The organizational system is made up of interconnections between and among all parts and their environment
Organizations as human resources	Organizations are made up of individuals with needs, feelings, skills, memories, prejudices and limitations
Organizations as political arenas	Competing individuals and groups have enduring differences in perspectives, needs, and goals such that conflict, bargaining, negotiation, coercion and compromise are everyday activities

Adapted from Bolman & Deal (2003), Morgan (1997), Morgan (2005).

While organizations are traditionally thought of as monolithic and unified actors, with a single uncomplicated interest in self-preservation and development, from a human resource perspective, Taylor & Van Every (2000) contend that they are instead social constructions shaped by the ongoing and overlapping conversations of their members. Indeed, an organization can change its physical location and lose its physical assets without dissolving, because in large part it is essentially a patterned set of discourses that were created by the members and codified into norms and practices that are later inherited, accepted and adapted by newcomers (Keyton 2005).

As indicated in the metaphor of organizations as political arenas, one way of looking at organizations is as a composite of individuals and smaller and larger interest groups. The actors that make up organizations have different and evolving relationships both with each other and to the different dynamics and influences outside of the organization. Therefore, their relationships with each other can be conflictive or cooperative depending on each actor's needs and their perceptions of each other in each evolving situation; this cultural universe is complex and permanently evolving (Gumucio Dagrón 2001b).

Using a structural perspective, organizations attempt to maintain stability with mission statements, performance benchmarks, defined roles and structures that are maintained with policy and procedures. The people who work within an organization do not act randomly; each person has a defined role, which leads to expectations regarding their behavior. Rosengren in fact describes organizations as "a social structure defined in terms of the relations between a number of …positions, the individual incumbents of which have to play social roles…defined by the position in question" (2000: 105).

In almost all organizations, these defined individual roles are codified into some type of hierarchy through which rights, responsibilities and power are distributed throughout the organization. Each position in a hierarchy embodies rules that constrain or empower how, what, when, where and with whom communication can and should happen (Stohl 1995). Hierarchies serve to make behavior more predictable yet at the same time can limit the degree to which employees can be innovative, flexible and responsive to changing situations (Keyton 2005).

The actual hierarchical structure may or may not resemble the organization's formal organizational chart, often found in official documents. However, the structure in use serves as the route through which employee participation flows and therefore an examination of the messages and flow of information between levels can help to identify the responsibility, power and level of participation that employees feel they possess (Keyton 2005). As Stohl points out, "communication is simultaneously the source, the process, and the outcome of hierarchical position" (1995; 114). The patterns of organized activity and the communication that supports it create direct and indirect links among organizational members and the broader environment.

Keyton (2005) defines an organization is a system of members, and external stakeholders, working interdependently. These different actors communicate and collaborate with each other in order to achieve organizational goals, which in turn serve as a vehicle for obtaining the resources required to continue further activities to reach additional goals in the future. Organizations and the individuals within them also interface with the historical and current institutional contexts, such as the legal, economic, and political systems that inform things like property rights, codes of conduct, and customs. These are the rules of the game that shape expectations about behavior, performance, rights and obligations (Wilson *et al.* 2003).

Individual Learning

Since organizations are made up of individuals, the manner in which people learn to create and adapt to change in an organizational context is important. For most managers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the key to effective organizations lay in bureaucracy, hierarchy and a strict division of labor (Weber 1958). At this time, employers focused only on training workers what they needed to know in order to accomplish the specific tasks set out for them and only a relatively small number of people in skilled positions were given more training (Jarvis *et al*. 1998).

In the 1960s the idea of what an organization should look like began to break down as it became more and more difficult to control external conditions and to foresee what skills would be needed to react appropriately to them. The clear dividing line between managers who have all the answers and give orders, and workers who do as they are told also started to blur as training for workers shifted to 'human resource development.' This change reflected

the amount of knowledge and autonomy employees need in order to make quick decisions in the best interest of the organization (Jarvis *et al*. 1998).

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) outline four main orientations to adult learning theories- behaviorist, cognitivist, humanist and social learning. Behaviorists (e.g. Thorndike 1913; Pavlov 1927; Watson 1998; Guthrie 1956; Hull 1943; Skinner 1974) view learning as producing more or less permanent behavior change in a desired direction. Cognitivists (e.g. Köhler,1959; Lewin 1948; Kohlberg 1986; Gagne 1985; Mezirow 1991) view learning as an internal mental process that relies on individual memory and perception to create meaning and insight. Humanists (e.g. Maslow 1954; Rogers 1961; Knowles 1978) regard learning as an individual act to fulfill personal potentials for growth. Social learning theorists (e.g. Bandura 2001; Rotter 1973; Jarvis 1987) believe that learning occurs through interaction with, observation of and feedback from others in a social context.

