Constructions of ‘community engagement’ in the Australian minerals industry: A critical study

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Abstract
Large, profit-seeking corporations are today expected to apply principles of sustainability and social responsibility to their business operations, and to be publicly accountable for their social and environmental impacts. This expectation appears to be a response to public concern regarding corporations’ perceived power and their control over people’s lives and the environment, as these corporations have extended their influence globally. In turn, corporations have sought to demonstrate that they can be responsible with this power and control, and concurrently to persuade governments that regulating corporate responsibilities is unnecessary (Conley, 2005; Sklair, 2001). Thus, corporate discourses have evolved to accommodate the notion of ‘community engagement’. The outcome is a dynamic landscape of ongoing, interdiscursive tensions between the profit-driven, individualistic focus of capitalism, and social concerns relating to notions of community and environment.

Few companies must navigate these tensions as carefully as minerals companies, whose operations are commonly in socially and environmentally sensitive locations, often interacting with Indigenous communities (Ballard & Banks, 2003; Danielson, 2006; Whiteman & Mamen, 2002). Minerals companies, therefore, appear to be embracing notions antithetical to traditional industry discourses. However, macrostructural rationalities inherent in the ideology of capitalism may constrain the ceding of control and power. Thus, social initiatives are generally rationalised on the basis of presumed, but unproven, economic benefits (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006), implicitly privileging the dominant economic paradigm (Korhonen, 2002). Meanwhile, ‘community engagement’ metaphorically suggests a consensual, social union of two parties, with the promise of enduring partnership, mutual dedication, and perhaps sharing of resources. However, apparent consensus can hide subtle forms of power, especially as it operates through language (Fairclough, 1989, p. 2; van Dijk, 1997a, pp. 17-20). The task of this study,
therefore, is to unpack the emerging discourse of ‘community engagement’, to consider what it means to the people concerned, and how it is socially and discursively constructed.

This study concentrates on two case studies of large minerals processing sites in Australia. The central research question, addressed from interpretive and critical perspectives, is: How do the people concerned understand ‘community engagement’, and what shapes these understandings? Firstly, I explore how the people concerned—relevant site personnel and local community members—understand, experience, and interpret ‘community engagement’ at a local level. Secondly, I investigate how competing discourses construct these understandings, experiences, and interpretations. At each site, I focus on a contentious issue: relations with the local Indigenous community at Site A, and artesian water use at Site B.

This study also contributes to literature on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder theory. CSR conventionally represents the idea that corporations have moral responsibilities to society, beyond legal or contractual responsibilities (Jones, 1980; McWilliams et al., 2006). Stakeholder theory conventionally examines how corporations can affect, and be affected by, several groups of people (Freeman, 1984). While these definitions are contestable, the dominant perspectives appear to be those that adopt a utilitarian, instrumental, and economic worldview.

‘Community engagement’ seems to exemplify interdiscursivity, in which sociopolitical struggles challenge existing hegemonic relations, and where different discourses, genres, or whole systems of language overlap into new discursive orders (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 115-120; 1995, p. 94; Wodak, 2001, pp. 66-67). Interdiscursivity represents ongoing contestation, which legitimates and preserves some elements of dominant discourses while accommodating some elements of opposing discourses (Livesey, 2002).

My methodological approach triangulates phenomenography and critical discourse analysis, within a case study framework. Phenomenography is an interpretive methodology that investigates the different ways in which people experience, perceive, understand, and conceptualise various phenomena (Marton, 1994). Critical discourse studies, meanwhile, are explicitly committed to justice, democracy, equality, and fairness (McKenna, 2004; van Dijk, 1993), by considering how historical and cultural systems of power and knowledge constitute people, their worlds, and social practice, and how, in return, practice is constitutive of discourse (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Gubrium & Holstein, 2000).
The empirical analysis begins by analysing how companies construct community engagement discourse, via the verbal and visual texts in ‘sustainability’ reports and company websites. I find that company literature appears to assert ‘facts’, and implicitly privileges corporate and managerial, economic values. It also appears to deny the companies’ agency rôle in constructing reality, presents an impression of harmony and congruence between company and community interests, and tends to marginalise dissent.

For the case studies themselves, I describe, analyse, and interpret the empirical material gained from three visits to each site. Firstly, from documentary research and observation, I describe the context at each site in terms of discursive tensions. Within the companies, I observed tensions between social concern and cultural sensitivity on the one hand, versus functionality and control on the other. Within the communities, I observed tensions between dissent and social concern, versus acquiescence and individualism. Secondly, I derive phenomenographic conceptions of community engagement based on interviews with company staff and community members. Conceptions vary from ‘maximising self-interest’ to ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’ and ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’. Thirdly, I use textual analysis to interrogate these conceptions, and to investigate their discursive construction. I find that conceptions appear to be more comprehensive when participants articulate statements in relatively collectivist, dialogic, ethical/normative, and heteroglossic ways. I then find that both company and community participants’ worldviews are constructed by multiple, sometimes oppositional, discourses, but that the most influential discourse is Business and management. Where the issue is Indigenous relations, company and community participants discourses are more oppositional, apparently based upon conflicting worldviews. Integrating the findings, I develop a new model of community engagement as socially constructed through discourse.

**Keywords**

community engagement, corporate social responsibility, indigenous, interdiscursivity, interpretivism, mining, phenomenography, critical discourse analysis, poststructuralism, stakeholder theory

**Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)**

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'Community engagement': An emerging discourse

In the 1970s, Colonel Kenneth McKenzie, working on community and industrial relations issues for the mining company CRA, commented, “Part of our job is intelligence and propaganda” (quoted by West, 1972). Today, it is inconceivable for a mining company spokesperson to make such a statement publicly. Traditionally, corporate managers viewed outsiders as potentially complicating the marketplace (Jackall, 1988, p. 14). Now, the external world has been reconceptualised in terms of ‘stakeholders’. Large, profit-seeking corporations are expected to apply principles of sustainability and social responsibility to their business operations, and to be publicly accountable for their social and environmental impacts (e.g., Elkington, 1997). Corporations, therefore, now have a key rôle in achieving social cohesion (Oketch, 2004), making them a primary target of organisations seeking to change corporate behaviour (Doh & Guay, 2004) and to alleviate social and environmental problems (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). In response, as a means of managing relationships with these ‘stakeholders’, the notion of ‘community engagement’ has become commonplace in corporate discourses.

Catalysts of these discursive shifts may be external, such as legislative and regulatory requirements and public perceptions of social and environmental impacts; and internal, such as a ‘customer orientation’ and decentralisation of managerial decision-making (AMEEF, 2002; Waddock & Boyle, 1995). Both external and internal drivers may derive from the tendency of markets, as they expand their influence, to increase uncertainty and insecurity (Bauman, 2001; Hutton & Giddens, 2001, p. ix; Sennett, 1998; Yergin & Stanislaw, 2002, p. 404). Furthermore, although corporations exist ostensibly to produce goods and services, they also produce meaning; decisions that significantly shape our social and political lives, our values, and our social conceptions, are increasingly made in the corporate economic realm (Deetz, 1999, pp. 292-293). Thus, corporations appear to be extending their influence globally, leading to public concern regarding their power and control over people’s lives and the environment.

To assuage this concern, corporate managers seek to demonstrate that they can be responsible with this power and control, and concurrently to persuade governments that regulating corporate
responsibilities is unnecessary. The outcome is a dynamic landscape of ongoing tensions between the profit-driven, individualistic focus of capitalism, and social concerns relating to notions of community and environment. Few companies must navigate these tensions as carefully as minerals companies, whose operations are commonly in socially and environmentally sensitive locations, often interacting with Indigenous communities (AMEEF, 2002). For these companies, the increase in awareness of Indigenous rights and ecological sustainability have particularly amplified these tensions, and thus intensified the perceived need for ‘community engagement’ (Ballard & Banks, 2003; Danielson, 2006; Humphreys, 2000; Whiteman & Mamen, 2002).

While we can describe these broad trends, however, there is increasingly a recognition that, despite the suggestion of convergence implied by notions of globalisation, firm behaviour is not passively predetermined by the constraints of institutional structures. Rather, we can identify divergences, contradictions, and variations, both between and within different varieties of capitalism (Morgan, 2005; Whitley, 1999). A case study approach, therefore, offers an opportunity to examine such divergences, contradictions, and variations at the local level, while providing insights into changing social practices more broadly.

This study investigates the concept and practice of ‘community engagement’, concentrating on two case studies of large minerals processing sites in Australia. Site selection was an outcome of negotiations between university researchers and minerals company staff. As this process occurred prior to my joining the project, their selection was outside my control. The two sites were chosen largely because they have residential areas in close proximity, bringing significant and immediate engagement challenges. Thus, the cases are not necessarily representative of other minerals operations in Australia, but they offer an opportunity for comparative analysis. At each site, I focus on a contentious issue to illustrate discursive tensions. At Site A, this issue is relations with the local Indigenous community, which historically have proven problematic. At Site B, the issue is the company’s right to use a substantial proportion of artesian water, and the associated impacts on the water available to local residents and on the local environment.

The central research question, to be addressed from interpretive and critical perspectives, is: How do the people concerned (i.e., relevant site personnel and community members) understand ‘community engagement’, and what shapes these understandings? In answer to the first question, a common view is that community engagement refers to “processes and practices in which a wide range of people work together to achieve a shared goal guided by a commitment to a common set of values, principles and criteria” (Aslin & Brown, 2004, p. 3). However, what happens if people do
not share certain values and principles, and are not committed to shared goals? Even if they do share certain goals, what assumptions underlie the selection of these goals in preference to others? Thus, rather than seeking an overarching, universal definition, I firstly explore the different ways in which the people concerned understand, experience, and interpret ‘community engagement’ at a local level.

To address the second question, I investigate why they do so in these varying ways. In other words, how do competing discourses construct people’s understandings, experiences and interpretations? Further, have corporations challenged dominant paradigms, reinvented their assumptions and ceded control and power to community stakeholders (Berry, 2003), or are they internalising new challenges and absorbing opposition into a ‘one-dimensional society’ (Marcuse, 1964)? Can managerial behaviour be changed within dominant paradigms, or do the technocentrism and anthropocentrism of such paradigms render them inherently incapable of addressing social and environmental externalities (Banerjee, 2002, p. 108)? Initial research suggests that the landscape is more complex than a simple dualism, and that control and power may be operating in subtle ways, especially through the ideological workings of language (Fairclough, 1989, p. 2; van Dijk, 1997a, p. 20), potentially constructing discursive ‘régimes of truth’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). This study aims to explore these complexities and the associated tensions.

As well as contributing to an understanding of corporate-community relationships, this study contributes to literature on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder theory. CSR conventionally represents the idea that corporations have moral responsibilities to society, beyond tightly defined legal or fiduciary responsibilities (Jones, 1980; McWilliams et al., 2006). The related concept of stakeholder theory conventionally examines how corporations can affect, and be affected by, several groups of people (T. Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984). Focusing on ‘community engagement’ is potentially useful because it is the most recent, and perhaps the most radical, manifestation of CSR and stakeholder theory (Ballard & Banks, 2003; Livesey, 2002; Zadek, 2003). At face value, the two concepts, ‘community’ and ‘engagement’, appear antithetical to traditional discourses of business, management and mining, yet the minerals industry appears to be internalising both into its discourse. Thus, studying this phenomenon interpretively may offer rich empirical material with which to deepen an understanding of corporate responsibilities in contemporary capitalism.

So, what corporate rationalisation underpins this development? The argument that CSR delivers financial and other business benefits is, according to Vogel (2005, p. 16), the most influential factor
motivating corporations. Thus, much relevant literature (e.g., Dunphy, Griffiths, & Benn, 2003; Elkington, 1997; 2001; Hargroves & Smith, 2005; Hawken, Lovins, & Lovins, 1999; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Ruf, Muralidhar, Brown, Janney, & Paul, 2001) typically investigates socially responsible, or sustainable, business by considering its consistency with economic outcomes.

Margolis and Walsh (2003) note that there has been a thirty-year quest, comprising 127 published studies, for objective evidence of a causal relationship between undertaking social initiatives and maximising profits. However, in the absence of such conclusive evidence (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Maxfield, 2008; McWilliams et al., 2006), advocates are left to make definitive, irrefutable statements on the apparently rational logic of CSR and sustainable development. For example: “But industry leaders increasingly recognise that building relationships is a sensible long-term investment in the success of their enterprise” (AMEEF, 2002, p. 52). Similarly: “If you create more social and environmental value the right way, you’ll create more financial value as a direct and measurable result” (Gilding, Hogarth, & Reed, 2002, p. 6, original emphasis). These statements, therefore, adopt a utilitarian, rather than deontological, ethic, suggesting an assumption that responsible behaviour is more justifiable if it appears logical and rational. Likewise, community engagement processes can constitute an “almost compulsive concern” (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 250) about stakeholders’ opinions, suggesting an effort to circumscribe uncertainty with order and rationality, or to control the trajectory of the discourse.

**New responsibilities**

“Money has become the grand test of virtue” (Orwell, 1940, p. 155).

Only relatively recently has capitalism attempted to internalise social and environmental externalities. Traditionally, market economics marginalised conceptions of community, public service, and social concern (Reed, 1996), and the prevailing view was that ‘the business of business is business’. Maximising profits, or shareholder returns, became the overriding objective. In the 1970s, Schumacher described the dominant economic paradigm as a “metaphysical position of the crudest materialism, for which money costs and money incomes are the ultimate criteria and determinants of human action, and the living world has no significance beyond that of a quarry for exploitation” (Schumacher, 1974, p. 110, original emphasis). However, capitalism has bequeathed the simultaneous crises of increasing social inequality and ecological unsustainability (Sklair, 2001, p. 6). These crises, in turn, have led to reconceptualisations of corporations’ responsibilities, so that “the crudest materialism” is typically no longer considered sufficient to pass Orwell’s “grand test of virtue”. Rather, a social expectation appears to have emerged, in which corporations are deemed
‘responsible’ for ameliorating the adverse social and environmental impacts of their activities. More recently, this idea has incorporated the notion that corporations must ‘engage’ local communities in the process of meeting this expectation (Humphreys, 2000). However, these are imprecise concepts that are continually evolving, and their meanings are therefore contestable.

Social responsibilities

Corporate social responsibility was defined by Jones (1980) as the notion that corporations have responsibilities beyond those towards shareholders, and beyond those prescribed by law or contract. This definition appears to remain dominant today. However, perhaps because of the breadth of this conception, and because alternative possible corporate motives for CSR may exist, the definition and nature of socially responsible corporate behaviour remain contestable (Vogel, 2005). Thinking of Site A, in terms of Indigenous relations, ‘responsibility’ could be interpreted narrowly as providing employment opportunities for local Indigenous residents, or more broadly as engaging dialogically with Indigenous worldviews. At Site B, ‘responsibility’ could mean sponsoring local community projects, or ethically reflecting on the company’s position of power in enjoying extensive groundwater access rights.

The notion of social responsibilities, and its various theoretical perspectives, is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two. However, it is not only a corporation’s social responsibilities that are contestable, since the location of environmental impacts within notions of ‘responsibility’ is also unclear. Taking Site B as an example, to what extent is a minerals processing operation responsible for ensuring that it does not damage local ecosystems? Further, does its creation of income and employment, and of goods that society demands, partly mitigate its environmental impacts? Is some degree of environmental damage a reasonable trade-off for economic benefits? And, who defines what is ‘reasonable’?

Environmental responsibilities

As suggested by Schumacher’s sentiments above, conceptualisations of corporate responsibilities in contemporary capitalism have been deeply influenced by concerns regarding the capacity of the natural environment to sustain ever-increasing levels of resource extraction, industrial production, energy use, and consumption. These concerns have notably culminated in the escalating sense of crisis regarding anthropogenic climate change (e.g., Flannery, 2005; Hamilton, 2007; Lovelock, 2006; Lowe, 2005; Monbiot, 2006; Spratt & Sutton, 2008; Stern, 2007). Since the 1990s, therefore, environmental issues have gradually permeated business strategy (Banerjee, 2002).
The environmental consequences of industrial activity first penetrated western public consciousness with the publication of *Silent Spring* (Carson, 1963), which questioned the long-term impact of widespread pesticide use. In Australia, environmental awareness was particularly catalysed by the intensive destruction of native forests in favour of non-native pine plantations, documented in *The Fight for the Forests* (Plumwood & Sylvan, 1973). Broadening the discussion, Næss (1973) proposed the more radical notion of ‘deep ecology’, which posed moral and philosophical questions about the relative right to live of different species. From a contemporary standpoint, we can see that these debates centre on a conflict between values of the environment and values of economic development, or between viewing the environment as having intrinsic value and viewing it as an economic resource (Plumwood, 2003). Hence, the now institutionalised term, ‘sustainable development’, seems to offer a means of balancing environmental concerns with economic development, or, more specifically, of maximising economic growth while minimising adverse environmental impacts.

An early definition of sustainable development appeared in the World Conservation Strategy (IUCN, 1980), an initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (now the World Conservation Union). This document defines sustainable development as development that allows ecosystems and biodiversity to be sustained (Sutton, 2004). However, the concept of sustainable development was popularised in the ‘Brundtland report’, or *Our Common Future*, which proposed that development can be sustainable if it “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 43). Thus, while the 1980 definition was perhaps relatively eco-centric, the Brundtland definition has been criticised for being anthropocentric and utilitarian (Livesey, 2002).

In this sense, the shift in emphasis from environmental concern to sustainable development can be seen as regressive, since the latter lends a palatability and legitimacy to continued economic growth (Tregidga & Milne, 2006). Further, some claim that talking of sustainable development, rather than sustainability, facilitates focus on the journey, rather than on the destination, allowing incremental change to be described misleadingly as ‘sustainable’ action, diverting attention from inherently unsustainable outcomes, and perpetuating ‘business-as-usual’ approaches (Milne, Kearins, & Walton, 2006; Springett, 2003; Sutton, 2004). This point may be particularly pertinent for the minerals industry, which typically portrays sustainable development as a journey (e.g., AMEEF, 2002, p. 28). Tregidga and Milne (2006) argue that, following the Brundtland report, the ‘Earth Summits’ in Rio de Janeiro (1992) and Johannesburg (2002) saw further corporate domination in constructing the meaning of sustainable development, thereby privileging the economic sphere.
This implies that environmental problems can be solved though applying business ‘logic’, meaning simply improving systems, technology, and efficiency.

Sutton (2004, p. 13), therefore, proposes a less ambiguous definition of sustainable development as “development that does not undermine the environment, society, or the economy, locally or globally, now or in the future, and that delivers genuine progress socially, environmentally and economically”. Of course, some notions here, such as ‘undermine’ and ‘genuine progress’, remain vague and therefore contestable. In any case, the Brundtland definition remains highly influential, and versions of it appear routinely in corporations’ public statements regarding their environmental impacts, as well as in industry-related research papers (e.g., Mudd, 2007, p. 7). The underlying assumption, then, appears to be that environmental concerns can be accommodated within a discourse of ‘development’, leading to notions such as ‘green’ or ‘natural’ capitalism (Hargroves & Smith, 2005; Hawken et al., 1999).

**Responsibility or sustainability?**

The foregoing discussion might suggest that social and environmental impacts can be treated independently. Increasingly, however, notions of social responsibility implicitly appear to incorporate environmental concerns, while notions of environmental responsibility implicitly appear to incorporate social concerns, for example in the term ‘social sustainability’ (Banerjee, 2002). The newer terms ‘corporate responsibility’ and ‘corporate sustainability’, therefore, are sometimes used to refer to both social and environmental impacts, and reflect the idea that consideration of such impacts should be integrated with corporate strategy and management systems (Dunphy et al., 2003; Gao & Zhang, 2006; Pedersen & Neergaard, 2008; van Marrewijk, 2003). Just as conceptualisations of corporations’ responsibilities are continually evolving, therefore, so too is the associated language. ‘Community engagement’ appears to be the latest term to emerge from this reconceptualisation process. Hence, for this research, the study of language-as-discourse is crucial, since discourse both reflects and shapes social practice (Fairclough, 1992; N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002). From this perspective, sustainable development, CSR, and community engagement may be seen as examples of interdiscursivity.

**Community engagement as interdiscursivity**

Interdiscursivity represents the joining, or overlapping (Wodak, 2001, p. 67), of different discourses or genres into a new discursive order or text. It is the outcome of sociopolitical struggles to challenge existing hegemonic relations and ‘naturalised discourse conventions’ (Fairclough, 1995, p. 94). Thus, it is more than merely the combination of various texts (intertextuality), since it refers
to the whole system of language (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 115-120). However, interdiscursivity does not represent a new, stable state, but rather ongoing contestation, which may “allow for new fields of action” (Wodak, 2001, p. 66). Thus, Livesey (2002, p. 316) describes the discourse of sustainable development as representing “a space for dissension and sociopolitical struggle”. The effect of interdiscursivity here is the negotiation of a new, tentative ‘middle ground’, which legitimates and preserves some elements of dominant discourses while accommodating some elements of opposing discourses, in a state of perpetual contestation.

Sustainable development and CSR, therefore, seem to represent a new, unstable discursive order, exposing ambiguities between competing paradigms and discourses (Livesey, 2002). Specifically, neoclassical economics has been challenged by oppositional discourses of social justice and environmentalism. These new discourses provide opportunities for coalitions across previously antithetical positions. For example, in place of adversarial methods of persuasion, some non-governmental organisations have formed partnerships with corporations (Hendry, 2003), a strategy that Mah (2004, p. 4) describes as existing precariously between mobilisation against, and cooption by, the hegemonic capitalist project. Yet, since this interdiscursivity is continually evolving, its nature is unresolved.

For example, in the wake of adverse publicity regarding both the plan to dump the Brent Spar oil platform at sea, and the failure to intervene when the Nigerian military régime executed eight environmental activists from the Ogoni tribe, Shell published its 1998 social report (Knight, 1998). This report was considered a benchmark for CSR, yet it asserted that the company’s primary responsibility was economic, that regulation is undesirable, and that free markets contribute to a free society (Livesey, 2001, 2002). More subtly, Tregidga and Milne (2006) show how a water utility company in New Zealand, which has won multiple awards for its sustainability reporting, has gradually reinforced an economic and technocratic conceptualisation of sustainable development. Thus, underlying assumptions regarding the rôle of business in society may have been relatively untouched, raising the question of the extent to which these discursive shifts represent a challenge to the dominant economic paradigm (Korhonen, 2002).

Concurrently, despite the identification of ‘limits to growth’ (Meadows, Randers, & Meadows, 2004), the assumptions of neoclassical economics and neoliberal individualism remain embedded in western government policies favouring deregulation, privatisation and consumerism (Beck, 2001; Hamilton, 2003; Hutton & Giddens, 2001; Layard, 2005; Sennett, 2006). Further, the dominant models of competitive advantage, the ‘five-forces’ model (Porter, 1990, 1996) and the resource-
based view (Barney, 1991), are embedded in assumptions of neoclassical economics (Maxfield, 2008). So, does the emergence of ‘community engagement’ mean that corporations have reinvented the assumptions of capitalism and accepted new responsibilities, or have they effectively absorbed opposition by neutralising antagonistic discourses? The notion of interdiscursivity implies that community engagement may legitimate and preserve crucial elements of neoliberal and neoclassical discourses, while accommodating some elements of social justice and environmentalism discourses. For example, a landmark report on the future of mining in Australia explains why the industry should embrace sustainable development, while implying that such sustainable development is wholly dependent upon maintaining the dominant economic paradigm: “Wealth must be created if we are to grow and develop as a nation. Without an economically viable minerals industry, we may not maintain the social, economic and environmental processes which underpin sustainable development” (AMEEF, 2002, p. 32). Thus, the minerals industry in Australia has been at the forefront of these discursive shifts, and provides an appropriate context from which to explore the construction of ‘community engagement’.

**Context: Discursive shifts in the Australian minerals industry**

“And they're drilling these hills for uranium deposits,
And they'll bury the waste for our children to inherit,
And though this is all done for our own benefit,
I swear we never asked for any of this.” (Sullivan & Heaton, 1988)

“And nothing’s as precious as a hole in the ground.” (Midnight Oil, 1990)

The minerals industry globally is the subject of relatively extensive public scrutiny. This results especially from its significant environmental impacts and a history of dispossession of Indigenous people from their lands (Banerjee, 2000; Danielson, 2006; Whiteman & Mamen, 2002). Both of these issues are central to the present study, and I explore how they have evolved at the two research sites in Chapters Five and Six. For now, I outline discursive shifts in the industry more broadly.

During the 1990s, the increasing focus on the industry’s environmental impacts, and the perceptions that it associated with authoritarian régimes and failed to deliver economic development, contributed to the industry having to reassess its goals and practices (Danielson, 2006, p. 16). International human rights and environmental organisations, in particular, started to draw attention to these issues, and advocated that local communities receive greater respect and a greater share in
the industry’s benefits (Ballard & Banks, 2003; Danielson, 2006). In addition, large companies experienced market pressures from declining minerals prices, leading them to see social and environmental initiatives as potential new sources of strategic differentiation. Thus, some companies emerged as strategic leaders, and others as reluctant laggards.

In the early 2000s, these company-level efforts coalesced into new industry initiatives. The Global Mining Initiative, the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), and the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development project emerged to coordinate industry discussion of sustainable development (Danielson, 2006). ICMM published its ten Principles of Sustainable Development in 2003 (ICMM, 2003), and the Minerals Council of Australia adopted these principles in its sustainable development framework, Enduring Value (MCA, 2004). However, sustainable development initiatives are typically dominated by the larger, transnational companies, (AMEEF, 2002, p. 69), even though small minerals operations can also have significantly adverse social and environmental impacts locally (ICMM, 2007, p. 9).

Transnational corporations are those that cross borders and do not derive their authority from, or extend specific privilege to, any particular nation state. According to Sklair (2001), they tend to perpetuate a culture-ideology of consumerism. Thus, it would appear to be counter-intuitive for large minerals companies, whose culture reflects an ideology of economic development (Trigger, 1997), to promote restraint in the processes of production and consumption. Furthermore, as some in the industry recognise, it remains questionable whether “an activity based on the exploitation of primary resources, which consumes enormous quantities of energy and generates large volumes of waste with sometimes toxic components” (AMEEF, 2002, p. 28) can ever be sustainable. Indeed, a recent longitudinal study of Australia’s resource extraction points to the likelihood that the industry’s environmental footprint will actually increase in the future, because of a combination of increasing production and reducing ore grades (Mudd, 2007).

Yet, a company’s survival may depend on operating within the boundaries of the ‘social contract’, or society’s norms (Brown & Deegan, 1998). Thus, reflecting the broader discursive shift towards CSR and sustainable development, there is increasingly a social expectation for large minerals companies to undertake social and environmental initiatives, and to engage with local communities (AccountAbility & Business for Social Responsibility, n.d.; AMEEF, 2002). Community members now typically expect to have some say in decisions that affect their neighbourhoods; failure to respond to these expectations is now thought likely to inhibit business performance (Humphreys, 2000). The outcome is ongoing interdiscursive tension between traditional industry practices and
emerging practices of community engagement. Two illustrations of this tension are the social impact of long working hours, and the new profession of community relations practitioner.