Workplace learning is now seen more holistically as many of these theories have been integrated. Kim defines learning as "increasing one's capacity to take effective action" (1993; 38). This definition encompasses two meanings: the acquisition of skills and know-how which include the physical ability to take certain actions, and the acquisition of know-why which includes the mental ability to conceptualize an experience and know how and when to apply lessons from it. Both of these processes are affected by personal and collective memory, which determines what will be retained and remain available for recall in new situations.

A new way of looking at adult learning that is now a common perspective in work place learning is situated learning theory. Lave & Wenger explain, "It concerns the process by

which newcomers become part of a community of practice. A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a socio-cultural practice. This social process includes, indeed it subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills" (1991; 29). Because of this, situated learning theory blurs the line between individual and collective learning (Sun 2003).

Situated learning theory holds that learning is located within everyday work practices that coincide with processes of identity formation, both of which are embedded in individual and group power dynamics. These power relations are what constrain and enable access to positions of potential mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary within each context (Contu & Willmott 2003). Since information and knowledge are acquired, maintained, and transformed through social interaction, within this framework, the acquisition of skills is not what is most valued, but rather it is the ability to read the context and act in a way that is recognized and valued by other organizational members that is crucial.

Power, Knowledge and Mental Models

Giddens looked at power from two perspectives; one of domination and the other of transformative capacity. The common view of power is as the ability to influence or control the actions of others. The second type of power, known as "human agency," is the capability of a person "to intervene in a series of events so as to alter their course" (1976; 111). The power of domination therefore, involves influencing other people to use their personal agency to achieve outcomes. A person with power can do this by imposing his or her definition of a situation on other people and making them act based on a certain viewpoint about it (Leewuis 2004).

O'Dell *et al.* describe knowledge as "information in action" (1998; 5), and distinguish it from data as raw sensory input; information which is interpreted data; and knowledge which according to Leewis is, "the body of mental inferences and conclusions that people build from different elements of information, which allows them to take action in a given context" (2004; 95).

Access to relevant and timely information and knowledge influences the ability of each person to make informed choices about how to exercise their personal agency. So, in this sense, access to information is empowering while inadequate information is disempowering. Therefore, the flow and distribution of information within an organizational system can be seen as the evidence of myriad political acts involving the exertion of power (Stohl 1995).

While the word politics often has unpleasant connotations, Coopey and Burgoyne (1999) argue that because of the tacit and implicit nature of social learning, the political *status quo* within an organization is often shaped in ways that are difficult to discuss and that prohibit higher levels of learning. In that sense, publicly sanctioned and open political activity could serve to open up space for creative dialogue, learning, and analysis of alternative courses of action within organizations. It could allow individuals to question and resist the pressures placed on them by other people's perceptions of their identities by making their own self-knowledge explicit. It could also offer scope for constructive airing of conflicts and disagreements that would bring problematic relationships to light so that those involved could manage them rather than allowing them to influence future activities in unforeseen ways.

Coopey and Burgoyne describe the process this way:

> Sensemaking…requires us to make moral judgments about our experience, involving distinctions between what is worth doing and what is not. In this search for a full and meaningful life we are also guided by respect for, and obligations to others, and our sense of dignity, which is itself dependent on the respect accorded to us by others. Thus our human agency is constituted, enabling us to respond both to our own questioning- of where we are in our lives and whether the direction taken is the right one- and to others questioning 'who we are' or perhaps more important, telling us who they think we are or should become (1999; 7).

Factors that influence communication and relationships are often unconscious even to individuals themselves. Leeuwis (2004) makes the distinction between discursive knowledge and tacit knowledge. Discursive or explicit knowledge is that which the individual is consciously aware of, has reflected upon and can be easily conveyed as information in common language to other people or codified in documents and databases. On the other hand, tacit or implicit knowledge is often embedded in contextual experience, specific social situations, memory, judgments, emotions, perceptions and motives so that while this type of knowledge can be made explicit and transferred to others, it takes considerable effort and self-reflection (Jarvis 1999).

Though both discursive and tacit knowledge serve as lenses through which each of us interprets and assigns meaning to experiences, Leeuwis notes that, "explicit knowledge can be seen as only the 'tip of the iceberg'. In sociological terms, this 'iceberg' can be called an actor's life-world" (2005; 97). Each person possesses a life-world or mental model of how and why the world works as it does.

Senge (1990) describes mental models as deeply held internal images of how the world works. They include implicit and explicit understandings, and also provide the context in

which to view and interpret new data and determine how stored information is relevant in each given situation. The mental models in people's heads are where the vast bulk of an organization's knowledge (both know-how and why-why) lies. Mental models are composed of past experiences and personal and shared understandings, as such they are not fixed but rather are continually changing and being reshaped by new experiences. Access to information then actually shapes how reality itself and any future information will be interpreted.

The hidden nature of much knowledge means that there is often a gap between what someone thinks or how they perceive themselves and what their behavior actually demonstrates. Argyris and Schön (1974) hold that people usually act according to their mental maps or theories-in-use, rather than the reasons they tell others or their espoused-theories when required to explicitly explain their actions. This gap can be narrowed through consistent feedback and self-reflection (Jarvis 1999).

Argyris and Schön (1978) also talk about two different levels at which learning can take place. Single-loop learning tends to involve learning how to do the same general thing better and usually encourages only small changes in procedure to make existing techniques more efficient rather than shifting the foundation that behavior is based on. Double loop learning, on the other hand, involves actively questioning the paradigms upon which action is based and calls for a change in the way strategies, policies, objectives and consequences are framed. In the context of an organization, it can involve making explicit deeply held assumptions and norms that were previously inaccessible because they were unknown or known but not open for discussion.

Organizational Learning and Learning Organizations

The main idea of strengthening capacity, then, is to help people through processes in which the capacity for individuals to learn, as well as the overall capacities of the organization are increased. So just how does individual learning translate into increased organizational effectiveness?

According to Easterby-Smith and Araujo the concept of *organizational learning* (e.g. Argyris & Schon 1996; Weick 2001) was developed by academic authors from diverse fields and is concentrated around the "detached observation and analysis of the processes involved in individual and collective learning inside [and between] organizations" (1999; 2). Learning processes occur inside all organizations, although variables include the speed, degree and content of what people learn (Sun 2003).

On the other hand, the literature on *learning organizations* (e.g. Kim 1995; Senge 1990) tends to be written by managers and consultants in order to create methodologies for improved learning processes and an increased ability to survive and adapt to an evermore unpredictable future. As such, it is action oriented and "geared toward using specific diagnostic and evaluative methodological tools which can help to identify, promote and evaluate the quality of learning processes inside organizations" (Easterby-Smith & Araujo 1999; 2).

Within each of these two communities of thought, a distinction between a technical and a social orientation can be made. Easterby-Smith and Araujo state that, "the technical view assumes that organizational learning is about the effective processing, interpretation of and response to, information inside and outside the organization. This information may be

qualitative or quantitative but it is generally explicit and in the public domain" (1999; 3). The social perspective highlights the manner in which people make sense of their experiences at work and views learning as a natural process that occurs during social interaction. As the social perspective fits with a constructivist lens and workplace situated learning theory, it will be the basis for the rest of this discussion.

Just as each person has their own mental model of how the world works, organizations themselves can develop their own life-worlds based on collective memory and experience. "Individuals come and go, but organizations preserve knowledge, behaviors, mental maps, norms and values over time" (Weick 2001; 243). This process of creating and codifying organizational memory, leads to what O'Dell *et al.* describe as organizational culture or "the shared history, expectations, unwritten rules and social mores that affects the behavior of everyone… It's the set of underlying beliefs that while never exactly articulated, are always there to color the perceptions of action and communications" (1998; 71). Servaes (1999) similarly defines organizational culture as the social settings in which a certain reference framework has taken concrete form and been institutionalized.

When information is shared and captured or codified, it can be passed from employee to employee creating an organizational level interpretation that can be passed on and acted on by others (Keyton 2005). These shared models that members of an organization develop together over time defines which actions are given priority, how an organization chooses to act, and what it chooses to remember from its experiences. They also serve to orient the interaction and communication of people within a specific historical context.

These models may be explicit or implicit, tacit or widely acknowledged, but just the same they affect the way an individual or organization views the world and takes action (Kim 1993). In other words, mental models are not merely a repository of data, instead they actively serve to build shared theories about experiences.