The minerals industry in Australia typically employs staff on long shifts, placing pressure on employees’ family and community responsibilities (AMEEF, 2002, p. 42). Hamilton and Dennis (2005, pp. 94-97) note that long working hours tend to make people withdraw from community activities and mix socially only with workmates. This phenomenon, they argue, prevents employees from gaining an external perspective on their work culture. The implication is that minerals employees may see ‘the community’ as something external, different, and perhaps threatening. As an instantiation of interdiscursivity, then, ‘the community’ presents both a potential threat to order and rationality, and a potential opportunity to demonstrate CSR. Those who work as community relations practitioners, in particular, may encounter conflicting priorities (Trebeck, 2004), in some cases perhaps having to straddle an ongoing tension between professional identities and personal causes (Meyerson & Scully, 1995).

While it is standard practice for sites to employ people to work solely as health and safety officers and environmental officers, Kemp (2004) found that, in the Australian minerals industry, only 36% of community relations practitioners worked exclusively in a community relations function; the rest spent on average 72% of their time fulfilling other responsibilities. Furthermore, in her study, 57% of participants had never been offered relevant industry training in community relations. While these figures are likely to have changed as ‘community relations’ has become more professionalised, they suggest that minerals companies’ systems for managing community relations are less institutionalised than those for health, safety, and environmental issues. This may reflect the largely voluntary nature of community relations activities, in contrast to the greater regulation surrounding health, safety, and environmental issues. Similarly, of the ten ICMM Principles of Sustainable Development (ICMM, 2003), the two that explicitly concern community relations are at the bottom of the list. While the list is not intended to be hierarchical, the inference is that community issues have received widespread industry attention only recently, relative to other social and environmental issues (Humphreys, 2000).

Conclusion
At one level, it appears that little has changed: “The central objective of the mining company is what it has always been, the creation of shareholder wealth” (Humphreys, 2000, p. 131). Yet, minerals companies in Australia, as elsewhere, are increasingly adopting social and environmental
initiatives, apparently in response to evolving public expectations of corporations generally, and of the minerals industry in particular. ‘Community engagement’ can be seen as the latest manifestation of this discursive shift. Minerals companies appear to be embracing notions antithetical to traditional industry discourses. However, macrostructural rationalities inherent in the ideology of contemporary capitalism may constrain the ceding of control and power. That is, social responsibility is generally rationalised on the basis of presumed economic benefits, a rationalisation that implicitly privileges the dominant economic paradigm. Hence, an ongoing interdiscursive tension exists, between traditional discourses of mining and business, and oppositional discourses of society, community, and the environment.

This study investigates company-community relationships at two large minerals processing sites in Australia, and aims to address the following research question: How do the people concerned understand ‘community engagement’, and what shapes these understandings? Methodologically, it is both interpretive and critical, exploring how people understand, experience and interpret ‘community engagement’, and why they do so in these ways. In Chapter Two, I explore the evolving nature of capitalism more deeply, and discuss the emergence of relevant theoretical concepts characterising this evolution towards notions of ‘community engagement’, in particular focusing on stakeholder theory. Then, in Chapter Three, I explain my methodological approach, a triangulation of phenomenography and critical discourse analysis, within a case study framework. This approach derives predominantly from a poststructural orientation, and draws on interpretive and critical approaches (e.g., Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Deetz, 1982). In Chapter Four, the empirical analysis begins by analysing how companies construct community engagement discourse, both verbally and visually, in public documents. Chapters Five and Six constitute the bulk of the analysis; here, I describe, analyse, and interpret the empirical material gained from three visits to each site, drawing on multiple methods. Firstly, I describe the context at each site in terms of discursive tensions, based on documentary research and observation. Secondly, I derive conceptions of community engagement based on company and community interviews, identifying conceptual variations. Thirdly, I use textual analysis to interrogate the derived conceptions, and to investigate the discursive construction of these conceptions. Based on these findings, in Chapter Seven, I develop a new model of community engagement, emphasising its socially constructed and contextual nature, and propose three implications for changing practices of community engagement.

‘Community engagement’ may be seen linguistically as a metaphor, suggesting a consensual, social union of two parties, with the promise of enduring partnership, mutual dedication, and perhaps even sharing of resources. In this sense, it is an alluring idea, something against which it is difficult to
argue. Surely, community engagement must be a good thing, a desirable objective. However, apparent consensus can hide subtle forms of power, especially as they operate through language (Fairclough, 1989, p. 2; van Dijk, 1997a, pp. 19-20). The task of this study, therefore, is to unpack the emerging discourse of community engagement. What does it mean for the people supposedly doing the ‘engaging’, and how is it socially and discursively constructed?
Chapter Two: CSR, STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES

Introduction

The introductory chapter concluded by suggesting that tensions between oppositional forces within contemporary capitalism are competing to shape the nature of community engagement. This chapter, therefore, discusses the development of these tensions. I begin with a brief overview of some recent evolutions in global capitalism, before considering the rôle of corporate social responsibility in these evolutions. I then discuss the concept of ‘stakeholders’, which provides a theoretical justification for community engagement. Next, I disentangle the term ‘community engagement’, firstly considering competing notions of community itself, and secondly examining perspectives on engagement and communication. Finally, to begin to orientate the thesis philosophically, I discuss the rôle of power relations and language in constituting community engagement as a discursive practice.

Tensions in contemporary capitalism

In Chapter One, I noted that market economics traditionally marginalised notions of social concern (Reed, 1996), that ‘new capitalism’ may be exacerbating economic and social inequalities (Sennett, 2006), and yet that corporations’ perceived non-financial responsibilities are expanding. Thus, contemporary capitalism is multifaceted, a product of inherent tensions. Dualistic capitalism-versus-Marxism battles now seem inadequate. Tressell’s (1955, p. 624) colourful view of capitalists as “the gang of swindlers, slave-drivers and petty tyrants, … that despicable class whose greed and inhumanity have made the earth into a hell”, today reads as an anachronistic generalisation. Poststructuralism, postmodernism and feminism have critiqued Marxism, structuralism and early critical theory for their failure to challenge modernism, objectivism, and enlightenment rationality (Kellner, 1990). These challenges suggest that portraying capitalism as a monolithic, profit-maximising, exploitative machine is overly reductive. Such an oversimplistic portrayal assumes that totalising theories can encapsulate all subjective experiences, that objective description is possible, and that power and knowledge are centralised. However, capitalism is heterogeneous, being either relatively regulated or relatively liberal, and can feature informal rules as well as formal institutions (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Morgan, 2005; Whitley, 1999). Perhaps because of this multifaceted and adaptive manner, capitalism as a socio-economic system is increasingly uncontested.
Following the demise of Soviet communism, some argue that global capitalism, through its capacity to evolve, is increasingly triumphant (e.g., Hutton & Giddens, 2001; Thurow, 1997), and that alternatives to western economic liberalism have been exhausted, implying that we have reached ‘the end of history’ (Fukuyama, 1992). The militaristic stability of bureaucratic capitalism, as described by Weber (1978), has evolved, via Keynesian capitalism, welfare statism and neoliberalism (Hobsbawm, 1994). The resulting ‘new capitalism’, however, is characterised by uncertainty, ephemerality, and workforce casualisation, coupled with ever-increasing economic and social inequalities (Sennett, 2006). Old social orders have given way to personal libertarianism, or the individualisation of fulfilment, achievement, and responsibility (Beck, 2001). Modernist forms of resistance, such as class-conscious industrial action, have given way to individualised forms of resistance, such as whistle-blowing (Gabriel, 2008). These social dimensions of capitalism’s evolution, then, contain inherent tensions.

Corporations, meanwhile, have had considerable success in persuading governments that meeting business demands for deregulation, privatisation, and lower taxes is good for the nation (Marsden, 2004). In Australia, dialectical struggles of militant unionism has given way to a relatively de-unionised workforce, often on individual contracts, with highly variable pay and conditions. This individualism implies a challenge to collectivist, democratic notions such as ‘community’ (Burgmann, 2004; Hopper, 2003). Simultaneously, the dominant, neoclassical economic view envisages the state’s economic rôle as being restricted to facilitating business (Sklair, 2001, p. 8). Thus, Beder (2006, p. 69) argues that corporations today are increasingly influential in framing the policy process in favour of market ideology. This influence is evidenced in Australia, for example, by declining rates of trade union membership, and the replacement of union solidarity with an individualistic enterprise culture (Hearn, 2005).

Yet these developments exist in juxtaposition with the global growth of social justice and environmentalist movements, “determined to expose the damage behind the slick veneer” (Klein, 2001, p. 325). In Australia, various community-level groups have emerged in resistance or reaction against market-oriented reforms, and against the perception that corporate interests are being privileged over social institutions and democratic rights (Burgmann, 2004). Thus, contrary discourses have come together in dialogic negotiation and, occasionally, dialectic struggle, leading to the increasingly prevalent notion that corporations have wider responsibilities than perceived by traditional market economics.
So, in the presence of heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory social, political, and economic phenomena, and their attendant discourses, the continuing success of capitalism may stem from its capacity to evolve by internalising challenges. Large corporations have partly institutionalised concerns for health, safety, and the environment, and many of the conditions of capitalism that triggered the rise of early social and environmental movements have dissipated. In western societies at least, no longer do many people work in conditions reminiscent of ‘dark satanic mills’. No longer is it socially, politically or legally acceptable to murder or dispossess people who happen to live on land containing valuable minerals, or to discharge toxins into river systems. However, for Sklair (2001), these evolutions represent the latest corporate attempt to co-opt opposition and promote self-regulation. Similarly, Mah (2004) describes corporate social and environmental responsibility critically as a neoliberal strategy in response to legitimacy crises and market pressures. Corporate involvement in social initiatives matured during the 1980s, when neoliberal-oriented governments were retreating from social welfare expenditure, inviting the view that this phenomenon entrenches the privatisation of state services (Hamil, 1999, p. 22). From this perspective, therefore, corporate social responsibility actually entrenches capitalism.

In practice, corporations have been both reactive and proactive. That is, they have been obliged to comply with new social and environmental regulations, and they have voluntarily introduced new practices, such as codes of conduct and sustainability reporting. In general, community engagement activities are enacted voluntarily, whereas health, safety, and environment are increasingly regulated domains. However, apparently voluntary practices are not necessarily proactive or altruistic, since they may reflect a perception of broad social pressures (L’Etang, 1994). As expectations of corporate responsibilities have shifted, corporate discourse has incorporated, or appropriated, ideas such as business ethics, sustainable development, corporate citizenship, corporate social responsibility, and the stakeholder concept. These terms tend to be used synonymously, leading to definitional problems (McWilliams et al., 2006). From this perspective, corporate social responsibility, and the stakeholder concept, have indeed challenged traditional neoclassical economic assumptions by encapsulating the idea that a corporation’s responsibilities extend beyond those towards shareholders.

**Corporate social responsibility**

Over the last century, the perceived responsibilities of business in society have fluctuated along with attitudes towards capitalism. The traditional, *laissez-faire*, conservative concept of neoclassical economics was re-stated by Milton Friedman (1962; 1970), as a reaction to the orthodoxy of neo-
Keynesian welfare statism, which had originated in the 1930s (e.g., Hobsbawm, 1994). Welfare statism had envisaged “dangers lurking in the anarchy of *laissez-faire* society…[based upon the] amoral climate of the business world” (Bevan, 1952, pp. 47-48). By the end of the 1970s, all advanced capitalist nations had become welfare states and, in six nations—including Australia—more than 60% of public expenditure was on welfare (Hobsbawm, 1994, p. 284). During the 1960s and 1970s, however, free market proponents typically framed public expenditure as market interference, and pointed to totalitarianism in the Soviet Union as demonstrating how such interference inevitably leads to loss of freedom (e.g., Friedman, 1962, p. 197). Friedman (1970) then asserted that business has no responsibility other than to maximise profits, and that spending company money on social initiatives abuses shareholders’ rights, encapsulating the utilitarian assumption that the individual pursuit of profit is rational. As Rand (1967, p. 20) claims, “The moral justification of capitalism lies in the fact that it is the only system consonant with man’s rational nature”.

Following the stagflation of the 1970s, Keynesian economics and welfare statism were fundamentally challenged and supplanted by neoclassical economics and neoliberal, individualist ideology. Friedman’s Nobel Prize for Economics in 1976, following Friedrich von Hayek’s in 1974, symbolised this new age (Hobsbawm, 1994, p. 409). Friedman’s views entered the political mainstream in the 1980s, heavily influencing economic and social policies in industrialised nations, particularly the USA and the UK (Hobsbawm, 1994). In the ‘new capitalism’, then, the idea of social welfare came to be associated with undesirable traits such as dependence, weakness, and inflexibility (Sennett, 1998, p. 139).

Until the 1990s, western business managers generally adopted a narrow view of the corporation’s responsibilities, often opposing discussion of social and environmental issues, and lobbying against such discussion at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit (Gray & Milne, 2002). More recently, however, Friedman’s position has ceded dominance to the view that corporate social responsibility (CSR) can address global social problems, perhaps because it seems to offer a compromise between free market economics and social and environmental concerns. What distinguishes the era of CSR from that of welfare statism, however, may be that welfare statism had assumed social responsibilities to lie collectively with the state, whereas CSR envisages individual corporations as having such responsibilities. In this way, the emergence of CSR is consistent with the broader discursive shift from collectivism to individualism.
CSR has generally resisted attempts at comprehensive definition, since such a definition would be too vague to be useful, either academically or practically (van Marrewijk, 2003). As a result, some have dismissed CSR as public relations (Frankental, 2001), or as incompatible with the dominant economic paradigm (Korhonen, 2002). Nevertheless, CSR has attracted substantial theoretical attention.

Although the origins of CSR are unclear, Berle Jr and Means (1932) proposed that decision-making power in corporations had shifted from owners/shareholders to managers, separating ownership from control, and freeing managers from the overriding obligation to serve shareholders. According to agency theory, corporate executives are agents of principals (owners), and both seek to maximise their own utility, a situation that may lead to executives pursuing interests other than those of shareholders (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997). Agency theory, therefore, with its origins in neoclassical economics and its worldview of opportunistic and self-seeking individuals, is unsatisfactory in explaining notions of responsibility for the other (J. Roberts, 2003, p. 251).

Barnard (1938) perhaps offered a ‘stakeholder view’ by portraying corporations as social networks, among whose members managers must secure cooperation in order to achieve corporate objectives. CSR has also been traced to Theodore Kreps (1940), who advocated measuring social performance. In practice, CSR may originate in Victorian-era philanthropy, in which industrialists such as Joseph Rowntree and Titus Salt adopted a normative, perhaps altruistic, view that they had a responsibility to society (Edmondson & Carroll, 1999, p. 171; Frankental, 2001; Hamil, 1999). More recently, however, philanthropy has been advanced as a strategic pursuit (e.g., Buchholtz, Amason, & Rutherford, 1999; C. Smith, 1994).

Most commonly, though, contemporary authors credit Howard R. Bowen with initiating debate on CSR in the 1950s (Carroll, 1999; Lockett, Moon, & Visser, 2006). Bowen (1953) proposed that businessmen (sic) had obligations to adhere to society’s objectives and values. McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006, p. 3) note that Theodore Levitt (1958) had raised the issue, conversely, by warning of the ‘dangers’ of business becoming involved in the social realm. Goyder (1961) advanced the concept of ‘The Responsible Company’, arguing that companies should conduct a ‘social audit’. Carroll (1999) notes that definitions multiplied in the 1960s and 1970s, culminating in the Committee for Economic Development’s (1971) propositions that the basic purpose of business is to serve society’s needs, and that there exists a ‘social contract’ through which business functions by public consent. Hasnas (1998, pp. 29-33) explains that social contract theory posits an implicit contract whereby society grants businesses a legal right to exist, and to use land and natural resources, in return for specified benefits. This theory, he argues, appears to be inadequate, because
no actual contract, either express or implied, exists, and the theory thus relies on managers behaving as though a contract did exist.

According to Carroll, the 1980s saw attempts to recast CSR into alternative concepts, such as corporate social responsiveness, corporate social performance, business ethics, and stakeholder theory/management, while the 1990s saw few further unique contributions. Rather, previous definitions formed the foundations upon which newer concepts, such as corporate citizenship, were built. The most influential definition of CSR is the notion that corporations have responsibilities beyond those towards shareholders, and beyond those prescribed by law or contract (Jones, 1980). Although this definition is nearly 30 years old, McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006, p. 1) define CSR very similarly as, “where the firm goes beyond compliance…beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law”. Baron (2001), likewise, proposes that, if a responsible action is motivated by societal concerns, it constitutes social responsibility, whereas motivation by business interests constitutes only ‘private responsibility’. It is debatable, then, whether CSR as a concept challenges conventional theories of the firm.

Scherer and Palazzo (2007) argue that many CSR studies adopt the positivist paradigm, leading to an instrumental interpretation of CSR consistent with an economic theory of the firm. In contrast, they label as ‘postpositivist’ those conceptions that emphasise the normative foundations of responsible business behaviour. Within this umbrella term they include virtue ethics, Kantian deontology, social contract theory, postmodernism, and Habermasian critical theory. The authors themselves develop a perspective on CSR that emphasises joint communicative processes between different actors. Critical analysis of CSR, however, remains embryonic, and a recent review of theoretical perspectives on CSR contained no critical perspectives (McWilliams et al., 2006).

Thus, CSR is in a “continuing state of emergence” (Lockett et al., 2006, p. 133) and the areas of responsibility implied by it are unclear and contested. Moir (2001) suggests that these areas are widening, to cover plant closures, employee relations, human rights, corporate ethics, community relations, and the environment. The perceived extent of CSR, he suggests, depends on the perspective one takes: neoclassical economics, enlightened self-interest, or moral obligations. Windsor (2006) proposes a similar set of perspectives: economic responsibility, corporate citizenship, and ethical responsibility. Meanwhile, van Marrewijk (2003) defines the alternative perspectives as a shareholder approach, a stakeholder approach, and a societal approach. So, these models each propose that there are three possible perspectives on the extent, or comprehensiveness, of a corporation’s social responsibilities (Table 1). The neoclassical economics, shareholder
approach, and economic responsibility perspectives assume relatively narrow responsibilities, while the moral obligations, societal approach, and ethical responsibility perspectives assume relatively broad responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Extent (or comprehensiveness) of CSR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Moir (2001)</td>
<td>neoclassical economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>van Marrewijk (2003)</td>
<td>shareholder approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor (2006)</td>
<td>economic responsibility</td>
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Attempts to interrogate the relationship between social initiatives and financial performance, mainly via quantitative analysis (Lockett et al., 2006; Paul & Siegel, 2006), can be traced to Myrick (1941). Lack of agreed definitions, however, have led to inconclusive results (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Maxfield, 2008; McWilliams et al., 2006). Most significant, though, is the perceived need to ‘prove’ that acting responsibly need not jeopardise profitability, or that CSR must be justified partly on an economic ‘business case’ (Hamil, 1999, p. 21). This suggests that the mid-point perspectives in Table 1, representing a discursive ‘middle ground’ (Livesey, 2002), are ascendant. These utilitarian positions mean that a company will undertake an activity if the anticipated economic benefits offset the costs of doing it (Paul & Siegel, 2006). Enlightened self-interest is thus still self-interest, argues L’Etang (1994, p. 118), who states that the corporation so motivated is focused more on what a stakeholder can do for the corporation than on the stakeholder’s needs and interests.

Meanwhile, business organisations adopt various definitions of CSR. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2005) defines CSR as “business’ commitment to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community, and society at large to improve their quality of life”. Business for Social Responsibility (2005) aims to help organisations achieve commercial success while demonstrating “respect for ethical values, people, communities and the environment”. Both organisations, therefore, implicitly assume that economic and social objectives need not be contradictory. This contrasts with the view that economic responsibility and ethical responsibility are antithetical, constituting competing moral positions and political philosophies (Windsor, 2006). The denial of an inherent economic/ethical conflict is consistent with an anti-regulation position, in which CSR is largely voluntary (Mah, 2004). If governments believe that corporations will voluntarily act responsibly, however that is
defined, then they will perceive little need for regulatory enforcement (Conley, 2005). Indeed, voluntarism appears to be a common theme among definitions of CSR (Banerjee, 2008, p. 60).

Marens (2004), however, argues that voluntarism is ineffective in delivering CSR. He notes that, in the post-war period, and particularly since the late 1970s, (North) American academic ethicists have shifted away from a pluralist model, in which government and unions have a positive rôle in regulating corporate behaviour, towards advocating the voluntary practice of CSR. As evidence that this refocus is misguided, Marens contrasts executives’ generous rewards, even when their companies perform poorly, with workers’ declines in compensation, retirement payouts, opportunities for advancement, and bargaining power. Similarly, Windsor (2006, p. 100) links an unregulated, instrumental approach with recent corporate scandals.

So, CSR seems to accommodate both the free-market critique of welfare statism, and the counter-critique of social justice and environmentalism. However, its meaning, objectives, and effectiveness remain contested. The nature and meaning of ‘community engagement’, as a manifestation of CSR, are similarly unclear, perhaps because its practice is largely voluntary. Since social and community concerns are more difficult to define and measure than health, safety and environmental concerns (Korhonen, 2003), conceptualisations of ‘community engagement’ may be even more contestable than those of CSR. Nevertheless, its increasing pervasiveness has been accompanied by the complementary notion of ‘stakeholders’. Yet the discourse of stakeholders, along with that of CSR, is dominated by narrow business interests, legitimising managerial control while curtailing the interests of external stakeholders (Banerjee, 2008).

**Stakeholders and communities**

**The stakeholder concept**

The notion that companies should take a broader view of their responsibilities, as a normative assertion, appears ostensibly to contradict conventional theories of the firm (Banerjee, 2000, p. 24). Lexically, the word ‘stakeholder’, with just two letters altered, seems deliberately to contrast with the word ‘shareholder’, and thereby appears to signify opposition to the shareholder concept itself. Yet, while it is relatively easy to identify who holds shares, defining who holds ‘stakes’ is more problematic. The concept of stakeholders has been traced to a 1963 Stanford Research Institute memo that referred to “those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist” (quoted by Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997, p. 858). Preston and Post (1975, p. 45) widened this concept, stating that “many relevant publics”, or groups of people bound by a common interest, act
as sources of social approval and disapproval towards the organisation. Just as the ‘extent’ of a company’s social responsibilities depends on one’s perspective, however, identifying ‘stakeholders’ may depend on a preference for a broad or narrow view (Mitchell et al., 1997). Kaler (2003) defines stakeholders broadly as those who have an interest in the organisation. Evan and Freeman (1993, p. 79) offer an apparently narrower definition: “those groups who are vital to the survival and success of the corporation”. The most influential definition, however, portrays stakeholders as groups or individuals who can affect, or who can be affected by, the organisation’s activities (Freeman, 1984). Freeman considers stakeholders to comprise owners, customers, employees, suppliers, governments, competitors, consumer advocates, environmentalists, special interest groups and media.

Although some companies had established a community relations function in the 1970s (Waddock & Boyle, 1995), local communities are notably absent from Freeman’s list of stakeholders. Indeed, in the early stages of social reporting in the 1990s, while effective communication with stakeholders was considered a requisite of good practice (Elkington & Wheeler, 2003), this communication generally did not include local communities, with whom communicating was “a curious novelty, an exotic accessory” (Zadek, 2003). Thus, ‘communities’ are the most recent addition to corporate conceptions of ‘stakeholders’, and ‘engaging’ them is now seen as fundamentally important for minerals companies’ sustainable development efforts and strategic business interests (Humphreys, 2000; ICMM, 2007).

This evolving discourse suggests that understandings of a corporation’s responsibilities are changing, consistent with the ascendancy of CSR. Thus, the assertion that satisfying community needs contravenes corporate responsibilities towards shareholders (Friedman, 1970; Henderson, 2001; The Economist, 2005) has been largely superseded by an expectation that company managers will look beyond shareholder interests when making decisions, since others also have ‘stakes’ in those decisions. Meanwhile, Clegg and Hardy (1996) note that, as bureaucracies were replaced by networks, clusters, strategic alliances, joint ventures, and virtual and global organisations, these new organisational forms eroded the boundaries of the formal bureaucracy. Thus, the ‘stakeholder corporation’ might comprise a new organisational form, in which the boundaries for managerial decision-making are shifting outwards. Indeed, the stakeholder concept appears to imply a claim on owners’ property rights (T. Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Weiss, 1995).

Alternatively, following Sklair (2001) and Mah (2004), the stakeholder concept is a strategic managerial response to social pressures or perceived threats to organisational autonomy. This view
may originate from Freeman’s (1984) location of a stakeholder approach in a strategic management context. Such a juxtaposition creates a tension, because the stakeholder concept purports to embody contemporary perspectives on business and society, while the strategy field tends to adopt a functionalist ideology, and emerged from neoclassical economic theory and alongside neoliberal ideology (Rumelt, Schendel, & Teece, 1994; Whipp, 1996, pp. 262-264). Indeed, Whittington (2004) argues that orthodox strategy is a product of modernism, with an epistemological preference for scientific detachment. More recent stakeholder research generally retains the same strategic management perspective. The problem, then, is the assumption that adopting a stakeholder view adequately enables a company to fulfil its social and moral obligations, a position that overlooks the inability of the managerial-economic paradigm to represent alternative worldviews. For example, if a company declares that the local Aboriginal population is a ‘stakeholder’, its position is unlikely to accommodate Aboriginal conceptions of land and culture, because the institutions that ‘manage’ stakeholders are grounded in colonial discourses (Banerjee, 2000). Hence, in ‘consultation’ with Aboriginal stakeholders, the question is “not whether or not mining should proceed but under what conditions should it be carried out” (Banerjee, 2008, p. 64).

Mitchell et al. (1997), for example, discuss how managers might identify which stakeholders deserve attention, by considering their power to influence the firm, the legitimacy of their relationship with the firm, and the urgency of their claim. Thus, it is managers who determine which stakeholders deserve attention, a situation that is problematic for marginalised groups, which rarely have power, legitimacy, and urgency combined (Banerjee, 2000, pp. 26-27). Frooman (1999), similarly, in considering how stakeholders might influence the corporation, states that his objective is to facilitate the ‘management’ of those stakeholders. Thus, while an interdiscursive space is emerging, the partial accommodation of heterogeneous discourses may constitute an exercise of power through articulating consensus (Mumby & Stohl, 1991), and may have legitimised the view that addressing social and environmental problems is consistent with economic development (Livesey, 2002, p. 316). A deeper exploration of stakeholder theories may help to consider this assertion.

**Stakeholder theories**

While the concept of stakeholders may be more of a ‘research tradition’ than a genuine ‘theory’ (Treviño & Weaver, 1999), different forms of stakeholder theory have been advanced. Kaler (2003) proposes that they share two core characteristics. Firstly, in contrast to neoclassical assumptions, they identify non-shareholders as ‘stakeholders’. Secondly, they see the serving of non-shareholder interests as part of the corporate purpose. However, it is unclear whether a stakeholder view implies
that all stakeholder interests are equally worthy of managers’ attention (e.g., Jones & Wicks, 1999; Mitchell et al., 1997). Thus, some distinguish between ‘primary’ stakeholders, who have a formal or contractual relationship with the organisation, and other, ‘secondary’ stakeholders (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2000).

Donaldson and Preston (1995) developed an influential taxonomy of three stakeholder theories. Firstly, ‘descriptive’, or empirical, stakeholder theory argues that, since managers and board members nowadays look beyond shareholders when making decisions, it simply makes sense to speak of stakeholders. Since I am more interested in why and how these discursive shifts have emerged, I will not discuss this simple descriptive view further. Secondly, ‘instrumental’ stakeholder theory implies that a stakeholder perspective is consistent with traditional corporate objectives of profitability and growth. This is based on the notion that instrumentalism is aimed at “self-interested promotion of corporate reputation and market opportunities” (Windsor, 2006, p. 97), and is typified by concepts such as ‘mutual benefit’ and ‘partnership’ (Hamil, 1999, p. 18). This perspective is consistent with the strategic management foundations of Freeman’s (1984) stakeholder theory, and echoes the notion of CSR as enlightened self-interest. Hasnas (1998) asserts that, in this sense, (instrumental) stakeholder theory is actually consistent with stockholder theory, since it focuses on maximising shareholder returns. Drucker (1984) perhaps goes further when advocating not only that business performance and CSR might be compatible, but that business should transform social problems into economic opportunities. Kanter (1999, p. 124) echoes Drucker when proposing that some companies practise ‘corporate social innovation’, where “tackling social sector problems forces companies to stretch their capabilities to produce innovations that have business as well as community payoffs”.

Thirdly, ‘normative’ stakeholder theory articulates a moral or philosophical rationale for adopting a stakeholder perspective. It proposes that principles of fairness, reciprocity, rights, or respect for the intrinsic worth of human beings apply regardless of the potential financial benefits (Gibson, 2000; Margolis & Walsh, 2003). This implies that management must sometimes sacrifice shareholders’ interests, according to the Kantian principle of respecting people as autonomous moral agents, rather than merely as means to business’ ends (Gibson, 2000; Hasnas, 1998, pp. 26-27). Such a categorical imperative also appears to be consistent with Rawls’ (1972) notion of maximising fairness (Gibson, 2000, p. 249). Its deontological sentiment echoes Moir’s (2001) notion of CSR as moral obligations, and Baron’s (2001) distinction between private and social responsibility. It also accords with the approach of early philanthropic industrialists, and mirrors the normative theme of much corporate environmentalism (Banerjee, 2002, p. 108).
Jones and Wicks (1999) propose that the instrumental view derives from functionalism, whereas the normative view stems from radical humanism. Treviño and Weaver (1999), meanwhile, propose that normative theory is inherently critical. Alternatively, in terms of business ethics, instrumental stakeholder theory may reflect a utilitarian perspective, or consequentialism, since it focuses on the economic consequences of a stakeholder approach, and it aspires to measure those consequences. This perspective, therefore, is consistent with efforts to establish a quantifiable, causal relationship between social initiatives and financial performance (Lockett et al., 2006). Meanwhile, normative stakeholder theory may reflect either deontological (rights-based) ethics, justice ethics, care ethics, or virtue ethics, since it is apparently more interested in, respectively, pursuing categorical (moral) imperatives (Kant, 1949), in achieving justice, in caring for people, or in developing moral character (see, e.g., Velasquez, 1998). Meanwhile, Kaler (2003) has challenged Donaldson and Preston’s model, arguing that stakeholder theories differ according to whether they consider responsibilities to non-shareholders as being morally obligatory or merely morally desirable. However, according to Weiss (1995), stakeholder theory fails to distinguish between the validity of different non-shareholder claims, making the normative perspective inadequate as a justification for social initiatives. Additionally, the normative, philanthropic approach may conflict with a company’s legal obligations to shareholders, unless—ironically—the company can persuasively frame its position as delivering instrumental benefits (Hamil, 1999, p. 21). To complicate matters further, Hasnas (1998) describes the stockholder, stakeholder, and social contract theories of business ethics all as normative, suggesting that ‘normative’ stakeholder theory might be better understood as aligned with the relatively broad conceptualisations of CSR above.

Perhaps because normative stakeholder theory sits uneasily with orthodox approaches to both science and business, many authors explicitly or implicitly prioritise the instrumental perspective, reflecting a utilitarian position, and assume that the relationship between a stakeholder approach and business performance can be assessed objectively. Hence, 80% of empirical papers on CSR in leading journals from 1992-2002 used quantitative methodology (Lockett et al., 2006). The underlying objectivist assumption mirrors the general dominance of rationalistic science in organisation studies (e.g., Reed, 1996; Westwood & Clegg, 2003), and the associated tendency for management studies to reproduce dominant institutions and interests (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 31). Gioia (1999, p. 228), for example, claims that “social, economic and organisational realities”, and “pragmatic forces operating in the corporate world” are there to be observed empirically. Concurrently, Jackall (1988) notes that managers, especially at lower and middle levels, are expected to implement ‘functional rationality’, rather than to criticise or reflect; thus, moral
principles become usurped by “vocabularies of rationality” (p. 76) or “fundamental rules of bureaucratic life” (pp. 109-110).

Jones and Wicks (1999) propose converging the instrumental and normative theories, but implicitly favour instrumentalism. For example, they advocate that ‘social performance’ should be quantifiably measured, a position that assumes an objectivist epistemology. Conversely, Korhonen (2003) argues that ‘social sustaining functions’, such as love, social bonding, nurturing, and community ties cannot be meaningfully measured. This reflects the assertion that, in some areas of management research, such as diversity, measurement may be meaningless (Clegg & Hardy, 1996). Yet, Jones and Wicks (1999, p. 214) go further, proposing that self-interest and profit-making are consistent with stakeholder theory, adding that profitability is “an essential mission” to “help human beings lead morally meaningful lives”. This suggests that economic success is the principal objective, and indeed that morality cannot eventuate without it. Rather than challenging neoclassical economics, therefore, Jones and Wicks’ conceptualisation of stakeholder theory appears to echo Rand’s (1967, p. 20) morality-based rationalisation of free-market capitalism.

Some writers who prioritise the instrumental approach adopt a paradigm that more overtly reflects neoclassical economics. Ruf et al. (2001), basing their investigation in transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1975) and a resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 1991; R. M. Grant, 1991), derive a composite score for ‘corporate social performance’, suggesting that an objective justification for a stakeholder approach may exist. Similarly, Hart (1995) suggests that being environmentally responsible can lead to sustained competitive advantages, although these competitive advantages may be sustained only if competitors cannot easily imitate the strategy (Reinhardt, 1998). McWilliams and Siegel (2001), and Husted and de Jesus Salazar (2006), propose that cost-benefit analysis can calculate an ‘ideal level’ of CSR. Yet Jackall (1988, p. 127) argues that cost-benefit analysis is a secular, pragmatic, utilitarian tool, which turns moral dilemmas into functional rationality, thereby providing a psychological distance between the decision and the decision-maker.

Adopting an interpretive perspective, Dean (2001) explores perceptions of social responsibility among senior executives and managers. Hendry (2003), likewise, uses grounded theory to investigate how environmental non-governmental organisations select, evaluate, and seek to influence certain companies. However, these are exceptions. Orthodox perspectives and methodologies dominate the field, drawing on a technocratic discourse (McKenna & Graham, 2000), and generally seeking to establish a quantifiable, causal relationship between stakeholder
capitalism and financial performance. Concurrently, companies have increasingly framed community involvement in strategic, rather than altruistic, terms (C. Smith, 1994). Industrial philanthropy, therefore, may have been superseded by instrumental, economic rationalisation, according to a former adviser to Margaret Thatcher: “The Victorian philanthropist gave to charity because he made a lot of money, and he felt he had to put something back. The modern philanthropist does it because it makes it easier for him to earn more” (Tim Bell, quoted in Hollingsworth, 1997, p. 281).

The dominant assumption seems to be that looking after external stakeholders ensures either that those stakeholders, in turn, will be able to buy the corporation’s goods and services, or that the corporation thereby accumulates a reserve of goodwill upon which it can draw in difficult times (L’Etang, 1994, p. 119). From a critical theory perspective, the dominance of this instrumental, utilitarian view may stem from the characteristic of capitalism to reify human beings, or to consider them as commoditised things, thus making capitalism appear ‘natural’ (Kellner, 1990; Lukacs, 1971). In this way, CSR and stakeholder theory have been aligned with corporate strategy and core competencies (Dean, 2001; Waddock & Boyle, 1995), blended into quality management systems (Castka, Bamber, Bamber, & Sharp, 2004), and measured to assess their contribution to business goals (Pedersen & Neergaard, 2008; Waddock & Boyle, 1995).

Meanwhile, as contemporary capitalism transforms its image, neoliberal and libertarian writers reinvigorate old tensions, asserting the rights of business. Henderson (2001, p. 30), for example, dismisses CSR since it requires managers to consult stakeholders, thus increasing costs and hindering economic performance. The Economist (2005), similarly, echoing Friedman (1962; 1970), reasons that the “selfish pursuit of profit” makes everyone better off. Sternberg (1997; 2000), meanwhile, claims that the stakeholder concept amounts to extortion, breaching the private property entitlements of business owners, by transforming literally everyone into a stakeholder, including, she notes disparagingly, “terrorists” and “nameless sea creatures”. Humber (2002), finally, advocates abandoning any moral theory for business, echoing the argument that the postmodern, individualised age has emancipated us from the ‘oppression’ of ethics (see Bauman, 1993).

In summary, CSR and stakeholder theory expose deep political and ideological fissures, leading to competing interpretations. However, the apparent dominance of the instrumental view of stakeholders, or the ‘enlightened self-interest’ view of CSR, may induce a paradox. Some advocates of community engagement may be intuitively applying genuinely altruistic, normative principles, “but with a figleaf of instrumental justification to satisfy shareholders” (Hamil, 1999, p. 20). The
instrumental rhetoric that responsibility pays may conceal genuine ethical sensibilities (J. Roberts, 2003, p. 258). Alternatively, one might prioritise profit maximisation, but see CSR as a strategic means of pursuing it (Moir, 2001), reflecting ethical egoism (L'Etang, 1994). Indeed, Windsor (2006) suggests that a ‘citizenship’ position could be interpreted as an ‘ethics’ position in disguise, or equally as an ‘economics’ position in disguise. The reconciliation thesis, meanwhile, suggests that moral and rational behaviour are consistent, since many people believe that their present actions will be judged later (Gibson, 2000, p. 246). Thus, perspectives on the stakeholder concept and CSR can offer useful explanations for the emergence of ‘community engagement’, but it is possible that instrumental and moral rationales are operating simultaneously. This proposition supports the view of community engagement as an interdiscursive phenomenon characterised by ongoing contestation. If we think of capitalism morphogenetically, the question of basing decisions on instrumental versus ethical grounds remains undecided. Meanwhile, the notion of the stakeholder corporation can be reinterpreted critically.

**Critical re-interpretations**

Ayn Rand proclaimed that, “Of all the social systems in mankind’s history, capitalism is the only system based on an objective theory of values” (Rand, 1967, p. 22, original emphasis) A critical theory perspective, however, might see ‘objective’ perspectives as fitting with the ‘unitary conception’ that the market system is ‘natural’ (e.g., Agger, 1991; Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Do the objectivist assumptions of instrumental stakeholder theory, therefore, tend to entrench capitalist relations? Further, is it accurate to portray normative stakeholder theory as an alternative that challenges neoclassical economic assumptions?

Instrumental stakeholder theory, with its focus on apparently objective methods of relating a stakeholder view with financial performance, may conceal ideology behind a ‘cloak of neutrality’ (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000, p. 109). This objectivism disguises the inherently political nature of free market ideology, marginalising concerns regarding power, conflict, and domination, and promoting passivity and fatalism (Agger, 1991; Livesey, 2002). Normative stakeholder theory, meanwhile, appears to have a broader underpinning, since it rationalises decisions on non-consequentialist ethical models. However, Kaler (2003) argues that, because it generally considers that non-shareholder interests cannot supersede those of shareholders, normative stakeholder theory also fails to challenge the dominant economic paradigm (Korhonen, 2002). According to Weiss (1995), therefore, all stakeholder theories understate the structural change required before capitalist enterprises can view stakeholder interests as integral to their operations. Stakeholder theory, he
argues, assumes that managers, supposedly freed from the influence of owners (Berle Jr & Means, 1932), will serve the public good, rather than their own interests.

Thus, stakeholder theory may be interpreted as “an invitation to owners and managers to engage in a kinder, gentler capitalism” (Weiss, 1995), rather than as an involuntary and radical realignment of control. Margolis and Walsh (2003, p. 279) claim that stakeholder theory “is impeded by a set of assumptions designed to accommodate economic considerations”. These ‘assumptions’ might be encapsulated in the utilitarian position that “freedom is maximised through the independent accumulation of individual satisfaction” (L'Etang, 1994, p. 118). More broadly, this position assumes that economic growth is a legitimate pursuit, a source of happiness, and the principal indicator of social progress, a position that has been challenged by the assertion that indefinite economic growth is either undesirable or impossible, or both (e.g., Eckersley, 2004; C. Hamilton, 2003; Layard, 2005; Meadows et al., 2004). Stakeholder theory also generally assumes that corporate involvement in social issues is inevitably beneficial, overlooking the possibility that it may exacerbate social problems (Hamil, 1999; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Reed, 1996, p. 39).

We can conclude that stakeholder theory, while representing an evolution in capitalism, may be limited by ideologically-based assumptions regarding the rôle of business in society. In general, its advocates rationalise their position by asserting an objective, causal relationship between stakeholder capitalism and enhancing financial performance, thus, appealing to business self-interest. However, it is unclear whether someone adopts this position because they genuinely believe that such a relationship exists, or whether they are motivated more by moral beliefs, simply adopting the instrumental argument believing its apparently objective rationality to render it more persuasive. This question leads us to consider the object of these debates – the community that supposedly holds a stake.

**Community?**

Community seems to mean everything and nothing, and its meaning appears often to be assumed in corporate discourses. Its most obvious manifestation is geographical, such that community and place are often conflated (Brent, 2004, p. 217). This is the interpretation often implicitly adopted by the resources sector, which typically refers to ‘local’, ‘host’, or ‘affected’ communities (MCA, 2004, p. 26). Thus, in Australia, the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources (2005, p. 5), apparently drawing on Freeman’s (1984) notion of stakeholders, defines community as “the inhabitants of immediate and surrounding areas who are affected by a company’s activities”.
However, what is the extent of these “surrounding areas”, and who defines them? To illustrate, it could be argued that the entire world’s population is “affected by a company’s activities”, since minerals operations tend to consume large amounts of fossil fuels, contributing significantly to climate change.

Thus, the boundaries of a geographical ‘community’ seem to be highly contestable, accommodating anything from a local neighbourhood, through ‘the Australian community’, to ‘the international community’. Furthermore, in the case of the latter two conceptions, the term ‘community’ may be conveying a sense of common cultural values, rather than implying a geographical region. In addition, there are ‘communities’ explicitly unbounded by geography. Examples include religion-based groupings (e.g., ‘the Muslim community’), communities-of-interest (e.g., ‘the business community’), identity-based groups (e.g., ‘the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and intersex community’), professional groups, and internet chatrooms or (we)blog forums. Indeed, Sennett (1998, p. 138) argues that ‘new capitalism’, by increasing uncertainty, distrust and insecurity at work, has inadvertently impelled people to search for alternative sources of attachment, as a defence “against a hostile economic order”. So, when minerals companies say they are engaging ‘communities’, what conceptions are they applying?

While community, as a concept, resists ideological categorisation, the dominant philosophical debate has been between liberals and communitarians (Little, 2002). Broadly speaking, liberals prioritise individual freedom, while communitarians see individualism as the cause of social division, and human association as the primary source of self-identification. The communitarian argument (e.g. Etzioni, 1995; MacIntyre, 1992) argues that liberals fail to acknowledge the social inequalities that occur under individualist régimes, and challenges the methodological assumptions in Rawls’ (1972) *A Theory of Justice*, which portrays individuals as asocial. Indeed, there seems something rather paradoxical about an individualist conceptualisation of community.

Communitarianism, however, has been criticised for moral authoritarianism (Hopper, 2003; Little, 2002), and for overlooking structural forces of global capitalism (Brent, 2004). Furthermore, neither the liberal nor the communitarian camp is homogeneous, and both share some concerns. Thus, more radical theories have emerged, seeking to recognise the plurality and diversity of communities, and to accommodate the conflict within them (Frazer, 1999; Jordan, 1998; Mouffe, 2000).

Other perspectives may also inform an understanding of community. Social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Paulsen, 2003), for example, argues that individuals, driven by underlying desires for self-esteem and certainty, actively seek a sense of group belonging.
Thus, people categorise themselves into ‘ingroups’ and others into ‘outgroups’. Sociologically, community is associated with ‘social capital’, understood as something that binds societies together (Hopper, 2003) through networks, trust, and reciprocity (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Flora & Flora, 1995; R. D. Putnam, 1995; Woolcock, 2000). However, social capital theory is generally used to provide indications of community wellbeing, rather than to deconstruct the notion of community itself. Puddifoot (2003), meanwhile, speaks of a ‘sense of community identity’, which considers the perceptions of other community members, as well as those of the respondent, as opposed to previous research that focused principally on individual perceptions (Buckner, 1988; Glynn, 1981; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This combination of perceptions is reflected in Crowther and Cooper’s (2002) study of the ‘ecoprotector’ movement in the UK, which found that community identity is rooted in self-belief and shared aspirations. However, Puddifoot’s approach might view a community as one homogeneous entity, to which all individuals belong by accident of geographical location. This view overlooks the increasing geographical mobility of people in industrialised regions, and other forms of community and association (Hopper, 2003, pp. 4-5). Indeed, postmodern perspectives suggest that this approach may oversimplify complex, multiple realities.

Traditional, modernist conceptions imply that ‘community’ is a noun, a universal ideal, having stable, objective characteristics that can be studied scientifically. Conversely, a postmodern conception might understand ‘community’ as a verb, to signify ongoing processes of constituting and reconstituting meaning, a creative achievement in the struggle of human relationships; in this view, community is uncertain and unstable (Burkett, 2001). This echoes Giddens’ (1993) perspective that the production and reproduction of society is a ‘skilled performance’, rather than a mechanical series of processes. In an organisational context, it also reflects Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) view of change as immanent and ongoing, in contrast to conventional portrayals of change as being unusual.

‘Community’ may also represent a nostalgic desire for an idealised past (Brent, 2004). Reflecting Baudrillard’s (1994) notion of simulacra, idealised conceptions of community may be more simulations of an imaginary, desired community than re-creations of real communities. Bauman (2001) sees ‘community’ as a shared dream of living among friendly, sympathetic, trusting, mutually supportive people, while its unattainability ensures that the dream remains unfulfilled. According to Bauman, our desire for ‘community’ exposes the conflict between freedom and security. We want both, but the cherished security, reciprocity, and cooperation of our imagined community would require us to relinquish some individual freedom. But do we really want ‘community’? In practice, community activity may bring conflict and division (Brent, 2004). In an
empirical study of a new Australian suburb, Richards (1990, pp. 178-179) found that many women, in particular, were concerned about isolation, did not necessarily crave community. The assumption that community is always good, she argues, is a product of functionalist sociology, which reinforces uniformity, homogeneity, and conformity.

The idea of ‘community’, therefore, is contestable. If ‘community’ can be unstable, plural, diverse, and imaginary, minerals companies’ implicitly narrow, geographic definition may overlook some complexities. While a modern-postmodern dualism may be oversimplistic, the postmodern conception implies a need to challenge dominant notions of what it means to ‘engage’ communities. What are minerals companies trying to engage, based on what assumptions about the world, and with what objectives?

**Engagement and communication**

*‘Engagement’: Struggling with definitions*

Just as the meaning of community may be assumed in corporate discourses, ‘engagement’ seems to be inherently desirable, and is rarely interrogated. In a government context, ‘community engagement’ generally refers to citizen involvement in policy development and implementation, through initiatives such as consultation, community building, and deliberative democracy (Wiseman, 2004). However, in the context of corporate relations with local communities, there is relatively little academic literature specifically on ‘engagement’, compared to other aspects of CSR and sustainable development. This suggests that its meaning is often assumed. Governments and business organisations have adopted the term ‘engagement’ quite readily (Oxley Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003), often implying a broad conception, with little theoretical underpinning, and with little appreciation of contestability.

Engagement has been defined as “the full range of an organisation’s efforts to understand and involve stakeholders in its activities and decisions” (Stakeholder Research Associates Canada Inc., United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], & AccountAbility, 2005, p. 13). Two key organisations that promote engagement in a corporate context portray it as understanding stakeholders’ views and building relationships. The Global Reporting Initiative, an influential promoter of sustainability reporting internationally, does not define engagement, but asserts that, “The engagement process should be sufficiently systematic to ensure that stakeholder views are properly understood” (Global Reporting Initiative, 2006, p. 4). The AA1000 Assurance Standard for sustainability reporting proposes that, “Engagement is…about organisations…using leadership to
build relationships with stakeholders” (AccountAbility, 2003, p. 16). These general definitions, therefore, seem to be more about overarching principles than about on-the-ground processes and outcomes.

Slightly more tangibly, the Minerals Council of Australia (2004, p. 27), and the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources (2005, pp. 19-20), both adopting the International Council on Mining and Metals’ Principles of sustainable development, define “a good engagement process” as: identifying and prioritising stakeholders; conducting dialogue; exploring ways to address issues; providing feedback; and negotiating agreed outcomes. All of the above definitions, however, implicitly place the organisation at the centre of engagement relationships. This contrasts with more recent sustainable development models that conceptualise the economy as a subset of human society, which in turn exists within the constraints of natural systems (Tregidga & Milne, 2006). The significance here is that our conceptualisations of the relationships between the environment, society, and the economy will influence our understandings of the nature and purpose of engagement.

Burkett (2001) proposes that the term ‘community engagement’ refers to both processes and outcomes, reflecting her postmodern interpretation of community discussed above (p. 31). In a corporate context, outcomes imply, for example, gifts to non-profit organisations, humanitarian aid, provision of educational support, sponsorship, and employee volunteer schemes (Brammer & Millington, 2003; Hess, Rogovsky, & Dunfee, 2002). However, when minerals companies talk of ‘community engagement’, they may be referring more to the process of communicating with local residents (MCA, 2004); typically, such communications comprise newsletters, information sessions, and complaints responses (Beach, Parsons, Brereton, & Paulsen, 2005). These communications are outcomes in the sense of physical entities, but underlying them are varying degrees of participation.

Hierarchies of engagement
It has been proposed that corporations have travelled linearly from the ‘awareness era’ in the mid-1980s, through the ‘attentive era’ in the early 1990s, to the ‘engagement era’ in the early 2000s (Stakeholder Research Associates Canada Inc. et al., 2005, p. 17). A number of authors, therefore, portray engagement on linear, progressive, hierarchical scales, comprising various points to represent the ‘extent’ of community participation in company decision-making (see Table 2), in a similar way to models of the ‘extent’ of CSR described above (Table 1, p. 20). Essentially, these scales range from relatively informative to relatively participative.
Probably the earliest such scale is Arnstein’s (1969) ‘ladder of citizen participation’. The bottom two ‘rungs’, manipulation and therapy, constitute non-participation. The middle three rungs, informing, consultation and placating, constitute tokenism. The top three rungs, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control, constitute citizen power. Wilcox (1994) developed Arnstein’s model in suggesting five ‘levels’ of participation: information, consultation, deciding together, acting together, and supporting independent community initiatives. Stewart Carter’s (1999) scale ranges from excluding, through informing, educating, consulting, planning, decision making, initiating action, and delegating power, to controlling. Roberts (1995), similarly, identifies such points as progressing from persuasion, through consultation, to self-determination. Aslin and Brown (2004, p. 5), writing in an Australian resources context, propose a scale from informing, consulting, involving or participating, to engaging. Crawley and Sinclair (2003), writing specifically in the context of minerals company relations with Aboriginal communities, propose the following scale: hostility, ignoring/neglect, instrumental pragmatism, paternal sponsorship, multi-level interaction, two-way learning, and enduring engagement. They suggest that ‘enduring engagement’ would feature four ethical criteria: two-way learning and adaptation; long-term sustainable relationships between individuals and communities; power sharing; and a view of Indigenous communities as being valuable in themselves. These ethical criteria, then, along with other authors’ suggestions that more community participation is generally desirable, represents a challenge to neoclassical economic assumptions.
Table 2: Scales of community participation

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<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arnstein (1969)</td>
<td>manipulation and therapy</td>
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<td>Wilcox (1994)</td>
<td>information</td>
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<td>Stewart Carter (1999)</td>
<td>excluding</td>
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<td>Roberts (1995)</td>
<td>persuasion</td>
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<td>Crawley &amp; Sinclair (2003)</td>
<td>hostility</td>
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<td>Aslin &amp; Brown (2004)</td>
<td>informing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oxley Green &amp; Hunton-Clarke (2003)</td>
<td>informative</td>
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Ross, Bucky, and Proctor (2002) critique these uni-dimensional scales for overlooking the complexities of rôle-sharing between governments, communities, and other parties in natural resource management. Instead of a ‘hierarchy of desirability’, which implies that greater community participation is inherently desirable, they argue that participation type should depend on circumstances. Oxley Green and Hunton-Clarke (2003) combine both perspectives, proposing a scale from informative, through consultative, to decisional (where stakeholders participate in decision-making), while advocating that the appropriate participation type should depend on the situation. For the purposes of this study, all of these models make useful distinctions between alternative levels of participation, but the latter two approaches, perhaps being more reflexive, begin to challenge the implied universality and linearity within other models.

**Communication perspectives**

Another way of considering engagement involves differentiating between conduit, or monologic, approaches and dialogic approaches. The conduit model, indicated by words such as ‘send’ and ‘convey’, means that language is simply a channel for transmitting ideas and truths (Axley, 1984; Reddy, 1979), and that the receiver is passive and reactive (L. L. Putnam, Phillips, & Chapman, 1996, p. 380); there is no interdiscursive negotiation process involved in interpreting these ideas and truths. This model reflects the modernist view of organisational communication as utilitarian or instrumental, which dominated research until the 1980s (L. L. Putnam et al., 1996, p. 376). Such a linear, asymmetrical communication model is akin to issue management; the aim of communication
is to shape people’s attitudes, beliefs, and perhaps actions (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 238; Foster & Jonker, 2005, p. 52). As Foucault (2003b, pp. 135-137) explains, systems of communication exist in an overlapping relationship with power relations and goal-directed, productive capacities; these three form ‘disciplines’ aimed at achieving “an increasingly controlled, more rational, and economic process of adjustment”. The conduit model, therefore, denies the inherently political nature of discourse, as highlighted by organisational communication research from the 1980s onwards. It overlooks the disparities in control and power that individuals have in constructing meanings, and the way in which ideology becomes ‘natural’ (Deetz, 1985; Deetz & Kersten, 1983; L. L. Putnam et al., 1996, p. 377). By implication, conduit communication depends on the privileging of one party, reinforcing relations of power.

In contrast, acknowledging the intrinsically dialogic nature of contested concepts, such as diversity, power, or community, means welcoming others’ contributions to their development (L. L. Putnam et al., 1996, p. 393; Yeatman, 1990, pp. 161-163). This implies more than two-way interaction, which can still involve persuasion and control (Foster & Jonker, 2005). Gao and Zhang (2006), for example, advocate dialogue in stakeholder engagement, but do not explicitly acknowledge that disparities of power can mediate stakeholder relationships. Rather, acknowledging contestability implies a ‘symmetrical’ dialogue (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 238). This leads to “shared understanding and ‘compulsion-free’ consensus”, based on the Habermasian notion that rationality is ‘communicative rationality’, emerging from subject-subject discourse (Foster & Jonker, 2005, pp. 53-54).

Corporate communication performs several rhetorical functions. As well as conveying factual information, such as reporting financial results, it can influence readers’ qualitative impressions of a company. Such rhetoric can project a positive corporate image in annual reports (Hyland, 1998), can involve misleading rhetoric in privacy policy statements (Markel, 2005), and can comprise symbolic representations in letters to shareholders (Amernic & Craig, 2004). Thus, by purporting to present value-free ‘facts’, corporate communication can tend towards technocratic discourse, which works to defend power interests through a specific political and economic agenda (McKenna & Graham, 2000).