Jones (2001) identified many factors as crucial to the organizational learning process; an organizational culture that actively encourages questioning by employees at all levels; the development of skills for critical reflection in all employees throughout the organization. Also, regular and varied opportunities for acquiring new information and sharing questions, reflections and learning; the development of spaces where active inquiry and experimentation with mental models is encouraged; the continuous search for learning opportunities in the organization's on-going activities; encouragement and recognition for taking new actions based on the outcomes of learning and critically reflecting on the outcomes of those actions are important so that a shared understanding of key assumptions and interrelationships can emerge (Kim 1993).

Learning often takes place during a specific situation like crisis managing or problem-solving a certain task and the result is not reflected on, codified or shared later on (Kim 1993). However, for organizational learning to occur, the discoveries and outcomes of individual learning must become embedded in organizational memory. If they are not encoded in the images that individuals have and the mental maps they collectively construct, then the individual will have learned but the organization will not (Horton *et al.* 2003).

There are many barriers, both individual and structural, that can hinder the sharing and transference of learning from the individual to the group or from the group to the

organizational level or between horizontal levels. While information sharing may appear

natural and spontaneous, it is conditional upon a sense of trust in one another rather than

suspicion, hostility or reservations about how the information will be used (Contu &

Willmott 2003).

Many times individual learning cannot affect the actions of others because of constraints

inherent in the learner's position within the organizational hierarchy, although Schultz (2001)

contends that hierarchy can play an important role in distributing new knowledge to a wider

range of groups within the organization to facilitate an assessment of its relevance. The link

between organizational culture and sharing of learning is explored in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Organizational Culture and Sharing

Pro-Sharing Culture	Anti-Sharing Culture
Learning through teaching and sharing	Negative incentives and sanctions work against the sharing of information and insights
Communal understanding through story telling	Little time and attention is devoted to learning from experiences
Continuous exchange and creation of new knowledge- as experimentation occurs, people share and learn	Assumptions about projects and activities are not challenged
Areas of interest and expertise overlap	Individuals have specialized technical expertise that do not overlap
Willingness to acknowledge and learn from error	Management and/or staff deny errors or assign blame to others
Development of personal relationships	Different groups within organization develop different cultures that prohibit the transfer of knowledge

Adapted from O'Dell *et al.* (1998).

Other obstacles to knowledge sharing include situations where people focus on the

differences between them or the tendency for each individual or group to horde information

in order to try to maximize its own accomplishments and rewards in comparison to others.

Other factors that prevent capacity development and learning efforts from becoming part of

the organizational culture include a lack of a common worldview within the organization that

would create a basis for effective communication, the use of a single coherent vocabulary to describe processes and practices, and a strict focus on explicit knowledge that undervalues the importance of tacit knowledge (O'Dell *et al.* 1998). The challenge is for individuals and organizations to overcome these barriers and learn to transfer specific insights into more general maps that can then guide future action both for themselves and others.

Chapter Summary

Two core paradigms, positivism and constructivism have shaped the way we think about development, communication, capacity development, organizations, and learning. All of these themes seen from the positivist perspective are technical concerns that involve the transfer of information from the group that possesses it to those that do not in order to reach established goals. On the other hand, the constructivist perspective emphasizes the process of creating dialogue and relationships that allow for the formation of shared mental models and common approaches to reach negotiated aims.

In response to behavior change communication, Communication for Social Change principles advocate a shift in focus from individual behavioral changes to broader change at the political and societal levels. However, all capacity development efforts whether intended for the individual, an organization, or society as a whole, and whether they focus on hard or soft capacities, necessarily enter through individual mental models.

Overall organizational capacity development then depends on what the individual has learned, how well they are able to express and share it with others, and the receptivity of the team or organizational culture to new ideas. The manner in which individual capacity becomes organizational capacity is through personal agency exercised through

communication. The type of communication that is used will in turn affect the individuals'

future perceptions of their position in the workplace community of practice and the future

functions of the communication that occur in that environment.

Through an exploration of how communication, capacity development, and organizational

learning are interrelated in this chapter we have seen that they are inseparable in many ways,

which are summarized in the conceptual approach in Figure 4.14. Principles of

Communication for Social Change point to the need for the ownership of communication,

learning and changes processes by those who are most affected by them. Additionally, the

success of capacity development efforts depend a great deal both on the capability of

individuals to learn and modify their own mental maps to encompass new ways of working,

and on their ability to communicate their learning to others in a way that helps to change the

collective mental models that are held within organizations.