As noted above, much literature on engagement tends to adopt a corporate perspective, which considers how corporations might ‘engage’ stakeholders. The agency rests with the organisation, and what the organisation frames as value-neutral stakeholder dialogue is also an exercise of control over who participates, what is said, and what is not said (Conley, 2005). This perspective overlooks
stakeholders’ own conceptions of the corporate-community relationship, and thus implies asymmetrical dialogue. Further, corporate communication tends to privilege active and resource-rich stakeholders, implicitly assuming that these stakeholders represent wider public interests (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001). Hence, there is a risk of favouring community ‘leaders’ and prominent non-governmental organisations (Conley, 2005), and of assuming that silence implies consent, a particularly problematic assumption when communicating with Indigenous peoples (Parsons, 2007). A dialogic appreciation of alternative conceptions, conversely, might imply a process of actively seeking a broad and diverse range of subjectivities, where managers’ task becomes one of understanding various stakeholder perceptions and objectives, rather than one of strategic control (Deetz, 1999, p. 313).

Perhaps inadvertently, the potential for companies to appreciate multiple subjectivities may be constrained by the unilateral nature of many community engagement initiatives, because “companies are primarily interested in constructing relationships to achieve their own outcomes” (H. Cheney, Lovel, & Solomon, 2002, p. 4). For example, reporting on social and environmental performance, a genre that appears to have emerged from a public relations paradigm, is a significant and explicit manifestation of unilateral communication. Public relations serves to manufacture official versions of reality, so that “creating the impression of truth displaces the search for truth” (Jackall, 1988, p. 172). Thus, because discourse constructs and reproduces knowledge, as well as representing the world (Fairclough, 1992), corporate reports represent a powerful means of shaping people’s subjective understandings of a company’s values and behaviour. Reports are primarily pieces of monologic communication, in which companies can define what is important, effectively shaping the issues available for discussion (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001).

**Communication through reporting**

Public relations emerged in the late 19th century in response to public attacks on organisations, and now incorporates ‘issues management’. Issues management has moved beyond these defensive origins, referring to more proactive efforts to shape and manage the organisational environment and the attitudes of people within it. Ironically, while appearing willing to consider public concerns, these efforts tend to be asymmetrical, characterised by transmission of information, and relatively closed universes of thought favouring organisational interests (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001). Public relations, then, assumes that people filter messages through a selective ‘lens’ (L. L. Putnam et al., 1996, pp. 380-382). ‘Sustainability’ reports may represent this ‘lens’ metaphor, since they
exemplify an asymmetrical, conduit-type communication relationship, but regard both senders and receivers as agents in the filtering process.

Public sustainability (or social and environmental) reporting is perhaps the most obvious manifestation of the ideas of corporate sustainability and social responsibility. This genre exemplifies interdiscursivity, blending ‘hard’ discourses of economics, business, management, and technology with ‘soft’ discourses of health, safety, environment, and community (Parsons & McKenna, 2005, 2006). In the 1850s, most western firms did not publish basic details regarding their operations, and accounting procedures were highly variable (Sennett, 2006). Today, accounting procedures and financial reporting are highly standardised, and a 2005 study across 16 countries found that, on average, 41% of the top 100 companies in each country published a sustainability report, although the figure for Australia was only 23% (Centre for Australian Ethical Research, 2005). Leading this effort is the Global Reporting Initiative, which released a third iteration of its Sustainability Reporting Guidelines in 2006. It also produces supplementary guidelines for specific sectors, including a pilot Mining and Metals Sector Supplement released in 2005 (www.globalreporting.org). Reporting is also sometimes seen from a ‘social auditing’ perspective, which aims to make organisations more transparent and accountable, and which views reporting as part of an ongoing process of planning, accounting, and engaging (Elkington, 1997; Gao & Zhang, 2006; The New Economics Foundation, 1996). So, what do managers perceive to be the purpose of reporting?

Research among Australian companies in 2005, in which managers were asked to list the perceived benefits of producing sustainability reports, suggests that corporate reputation is foremost in managers’ minds. By far the most common perceived benefit, cited by 86% of respondents, was ‘reputation enhancement’ (Centre for Australian Ethical Research, 2005). This response supports the views that sustainability reporting is principally an impression management strategy (Hooghiemstra, 2000), a public relations effort (Elkington, 1997), or even a form of advertising (McWilliams et al., 2006, p.5). Furthermore, the study found that 55% of those companies producing such reports were in the mining and manufacturing sectors, suggesting that reputation is considered particularly significant in these sectors.

Kemp (2004) notes that, among mining companies, this view may be explained by the common location of the community relations function within public/external affairs departments. As Yergin and Stanislaw (2002) assert, the success of capitalism depends on its ability to appraise risk and uncertainty, notions that typify the way in which corporations generally conceive sustainability.
issues (Banerjee, 2002, p. 107). In turn, successfully managing risk and uncertainty can represent acquiring valuable resources which, according to the resource-based and competency-based views of the firm, can potentially lead to (financially) sustainable competitive advantages (Barney, 1991; R. M. Grant, 1991; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). In particular, a favourable reputation, which social responsibility can provide (Alsop, 2004), may deliver competitive advantages (Fombrun, 1996; Hooghiemstra, 2000; McWilliams et al., 2006). While the notion of competitive advantage may be more applicable to consumer markets than to the minerals industry, Humphreys (2000) argues that minerals companies operate in a competitive environment that favours those companies that take their community relationships seriously. Furthermore, minerals companies commonly speak of the need to secure their ‘social licence’, meaning a favourable reputation among society (AccountAbility & Business for Social Responsibility, n.d.; DITR, 2006; MCA, 2004). However, the assertion that a company must secure a ‘social licence’ mirrors social contract theory, which relies on managers behaving as though a contract exists, as explained above (Hasnas, 1998). Thus, in some cases, it may be difficult to discern whether society has granted a ‘social licence’, and it seems unlikely that a company would publicly convey a contrary impression. Furthermore, since it is questionable whether any company has ever lost a social licence, the significance of such a licence may be overstated, conveying an exaggerated impression of stakeholder power (Banerjee, 2008).

Perhaps reflecting this impression management rôle, sustainability reports can depict an air of objectivity and truth, which disguises their inherently rhetorical nature. They often incorporate technical language and esoteric abbreviations, promoting “an expert rhetoric” (Livesey, 2002), and marginalising non-specialists. This is reflected more generally in the minerals industry, in which staff tend to speak a technical language, which often extends to communications with communities (H. Cheney et al., 2002). The power of this technical language lies in its capacity to exclude alternative voices and thoughts (Meyerson & Scully, 1995, p. 592). Applying Giddens’ (1993, p. 117) notion of power being the transformative capacity of human action, such language, as an expression of power, reduces the capability of stakeholders to influence events. Similarly, sustainability reports might signify the ‘technologisation of discourse’, representing efforts by dominant social forces to control the course of change (Fairclough, 1995, p. 91). In particular, an emphasis on systems reinforces the assumption that sustainability can be achieved through ‘better’ management and greater efficiency; it downplays tensions between economic and social/environmental spheres; and, it restricts the space for alternative conceptualisations (Tregidga & Milne, 2006).
Conversely, exemplifying the emerging nature of community engagement, some companies, such as Argyle Diamonds (2004) are becoming aware of these shortcomings, and are incorporating more narrative into their communications. In contrast to ‘technologisation’, this development may constitute a ‘conversationalisation’ of institutional discourse (Fairclough, 1995, p. 101), perhaps in an effort to demystify the technological nature of contemporary mining practices. At the same time, it does not necessarily imply that the purpose is anything other than impression management, or that the overriding objective is not economic. Rather, it indicates a shift in notions of how to achieve those economic objectives.

Even if sustainability reporting occurs mainly to enhance corporate reputation, perhaps its mere existence indicates a sensitivity to the social impacts of business. However, the asymmetrical, undemocratic nature of reporting (Tregidga & Milne, 2006) seems to exemplify ‘conduit’ communication (Reddy, 1979). According to Reynolds and Yuthas (2008), this may be because reporting frameworks fail to allow stakeholders with differing resources, or unequal power, to participate democratically in discourse. Thus, reports themselves do not necessarily signify dialogic engagement. Rather, they may be seen as a monologic channel for communicating ‘truths’, with opportunities for dialogue mostly limited to a feedback form. By purporting to present value-free ‘facts’, therefore, reports may constitute technocratic discourse (McKenna & Graham, 2000).

The point is not to suggest a conspiracy of exaggeration and obfuscation, but to highlight that, in the absence of meaningful dialogue, corporate reporting can perform a rhetorical function, over and above mere reportage (Davison, 2002). As well as conveying factual information, such as the financial value of company sponsorships, it can seek to influence readers’ qualitative impressions, and it can reinforce dominant cultural assumptions. For example, if a financial report states that revenue and profits have increased, this is generally assumed to be a positive thing, since it conforms to macrostructural rationalities. Whether reporting actually constitutes ‘engagement’, then, depends on the definition of ‘engagement’. However, it is worthy of investigative attention, because it represents the most public interface between the corporation and society (Livesey, 2002). It has also received extensive academic attention, perhaps because it is relatively accessible to researchers. However, corporations communicate with stakeholders is not only through reporting, but also through more consultative and participatory modes. Hence, a multi-modal investigation of community engagement will analyse various modes of communication, exploring alternative conceptualisations and competing subjectivities. Further, it will recognise the rôle of power in shaping those conceptualisations and subjectivities.
Social power: An invisible consensus

“This temple that is built so well
To separate us from ourselves
Is a power grown beyond control
A will without a face” (Sullivan & Heaton, 1987).

In *Silent Spring*, the book often credited with catalysing contemporary western environmental movements, Rachel Carson not only questioned the practice of widespread pesticide use, but also noted how major chemical companies maintained control of the agenda by funding university research (Carson, 1963, p. 211-212). This notion of subtle control resonates with a central concern of critical studies: social power, which refers to the relations between social groups or institutions (van Dijk, 1997a, p. 17). van Dijk proposes that we control others, and therefore have power over them, if we can influence how they act. The implication is that the exercise of power by one group usually implies a diminution of freedom for another group (van Dijk, 1998, p. 162). Furthermore, subtle forms of language can constitute a more ‘sophisticated’ form of power than overt coercion, shaping others’ minds so that they act in another’s interests of their own free will, in a process of apparent consensus, effectively constituting hegemonic power (Gramsci, 1971; van Dijk, 1997a, p. 19; 1998, p. 162).

Hegemony, in a Gramscian sense, refers to the dominant but contested position of a coalition of interests, or ‘historical bloc’, relative to subordinate groups or classes, achieved through consent and compromise rather than coercion (Gramsci, 1971; Smart, 1994, p. 209). Hegemony requires not only political-bureaucratic and economic dominance, but also “discursive frameworks that actively constitute perceptions of mutual interests” (Levy & Egan, 2003, p. 806). For example, the discourse of ‘environmental management’ conveys the impression of harmony between economic and environmental interests, in order to accommodate a perceived threat to corporate hegemony while legitimising the view that the environment should be ‘managed’ by corporations (Levy, 1997). Faced with the challenge of climate change, corporations have sought to maintain legitimacy through a variety of discursive strategies. These include coopting relatively moderate environmental organisations, establishing organisations that give the impression of grass-roots lobbying, promoting the views of climate-change sceptics, and disseminating the message that action on climate change would threaten economic growth and employment (Levy & Egan, 2003). Concurrently, corporations and governments assert the mutuality of business and environmental interests, legitimising the rôles of technology and market forces (Hajer, 1995; Levy, 1997; Levy &
Egan, 2003; Romm, 1999). Thus, corporations have accommodated challenges without relinquishing their dominant social position, but their hegemonic position remains unstable.

This perspective of social power, then, position discourse as both the site and the stake in power struggles (Fairclough, 1989, p. 74). While some (Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 1998) see discursive modes as being the most dominant contemporary instantiations of power, Lemke (1995, pp. 13-15) argues that the ideological functioning of discourse is supported by various forms of physical violence, which remains the fundamental form of social control. Nevertheless, for this study, the most fruitful concept of power may be Fairclough’s (1989, p. 2) notion that the exercise of power is achieved (at least partly) through the ideological workings of language. This view can be seen to derive from Foucault’s linking of power with the production of truth.

According to Foucault (1980, p. 131), truth “is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint.” More specifically, it “is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to the effects of power which it induces and which extend it” (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). Each society, therefore, has its ‘régime of truth’ that determines “the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true” (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Thus, the ‘new capitalism’ promotes terms that suggest more freedom, such as ‘flexibility’, while actually introducing new controls, such as information systems and outsourced production centres (Sennett, 1998, pp. 9-10). Through discourse, therefore, power élites can entrench their control over resources, both material and symbolic (van Dijk, 1997a, p. 20). Developing this theory, Smart draws on Foucault to propose that hegemony operates to form social cohesion not necessarily by consent, as Gramsci had argued, but most effectively by “practices, techniques and methods which infiltrate minds and bodies, cultural practices which cultivate behaviours and beliefs, tastes, desires, and needs as seemingly naturally occurring qualities and properties embodied in the psychic and physical reality (or ‘truth’) of the human subject” (Smart, 1994, p. 210).

However, as Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 273) point out, power relations are not static and monolithic, because there are dynamic, discursive aspects continually transforming power relations. Nor are power relations simply top-down processes of control; rather, they are complex patterns of sharing, negotiating, and dividing power (van Dijk, 1997a, p. 23). Some discourses reinforce existing power relations, while others contest and challenge their legitimacy (Lemke, 1995, p. 12).
Thus, discourses of social and environmental justice, and the increasingly common conceptualisation of communities as ‘stakeholders’, may be capable of constraining corporate power (Berry, 2003). Organisations, therefore, “exist precariously as symbolic structures shot through with competing interests, struggles, and contradictions” (Mumby & Clair, 1997, p. 187). It is through competing discourses, therefore, that these interests, struggles and contradictions are played out.

Power can be seen as constituted and reproduced through communication, interaction and symbolism, and as achieved through both organisational rituals and micro-processes of daily interaction (Iedema & Wodak, 1999). In short, power is often invisible. Thus, the above notion that the most effective form of power is consensual, rather than coercive (Gramsci, 1971), or that it comprises cultivating behaviours and beliefs that seem ‘natural’ (Smart, 1994), may be particularly relevant in the context of organisational discourse. People’s subject positions manifest the discursive possibilities in particular contexts at particular times (Foucault, 1972; Rose, 1996). Possible utterances are limited by the prevailing discursive formation. Everyday organisational talk is thus political in nature, and can perform the ideological function of concealing yet reinforcing relations of dominance (Mumby & Clair, 1997). Furthermore, text and politics are inextricably intertwined: as Lemke (1995, pp. 1-2) puts it, the textual is deeply political, and the political is profoundly textual.

Considering the functions of social power, then, may be particularly pertinent in understanding relationships between minerals companies and local communities, which often involve antagonistic power relations (Whiteman & Mamen, 2002). For example, Cheney, Lovel, and Solomon (2002) found that, despite minerals companies’ efforts to decentralise power, local community members typically felt relatively powerless, seeing companies as embedded in a broader system of government-corporate power. Thus, the authors suggest, community members may also sense an inevitability that corporate wishes and the profit motive will ultimately determine decisions. They found that many community members perceive barriers to participation, such as lack of confidence, concern about repercussions, or lack of time and resources, and that some felt intimidated because ‘consultation’ occurred within a technical or engineering worldview. Community engagement, therefore, is not something that can be defined or described objectively or universally, but may be better understood as socially constructed through discourse, and as shaped according to relations of power.
Conclusion: Investigating minerals companies and communities

The stakeholder concept usually places the company at its centre, implicitly constraining potential for symmetrical, dialogic relationships. This enables companies to enjoy a measure of control over the discourse of engagement. They may exert power through a circular relation with the ‘truth’, determining what statements are acceptable or true, and what statements are unacceptable or false. They can determine what constitutes a ‘legitimate’ stakeholder, and what constitutes a ‘legitimate’ claim by a stakeholder. Authors have argued, therefore, that companies may construct relationships to achieve their own objectives, and that they sometimes deliberately avoid engaging those perceived as critical or obstructive, a unilateralism that limits decentralisation of power (Ballard & Banks, 2003; H. Cheney et al., 2002).

Totalising theories cannot capture a whole range of subjective experiences. However, it remains pertinent that Marx and Engels recognised capitalism’s ability to evolve continually: “The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society” (Marx & Engels, 1952/1848). Thus, the discourse of ‘community engagement’ might represent an example of the capacity of capitalism to reinvent itself. However, orthodox Marxist theory fails to challenge modernism and Enlightenment rationality (e.g., Wheen, 1999). Because of its structuralist foundations, it cannot comprehensively analyse the complexities and tensions surrounding community engagement, corporate social responsibility, and stakeholder theory, nor can it fully appreciate the rôle of discourse in those complexities and tensions. Hence, a poststructural critique is warranted; from this perspective, it is macrostructural rationalities operating through discourse, rather than class-based relations of production, that construct boundaries of knowledge and subjectivity.

The next chapter, therefore, discusses the epistemological and methodological approach of this study, to address the research question, How do the people concerned understand ‘community engagement’, and what shapes these understandings? I explain how I combine a critical sensitivity, which highlights the relationships of knowledge, power, and language-as-discourse, with interpretive attention to socially constructed, subjective experience. In this way, this study contributes to the above literature in the following ways. Firstly, and most broadly, I aim to enhance understanding of an emerging aspect of contemporary capitalism, in the sense that community engagement exemplifies capitalism’s ability to respond to dialogic and dialectic challenges. Secondly, in contrast to authors who have sought to establish a quantifiable, causal relationship between corporate social responsibility, or the stakeholder concept, and financial performance, I
investigate people’s experiences and interpretations of these notions. Thirdly, I seek to apprehend the discursive construction of these experiences and interpretations.

This approach enables me to problematise core assumptions in the above theories, particularly that ‘more’ community participation is inherently and universally better, and that social and environmental concerns can be, or must be, managed rationally within the dominant economic paradigm. To this end, my epistemological and methodological orientation sees community engagement as socially constructed through discourse. Thus, just as ‘sustainable development’ has been interrogated from a Foucauldian perspective (Livesey, 2002; Springett, 2003), a critical-interpretive study of corporate-community relations must be cognisant of the ‘linguistic turn’ in organisation studies, entailing analysis of how language-as-discourse constructs certain realities and reinforces certain worldviews (Deetz, 1982, 2003; N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, pp. 12-16).
Chapter Three: METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION AND FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The previous chapter identified a critical-interpretive perspective as highlighting the relationship of language and power in constructing corporate-community relationships. Community engagement is thus presented as a socially constructed phenomenon based on interdiscursive relationships among subjects. In this chapter, I explain the epistemological and methodological approach I used to gather empirical material about the various social and discursive constructions of community engagement, and which informs a critical, interpretivist analysis of the research question, How do the people concerned understand ‘community engagement’, and what shapes these understandings? Thus, my methodology aims to investigate how certain minerals company employees and local community members understand, experience, and interpret ‘community engagement’, and why they do so in these ways.

Before explicating the three-part method later in this chapter, I frame it within a broader meta-theoretical framework. Eschewing the objectivist epistemological foundations of positivist research in management and organisation, I develop instead a theoretical framework using interpretivist and critical approaches. This framework sits in a poststructural, rather than postmodern, paradigm, because the poststructural view of discourse, language, power, and the subject can better address the research question.

To begin, therefore, I briefly survey epistemological shifts in research on management and organisation, from positivist orthodoxy towards an accommodation of interpretivist and critical approaches, and explain why a poststructuralist orientation is particularly relevant to this study. I then outline my methodological approaches: case study, ethnography, phenomenography, and critical discourse analysis, explaining that case study forms a delimiting framework within which I apply the other three methodologies. I describe the methods for collecting and analysing the empirical material: verbal and visual analysis of secondary material, followed by analysis of observation field notes and multi-method analysis of interview transcripts. Finally, because an important feature of poststructural analysis is that the researcher cannot adopt a neutral position, I discuss the rôles of reflexivity, validity, and reliability in a critical, interpretivist context.
Historical developments in social research

"Now, what I want is Facts." (Dickens, 1961/1854, p. 11)

Social research has developed to reflect evolutions of broader ontological, epistemological and ideological perspectives. As new ideas emerged regarding the nature of reality, knowledge, and society, conventionalism and interpretivism challenged positivism. Subsequently, critical theory, postmodernism, and poststructuralism challenged positivism, conventionalism, and interpretivism, as well as challenging each other. Of course, this description is a simplification. New paradigms do not always usurp their predecessors; they often merely provide alternative perspectives (Astley, 1985; Kuhn, 1970). Indeed, despite its challengers, positivism arguably remains the dominant, orthodox perspective in management research (Westwood & Clegg, 2003). Further, paradigms are heterogeneous, featuring internal contestations, and have evolved as new perspectives have surfaced. In this section, therefore, I firstly describe the evolution from positivist assumptions of an observable, objective reality towards an interpretivist emphasis on socially constructed experience. Next, I explain how ‘critical’ perspectives introduced concern for questions of discourse, language, power, and the subject. Finally, I discuss how these epistemological shifts have influenced organisation studies more specifically, and thus how they are relevant to a study of corporate-community engagement.

From positivism to interpretivism

“Nice distinctions are troublesome. It is so much easier to say that a thing is black than to discriminate the particular shade of brown, blue, or green, to which it really belongs.” (Eliot, 2003/1857, p. 46).

Orthodox, positivist perspectives on social research look for causal laws; they emphasise validity, reliability and generalisation; they consider that things can be studied independently and objectively; and they aim to produce overarching theories that correspond precisely to reality – the ‘truth’. For positivists, the task of science is to predict and control natural and social events. Knowledge is assumed to accumulate linearly, as new research uncovers new findings (Astley, 1985). The influence of positivism cannot be overstated; indeed, writers rarely acknowledge their use of it, or apply it unknowingly ( Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; P. Johnson & Duberley, 2000). On this basis, positivism is antithetical to a study designed to investigate a phenomenon framed as an interdiscursive social construction.

Conventionalism rejected the idea that language neutrally describes facts, instead acknowledging that researchers are situated in a particular historical context and informed by certain values. Thus,
judgement of ‘truth’ results from socially negotiated agreement, rather than being an objective reality. In effect, we participate in what we experience. Hence, a ‘paradigm’ is a set of beliefs, values, assumptions, and techniques, pre-constituted by our existing conceptions (P. Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Kuhn, 1970). Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggested that preferences for certain paradigms depend on whether authors take an objectivist or subjectivist view of social science, and on whether they explain social phenomena emphasising unity and cohesiveness or underlying structural conflict and contradiction. This leads to four ‘incommensurable paradigms’—functionalist, interpretivist, radical humanist, and radical structuralist—which can exist simultaneously. However, Burrell and Morgan’s taxonomy has been challenged for reducing the various dimensions of contrasts to categories, for discouraging cross-paradigm analysis and critique, and more generally for overlooking postmodern perspectives (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 23; Deetz, 1996; Westwood & Clegg, 2003). Indeed, Burrell and Morgan’s taxonomy may have misleadingly led the labels ‘subjective’ and ‘qualitative’ to be commonly ascribed to interpretive research (Deetz, 1996).

Interpretivism, with which I align part of this study, sees actors as active sense makers. Research focuses on meanings, ideas, and practices; concepts and theories are developed collaboratively with the research subjects. Perhaps its central objective is to achieve rich insights or understandings of naturally occurring events (Deetz, 1982). However, interpretivism can fail to question wider contexts, and can be pressured to portray a unified, consensual ‘reality’ (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). More critically, interpretivism has been described as a subliminal form of positivism, since it can suggest that it presents objective accounts of socially constructed worlds, without reflecting on the socially constructed nature of interpretations themselves (P. Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Nevertheless, interpretivism may be relatively ‘moderate’ or ‘radical’ (Kwan & Tsang, 2001), and Deetz (1982), for example, incorporates a critical orientation within the interpretive paradigm. For present purposes, then, I see interpretive accounts not as objective representations, but as intersubjective products of social negotiation (Astley, 1985, p. 499), based on “a relatively stable system of discourse” (Gergen, 2003, p. 153).

While the emergence of interpretivism is sometimes portrayed as incorporating a shift from objective to subjective perspectives, the dualistic distinction between subjective and objective is disputed and misleading (Deetz, 1996). Sometimes, research claiming to be objective is unconsciously subjective, its concepts and methods being based on unknown assumptions of previous writers (Deetz, 1973; Husserl, 1931). Similarly, interpretive research, which orthodox researchers may label dismissively as ‘subjective’, may be more objective than generally thought,
since it can deny privileged conceptions (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, pp. 63-66). Furthermore, a social constructionist position does not necessarily deny all objective reality; rather, it sees our knowledge of that objective reality as being socially constructed (Astley, 1985). The interpretivist paradigm, then, is useful for this study because it assumes a social constructionist epistemology, seeking to recreate others’ understandings of our world.

Critical perspectives, meanwhile, offer an additional layer of understanding, setting out to reveal the rôle of power relations and discourses in shaping our lives, and to offer alternative interpretations (Griseri, 2002, p. 34). Thus, we can analyse community engagement not only as an intersubjective construction, but also as a discursive phenomenon inextricably bound up in language, power, and the subject.

‘Critical’ perspectives

In critical studies, organisations are seen as political sites, in which domination often suppresses meaningful conflict; thus, they are more explicitly committed to moral and ethical issues than, for example, interpretive studies (Deetz, 1996, p. 202). According to Fournier and Grey (2000, pp. 17-19), critical management studies interrogate power, control, and inequality in organisational life, they deconstruct mainstream management theories, and they are philosophically and methodologically reflexive. In contrast, they argue, non-critical studies unproblematically aim to improve managerial effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability, while explicitly or implicitly marginalising alternatives.

Critical studies, therefore, have focused on how social phenomena, such as organisations, appear to be ‘natural’; how corporate interests appear to be universal interests; how technical, ‘rational’ reasoning dominates alternative forms of reason; how people can be unwittingly complicit in their own victimisation; and, finally, on what conditions might be necessary for free and open participation in communicative acts (Deetz, 1999, pp. 306-311). However, ‘critical’ as a label incorporates some plurality – typically, if perhaps not always appropriately, invoking postmodernism, critical theory, poststructuralism, and critical realism. Since my own methodological orientation draws predominantly on poststructuralism, I now situate this orientation in its historical context, and draw relevant epistemological linkages.
Postmodernism

Postmodernism, which refers principally to developments in art, music, culture, architecture, and literature, also affected the social sciences by reacting against Enlightenment rationality in favour of eclecticism (e.g., Baudrillard, 1994; Derrida, 1997). Lyotard (1984), for example, rejected ‘grand narratives’, or totalising theories, in favour of individual ‘subject positions’. Baudrillard (1994), meanwhile, argues that people are often unable to distinguish between reality and constructed simulations of reality, or ‘simulacra’, which produce a ‘hyperreality’. Perhaps most fundamentally, postmodernism tries to show that science is inevitably subjective, value-laden, and thus political, and to reopen the indeterminate spaces in which objects are constructed to appear natural (Deetz, 2000).

The methodology most associated with postmodernism is deconstruction, which aims to dismantle linguistic constructions to reveal apparently consensual assumptions and contradictions (Derrida, 1997; Kilduff, 1993; Norris, 1982). Deconstruction aims to show that assumptions depend on excluding certain voices. It questions assumed ‘truths’, which usually escape close scrutiny because of their dominance and apparent objectivity (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 143). For example, Kilduff (1993) notes how classic managerial texts escape critique by purporting to represent objective organisational ‘truth’. Such texts present themselves as being value-free, despite being founded upon specific discourses of neoclassical economics and a (neo)liberal individualist worldview.

Postmodernism, however, has been criticised for tending towards extreme relativism, a subjectivist position which denies the influence of macrostructural forces, although some see this as a misinterpretation (Chan & Garrick, 2002; Deetz, 2000; Reed, 1996). Further, while claiming emancipation as its objective, its jargon can marginalise those it seeks to empower, and it can contradict itself by making general claims while denying the possibility of a reality (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; P. Johnson & Duberley, 2000, pp. 91-114). Finally, postmodern theorists sometimes struggle to specify mechanisms of action to address institutionalised power structures (Chan & Garrick, 2002), perhaps because postmodern methods are relatively underdeveloped (Deetz, 2000). In terms of the present study, therefore, postmodernism may not offer the most fruitful avenue for accounting for structural power relations between minerals companies and local communities. Nevertheless, the related notion of postmodernity provides a useful contextual perspective from which to understand corporate-community relationships.
Postmodernity was first properly elaborated by Harvey (1989), and refers to a political, economic, and geographic ‘condition’: the state of western society following the condition of modernity. Modernity, in this context, means an epoch following traditional society, and characterised by notions such as rationality and control, and scientifically oriented towards the future and progress (Rabinow & Rose, 2003, pp. xxiv-xxv). Crucially, modernity assumed the rational, public realm and the traditional, private realm to be independent, whereas postmodernity recognises that organisations have colonised the private realm, deeply into the level of homes and communities (Deetz, 1995).

Postmodernity, then, is characterised by phenomena such as the casualisation of employment, commodity fetishism, the promotion of individual rights and responsibility, and ephemerality (e.g., Bauman, 1993; Harvey, 1989; Lyotard, 1984). Under the postmodern condition, life is commodified; that is, people are ‘consumers’, previously unpriced services have a price, and public spaces are privatised (Featherstone, 1991; F. Jameson, 1991; Klein, 2001). As a ‘consumer’ rather than ‘citizen’, the atomised individual’s opportunities for political action are restricted to isolated economic choices (Deetz, 2008, p. 389; Gabriel, 2008). This neoliberal apotheosis of individualism might be said to have been epitomised in Margaret Thatcher’s (1987) infamous pronouncement: “There is no such thing as society… There are individual men and women, and there are families”. The postmodern condition, then, underlies the societal context within which corporate-community relationships are evolving. Meanwhile, in contrast to postmodernism’s focus on indeterminacy, critical theory focuses on structural explanations for social phenomena.

**Critical theory**

Critical theory is traditionally associated with Frankfurt School theorists Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Theodor Adorno, and more contemporaneously with Jürgen Habermas. Thus, two versions of critical theory can be distinguished. The Frankfurt School, and Marcuse in particular, tends to be labelled neo-Marxist, and thus commingled with Gramsci, whose work was translated into English later. Habermas, meanwhile, is the least Marxist of those labelled critical theorists.

Frankfurt School theorists argued that traditional positivism was unwittingly bound with the social processes of production, leading it to submit uncritically to orthodox values. From this view, positivism, in assuming that knowledge can reflect an objective, rational world, has prevented attempts to change that world (Agger, 1991, p. 109; Kellner, 1990). ‘Instrumental rationality’ thus prevails, and elaborates ‘objective’ techniques while legitimising domination. Conflicts are then managed through technocratic solutions, rather than by addressing deeper political issues (Alvesson
Horkheimer also envisaged a relational, rather than dualistic, ontology; that is, a dialectical materialism in which material conditions and the subject constitute each other (Kellner, 1990). Later, however, Habermas (1972) argued that there is a reality independent of human subjectivity.

Critical theory in general, therefore, insists that a theory of society must acknowledge the constitutive role of capitalism in social life (Kellner, 1990). It focuses on competing power interests and ideological superstructures, in contrast to postmodernism’s emphasis on subjective meanings and everyday activities (Chia, 2002, p. 13). According to Kincheloe & McLaren (2000), it rejects the Marxist notion of economic determinism, but examines how, for example, the economy, class, gender, race, ideology, discourse, the media, education, and religion shape hegemonic social systems.

Critical theorists advocate continuous critical self-reflection, and aim to show how traditional research has ignored inequality, domination, and political forces, thereby implicitly preserving the status quo within capitalism. So there are two strands to critical theory in research: firstly, a critique of the dominant ideology, exposing how it produces active consent; and secondly, affirmative action for change through intersubjective dialogue ( Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Chia, 2002; Habermas, 1972; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). Typically, the critical theorist aims unashamedly to produce social transformation by enabling people to re-evaluate their conditions of existence (Mumby, in L. L. Putnam, Bantz, Deetz, Mumby, & Van Maanen, 1993, p. 225).

Johnson and Duberley (2000, pp. 115-147) identify three problems with critical theory. Firstly, it seems too simplistic to assume an automatic sequence from suffering, to critical reflection, to emancipation. Secondly, it is unclear when ‘emancipation’ has been achieved. Thirdly, if everyone is embedded in relations of power, it is unclear how critical theorists can step outside these relations to observe them. Poststructuralism, then, especially through its emphasis on language-as-discourse, arguably synthesises the political concerns of critical theory with a sensitivity towards postmodernity. More specifically, it retains a focus on power, but highlights the subject rather than structural explanations.

Poststructuralism

As suggested in Chapter Two, poststructuralism can be seen largely as a reaction against Marxist structuralism. Indeed, we might well identify the emergence of poststructuralism as coincident with Foucault’s gravitation away from the French Communist Party in the early 1950s, and towards
‘philosophies of the subject’, i.e., phenomenology and existentialism. More specifically, Foucault’s interest lay in the modes of objectivisation that transform human beings into subjects (Foucault, 2003b, pp. 126-127), and in “the conditions that establish, at any one time, the relation between true and false” (Rabinow & Rose, 2003, p. xii). While it would be oversimplistic to equate Foucault precisely with poststructuralism, in 1970 he emphatically refuted that he was a structuralist (Miller, 1994, p. 161), and later he even described himself as an ‘antistructuralist’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 114). Nevertheless, the work of Marx remained influential for Foucault, as illustrated in his imploring for “the unburdening and liberation of Marx in relation to party dogma” (Foucault, 2003a, p. 100). However, the work of Nietzsche and Freud was also highly influential for Foucault, their commonality with Marx being recognition of a relationship between power and knowledge (Smart, 1985, pp. 12-14).

According to Smart (1985, p. 16), Foucault departed from Marxist structuralism in four important ways. Firstly, he focused on local events, not global processes. Secondly, he aimed to rediscover ‘subjugated knowledges’, rather than to construct a systematising theory. Thirdly, he viewed events as being formed through multiple processes, rather than through a single determinant (i.e., relations to the means of production). Fourthly, drawing on Nietzsche, and consistent with postmodernism, he refuted the idea of progress in history: “Thus, in place of the continuous chronology of reason… (and) the general model of a consciousness that acquires, progresses, and remembers”, history now “has led to the individualisation of different series, which are juxtaposed to one another, follow one another, overlap and intersect, without one being able to reduce them to a linear schema” (Foucault, 1972, p. 8). This perspective hints at the potential usefulness of a comparative case study framework, since such a framework deliberately focuses attention on differences, dissonances, tensions, and contradictions.

Foucault acknowledges that global theories have provided useful tools, but argues that thinking in terms of totalities hinders research. Contemporaneously, he suggests, what has emerged is the “local character of criticism” without descending into (postmodernist) “soggy eclecticism” (Foucault, 1980, pp. 81-82). One aspect of this local character might be called ‘subjugated knowledges’, which are those that have been historically buried and disguised by a functionalist coherence or formal systematising theory, enabling them to be disqualified as insufficiently scientific (Foucault, 1980, pp. 81-82). Proponents of Marxism, Foucault argues, establish power relations by claiming to be conducting a scientific discourse. This implies the disqualification of local, historical forms of knowledge and particular subject forms, and reserves the effects of power for those engaged in this discourse. Furthermore, even when subjugated knowledges are disinterred, they remain at risk of
recolonisation or annexation by unitary discourses (Foucault, 1980, pp. 84-86). The task, then, is to reopen for contestation those conflicts whose submergence has made objects appear self-evident and natural, while avoiding relativism and subjectivism (Deetz, 2003). Hence, a poststructural study of community engagement must foreground local knowledges that might have been historically buried (e.g., Indigenous knowledges or oral, anecdotal histories), without descending into either extreme relativism or unitary determinism.

In Chapter Two, I introduced Foucault’s view of power, noting its ‘circular relation’ with the production of truth (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). More specifically, Foucault aimed to show that “practices, persons, and institutions gain their sense only from their location within a wider nexus of relations of knowledge, power, and the production of subjectivities” (Rabinow & Rose, 2003, p. xiv). He suggests studying power relations by focusing on resistance, antagonisms and oppositions, which tend to be directed not towards institutions or groups, or towards some overarching adversary, but towards techniques, or forms, of power. These forms of power relate to everyday life; they categorise individuals, imposing a ‘law of truth’ on them. In this way, Foucault argues, individuals are made ‘subjects’, in the sense that they are subject to someone else’s control, and subject to a constructed identity (Foucault, 2003b, pp. 128-130).

This reconceptualisation of power, therefore, further differentiates poststructuralism from structuralism. Foucault conceives power not as a property of a particular class, but as a multitudinous strategy transmitted by and through subjects (Smart, 1985, p. 77). In other words, human beings govern themselves and others through régimes of truth or rationality that constitute rules for doing things (Smart, 1985, p. 72). Thus, power is not a tangible commodity possessed by a certain group or class; rather, “there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise, and constitute the social body” (Foucault, 1980, p. 93). What this means for research is that analysis that starts from central locations of power is deterministic – everything can be shown to result from bourgeois domination, for example (Foucault, 1980, pp. 99-100). Instead, analysis must start “at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc. In other words,… we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts etc.” (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). In what ways, for instance, do certain forces and thoughts constitute the subject position of ‘Community Relations Advisor’?
This refutation of Marxist structuralism, then, is not to deny that domination, exploitation, and subjection exist, but to see them as interwoven in complex, interdependent relations, rather than being reducible to determination only through class and/or ideological structures (Smart, 1985, p. 136). Furthermore, Foucault argues that, while struggles against domination, exploitation, and subjection can exist concurrently, struggles against subjection are nowadays most significant. In contrast, struggles against domination were most significant in feudal societies, while struggles against exploitation were most significant in the nineteenth century (Foucault, 2003b, p. 130). From this perspective, it becomes more pertinent to focus study at the local level, on the ‘capillaries’ where mechanisms of power operate (Foucault, 1980, p. 96). Only then is the task to examine how these mechanisms have become economically and politically advantageous, and thus maintained by global mechanisms (Foucault, 1980, p. 101). In other words, analysis must investigate the ‘infinitesimal mechanisms’ of power before examining their relationships with more general, global mechanisms (Foucault, 1980, p. 99). To reflect this poststructural emphasis on the subject, therefore, much of this study considers the construction of subjective experiences of community engagement, before it introduces discussion of more global, or macrostructural, forces.

Foucault is considerably less expansive, however, on the nature of these global mechanisms, seemingly seeking to downplay his earlier Marxist influences. His theorisation significantly advances understanding of how power operates, but downplays the reasons why power functions as a mechanism of domination, exploitation, subjection, colonisation, and annexation. In particular, his theory seems to marginalise the influence of economic relations on the local mechanisms of power. He leaves the reader anticipating that the balance will be redressed when he claims that this “new type of power… is, I believe, one of the great inventions of bourgeois society…[and]…a fundamental instrument in the constitution of industrial capitalism” (Foucault, 1980, p. 105). However, he then fails to elucidate why this is so, or why certain discourses dominate or colonise others. Similarly, he acknowledges that mechanisms of subjection cannot be studied without reference to mechanisms of domination and exploitation, but does not discuss how these latter mechanisms influence subjectivity (Foucault, 2003b, p. 131). A thorough study of community engagement must, I believe, investigate the mutually constitutive relationships between macro, meso, and micro levels of discourse, where ‘meso’ refers to discourses at the organisational level (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Conrad, 2004; House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995). I explain how I attempt to do this in my discussion of discourse analysis below.
To address the gap in Foucault’s theorisation, I turn to the writings of Bakhtin and Voloshinov. Voloshinov\(^1\) critiques the ‘abstract objectivism’ of structuralism, which argues that “the system of language is an objective fact external to and independent of any individual consciousness” (1994/1929, p. 31, original emphasis). This account, he contends, overlooks both individual creativity and historical processes of change in language forms. Instead, Voloshinov advances a dialogic theory of language, in which subjectivity is produced by interactions between the micro level of individuals and the macro level of social context. In this view, then, subjectivity is the dialogic response of individual consciousness to signs from the outside world (Morris, 1994a, pp. 11-12). ‘Signs’, in this sense, are physical entities converted into language, which conveys ideological meaning (Voloshinov, 1994/1929, p. 50). For example, the physical presence of a minerals operation might convey meaning by representing ideologically-laden notions such as economic development, productive efficiency, human employment, technological progress, and human superiority over nature. This conceptualisation, then, resonates with contemporary concerns of discourse analysts, which, as I explain later (p. 69), have emphasised the constitutive rôle of discourse, in which language is ‘imbricated’ in social relations (Fairclough, 1992; 1995, p. 73).

In Chapter One, I introduced the idea of community engagement as interdiscursivity. Of particular relevance to this conceptualisation may be three related terms that Bakhtin introduced in his theorisation of dialogic discourse – heteroglossia, polyphony, and hybridisation. Bakhtin explains that, in dialogic relations, it is the conflictual interaction of contradictory voices that creates new meaning. In this oppositional struggle, or dialectic battle, two forces are competing through language. A centripetal force works to centralise and unify ideological meaning in the monologic interests of the dominant social group, while a centrifugal force fragments thought into multiple worldviews (Morris, 1994a, p. 15). Every utterance reflects both centripetal and centrifugal forces, or processes of centralisation and decentralisation, or unification and disunification: “The word, directed towards its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgements and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group” (Bakhtin, 1994/1935, pp. 75-76). For example, thinking of Indigenous relations at Site A, the word ‘land’ weaves, merges, recoils, and intersects among centripetal forces that might view land as an economic resource, and centrifugal forces that might view land in terms of spiritual relationship. This site of contestation between multiple social discourses, then, is what constitutes heteroglossia. At this point, Bakhtin paints an arguably overoptimistic picture, proposing that the ideological nature of monologic truth claims can

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\(^1\) There is some dispute regarding the authorship of works signed by Voloshinov (and Medvedev), which some consider to have been written largely by Bakhtin. In the absence of conclusive evidence, however, I have followed Morris’ (1994a, pp. 1-4) practice of attributing works to Voloshinov where they were signed by him.
be recognised simply by the existence of alternative worldviews, and that ‘unofficial’ accounts can thereby undermine ‘official’ accounts (Morris, 1994a, pp. 16-20).

Heteroglossia, then, refers to the juxtaposition of various languages that reflect specific worldviews, each characterised by its own principles and values (Bakhtin, 1994/1935, p. 115). Polyphony, meanwhile, means the ‘multi-voicedness’ of all discourse, in the sense that individual consciousness is always in an intensely dialogic relationship with another consciousness (Morris, 1994a, p. 14). It emphasises the coexistence, interaction, and internal contradictions within a single person (Bakhtin, 1994/1963, pp. 89-96). Hybridisation, finally, is the mixing of two or more languages in a single utterance, either intentionally or unintentionally. According to Bakhtin (1994/1935, p. 117), hybridisation is the primary way in which languages change over time. However, Bakhtin’s use of polyphony and hybridisation was in the context of utterances of characters within the modern novel, whereas heteroglossia relates to discourses interacting dialogically within whole language systems. Further, while polyphony refers to discourses interacting on equal terms within a single person, heteroglossia envisages conflict between antagonistic social forces (Morris, 1994b, p. 249). In this sense, heteroglossia is the most useful concept for investigating discursive tensions between competing worldviews or social groups, and it is consistent with the view of community engagement as a site of interdiscursive contestation. More recently, Martin and Rose (2007) have identified three forms of heteroglossia, namely projection, concession and modality, which can be identified at a lexico-grammatical level. In Chapters Five and Six, I draw on this approach to compare the extent to which participants acknowledge multiple voices in their conceptions of community engagement.

This poststructural emphasis on discourse, language, power, and the subject largely informs my textual analysis, which I explain below. In this analysis, I begin at the level of individual words, and then attempt to situate lexico-grammatical choices within the broader, macrostructural rationalities of contemporary, ‘stakeholder’ capitalism. In this way, I endeavour to elucidate relationships between mechanisms of power at the micro (local) level and the macro (global) level, which I see as interwoven with the ongoing, dialogic interactions of language.

Poststructuralism, however, is not easily delimited, perhaps because Foucault’s ideas evolved significantly over time (e.g., Miller, 1994). Further, as mentioned above, poststructuralism is not simply synonymous with Foucault. Indeed, its distinction from structuralism is contested, and it is sometimes conflated or confused with postmodernism (e.g., Agger, 1991; Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Thus, there are differing views on the relationship between local and global levels, or on the extent
to which macrostructural discourses constrain agency of thought (Bannett, 1989; McKenna, 2004; van Dijk, 1997b). In general, though, poststructuralism is relevant to the present study because it offers an epistemological orientation that critically highlights relationships between language-as-discourse, power, the subject, and social practice (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Clegg & Palmer, 1996; Foucault, 1972; Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). It could be argued, however, that a critical realist position is equally relevant, because it envisages the presence of underlying structural mechanisms, and would also view people’s conceptions of community engagement as being socially constructed.

**Critical realism**

Critical realism has its inception in the work of Roy Bhaskar, and particularly to a union of his notions of ‘transcendental realism’ (Bhaskar, 1975) and ‘critical naturalism’ (Bhaskar, 1979). What appears to have evolved into ‘critical realism’ is a postpositivist philosophy of science that combines an objectivist ontology with a broadly constructivist, or interpretivist, epistemology. However, if we distinguish between ‘moderate interpretivism’ and ‘radical interpretivism’, critical realism rejects the relativism of the latter (Kwan & Tsang, 2001). That is, it holds that there can exist a reality independent of our minds, but that knowledge of this reality is socially constructed (Morton, 2006). Thus, rigorous scientific research can lead us towards ‘true’ accounts, but our empirical efforts are fallible and must be repeatedly re-tested (Tsang & Kwan, 1999). Although critical in conception, it has been associated with more conservative worldviews (Collier, 1994; Mutch, 2005), and Willmott (2005), in particular, questions its commitment to emancipation, relative to a (poststructural) discourse approach.

For critical realists, agency is separable from structure. In other words, social reality comprises a system of structures with causal powers, which, under some conditions, are actualised to produce events, some of which may be observable empirically (Morton, 2006, p. 2). Thus, critical realism breaks from positivism in asserting that causal structures can exist whether or not we actually observe them empirically: “The absence of an observable event does not necessarily mean that the underlying mechanisms do not exist” (Tsang & Kwan, 1999). Applied to the present study, and drawing on Fleetwood (2005, p. 203), an Aboriginal woman does not need to know and say that she is being socially marginalised for us to propose that neocolonial and patriarchal systems exist. Critical realists, therefore, aim to penetrate behind actors’ impressions towards ‘actual’ events, and behind actual events towards structures and causal powers (Leca & Naccache, 2006, p. 630).
For this study, however, a significant problem with critical realism is that it implies that our failure to grasp ‘reality’ indicates an inability to fully understand phenomena. In contrast, a social constructionist position argues that ‘realities’ are products of different contexts, histories, perspectives and sense-making processes, and that realist-oriented research overlooks these contextual sensitivities (Mir & Watson, 2001). Further, according to Willmott (2005), critical realism presents ‘structures’ as relatively enduring, or ‘intransitive’, perhaps because of its assumption that the logic of natural science can translate to the social world. Conversely, a poststructural discourse perspective sees the constitution of the social world as inherently subject to contestation through discursive practices. Thus, a minerals company’s community relations manager does not become such simply by virtue of being defined as one, but by participating in discursive practices through which he/she becomes constituted and identified as one (see Willmott, 2005, p. 760). Hence, I have chosen to favour poststructuralism over critical realism on the basis that poststructuralism foregrounds (inter)discursive practices, and their inherent potential for ongoing contestation, which critical realism overlooks because of its objectivist ontology.

The above discussion has concerned historical, philosophical developments in the broad area of social research. Since the present study involves analysing social phenomena in relation to organisations, it is particularly pertinent to discuss how organisation studies have unfolded in the light of these broader philosophical developments.

**Theoretical perspectives on organisation**

Theories on organisation have developed alongside evolutions in organisational form to incorporate post-positivist theoretical developments. When hierarchies were the norm in the 1960s, positivism largely informed the research agenda. Organisations were typically portrayed as bureaucracies, featuring centralisation, hierarchy, and authority (Weber, 1978). When new organisational forms, such as networks and joint ventures, emerged, postmodern perspectives became more useful in explaining the increase in diversity, the decrease in structure and certainty, and the looser boundaries (Clegg & Hardy, 1996). Thus, contemporary organisations can be considered as sites where work and self-identities are blurred or coopted (Du Gay, 2007). However, this does not imply that postmodern perspectives have overcome the structuralist legacy. Instead, organisation studies is a contested discourse, comprising multiple claims for recognition and dominance. Nevertheless, the fundamental epistemological debating point in organisation studies can be seen broadly as ‘understanding’ versus ‘explanation’ or ‘prediction’ (Westwood & Clegg, 2003).
For Alvesson and Deetz (2000, p. 13), modernism, in an organisational context, means “the instrumentalisation of people and nature through the use of scientific-technical knowledge”. As long ago as the 1930s, critics highlighted the failure of rationalistic organisation theory to maintain social order. By the late 1940s, dominant theories portrayed organisations as systems focused on social integration. However, from the 1950s until the 1970s, structural functionalism and systems theory dominated, emphasising stability and growth. This perspective became entrenched with the development of contingency theory, which combined functionalism’s assumptions with a managerialist ethic (Reed, 1996).

Before the 1970s, therefore, management research was predominantly functionalist, reflecting organisations becoming more structured (Westwood & Clegg, 2003). This perspective emphasised order, consensus, and ‘legitimate’ power, portraying the organisation as a system applying rational decision-making to predefined goals. The ‘logical’ organisation would deliver the victory of rationality and reason over irrationality and ignorance, while overcoming the conflict between individual and collective interests (Reed, 1996). The researcher’s task was to collect and analyse objective data through hypothetico-deductive methods, and usually to represent such data quantitatively, with a scientific focus on validity, reliability, and replicability. Contingency theory, which holds that organisations achieve their goals by evolving according to environmental conditions, epitomises this scientific approach (Clegg & Hardy, 1996; Westwood & Clegg, 2003).

The challenge to orthodox functionalism in organisation theory was triggered by Silverman (1971), who introduced an interpretive approach, informed by social constructionism; by Weick (1969), who focused on processes; and by Braverman (1974), who highlighted notions of conflict and power. More recently, postmodern and poststructural perspectives have challenged orthodox organisation studies, especially in terms of the field’s epistemology and, therefore, its methodologies. Two themes of this challenge are questioning whether orthodox approaches can represent phenomena, and applying reflexivity to question the supposed objectivity and value-freedom of orthodox approaches (Westwood & Clegg, 2003).

While positivism remains highly influential, the legacy of the postmodern condition may be uncertainty regarding what an organisation is. Nevertheless, in a conservative reaction (Reed, 1996), or a ‘protectionism’ (Clegg & Hardy, 1996), some writers (e.g., L. Donaldson, 1985; Pfeffer, 1993) have tried to re-assert the dominance of orthodox functionalism in organisation theory, denying the legitimacy of non-orthodox perspectives. Meanwhile, organisational behaviour, reflecting a scientific heritage in psychology, remains strongly influenced by a positivist
epistemology. For example, Chatman and Flynn (2001), in a study on diversity and cooperation in work teams, adopt a hypotheses-testing methodology. Some authors portray their approaches as helping organisations gain a ‘competitive edge’, a position imbued with neoclassical assumptions. Similarly, literature on the relatively recent concept of ‘organisational culture’ typically portrays such culture as unitary, and as something that can be measured, with an implicit objective of leveraging it to help achieve organisational objectives (Westwood & Clegg, 2003).

The rôle of power has been discussed extensively in organisation theory, both as a symbolic, institutional feature, and as a resource used to exert influence (Westwood & Clegg, 2003). Early conceptions include a Weberian notion of power as an institutional concept of differentially distributed resources that reinforce hierarchies, and a Machiavellian and Foucauldian focus on political processes (Reed, 1996). Lukes (1974) differentiates between ‘episodic’ power, which focuses on observed conflicts, ‘manipulative’ power, which focuses on hidden activities, and ‘hegemonic’ power, which focuses on how ideological and social structures delimit people’s values and actions. Integrating these perspectives has led to notions of power being exercised, and thus control and domination being maintained, through general but localised organisational practices, embedded via ‘expert’ discourses (Reed, 1996).

Poststructural perspectives of power in organisations see it as inextricably linked with knowledge, as described in Chapter Two. Indeed, organisation studies can be seen as a ‘power-knowledge nexus’ (Foucault, 1980; Westwood & Clegg, 2003). Rejecting deterministic theories, this view sees power working in unstable and shifting networks, and sees certain fields as being colonised as the territory for expert groups. It focuses on knowledge, as the potential conferrer of power (Reed, 1996), and on how power and knowledge work together to include and exclude particular voices or knowledge claims. For the purposes of this study, then, a focus on mechanisms of power among organisational relationships, grounded in a poststructural orientation, can offer new insights into lived experiences and construction processes of community engagement. For example, how does the historically-situated relationship of power between minerals companies and local communities influence which statements are possible and which statements are not possible? This question can be addressed from a critical management perspective, consistent with the poststructural orientation.

**A critical management approach**

Earlier, I explained how critical perspectives represent an advance from earlier paradigms, by questioning the nature and construction processes of ‘truth’. Thus, a key question is: For whom is
the research undertaken? In orthodox research, this question is not addressed, since it is assumed that the research is objective, or that it should serve managerial interests (Westwood & Clegg, 2003). Rather than purporting to represent reality (objective or subjective), the tasks of critical management research are threefold: providing insight into local phenomena, developing a critique of conventional ideas, and facilitating change (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, pp. 1-20). Insight comes through interpretation, and by understanding how knowledge, ideas, and experiences are constructed through social and linguistic processes. Critique comes from understanding how strategic forces deploy and sustain power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980), from exposing historical privilege and dominant perspectives, and by empowering hidden voices (Kilduff, 1993; Norris, 1982). Change itself, finally, comes from developing skills in understanding, interpreting, and reflecting, so that we promote alternative vocabularies, develop ‘dissensus’, or constructive conflict, and catalyse new agendas (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, pp. 140-181).

‘Community engagement’, or the more general ‘stakeholder engagement’, has been hailed as a key ingredient in developing better organisational practices (e.g., DITR, 2006; Elkington, 2001; Elkington & Wheeler, 2003). However, what do we mean by ‘better organisational practices’? Better for whom? Taking a critical perspective means problematising such taken-for-granted notions by unpacking the discourse of community engagement and examining how it is socially constructed. It means challenging the assumptions underlying its theory and practice. It means more deeply analysing the concepts and social phenomena involved, rather than designing a ‘best practice model’ unquestioningly and unreflexively (Banerjee, 2008).

Methodologically, therefore, my starting point is a critical management approach, drawing particularly on poststructuralism and interpretivism. A ‘critical management approach’, however, is not a methodology; rather, it is a broad descriptor, a set of approaches, a ‘sub-discipline’ (Fournier & Grey, 2000), or a ‘field’ (D. Grant & Iedema, 2005, p. 55). Next, therefore, I outline the three methodologies that I have used—ethnography, phenomenography, and critical discourse analysis—and explain their appropriateness. Additionally, I begin by discussing the tradition of case study, which delimits this study.

**Case study**

Case study originated in anthropology and sociology. The anthropological foundation involved efforts to understand cultures, via participant observation, in which the researcher became integrated with that society over an extended period of time (Hamel, with Dufour, & Fortin, 1993,
In this sense, case study shares much with ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 1). Sociological case study, meanwhile, responds to the notion that, in an increasingly mobile society with mass communication, it is problematic to speak of ‘a culture’ as if it were a homogeneous, geographically-bounded entity. Instead, the focus should be on a key element, or ‘case’, as an observation point from which to understand a society (Hamel et al., 1993).

Case study requires clear parameters of time and place, or ‘boundedness’ (Creswell, 1998, p. 61; Merriam, 1998, pp. 27-28). A ‘bounded system’ delimits the parameters of the object of study; the principal interest lies within the cases themselves, and in comparisons between them (Eisenhardt, 1989). As with other qualitative methodologies, case study methods comprise interviews, observations, and document analysis. It favours an inductive approach, in which theories are developed, then validated empirically (Hamel et al., 1993).

Case study is commonly criticised for lacking rigour and representativeness (Hamel et al., 1993, p. 23). The first criticism may be addressed by reconsidering definitions of validity and reliability, and through reflexivity. I discuss these concepts below. The second criticism may be addressed by clarifying what a case study purports to represent. It is inappropriate to claim that one case represents the whole population, since there is no justifiable proof of external validity. However, we can claim that a case represents itself and that it might have similarities elsewhere. The value of this aspiration is suggested by Griseri’s (2002, p. 265) view that an ‘ideal management library’ would be one comprising records of local solutions to specific challenges.

Case study can be a step towards generalisability, moreover, especially when a case provides insight into a theory (Stake, 2000, p. 439). Thus, while generalisability is often of marginal importance in qualitative research (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997; Wainwright, 1997), this research has theoretical and practical implications for other mining and industrial sites and communities. As noted earlier, my intention is that the cases can inform a more general understanding of community engagement, rather than claiming to deduce a universal theory.

The relevance of case study to this research

Some authors (e.g. Creswell, 1998) classify case study as its own qualitative methodology, in contrast to, for example, ethnography and grounded theory. However, I see it more as a way of perceiving and delimiting the object being studied, a process that may involve various methodologies (Eisenhardt, 1989; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000). Using a case study framework, therefore, I could compare and contrast the salient issues of community engagement within and
between the two sites. The rationale is that two sites of intrinsic interest were identified, representing a ‘bounded system’ (Creswell, 1998, p. 61; Merriam, 1998, pp. 27-28).

Studying two cases offers opportunities for comparability, consistent with the poststructural themes of Foucault’s work, viz. refutation of a systematising theory, a single determinant, and a linear schema, and a focus on local events (Smart, 1985, p. 16). Site A, which comprises two operations, has resourced its community relations ‘function’ relatively well. Meanwhile, Site B has historically adopted a relatively improvised approach to community engagement. Additionally, within each case, there is an opportunity to compare how company and community participants understand and experience community engagement. Thus, I am interested in how these contextual situations influence people’s conceptions of the company-community relationship, and how they relate to texts and discursive practices.

As a tangible focus from which to investigate the rather intangible phenomenon of community engagement, I concentrated on one issue for each case. I selected each issue following an initial visit to each site. At Site A, Indigenous relations is an area that site management was having difficulty resolving, apparently because of competing worldviews. Meanwhile, at Site B, access to artesian water was a point of company-community tension. These issues, therefore, potentially provided rich material for interpretive and critical research, since they involve issues of power in evolving, contested contexts.

**Ethnography**

The popularity of ethnography emerged partly from a disillusionment with the dominant, quantitative methods within social sciences. It represents the shift in focus from objectivity to subjectivity, and from detachment to involvement, as well as the rising interest in reflexivity (Adler & Adler, 1987). For some, ethnography is almost synonymous with qualitative research, such that they choose not to distinguish strictly between the two (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, pp. 1-2). In common with many qualitative methodologies, ethnography explores social phenomena, rather than testing hypotheses (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 25). It involves collecting unstructured empirical material among a small number of cases, and interpreting the meanings that people express (Flick, 2002, pp. 146-148). Ethnography aims to satisfy three requirements of social research: the need for empirical observation, the need to remain open to new empirical material, and the concern for observations to be grounded in the specific context (Baszanger & Dodier, 1997, pp. 8-11).
While ethnography has no universal definition, it has certain characteristics. Firstly, it features participant observation in an everyday setting. Secondly, through observation, it aims to develop a comprehensive and holistic picture of a culture or society. Thirdly, it seeks to contextualise its explanations. Finally, it involves detailed description and analysis (Creswell, 1998; Stewart, 1998, pp. 5-7). Thus, it is less a specific method, and more a style of research, which aims to understand people’s actions and experiences, and the meanings of their social worlds, through researcher participation in the research setting (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 6; Brewer, 2000, p. 11; Flick, 2002, pp. 146-148). Indeed, it seems that some ethnographers pursue their vocation as a matter of philosophical conviction (L. L. Putnam et al., 1993), rather than letting the research question determine the appropriate methodology.

The empirical method most central to ethnography, then, is participant observation. Typically, this method involves collecting material by actively participating in the daily lives of the people being studied (Flick, 2002, pp. 139-146). As well as simply watching and observing, it involves talking informally with the people concerned to understand their interpretations of the world (Creswell, 1998). The principle here is that, by personally experiencing and sharing the lives of those being studied, the researcher can develop a deeper understanding of the local culture.

Ethnography, however, is epistemologically heterogeneous. While some ethnographers seek to produce ‘factual’ accounts of the nature of phenomena and cultures, others argue for a critical approach. Equally, some, such as early ethnomethodologists and existential sociologists, have partly or wholly rejected the focus on objectivity, arguing that validity depends on closeness to the empirical material (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 12). Given that much ethnographic work has reinforced colonial and neocolonial assumptions regarding knowledge production, often unintentionally, the context at Site A, in particular, calls for a more reflexive approach, perhaps approaching ‘ontological introspection’ (Banerjee & Linstead, 2004).

A critical approach to ethnography emphasises the need for reflexivity, acknowledging the researcher’s own power, privilege and biases when representing people and situations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, pp. 14-16; Noblit, Flores, & Murillo Jr, 2004; Wainwright, 1997). Madison (2005, p. 5) notes that critical ethnography “takes us beneath surface appearances, disrupts the status quo, and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control”. Its premise is that research can be both scientific and critical (Thomas, 1993, p. vii). Further, Madison (2005, p. 10) contends that critical
ethnography, by engaging in dialogic relationships, resists the tendency of some previous
ethnographic work to portray subjects as static and unchanging. Thus, Thomas (1993, p. 4) proposes
that conventional ethnography describes what is, while critical ethnography asks what could be.

**The relevance of ethnography to this research**

Ethnography traditionally involves an extended period of socialisation within a culture, in order to
apprehend fully the values and practices of the group, and to experience the full range of events and
activities (Brewer, 2000, p. 61; Stewart, 1998, p. 20). In this sense, “the less time for fieldwork, the
less the ethnography will be an ethnography” (Stewart, 1998, p. 20). In my case, immersion in the
cultures of both minerals companies and their local communities might have indeed delivered rich
empirical material.

However, while the principal aim of ethnography is to understand and describe a culture or society
(Creswell, 1998), the present study aims to understand a *phenomenon*, viz. corporate-community
engagement. Nevertheless, using ethnographic principles and methods to seek insights into cultures
and contexts underlying a phenomenon may help to understand the phenomenon itself. Thus, while
I could not develop deep ethnographic descriptions from a few weeks of fieldwork, observation
informed by ethnography could illuminate the discursive tensions at each site, providing a
contextual foundation for subsequent analysis of interview transcripts. The aim of the ethnographic
component of this study, therefore, is to describe the contexts within which community relations
work occurs at the two sites.

Baszanger and Dodier (1997, p. 9) assert that a true ethnographic study is one in which participants
are not influenced by the study arrangements. However, study arrangements, such as the presence
of recording equipment, inevitably create some degree of artificiality (Flick, 2002, p. 167). Adler
and Adler (1987, p. 10) describe the ethnographic challenge of getting close to participants while
maintaining professional distance as a ‘balancing act’ deriving from the pervasive influence of the
positivist emphasis on objectivity. Since a critical perspective does not aim for scientific objectivity,
this challenge is less relevant (Wainwright, 1997). Thus, I do not attempt to ‘write myself out’ of
the material, but rather to interpret observations reflexively, with an awareness that my own
presence, with its attendant power, privilege, and biases, could influence situations.

**Phenomenography**

Phenomenography is an interpretive methodology for understanding how people conceive concepts
in their everyday lives (Sandberg, 2000). It derives from symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1938,
1969) and phenomenology (Husserl, 1931), founded in a relational ontology and social epistemology, which see people and worlds as inextricably linked through lived experience. Marton (1994) claims that phenomenology differs from phenomenography in that the former concerns researchers’ ways of experiencing phenomena, whereas the latter concerns participants’ experiences.

The word phenomenography derives from the Greek words *phainemenon* (appearance) and *graphein* (description). Thus, phenomenography concerns the description of things as they appear to us (Marton & Fai, 1999, p. 1). It is the empirical study of the different ways in which people experience, perceive, understand, and conceptualise various phenomena. People’s ways of experiencing things—their conceptions—refer to ways of being aware of those things, where awareness is an inseparable relationship between subject and object. The principal method for collecting empirical material in phenomenography is individual interviews, since these help to thematise conceptions (Marton, 1994).

Phenomenography originates from studies of learning among university students at the University of Göteborg, Sweden, in the early 1970s. Having observed that some people are better at learning than others, the studies asked two questions. Firstly, what does it mean, that some people are better at learning than others? Secondly, why are some people better at learning than others? Lately, this questioning approach has focused more on the differences, or variations, between people’s ways of experiencing something, and on how those variations evolve (Marton & Fai, 1999, pp. 2-4).

Hasselgren and Beach (1996) question phenomenographers’ claim to describe others’ experiences of a phenomenon, since this claim implies living the experience of a phenomenon vicariously, disregarding one’s own experience. However, these criticisms may overlook two crucial features of phenomenography. Firstly, phenomenographic interviews stress a dialogue, as opposed to an inquisitional interview, between researcher and participant. Secondly, Hasselgren and Beach appear implicitly to assume positivist conceptions of validity, arguing that validity is breached through the researcher’s vicarious interpretations, whereas phenomenography adopts different, interpretive notions of validity, which I discuss later in this chapter.

Phenomenographic studies should not be read as objective accounts of others’ lives. By definition, all interpretive research involves interpretation of others’ worlds, a process that is influenced by the

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2 I use the terms ‘conceive’ and ‘conception’ to refer to someone’s way of understanding community engagement as a phenomenon, whereas ‘conceptualise’ and ‘conceptualisations’ refer to their ways of understanding various dimensions within community engagement.
researcher’s historically and culturally situated experiences. A set of conceptions derived from phenomenographic interviews is, therefore, only an interpretation of the material from those interviews, no matter how genuinely dialogic the interviews. Alternative interpretations may be possible. Nevertheless, concerns regarding truth claims may be addressed through reflexivity, through reconsidering definitions of validity and reliability (Sandberg, 2005), and through triangulating interpretive studies with critical perspectives.

The relevance of phenomenography to this research
Since phenomenography uses people’s lived experiences as the point of departure (Marton, 1994), its social epistemology seems well suited for developing understandings of how people conceive an emerging phenomenon, such as community engagement. In interviews with company employees, I explored the epistemological and axiological foundations of community engagement from the employees’ perspectives. Epistemologically, how do they acquire knowledge of what community engagement means? Axiologically, do they consider it necessary to engage community members for instrumental/economic or normative/moral reasons, or both? Meanwhile, phenomenographic interviews with community members also explored how they conceive the corporate-community relationship and engagement processes.

A single interview can never ‘uncover’ lived experience. Furthermore, it may elicit merely espoused conceptions, rather than uncovering underlying assumptions. Phenomenographic interviewing, however, does aim specifically to be faithful to participants’ lived experiences (Francis, 1996), and to encourage participants to reflect on their expressed conceptions (Bowden, 1996). Ultimately, my objective in interviews was to get as close as possible to people’s lived experience, through dialogic discussion. Applying phenomenography, therefore, enabled me to discuss community engagement with participants not as an isolated phenomenon, independent of the people ‘engaging’, but as a socially constructed phenomenon. Further, in subsequent analysis, I could consider variations in participants’ conceptions.

Phenomenography does not represent itself as critical. Nevertheless, because of my poststructural orientation, I approached interviews and analysis with critical awareness of how language and power might interact to shape participants’ conceptions in varying ways. Moreover, to understand the reasons for variations in conceptions more rigorously, I adopted a third methodology—critical discourse analysis—which explicitly considers the rôles of language and power. As Phillips and Hardy (2002, pp. 12-13) point out, “As researchers, we are no longer interested simply in what the social world means to the subjects who populate it; we are interested in how and why the social
world comes to have the meanings that it does.” Thus, I sought to combine both interpretive and critical approaches.

**Critical discourse analysis (CDA)**

While other qualitative methods seek to understand social reality, discourse analysis seeks to uncover how it is produced (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 6). Discourse analysis evolved from linguistics, sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology, poststructuralism, sociology, and social psychology (Potter, 1997, pp. 144-160). Its main meta-theoretical underpinnings are anti-realism and constructionism, although some practitioners take a critical realist view (Fairclough, 2003). It analyses language and texts not as abstract entities, but as manifestations of what people do and how they construct their worlds. It can thus demonstrate how processes that appear to be rational are contested, unstable, and discursively constructed (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 41).

In a discourse analytic approach, language is seen not as an objective conduit, but as “an intersubjective accomplishment of mutual understanding in an ongoing exchange” (Giddens, 1993, p. 110). This resonates with the Bakhtinian conceptualisation of discourse as dialogic, or interactive. That is, every utterance is moulded both by all relevant previous utterances, and by its anticipated response; thus, the utterance is “only a moment in the continuous process of verbal communication” (Voloshinov, 1994/1929, p. 59). Hence, the utterance has a synchronic dimension, being of its own contextual moment, and a diachronic dimension, being part of ongoing social change (Morris, 1994b, p. 5). Further, language is seen as evolving *interdependently* with concrete situations, rather than in either an “abstract linguistic system” or “the individual psyche of speakers” (Voloshinov, 1994/1929, p. 59). This leads to a definition of discourse analysis as the analysis of the relationships between discourse and other aspects of social practice, such as subjects, objects, values, activities, time, and place (Fairclough, 2003, p. 205).

Phillips and Hardy (2002, pp. 12-16) note five reasons why discourse analysis has become relevant to organisation studies. Firstly, the ‘linguistic turn’ comprises a social constructionist acceptance that language has a constitutive and constructive rôle, rather than simply reflecting and representing reality. Secondly, new fields of study, such as the environment, have emerged, and existing fields, such as identity, have been reconceptualised. Thirdly, the revitalisation of critical management studies has foregrounded a concern with power. Fourthly, organisational forms have evolved from hierarchical bureaucracies to fluid and ephemeral phenomena. Fifthly, the limits of traditional research methods have catalysed a desire for new insights from different, less institutionalised
perspectives. Of these five reasons, the ‘linguistic turn’ may be the most significant, since it can reveal the political nature of organisations, and how systems of advantage have been sustained (Deetz, 2003, p. 424). It is not surprising, then, that a critical—and, in particular, a poststructural—perspective has exerted a significant influence on discourse analysis.

Critical discourse studies are explicitly committed to justice, democracy, equality, and fairness, and emphasise materialism, historicity, ideology, language, and power (McKenna, 2004; van Dijk, 1993). Critical discourse analysis (CDA), therefore, considers language and non-language texts, and questions ontological, epistemological, and axiological issues (Luke, 2002; McKenna, 2004). This means understanding how historical and cultural systems of power and knowledge constitute people, their worlds and social practice, and how, in return, practice is constitutive of discourse (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Foucault, 1972; Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). In this view, power is seen as “embedded through the way in which taken-for-granted assumptions serve to privilege some actors and disadvantage others” (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 27), resonating with the ‘invisible consensus’ of social power that I described in Chapter Two.

Discourse itself, therefore, is both constitutive and constituting. It constructs and reproduces social identities, relationships, and knowledge (Fairclough, 1992); “our talk, and what we are, are one and the same” (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 2). From this perspective, social practice is considered to be potentially as informative as the texts that it produces, and that reproduce it (Fairclough, 2003). Thus, discourse is “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that bring an object into being” (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 3). A critical appreciation of the constitutive function of discourse, then, can provide new insights into how community engagement comes to have the meanings that it does.

The relevance of CDA to this research

CDA can inform various phenomena since it combines the analysis of language itself with a focus on social practice (Fairclough, 2003). Thus, it has been used to analyse race, ethnicity, pedagogy, and gender, and is suited to consider neoliberal hegemony and technocratic control (McKenna, 2004). According to Fairclough (1995, p. 73), language is ‘imbricated’ in social relations. That is, the macrostructure (society broadly) enables certain discursive formations3, within which meso-level (e.g., organisational) discourses develop. These meso-level discourses, in turn, strongly enmesh in micro-level (everyday) discourses, each with their inherent ontologies, subject positions, and ethics. Thus, everyday utterances linguistically manifest macrostructural rationalities, but not in

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3 According to Foucault (1972, p. 38), discursive formations can be characterised either by regularities, or by dispersions (discontinuities), between statements, objects, concepts, or thematic choices.
a rigidly determined way. Furthermore, texts form part of the discourse that constitutes a phenomenon (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 71), or are instantiations of the discourse. Analysis of texts, therefore, should consider the circumstances and practices of text production and audience reception (Fairclough, 1995, p. 9). To this end, I analysed empirical material in the context of both organisational discourses and wider social discourses, and my analysis is predicated on the interplay between macro, meso, and micro levels.

Livesey (2002) notes that, according to Foucauldian theory, meaning is perpetually reconstituted, and dominant discourses thus never achieve complete hegemony. Nevertheless, the nature of power relations between minerals companies and communities (H. Cheney et al., 2002; Whiteman & Mamen, 2002) may exclude and marginalise some from the discourse (Foucault, 1981). Analysing the construction processes of community engagement discourses, therefore, may unmask hidden assumptions, and highlight marginalised perspectives (Kilduff, 1993; Norris, 1982).

As explained in Chapter One, community engagement can be seen as an interdiscursive concept, appearing to legitimate and preserve crucial elements of neoliberal and neoclassical discourses, while accommodating some elements of social justice and environmentalism discourses. Since discourse is simultaneously a piece of text, a discursive practice, and a social practice (Fairclough, 1992), it is pertinent to analyse the language used in the companies’ formal community engagement discourses, the ways in which this language is formally produced, and contextual social practices (Livesey, 2002). The aim, then, is to understand how discourse is interwoven with systems of power and knowledge, and thus to consider how various discourses construct ‘community engagement’ as a social practice.

**Triangulating methodologies**

So, within the case study framework, ethnography, phenomenography, and CDA inform my critical-interpretive approach. While using only one methodology would be more ‘manageable’, the current state of knowledge in a field, rather than a personally preferred approach, should determine methodology (P. Johnson & Harris, 1997). Since community engagement is an emerging concept and practice, it is relatively unstructured conceptually. The aim, therefore, is to develop this understanding further, and triangulating methodologies should make this process more comprehensive (Gummesson, 2000, pp. 142-143; Lewis & Grimes, 1999). The emphasis is on providing ‘lenses’ through which to view alternative realities, rather than deriving unitary descriptions that ‘mirror’ pre-existing realities (Deetz, 1996, p. 197; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 6).
Furthermore, because no one methodology uniquely represents ‘truth’, breaking down disciplinary boundaries helps in representing those neglected in dominant discourses (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997). For example, ethnography can complement discourse analysis by showing how discourses are manifested (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 9), and triangulating CDA with another methodology minimises the risk of bias that CDA can present (Widdowson, 1998, 2000; Wodak, 2001, p. 65). Nevertheless, mixing methodologies also invites charges of conflating epistemologically contradictory positions.

As noted above, an epistemological problem arises from the phenomenographic claim of interpreting and describing meanings. This problem is that such interpretation and description fail to acknowledge the rôle of macrostructural rationalities and ideological assumptions, seeming to accept people’s conceptions as ‘the way things are’. Similarly, interpretation and description overlook Foucault’s (1972) notion of a speaker’s discursive choices being limited by the prevailing discursive formation, and Fairclough’s (1992) assertion that discourse constructs and reproduces reality, as well as representing it. Methodologically, therefore, while phenomenography may be useful in understanding people’s conceptions of community engagement, it does not explain how interviewees, as discourse participants, are to varying degrees discursively constructed, or how they draw on available discourses when deriving their conceptions. Thus, researchers must connect interviewees’ stories to the historical, ideological, structural and economic conditions in which those stories are situated (Fine et al., 2000), and CDA aims to fulfil this task.

Epistemologically, however, there is an inherent tension between the phenomenological underpinnings of phenomenography and the sociological underpinnings of poststructuralism and CDA. In particular, phenomenography, which has focused on educational research, has an individual focus, in contrast to the macrostructural concerns of poststructuralism. Thus, interpretive accounts offer insights into people’s lived experiences, while a poststructural orientation seeks to understand how those lived experiences are socially constructed through discourse, while rejecting grand narratives.

Phenomenography, then, may provide a useful interpretive methodology with which to explore variations in people’s conceptions of ‘community engagement’. Subsequently, by triangulating phenomenography with CDA, I endeavoured not only to understand people’s conceptions, but also to consider how they are discursively constructed. In this way, I hoped to gain insights into the functioning of subtle forms of power, reflecting Foucault’s (1980) notion of power being not centralised, but residing in localised contexts (‘capillaries’) in an intimate relationship with systems.
of knowledge. Furthermore, the critical approach I adopt towards ethnography helps to address some concerns with phenomenography. Combining these two interpretive methodologies enables me to apply phenomenography in a way that goes beyond mere description, by considering macrostructural forces that may shape people’s conceptions of a phenomenon. Thus, I saw interviews as dialogues that I approached with critical sensitivity. Just as I adopt critical ethnographic methods, therefore, my approach to phenomenography could be described as critical. I then augment these interpretive studies with CDA as described above.

In summary, methodological triangulation can present epistemological problems, especially if it approaches multi-paradigm work with contradictory positions. However, I see the use of multiple methodologies as offering opportunities to deepen understandings of the phenomenon under investigation, and to challenge my own analyses and interpretations iteratively. Indeed, it may be the contradictions between methods that provide the most informative learnings (Fine et al., 2000). Thus, engaging with the differences, disputes, and dissonances presented by arguably conflicting methodologies may be a fruitful approach towards developing broad and deep understandings, both of participants’ experiences, and of corporate-community engagement more generally. To this end, I scrutinised various company documents using verbal and visual text analysis, I undertook a number of episodes of observation, and I interviewed 33 participants, analysing the transcripts at both conceptual and textual levels.

**Methods**

**Secondary research**

As noted in Chapter Two, corporate reports represent the most public interface between corporations and society (Livesey, 2002), and help to shape subjective understandings of a company as impression management media (Hooghiemstra, 2000). While the numerical format of financial reporting conveys objectivity, such reports do not merely reflect ‘reality’; rather, from a phenomenological perspective, both writer and reader co-create a report’s meaning (D. A. Jameson, 2000, p. 10). Furthermore, they are socially constitutive, based on and reinforcing the ideologies and values of capitalism and consumerism (Graves, Flesher, & Jordan, 1996). Since texts constitute expressions of authorial attitudes, they convey ideological opinions, they construct relations between writer and reader, and they organise the discourse (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). The function of social and environmental reporting, meanwhile, is especially contestable. It might signify a technologisation of discourse, representing efforts by dominant social forces to control the course of change (Fairclough, 1995, p. 91), or a conversationalisation of discourse, which may
herald increased openness and democracy (Fairclough, 1995, p. 101). Indeed, it may signify both simultaneously, leading to discursive tension. These potential discursive functions, and their tensions, render the verbal and visual texts within sustainability reports worthy of critical analysis, in an effort to understand their constitutive rôle in the discourse of community engagement.

The minerals industry, perceiving threats to its legitimacy from rising accountability expectations, has seen sustainability reporting as an opportunity to respond (Jenkins, 2004). Ostensibly, such reports belong in the same genre as financial reports, discussing company performance and intentions. However, unlike financial reports, whose content is largely determined by regulatory requirements and accounting conventions, these reports have no standard format, making evaluation and comparability difficult. Companies are relatively free to determine what to include and what to exclude. The nomenclature ‘report’, therefore, with its connotation of objectivity, impartiality, and value-freedom, may conceal a rhetorical function. Company websites, similarly, appear ostensibly to present objective ‘information’ regarding companies’ social and environmental strategies, policies and activities. Since texts are multimodal (Iedema & Wodak, 1999; Martin, 2000), I analysed both the verbal and visual texts within this material.

**Analysing verbal text**

For the first part of my analysis, I analysed verbal text in the most recent public ‘sustainability’ reports for the two research sites, and the two equivalent reports for the parent corporations; i.e., four reports in total. To ensure relevance to the research question, I considered only the ‘Community’ sections, excluding, for example, sections on the environment and workplace health and safety. The ‘Community’ sections typically comprise general comments outlining why the companies engage ‘the community’, followed by a review of community relations activities, and self-assessments of performance. Concurrently, I analysed the verbal text of the ‘Community’ sections of the websites for the two corporations and sites, since these outline background, policies, reviews, and intentions regarding community engagement, thereby also contributing to discursive construction. To identify ‘Community’ sections, I searched for pages describing: general company approaches; visions and philosophies regarding local communities; policies for community engagement; and, community programmes and projects.

To analyse these texts, I adopted an inductive, heuristic approach. The verbal text constitutes a corpus of 28,045 words, and analysis took three forms. Firstly, I used *Leximancer* to provide an overview of conceptual relationships. *Leximancer* is a software programme that analyses the content of texts and displays this content in a conceptual map, deriving concepts using an in-built
thesaurus (A. E. Smith & Humphreys, 2006). It determines whether a concept is present by accumulating evidence, based on the occurrence of associated words in (usually) a three-sentence block. Words are assigned weightings to reflect their contribution to the accumulated evidence. Thus, Leximancer identifies both the explicit and implicit presence of a concept, since the concept name need not be present itself if sufficient associated words are present. For example, if the words cost and purchase are present in the same three-sentence block, ‘money’ as a concept might be deemed present, even if money itself is absent.

Secondly, I examined the 400 most frequently occurring words in the documents, since lexical choices signify certain social orders (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 113), and provide insights into how we interpret experience (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 190-191). Following theoretical coding, I allowed discourses to ‘emerge’ from the empirical material (Flick, 2002, pp. 177-185; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). That is, I assumed that the documents would be interdiscursive, but did not predetermine what discourses might be represented. I searched manually for terms (discourse identifiers) that might indicate the presence of certain discourses, and counted their frequency. The words planning and economic, for example, might indicate a discourse of Business and management, while the words local and families might indicate a discourse of Community. This process enabled me, therefore, to compare the relative influence of various discourses in constructing the texts.

Thirdly, I looked for nominalisations, modality, and agentless passive constructions. These grammatical features may be discursively significant, as follows. Nominalisations can simplify complex, dynamic, and contestable processes (verbs) into static, self-evident, and non-negotiable nouns or nominal groups (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 131; McKenna & Graham, 2000, p. 230). For example, the texts frequently speak of development, consultation, management, and employment, rather than explicitly describing social processes. Modality, meanwhile, indicates the degree of certainty of a reality being presented. It can be expressed either as modalisation (the degree of likelihood or usuality) or as modulation (the degree of obligation or inclination) (Fairclough, 1995; Halliday, 1994; Martin & Rose, 2007). Agentless passive constructions, finally, appear to diminish the rôle of the actor or agent, or to obfuscate the relationship between the actor/agent and the process; thus, an agent is implied but not identified (Ilie, 1998, p. 70), leading to the “linguistic removal of people” (McKenna & Graham, 2000, p. 238). By examining these grammatical features, therefore, I was able to describe some of the linguistic features of the texts, in the light of the conceptual relationships and lexical choices. I was then able to augment this verbal analysis with analysis of visual text.
Analysing visual text

For the visual analysis, I excluded websites, since the relevant website pages comprised predominantly verbal text, and few images. However, I considered the complete reports, not just the ‘Community’ sections, since images apparently relating to community engagement—e.g., photographs of local community members—appear throughout. In these reports, visual features comprise photographic images, charts, and graphs.

Visual design has become central to company reports, functioning rhetorically to assert certain values, ideologies, and truth claims, while trivialising public discourse (Graves et al., 1996). For David (2001), visual designs typically present an idealised impression which evokes beauty and efficiency, without referring to the negative social and environmental consequences of business activity. Jameson (2000, pp. 33-35) found that financial reports can rhetorically overcome poor results by conveying optimism through visually appealing images. In the case of non-financial reports, and especially in ‘Community’ sections, processes of social construction may be even more pronounced, since there are few established standards, and consequently more reliance upon imagery and evocation. Visually appealing sections, particularly using graphic designs and photographs, embed readers’ cultural myths of the company (David, 2001). Specifically, graphs satisfy a desire for summary communication (Courtis, 1997), and aesthetic images satisfy a desire for entertainment (Graves et al., 1996). The result is that actual operations and policies are often concealed behind the promotion of business values, and emotive visual symbols displace proposition, complexity, and argument (David, 2001; Graves et al., 1996).

Photographic images

The potential for photography to mislead derives from the substantial rôles for artistic design and viewer interpretation. Early photography established a truth-telling ethos, with photographs seen as transparently representing objects. Compared to drawing and painting, for example, photography seems to convey ‘reality’ more closely and to involve less artistic interpretation. Audiences often fail to question photographers’ representational techniques (David, 2001). Anderson and Imperia (1992) argue that a report aims to convey a company’s personality and philosophy. Images help to personalise otherwise impersonal information, they make stories more memorable, and they reinforce unconscious assumptions, perhaps unintentionally, preventing alternatives from being imagined. Further, Kress and van Leeuwen (1995) note that, as well as a picture containing visible participants, there may be invisible participants, represented by the visible ones. Hence, omissions may be just as significant as inclusions. For example, a photographic impression of some Aboriginal children apparently benefiting from the company’s largesse may suggest that Aboriginal
children in general are beneficiaries, concealing the poverty and social disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal communities in mining areas (e.g., DITR, 2007, p. 13).

Watts (2004) proposes semiotics as an approach for analysing photographs in corporate literature, describing designers of this literature as ‘signmakers’. He argues that architecture, artefacts, and dispositions of actors convey meanings, and that the interpreted relationship between signifier and signified is mediated by the social discourses within which the viewer exists. David (2001), similarly, uses semiotics to reveal dissonances between the subject and its representation as portrayed by signs. Following Barthes (1972), she notes how images in annual reports form common-sense cultural myths, oversimplifying concepts by omitting details. This resonates with Bourdieu’s concept of *doxa*, “things people accept without knowing” (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992, p. 114). David cites artistic images of oil rigs rising from an expansive blue ocean as creating a myth that oil drilling is beautiful and harmonious with the environment. This apparent beauty, she proposes, leads to public acceptance, and ultimately, previously contested representations become automatically accepted. Hence, in analysing the photographs, I considered what is absent to be potentially as significant as what is presented.

For analysis, I firstly considered each of the 202 images in turn, categorising them into the discourses from which they appear to be drawn. This enables me to compare the discursive constructions of the visual and verbal texts. Then, to deepen my analysis, I draw on a social semiotic approach, which describes three subcategories of ‘attitude’ that may be evoked as the viewer evaluates or appraises a text. These subcategories are affect (emotional response); appreciation (aesthetic response), and judgement (ethical/moral response) (Economou, 2006; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1995; Martin & Rose, 2007). Since visual text analysis is an emerging method, and since the purpose here is to supplement the foregoing text analysis, rather than to analyse all the photographs comprehensively, I selected a sample of five of the 202 photographs for this detailed task. This selection process is inevitably subjective, and I cannot claim that these images constitute a representative sample. However, the selected images appear to be typical of those commonly presented in this genre, in terms of the discourses from which they draw, and the attitudes that they might evoke. Among this sample, I consider the types of response that might be evoked by each image, and how the combination of these responses might determine our overall impressions of the issues being represented.
Graphs and charts

Previous research has also demonstrated that graphs and charts can influence impressions of a company’s performance, potentially misleading their audience as well as enhancing understanding. In financial reports, visual patterns are more memorable than text or numerical tables; they can liven up a report, facilitate understanding, highlight trends, and seem to speak a universal language (Beattie & Jones, 1992; Courtis, 1997; J. R. Johnson, Rice, & Roemmich, 1980). However, through selectivity in graphical presentation, or through non–compliance with graphical construction principles, graphs can distort the communication process, constituting “active information manipulation” (Beattie & Jones, 1992). Examples include scales not starting at zero or being interrupted; using non-arithmetic scales; and using ambiguous graphic effects (J. R. Johnson et al., 1980). Colours, shading, and three-dimensional effects can stimulate misleading optical illusions (Courtis, 1997). While it is possible that such errors are caused by ignorance of guidelines for constructing graphs, the finding that distortions tend to make performance look more favourable suggests some intentionality (Beattie & Jones, 1992; J. R. Johnson et al., 1980).

The verbal and visual analysis of secondary empirical material, therefore, provides a preliminary, multimodal understanding of the textual production of community engagement discourse. In addition, it forms a foundation for deeper understanding through observation and interviews.

Primary research

As noted above, to collect primary empirical material, I made three visits to each of the two sites, from September 2004 to December 2006 (see Table 3). While this could not be described as a longitudinal study, it did allow me to observe and investigate changes in the social practice of community engagement over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Timetable of research visits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site A</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Visit One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Two</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visit Three</td>
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Visit One

For Visit One, I spent one week at each site, accompanied by my Principal Advisor. Between us, and in most cases together, we interviewed 20 company employees, and 22 community members. The main purpose was to collect material as part of a broader study across Australia. Following
these initial visits, I identified the key issues at each site, in the sense that they were contentious issues presenting competing subjectivities.

At Site A, this issue is relations between the company and the local Indigenous community. Conversations during Visit One suggested that the company’s efforts to engage Indigenous community members had had mixed results, with significant challenges remaining in the areas of funding for Indigenous community projects, Indigenous youth employment, and more generally overcoming historical resentment and alienation. At Site B, the key contentious issue is access to artesian water. Site operations use considerable quantities of this water, and many residents perceive that this use leaves insufficient water for domestic supplies, and are more generally concerned about long-term impacts on the local environment. Consequently, these issues provided focal points on which to concentrate interpretive and critical study of community engagement during subsequent research visits. I describe and analyse the issues at both sites more deeply in Chapters Five and Six, in terms of discursive tensions.

Visits Two and Three

Visit Two comprised the principal collection empirical material, over three weeks at Site A and two weeks at Site B. The extra week was required at Site A because of difficulties securing company cooperation. Visit Three, comprising one week at each site, involved follow-up meetings, plus further observation and discussions, to investigate how community engagement had developed over time. Next, therefore, I explain how I approached the observation and interviews, and their analysis, in the context of the methodologies outlined above.

Observation

As explained above, ethnography traditionally involves an extended period of socialisation within a culture. The present study, however, comprised no such extended socialisation, since it investigates a phenomenon, not a culture. Thus, the episodes of observation, conducted in the spirit of (critical) ethnography, do not constitute a traditional ethnography. Rather, they provide insights into the cultures and contexts in which community engagement occurs, and they illuminate discursive tensions.

Consistent with ethnographic methods, I undertook as much observation as was practicable within the time constraints, and took regular field notes. This observation occurred in three types of setting. Firstly, I observed work in naturally-occurring settings, which may be more insightful than interviews in understanding how an organisation socially constructs itself (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 72). Secondly, I attended various meetings and functions, on one occasion as a ‘participant
observer’. Thirdly, before, during, and after interviews, and on other occasions throughout my visits, I collected non-verbal empirical material, such as formal and informal actions and behaviours, physical attributes and demeanour, and details of home or work environments. For example, every day during Visit Two at Site B, I joined staff in the kitchen for lunch, as this ‘naturally occurring’ setting provided an informal environment in which staff might discuss their opinions more frankly than in formal interview situations. In all cases, I explained to staff the purpose of my presence.

As Thomas (1993, p. 38) points out, any artefact that embodies cultural meaning can constitute a source of empirical material. For example, when visiting company sites, I made notes regarding site and office design, buildings, staff notices, and clothing. Among community members, at Site B for example, a few participants showed me around their properties, particularly to witness the dry riverbed. In these cases, I noted how they responded emotionally to their situations. This enabled me to build a picture of participants’ living or working environments, of the tensions arising, and of how they responded to them. Specifically, observations at Site A comprised:

- taking part in an ‘Indigenous cultural awareness’ training session for a group of nine new company employees;
- attending a divisional staff meeting;
- attending a meeting of the Advisory Board for the company’s Indigenous Fund;
- attending the company’s annual stakeholder function.

Observations at Site B comprised:

- accompanying the Community Relations Advisor in her everyday work intermittently over two weeks, including observing meetings with neighbouring residents;
- accompanying the Borefield Operator on a half-day trip to check the company’s water bores, located on properties owned by neighbouring residents;
- attending two divisional staff meetings, and a staff Christmas Party for the relevant company division;
- visiting several residents’ properties, to observe the local environment in relation to underground water, and to record how participants responded to this situation;

Observations at both sites, over a total of nine weeks, comprised:
• collecting non-verbal empirical material before, during, and after interviews, regarding participants’ actions and behaviours, physical attributes and demeanour, and details of home or work environments;

• miscellaneous observations of work environments and the local areas;

• miscellaneous informal conversations with staff and local residents.

**Analysing observational field notes**

During each episode of observation, I made notes concurrently if possible, or soon afterwards (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Inevitably, this process sometimes necessitates interrupting the observation itself to make notes, and involves selective perception and selective presentation. Thus, my findings should be read not as objective accounts of ‘what actually happened’, but rather as accounts of anything I interpreted as being relevant to the research question. In addition, during each of the three visits, I kept a daily research diary, noting events as they appeared to me (Flick, 2002, pp. 168-170).

Following a hermeneutic process (Noordahaven, 2004) that involved close analysis and re-analysis of field notes, I discerned certain discursive tensions within both the company and the community. This hermeneutic process is mimetic, an active process of construction (Flick, 2002, p. 34; Ricoeur, 1981, p. 25). Since hermeneutic interpretation sees human behaviour as linguistically-mediated, and recognises that one cannot explain behaviour without reference to historical context (Gibbons, 2006), my observations foreground a linguistic and discursive perspective. Thus, in Chapters Five and Six, I present my observations in terms of discursive tensions among company and community.

**Interviews**

Including the two participants from Visit One, I interviewed 33 participants: 20 community members, ten company staff, and three (at Site B) who were both community members and company staff. The unequal representation of company and community participants reflects the small number of company staff at these operations with community relations responsibilities. Company interviews mostly took place in offices on-site, although one took place in a local café, and another at the motel where I was staying. Community interviews mostly took place at participants’ homes, although four took place at the motel where I was staying, one was at a community facility, and another was at the participant’s workplace. Of the three Site B interviewees who were both community members and company staff, two took place at participants’ homes, and one on-site. During Visit Two interviews, while some material was necessarily general in nature, discussions took place in the context of the key issue at each site. Thus, participants referred both to
their general conceptions of community engagement, and to the key issue to illustrate these conceptions. The interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes on average, and produced a total corpus of 181,041 words.

**Sampling – company participants**

To identify company participants, I adopted ‘critical case’ sampling – selecting those people who explicitly have key roles in relation to the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 1990). Thus, ‘critical cases’ comprised those who had direct interaction with community members, and/or strategic responsibility for community relations. These particular staff, therefore, are likely to have spent some time reflecting on the relationship between the company and local community, and perhaps on wider questions of a corporation’s responsibilities in contemporary society. In total, I interviewed six community relations practitioners, two senior site managers, one Indigenous employment manager (Site A), and one environmental manager (Site B).

In practice, identifying participants followed phenomenographic methods. At Visit Two, I firstly held informal meetings with the community relations practitioners at each site, to discuss the nature and purpose of the research. These discussions provided opportunities for the community relations practitioners to ask questions about my research, and to identify other staff who might help in addressing the research question. Since there were few staff with community relations responsibilities, such identification was a relatively simple process. In the meetings, I also aimed to establish ‘communicative validity’ (Sandberg, 2005), meaning a mutual understanding between researcher and participant regarding the nature and purpose of the research.

**Sampling – community participants**

Selecting community participants required a different approach, as there was no central contact person. At Site B, I started by contacting the spokespeople for the local community association in the catchment area from which the company draws artesian water. I then adopted gradual sampling, to identify further local participants, based on referrals from these initial participants, and then on further referrals from subsequent participants. Gradual, or theoretical, sampling, comprises the selection of participants based on their potential for offering new insights. Flick (2002, p. 66) suggests that gradual sampling is an appropriate qualitative technique when the extent and features of the population are not predefined. Consistent with this approach, I stopped seeking additional participants when no new major insights emerged from additional cases (Eisenhardt, 1989; Flick, 2002, pp. 64-65; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The resulting sample is not ‘representative’, but is designed to encompass a diversity of perspectives. Ultimately, I interviewed eight community members at Site B.
At Site A, community participants comprised members of the local Indigenous community, whether or not they had formally interacted with the company. Following Indigenous protocols, I initially interviewed representatives of the local Traditional Owner families. Then, I again adopted gradual sampling, to identify further participants. Again, I stopped seeking additional participants when no new major insights emerged from additional cases. Ultimately, I interviewed twelve community members at Site A.

As noted above, three participants at Site B were both company staff and local community members, giving them a dual identity which might illuminate company-community tensions. The Community Relations Advisor identified, from company employment records, four staff living in the relevant area. Since they were few in numbers, ‘complete collection’ sampling was appropriate (Flick, 2002, pp. 62-63). That is, I decided to interview them all, although one was unavailable. Since these three participants are not community relations practitioners, including them among ‘company participants’ could skew the findings. Similarly, they differ from other ‘community participants’ by virtue of working for the company. Thus, I treated them initially as a separate group, pending analysis of empirical material, to avoid a priori categorisations.

The interview process

Prior to starting the interviews, I explained the nature and purpose of my research, and presented an information sheet (Appendix 1), which I asked participants to read carefully. I emphasised that participation was voluntary, that participants’ contributions would be treated in strictest confidence, and that participants and companies would not be identified. I then asked them to sign an informed consent form (Appendix 2) if they were happy to proceed, to advise whether they were happy for the interview to be recorded, and to indicate whether they would like to receive written feedback on the findings. Of the 33 interviews, I recorded 32. While recognising that the presence of recording equipment can influence behaviour (Flick, 2002, p. 167), most participants seemed at ease being recorded. I also took fieldnotes during interviews, and made further notes afterwards, to avoid excessive interruption of the dialogue. I transcribed all interviews verbatim. In the case of the one (Site A community) participant who asked not to be recorded, I made comprehensive notes during the interview, and wrote these notes up immediately afterwards (Flick, 2002, p. 168). Nevertheless, notes from this interview are inevitably less complete than for others.

In each interview, having discussed participants’ backgrounds, and following Sandberg (2000), I started with the introductory question, What does community engagement mean for you? In
specifying for you, my aim was to encourage participants to reflect on their own lived experiences. I asked the same introductory question of both company and community participants, to understand how people constructed different, perhaps competing, conceptions of company-community relationships. In a small number of interviews with community participants, the term ‘community engagement’ appeared initially to have little meaning, judging by blank responses to the introductory question. Since a blank response itself may be an important signifier of the absence of a concept from a participant’s discourse, in such cases I noted the response, and then re-phrased the question, drawing on terms such as ‘involvement’ and ‘consultation’. Later in the interviews, to introduce discussion of wider social practices, I asked, Why do you think [company] is trying to engage the community here?

Follow-up questions were not predefined, but rather were worded spontaneously as discussions unfolded. In this way, I aimed to get as close as possible to participants’ lived experiences, until it seemed that no further progress was being made. In phenomenography, follow-up questions help to elaborate and substantiate responses by drawing on practical situations (Sandberg, 2000). This is also essential in critical ethnography, allowing the researcher to pursue contradictions and anomalies; a list of predefined questions can become a crutch which hobbles the researcher (Thomas, 1993, pp. 40-41). This is particularly pertinent, Thomas adds, to the critical researcher, who is trying to dig beneath surface appearances, impression-management statements, and official corporate rhetoric. Nevertheless, some follow-up and probing questions were useful for several participants; for example:

*What exactly do you mean by that?*
*Can you give me an example of that?*
*Can you explain why you think that?*
*Would others around here share your views?*

At this point, it is pertinent to point out that I am a non-Indigenous Australian. Furthermore, although I was born in Australia, I lived for many years in the UK, not returning to Australia until 2000. To many Aborigines, therefore, seeing my white skin and hearing my largely English accent, I may appear to embody neocolonialism. This identity, in the context of the colonial history of Australia, means that interviewing (and observing) members of the Indigenous community at Site A entailed special considerations. Even research epistemologies that challenge conventional modes of inquiry within organisation studies have remained somewhat silent on colonial and neocolonial assumptions in knowledge production (Banerjee & Linstead, 2004; Prasad, 2003). According to
Smith (1999, p. 1), research is “probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary”, being inextricably linked with the European imperial and colonial project of pursuit of ‘knowledge’ about Indigenous peoples (G. Phillips, 2003, p. 3). Western conceptions of culture, values, time, space, and knowledge have been privileged historically as more valid interpretations than Indigenous accounts. Having cognisance of this persistent colonial legacy, therefore, when engaging in social contact with Indigenous participants, I kept in mind the idea of ‘respect’ as inducing balance and harmony (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 120). Following Phillips (2003, pp. 3-4) and Smith (1999, pp. 126-127), I commonly referred to my work/project rather than my research, to the community rather than the field, and to talking with people rather than obtaining data. Also, where necessary, I provided verbal explanations of the consent forms, using everyday language (G. Phillips, 2003, p. 9). In these ways, I endeavoured to establish, reasonably quickly, a working level of trust with Indigenous participants.

**Interview analysis**

The interview analysis took two forms, to reflect both interpretive and critical perspectives (see Table 4). The first form was phenomenographic analysis, in which I again used theoretical coding to allow interpretive themes to emerge (Flick, 2002, pp. 177-185; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). To derive conceptions of community engagement, I read the transcripts several times, categorising them into preliminary groups, according to qualitatively different variations. I then compared conceptions within each group, and between each group, focusing on the transcripts as a whole, rather than on individual statements. I repeatedly regrouped the transcripts until the conceptions appeared stable (Marton, 1994; Marton & Fai, 1999; Sandberg, 2000, p. 13). Through progressive hermeneutic iterations, “in which the actual writing developed my thought and understanding” (Maevé, 1999, p. 56), I also repeatedly revised the descriptions of each conception. At this stage, I did not focus on company/community differences, as the emphasis was on identifying conceptions, regardless of who holds them. Ultimately, for each site, I derived three conceptions of community engagement among the participants.
Table 4: Forms and stages of interview analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of analysis</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PHENOMENOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS</td>
<td>To describe variations in conceptions of community engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1:</strong> Triangulating the</td>
<td>To seek textual evidence to support or challenge the phenomenographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phenomenographic conceptions</td>
<td>conceptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2:</strong> Conceptual relationships</td>
<td>To compare the relative influence of various discourses in constructing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and lexical choices</td>
<td>company and community participants’ worldviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 3:</strong> Discursive recontextualisation</td>
<td>To reconsider the texts in the context of wider social practices, and thus to consider how certain rationalities and discourses are enacted in everyday ontologies, dispositions, and ethics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second analytical form, which comprises three stages, can be described collectively as textual analysis. Of course, all analysis is analysis of texts – i.e., of documents, notes, and transcripts (Deetz, 1982, p. 135). However, I use the term ‘textual analysis’ here to refer both to the micro level of lexico-grammatical choices and to macro-level discourses, as distinct from the preceding focus on concepts and tensions. In the interests of coherence, I explain these stages in more detail prior to discussing the analyses themselves, in Chapters Five and Six, but I outline them briefly here. For the first stage, as a means of triangulation, I interrogated the phenomenographic conceptions textually, consistent with the “poststructuralist emphasis on contradiction, heterogeneity, and multiplicity” (Fine et al., 2000, p. 119). This process involved identifying the major apparent differences between the three phenomenographic conceptions at each site, then comparing the relative presence/absence of certain terms that might signify such differences, in order to provide support for, or to challenge, my phenomenographic interpretations.

For the second and third stages of textual analysis, I considered how participants’ worldviews are socially constructed through discourse, treating company and community participants separately to draw out comparisons. The purpose of these stages, therefore, is to consider similarities and differences in company and community participants’ worldviews, by analysing how different discourses influence their utterances. My approach is guided by viewing analysis as “a process of identifying what semantic features are manifested in a text”, and viewing interpretation as a process “that involves recognising how a text functions as discourse” (Widdowson, 2004, p. 20). For the second stage, I returned to Leximancer to generate maps of conceptual relationships for the
participants, and to describe the (inter)discursive construction of participants’ worldviews, as indicated by their lexical choices. As with analysis of the secondary empirical material, this enables me to compare the relative influence of various discourses in constructing participants’ worldviews. Consistent with the foregoing analyses, I allowed the discourses to emerge from the empirical material, rather than attempting to predetermine what discourses might be represented.

For the third stage, finally, I aimed to recontextualise the foregoing word-level analysis (Widdowson, 2000), drawing on the notion that language is ‘imbricated’ in social relations (Fairclough, 1995, p. 73). I analysed the texts with an explicit focus on the interplay between macro, meso, and micro levels of discourse. The overall purpose here, therefore, was to consider how certain rationalities and discourses are enacted in everyday ontologies, dispositions, and ethics. This process involved reviewing the foregoing findings, and identifying the main conceptual differences between company and community participants. I then examined all instances of words that might signify such points of difference, to consider any evidence of competing worldviews. To augment this stage, I again draw on the idea, used in the document analysis, that certain grammatical features, viz. nominalisations, modality, and agentless passive constructions, can be discursively significant.

As Phillips and Hardy (2002, pp. 74-75 & p. 87) note, a paradox of discourse analysis is that, if it is too systematic, it can lead to reification and unreflexive research, but being too ‘loose’ invites criticism for lack of rigour. This paradox highlights the significance of reflexivity in discourse analysis, a significance applicable to interpretive and critical research more generally.

**Reflexivity**

Interest in reflexivity has been enhanced by interpretivism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, and critical management studies, which have challenged the notion of researchers reporting objectively on their observations (Alvesson, Hardy, & Harley, 2004). Traditionally, the positivist claim of value-freedom purported to exempt the researcher from self-reflection (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1973). Thus, dominant approaches to research interviews tend to be technically oriented, seeing interviews as tools for accessing social reality, rather than as embedded in social complexities (Alvesson, 2003). As Habermas noted, self-reflection is essential because the research process itself is part of the object being examined (Holub, 1991, p. 30). Reflexivity, therefore, involves the “self-critical consideration of one’s own assumptions and consistent consideration of alternative interpretative lines and the use of different research vocabularies” (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, pp.
Since it can help us to highlight hidden assumptions (Singh & Dickson, 2002, p. 123), reflexivity enables me to reconsider interpretations from alternative perspectives.

Alvesson, Hardy, and Harley (2004) suggest that four sets of reflexive practice exist. Firstly, destabilising practices focus on challenging epistemological assumptions. Secondly, multi-perspective practices aim to build rich, varied pictures viewed from different angles. Thirdly, multi-voicing practices acknowledge the influence of the researcher on the object of study, and use creative writing to create space for ‘the Other’. Fourthly, positioning practices consider how social, cultural, political, and institutional contexts influence research. This model provides a framework to guide my reflexive approach. For example, during interviews, I regularly asked participants to consider alternative explanations to the ones they expressed initially. I asked company participants to imagine the perspectives of community members, and vice versa. Subsequently, during analysis, I iteratively re-examined my own interpretations for possible alternatives, and discussed these at length with my doctoral research Advisors. For example, I revised the phenomenographic conceptions at both sites many times, following repeated readings of the transcripts and comparisons with other transcripts.

Phillips and Hardy (2002, p. 2), meanwhile, propose that discourse analysis has an inherent emphasis on reflexivity, since using language means that researchers themselves help to construct discourses. Critical theory also can be deeply reflexive, urging continual reflection on values and assumptions underpinning theories and methods (Kellner, 1990). However, it also can become unreflexive and elitist, tending towards ‘hyper-critique’ (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Kellner, 1990). There is a risk, therefore, that interpretations can exaggerate conflict or dissensus, or over-emphasise subjective distinctions, although in-depth interviews can help to develop sensitivity to participants’ affirmative meanings, balancing critical interpretations (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 183). In general, following Alvesson et al. (2004), I endeavoured to practise a reflexivity in the spirit of reconstruction, reframing, reclaiming, and re-presentation, rather than deconstruction, defence, declaiming, destabilising, and danger-warning.

**Validity**

A legacy of the positivist tradition is a resilient emphasis on validity and reliability in much qualitative research. This emphasis often leads to ‘technocratic unimaginativeness’ (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 139). Yet, the question remains, *What is truth?* While positivist research considers that truth is whatever represents objective reality, an interpretive conception might see truth as
‘intentional fulfilment’, meaning agreement between the researcher’s interpretation and participants’ lived experiences (Sandberg, 2005). In response to dilemmas regarding ‘truth’, Sandberg (2005, pp. 54-59) suggests that, in interpretive studies, there are four alternative dimensions for justifying knowledge claims.

Firstly, ‘communicative validity’ refers to a mutual understanding between researcher and participant regarding the nature and purpose of the research, and to coherence between parts of texts and the whole (Sandberg, 2005, p. 54). I demonstrated this in the following ways. By conducting three site visits over a period of time, some participants became increasingly familiar with my research, progressively developing a mutual understanding. Also, I spent as much time as was needed in informal discussions with each participant, before commencing a formal interview. I ensured that participants were fully cognisant of the nature and purpose of my study. I asked them to read the information sheet carefully before I asked any interview questions. I also tried to conduct interviews in the form of dialogue, rather than inquisition. This dialogic objective is exemplified by my practice of asking only two predefined questions, as explained above. In this way, the discussion evolved to suit participants’ experiences and the context, leaving me to guide the discussion towards the research questions.

Secondly, ‘pragmatic validity’ concerns the consistency between what participants say they do and what they do in practice (Sandberg, 2005, p. 56). Thus, when participants made a conceptual statement, I asked them to provide examples of personal experiences to illustrate the statement. I also sought to validate or refute statements through observation.

Thirdly, ‘transgressive validity’ aims to acknowledge the inherent complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions in our interpretations, in contrast to the search for consistency and ‘truth’ (Sandberg, 2005, p. 57). For example, on many occasions, participants made statements that appeared to contradict earlier statements. In these instances, I probed for clarification, encouraging participants to think and reflect deeply about their experiences and conceptualisations. Similarly, having read a transcript, I may have reached an initial conclusion that the participant had expressed a largely instrumental/economic perspective. Then, I would reflexively re-read the transcript from a normative/moral perspective, to see how the participant’s statements might fit with this alternative perspective.

Fourthly, redefining reliability as ‘interpretive awareness’ means acknowledging our subjectivities in our procedures of interpretation. This means that, rather than claiming objectivity, we explicitly
deal with our subjectivities. Rather than exercising bias or practising ‘selective interpretation’, we practice ‘perspectival subjectivity’ (Kvale, 1996), acknowledging the influence of epistemological and methodological choices (Sandberg, 2005, pp. 58-59). Hence, for example, during analysis, I repeatedly considered how my own assumptions might be influencing my interpretations, which I then adjusted accordingly.

Combining the above methods of understanding and representing ‘reality’ and texts, therefore, constitutes an effort to maximise interpretive awareness and communicative, pragmatic, and transgressive validity, and thus provides a useful grounding for phenomenographic representations (Sandberg, 2005). Inherently, however, qualitative research constitutes ‘mimesis’, or the transformation of social worlds into symbolic worlds according to interpretations (Flick, 2002, pp. 29-37). Furthermore, any analysis involves selectivity, based on the researcher’s historically-situated perspective. My interpretations cannot be strictly objective, since they are influenced by my own subjectivities, including political, ideological, and axiological perspectives, as well as being delimited by the case study approach. Similarly, my analysis and knowledge can be only partial and incomplete, and open to change and improvement (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 14-15). Inevitably, therefore, some part of lived experience can be lost during transformation from social practice to interview, to recording, to transcript, to analysis and interpretation, and to the final paper. Nevertheless, awareness of this limitation can help to overcome the sense of a ‘crisis of representation’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 16-17).

Critical theory, meanwhile, largely rejects the conventional notion of validity. Instead, it is interested in concepts such as trustworthiness, sincerity, comprehensibility, credibility, and emancipatory potential (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, pp. 89-91; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). In this view, interpretation is legitimate if it produces more equitable and democratic social transformation, or if it enables people to re-evaluate their conditions of existence, rather than if it faithfully represents either objective or subjective reality (Kellner, 1990; Mumby, in L. L. Putnam et al., 1993, p. 225). For Phillips and Hardy (2002), validity and reliability are irrelevant in discourse studies, where the epistemological foundation focuses on discursively constructed discourses and multiple readings of a situation. While I would not describe validity and reliability as irrelevant to this study, a broadly critical perspective allows us to reconceptualise validity as reflexive management of the relationship between the testimony of research participants and a broader process of historical and structural analysis (Wainwright, 1997).
Given the above perspectives, I do not claim to have learned and represented the ‘objective truth’ regarding people’s lives. Rather, I listened to participants’ accounts of their experiences, seeking to derive various conceptions, and I interpreted these in the context of the historical, ideological, structural, economic, and organisational conditions in which those conceptions are situated. In this way, I have endeavoured to take previous phenomenographic work beyond its focus on the individual, using a critical discourse approach to acknowledge the socially constitutive rôle of macro-level and meso-level discourses.

In summary, while validity may have a rôle in interpretive and critical research, the pursuit of objective knowledge is inappropriate to the epistemological position of this study. Indeed, such a pursuit might invite accusations of ‘physics envy’ (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 134), and is inconsistent with the social constructionist paradigm, which ‘sculpts’ knowledge, rather than ‘excavating’ phenomena for naturally occurring insights (Mir & Watson, 2000). Adopting this perspective with reflexivity, therefore, I can begin to investigate ‘community engagement’, as a social practice, with both interpretive and critical sensitivity.
Chapter Four: DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION THROUGH COMPANY TEXTS

Introduction
To begin to investigate how community engagement discourse is constructed, this chapter considers secondary empirical material, in the form of published company reports and relevant website pages. Both of these media sources might be described as genres. A genre is characterised by “a system of action that became institutionalised and is recognisable by repetition” (Czarniawska, 1999, p. 10), by “consistent patterns of meaning” (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 7), or by “recurring patterns of communicative practices” (L. L. Putnam et al., 1996, p. 393). For the purposes of poststructural analysis, the significant point is that these genres, which are relatively stable, enter our consciousness, and impose restrictions of thematic content, linguistic style, and compositional structure (Bakhtin, 1994/1986, pp. 81-87). Thus, we come to expect company documents to look as they do; only certain statements, styles, and structures are admissible. Hence, analysis of them may reveal insights into the discursive construction of community engagement.

In published company reports and website pages, companies communicate and rationalise their community engagement principles, strategies, activities, and intentions. Examining these texts, it becomes apparent that community engagement, as a discursive phenomenon, is multimodal (Iedema & Wodak, 1999; Martin, 2000); a complete understanding requires attention to both verbal and visual text (D. A. Jameson, 2000, p. 33). Thus, I analysed both verbal and visual text in the two most recent public ‘sustainability’ reports for the two research sites, and the two equivalent reports for the parent corporations. The two corporate reports were dated 2005. The two divisional reports were dated 2005 and 2003, these being the most recent at the time of analysis (February 2007).

Concurrently, as explained in Chapter Three, I analysed the verbal text of the ‘Community’ sections of the websites for the two corporations and sites. Mirroring the reports, this material outlines general background, policies, reviews, and intentions. The rationale for incorporating websites in the verbal analysis is twofold. Firstly, websites are another instantiation of community engagement, or at least of external communication, with a different and/or broader audience; including them thus provides me with a more comprehensive corpus of empirical material than analysing the reports alone. Secondly, as website material is generally more current than the reports, it may more closely
represent, and construct, the companies’ most recent conceptualisations of community engagement. Nevertheless, both media constitute only part of community engagement discourse. Hence, the subsequent two chapters focus on primary research into other instantiations of community engagement. For now, the objective is to investigate how company documents contribute to constructing the community engagement discourse.

**Verbal text**

As outlined in Chapter Three, the verbal analysis takes three forms. Firstly, I use Leximancer to provide an overview of conceptual relationships. Secondly, I describe the discourses present in the documents’ representation of community engagement, by examining lexical choices. Thirdly, I analyse instances of nominalisations, modality, and agentless passive constructions, to investigate how these grammatical features might influence the discursive construction of community engagement. Meanwhile, the visual analysis comprises two parts. Firstly, I consider the degree to which charts and graphs distort the communication process. Secondly, drawing on a social semiotic approach, I discuss the ways in which photographic images in the texts evoke aesthetic, emotional, and ethical/moral responses.

**Conceptual relationships**

The community sections of the four reports comprise 53 pages of 17,889 words. The website material comprises 40 pages of 10,156 words, making a total corpus of 28,045 words. To analyse the verbal text, I entered the corpus into Leximancer. Having examined the initial, ‘raw’ output, I merged concepts that Leximancer had treated separately, but that appeared to be conceptually synonymous. Apart from the concepts ‘mine’ and ‘site’, all of these mergers involved simply amalgamating the singular and plural of certain nouns: ‘area’, ‘community’, ‘program’, ‘project’, and ‘year’. Running the programme a second time, Leximancer treated these mergers as single concepts, producing a new map (see Figure 1).

Perhaps the most significant finding is the absence of the concept ‘engagement’, and of any related concept, such as ‘consultation’. This suggests that the documents do not substantially describe, analyse, or reflect on the companies’ relationship with local communities. If we take ‘community’ as the focal point, then, we can analyse how the companies represent it as a concept, in relation to other concepts, and particularly in relation to the companies themselves. In Leximancer, the darker the font of a concept, the more often it appears in the text. Thus, ‘community’ (278 times) and ‘company’ (274 times) are the concepts appearing most frequently in the texts. However, perhaps more important is a concept’s location relative to other concepts. Concepts that are in close
proximity on the map appear in similar conceptual contexts in the texts, meaning that they co-occur with similar other concepts. Thus, ‘community’ (top right quadrant) appears in similar conceptual contexts to ‘support’, ‘local’, ‘activities’, ‘project’, and ‘region’. This suggests that ‘community’ is discussed mostly in physical and tangible terms. Equally, ‘community’ appears most distant from more contestable, concepts: ‘land’, ‘work’, ‘management’, and ‘rights’ (mostly bottom left quadrant). The location of these four concepts as outliers suggests further that they are not discussed at length, as though their meanings were mutually understood.

The concepts ‘business’, ‘company’, ‘management’, and ‘mining’ (in or near the bottom left quadrant) are somewhat separate from ‘community’, ‘sustainable’, ‘social’, and ‘environmental’ (right-hand side). Thus, business-related and non-business-related discourses may be somewhat disjointed conceptually in the documents. This preliminary finding suggests a potential tension between company and community concerns, and thus problematises the dominant assumption that social and environmental concerns can be, or must be, addressed within a neoclassical and neoliberal worldview. The next stage of analysis, then, investigates the discourses represented in the documents more closely – at the word level, rather than at the concept level.

**Lexical choices**

Lexical choices signify certain social orders (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 113), and provide insights into how we interpret experience (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 190-191). As explained in Chapter Three, I examined the 400 most frequently occurring words (the maximum provided by Leximancer), and marked ‘discourse identifiers’, or words that might indicate particular discourses. I also noted the
number of discourse identifiers, to compare the extent of vocabularies within each discourse. Thus, I can identify and describe the discourses present in the documents’ representation of community engagement: Business and management, Community, Engineering, The natural world, Communication, and Ethics. The ‘Community’ sections of the reports and websites, therefore, draw from disparate discourses. Hence, we can describe this genre as interdiscursive, since whole discourses, genres, or systems of language (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 115-120) are overlapping into a new discursive order, allowing for “new fields of action” (Wodak, 2001, p. 66). I have listed the discourse identifiers in Appendix 3 (Table 24).

The discourse of Business and management constitutes nearly two-fifths (39%) of the frequency of discourse identifiers, with a vocabulary (29 discourse identifiers) considerably larger than that for any other discourse. It incorporates entities such as company, employees, and stakeholders, processes such as training, working, and planning, and nominalised concepts such as management, employment, and performance. The second most influential discourse is Community (31%), but this has a smaller vocabulary (15 discourse identifiers) than the Business and management discourse. It incorporates notions such as local, relationships, traditional, and culture. The third most influential discourse is Engineering (16%), which has a vocabulary of 14 discourse identifiers. In contrast to the Community discourse, discourse identifiers here are tangible, physical entities, such as mine, site, operations, and infrastructure. The remaining discourses—The natural world, Communication, and Ethics—respectively constitute 6%, 4%, and 3% of the frequency of discourse identifiers, and have vocabularies of four, four, and five discourse identifiers respectively. The natural world and Ethics comprise contestable terms, such as, respectively, sustainable, land, and conservation, and rights, responsibility, and respect. The Communication discourse, meanwhile, mainly comprises nominalised processes such as consultation and engagement.

The presence of engagement as the second most frequently occurring discourse identifier of Communication may seem to contradict its absence as a concept on the Leximancer map. However, its 30 instances constitute only 1% of the frequency of discourse identifiers. Thus, the apparent discrepancy highlights the relatively low overall influence of the Communication discourse in the documents. This finding supports the interpretation above that the documents talk at some length about ‘communities’, but do not describe, analyse, or reflect on the nature and processes of their relationship with these communities at such length.

A further finding is that the discourse identifier frequencies do not necessarily correlate with the relative extent of various vocabularies. For example, while Community is represented at almost
double the frequency of Engineering, the vocabularies have an almost identical number of discourse identifiers. In other words, the documents draw on Community fairly extensively, but their vocabulary for articulating this discourse is small, relative to their vocabulary for Engineering. Similarly, The natural world has double the frequency of the Ethics discourse, but an identical number of discourse identifiers. Understanding the relative influence of various discourses requires an appreciation of both dimensions. Furthermore, the above figures rely on my subjective interpretation in categorising various words as signifying certain discourses. Nevertheless, it appears that the presence of a discourse does not necessarily mean that it is deeply embedded in the subject positions of those using it.

While most of my categorisations are probably non-controversial, some are inevitably tentative and contestable. For example, the word consultation, which I have classified under Communication, could arguably indicate Business and management. Equally, while I have classified stakeholder(s) under Business and management, because of stakeholder theory’s foundations in strategic management (Freeman, 1984), it could alternatively indicate Community. In this sense, therefore, consultation and stakeholders are both textual manifestations of interdiscursivity. As Livesey (2002) suggests, then, interdiscursivity represents a ‘middle ground’, legitimating and preserving elements of dominant discourses, while accommodating elements of opposing discourses. To investigate how it does this, I now examine the documents more closely.

**Linguistic effects of other grammatical features**

In this next stage of analysis, I focused on text that specifically concerns company-community relationships, using a Leximancer feature that narrows the corpus to those text segments in which selected concepts co-occur. Thus, I selected text segments where the concept ‘community’ co-occurs with the concepts ‘company’, ‘mine’, ‘business’, and ‘mining’. The aim is to maximise the relevance to ‘community engagement’ of the material being analysed, and to exclude ‘irrelevant’ material (see Table 5):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPT CO-OCCURRENCE</th>
<th>NO. OF CO-OCCURRENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘community’ with ‘company’</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘community’ with ‘mine’</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘community’ with ‘business’</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘community’ with ‘mining’</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>439</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>less 120 duplications</em></td>
<td><em>319</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5: Key concept co-occurrences from the documents**
Having identified all the text segments, I found that some co-occurrences overlap; for example, of the 272 co-occurrences of ‘community’ with ‘business’, 58 also co-occur with ‘company’. Hence, while the total number of co-occurrences in Table 5 is 439, I excluded the 120 duplications. This left 319 text segments for analysis, totalling 19,987 words, or 71% of the total corpus. Thus, the process of selecting ‘relevant’ segments removed only 29% of the corpus, diminishing any concern that I might be overlooking substantial portions of the texts.

I then read through the text segments looking for nominalisations, modality, and agentless passive constructions. As explained in Chapter Three, these are grammatical features that may be discursively significant. To recap:

- Nominalisations can simplify complex, dynamic, and contestable processes\(^4\) (verbs) into static, self-evident, and non-negotiable nouns, or nominal groups (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 131; McKenna & Graham, 2000, p. 230).
- Modality indicates the degree of certainty of a reality being presented (Fairclough, 1995; Halliday, 1994; Martin & Rose, 2007).
- The passive voice appears to diminish the rôle of the actor or agent, or to obfuscate the relationship between the actor/agent and the process, or verb (Ilie, 1998, p. 70; McKenna & Graham, 2000, p. 238).

In the following analysis, I have highlighted these grammatical features as follows: nominalisation, modality and passive voice. I found that, linguistically, these features collectively convey four themes: incontestability, technocratisation, agentlessness, and harmony.

**Incontestability**

The first theme concerns truth claims regarding the companies’ socially responsible approach towards its local communities. This is identified by statements that lack modality and thereby assert ‘facts’ regarding contestable concepts such as lasting relationships, key stakeholders and good progress. Thus, the ‘fact’ that the companies are socially responsible becomes neither verifiable nor refutable:

1. **[Company]… is focused on building lasting relationships with its neighbours across the entire Pilbara region.**

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\(^4\) Process is a term used in systemic functional linguistics to identify the linguistic concept that creates transitivity in a clause. Transitivity focuses on the actor who performs an action, as opposed to ergativity, which focuses on the agent who initiates or facilitates it (Eggins, 1994, pp. 228-231; Halliday, 1994, Ch. 5). In lay terms, these processes are recognised as verbs (e.g., do, be, and have). However, systemic functional linguistics distinguishes between six processes: material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal, and existential (Halliday, 1994, pp. 106-107).
2. *We do not proceed* with any activity that is in breach of our values.

3. *The program...recognises* Aboriginal communities as key stakeholders.

In Statement 4, the company’s position, by lacking modality, appears certain (*There is*), whereas dissenters’ position is expressed with less certainty, via a modal auxiliary verb (*may*). The anonymity attached to the dissenters (*Some people*) facilitates dismissal of their position:

4. *Some people have expressed concerns that, because of the complexity of local languages, communications by [company] with communities may not be effective. There is no basis for these concerns.*

Potential areas of dissent or conflict are typically expressed in vague and conceptual terms. In Statement 5, there is low modality in the company actions *has addressed* and *has made*, suggesting that the *issues raised by community groups* are no longer contentious, and that *progress* is considered *good* by the community, as well as by the company:

5. *During the year, the company has addressed a number of issues raised by community groups and has made good progress in advancing its community programs.*

In the following statements, truth claims invest the anthropomorphised company with a sense of moral judgement, expressed via a capacity for mental processes (Halliday & Martin, 1993) such as valuing, encouraging, respecting, and recognising. Thus, the statements humanise the companies through possession of thinking and feeling abilities, reflecting the metaphorical notion of companies as ‘corporate citizens’ (Matten & Crane, 2005; Zadek, 2001):

6. *[Company]... values its local communities and encourages involvement and interaction wherever possible.*

7. *We respect the rights of Indigenous peoples to retain their culture, identity, customs and traditions and acknowledge the importance of their cultural heritage.*

8. *[Company]... recognises its responsibilities to the unique environment and communities of the [place] that are impacted by its operations.*

Crucially, the documents convey a sense of agency that the companies voluntarily carry out socially responsible acts. The lack of modality in Statement 9 suggests that a legal obligation—conforming to Native Title legislation—is actually a voluntary, benevolent gesture. The nominalisation
consultation then collapses various social processes that might constitute consulting, participating, or engaging:

9. [Company B] supports Native Title rights and has continued its mining operations in consultation with the Traditional Owners of the region.

The above statements, then, present truth claims regarding the companies’ social responsibility and community engagement without space for contestation or discussion.

Technocratisation

Above, I noted that the Business and management discourse features a number of nominalised processes. A second grammatical characteristic of the documents, then, is the use of nominalisations to technocratisate community engagement. Technocratic language appears to be objective and rational, but implicitly values corporate and managerial economic interests (McKenna & Graham, 2000, pp. 224-226). The documents cannot be described as universally technocratic, since humanising mental processes, suggested in Statements 6-8 above (e.g., values and respect), are uncommon in technocratic texts (McKenna & Graham, 2000, p. 236). However, certain statements indicate technocratisisation, reflecting the dominant engineering mode of discourse (McKenna, 1997). For example, community engagement processes become nominalised as consultation and delivery, and are framed as just another functional aspect of operations management (e.g., consultation program):

10. Systematic attention to baseline studies, two way community and local stakeholder consultation and delivery of socio-economic programmes has improved the strength and quality of the programmes, and hence the benefits provided.

11. …we are undertaking an extensive consultation program in the area and surrounding locales with various stakeholders.

In Statement 12, the nominalisation delivery indicates a benevolent, or perhaps paternalistic, one-way relationship of giving, rather than interpersonal interaction with communities:

12. The involvement of our employees in the delivery of community programs adds another important dimension.

Such processes are then systematised to plan and review progress, to facilitate improved focus, and to be measured for evaluation. The effect is that community engagement becomes a technocratic, quantifiable practice:
13. The HIV/Aids support group meets on a monthly basis for capacity building purposes and to plan and review progress of their work. During the year they conducted 1,187 home visits and visited eight schools, three prisons, four churches and seven farms and two military bases. There are 37 community peer group educators who play a valuable rôle when visiting high risk areas.

14. Across our organisation, we reported a 33 per cent reduction in community complaints about our operations, partly due to our improved focus on community engagement activities.

15. Specific projects with agreed objectives assist evaluation and enable the success of the project to be measured.

This quantification is commonly expressed in monetary terms, marginalising non-financial forms of community engagement, an effect enhanced by drawing on business discourse (leveraged):

16. Total contributions to communities in 2005 were US$93.4 million, a six per cent increase from 2004.

17. Over the next three years 2004 - 2006, we will continue our [name of programme] and will make another A$1.5million commitment to assisting community efforts at 10 significant and threatened locations across remote, regional and urban Australia.

18. The $12 million committed by the Fund during this time has been leveraged into more than $32 million worth of community projects.

In Chapter Two, I noted that the dominant rationalisation for companies to adopt a ‘stakeholder approach’ is the instrumental assertion of ensuing business benefits. In Statements 19-21, lack of modality and nominalisations imply a truth, or statement of fact, by using relational processes (is, are) asserting that community engagement is important for the instrumental reason that it can influence business success, or the company’s ability to operate and grow:

19. Good relationships with local communities are critical to [company]’s success.

20. Good management of community relationships is as necessary to [company]’s business success as the management of operations.

21. A key to our ability to operate and grow as a company is a commitment to engage effectively with the communities in which we work.
Similarly, in Statements 22 and 23, nominalisation and lack of modality present western managerial values as universal and non-negotiable, without questioning their appropriateness to different contexts. The implicit suggestion is that local communities could achieve better outcomes if only they adopted more business-like attributes:

22. *However, the capability of the community to organise itself has been limited by a lack of* 'can do' *spirit and a strong sense of dependency on handouts.*

23. *The issue of good governance is of major importance in order to develop the management, transparency and accountability of Aboriginal community organisations, councils, government departments and institutions.*

Technocratisation is also evident in the privileging of a western socio-economic worldview. In Statement 24, lack of modality presents a western interpretation of land as factual, marginalising Indigenous perspectives. While *Traditional Owner groups* are acknowledged, the land is seen not in terms of its traditional significance, but in terms of geography, economic-oriented settlement, and economic and government institutions. This suggests a view of land not as something having intrinsic value, but as “something to be tamed and brought under control” (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 51).

24. *There are 11 Traditional Owner groups represented in the area, and the region's population is based largely in five main communities or towns... The town of [place] was constructed by [company] in the 1960s to house its mining workforce, but today is the regional hub of [place] hosting many businesses and government services.*

Grammatical features within the above statements, then, suggest an implicit privileging of corporate and managerial economic interests, consistent with technocratic discourse (McKenna & Graham, 2000). Nominalisations, in particular, frame community engagement as a managerial function, becoming part of operations management. Yet managerialism is a political ideology that displays hegemonic characteristics, seemingly offering the only solution to organisational problems and enabling the corporation to colonise multiple areas of life (Deetz, 1992). Community engagement thus becomes a quantifiable phenomenon, expressed in monetary terms, and is rationalised instrumentally as being consistent with business success. As a corollary, local communities could realise their aspirations if they adhered to mainstream social and cultural values, which are universally applicable.
Agentlessness

In linguistics, agentlessness refers to the “absence of a prime actant of the verb” (Fogsgaard, 1998). In the documents, agentless passive constructions diminish the rôle of actors or agents, particularly where that actor/agent is the company. In Statements 25-29, the passive voice diminishes the rôle of the companies in constructing various contestable concepts: recognised experts, least sensitive, good progress, stakeholder engagement methods, a Communities standard, and effective community relations. Furthermore, lack of modality again presents assertions as factual, and nominalisations reinforce a technocratic discourse:

25. A rigorous methodology had to be designed and implemented by maximising existing data sets and consulting widely with recognised experts.

26. The [company] site selection study has successfully identified a site that is considered to be the least sensitive from an environmental, social, health and safety risk perspective ...

27. The management team...is fully operational and good progress has been made in developing and delivering projects.

28. A range of stakeholder engagement methods has been used to support environmental assessments and approvals for exploration, appraisal and development activities ...

29. A Communities standard has been developed which sets out the requirements businesses need to consider in the design and implementation of an effective community relations programme, which is being actively implemented ...

In Statement 30, the passive voice diminishes the agency—presumably of the company—in hiring, and paying for, a consultant, reinforcing the incontestable claim of being unbiased (neutral):

30. A neutral consultant was hired to chair the meetings.

In Statement 31, workplace training appears agentless, overlooking its potential to convey ideologically-laden values. Training here operates as a nominalisation, suggesting that its meaning is self-evident:

31. To date, more than 500 soldiers, policemen and security guards have received training on humanitarian law and human rights.

In the discussion of technocratisation, I noted that the nominalisation consultation collapses processes of engaging into other functional aspects of operations management. The passive voice
performs a similar linguistic function, presenting the content of *posters and signs* and *communication formats and media* as agentless conduits that disinterestedly *inform*, overlooking their potentially rhetorical rôle as public-relations mechanisms:

32. *In areas around the company's exploration activities, posters and signs are displayed to inform communities...*

33. *Due to the complexity of local languages and low literacy levels in some areas, a range of communication formats and media has been utilised to help ensure the widest range of stakeholders is informed about the exploration processes and program.*

Thus, the documents convey an agentlessness regarding many of the processes by which the companies construct ‘community engagement’. The nature of company-community relationships, and the interpersonal communication processes that characterise those relationships, appear to be objective, mutually understood, and devoid of rhetorical potential.

**Harmony**

Research by Jenkins (2004, p. 31) suggests that minerals companies’ sustainability reports convey an impression that mining and sustainability are wholly compatible, and that they typically remain silent on the inherently unsustainable nature of extracting non-renewable resources. Similarly, the documents analysed here convey an impression of harmony in company-community relations, and congruence between company and community interests. For example, lack of modality and the passive voice in Statements 34 and 35 diminish space for company-community dissent, and assume that *mutual benefit* is attainable:

34. *The aim is to arrive at an understanding of what we can do for mutual benefit and then to secure those benefits through agreed objectives.*

35. *By consulting with the community in order to understand and address local needs, and by initiating programs that help build capabilities of local people and enterprises, strong relationships are being developed, to the benefit of the community and the Company.*

By asserting differences in usuality, the following is a rare example of modalisation. The modal adjuncts *usually* and *occasionally* convey an impression that *negative effects of Group operations* are infrequent, relative to *benefits for communities*. Hence, disharmony appears to be rare:

36. *In order to implement [company]’s local communities policies, businesses undertake local programmes and initiatives. These are usually aimed at securing benefits for communities or occasionally to mitigate the negative effects of Group operations.*
In Statements 37 and 38, lack of modality intensifies assertions that dissent has been overcome and resolution achieved. Thus, conflict now appears to be historical, such that further dissent would be anachronistic. In Statement 37, the passive voice diminishes the agency of who determines when or whether the conflict has been overcome.

37. A line has been drawn under years of conflict over [company]'s work on the [mine] uranium deposit.

38. This agreement lifts the shadow of [mine] off the... Aboriginal people in [place].

According to Jenkins (2004, p. 30), where company reports do discuss conflict, they present their own version of events, as an impression management strategy. This was evident in the documents, apparently in cases where conflict and dissent were undeniable because of wider public knowledge. Statements 39-41 actively seek to silence dissent. In Statement 39, lack of modality excludes opponents by associating a broader political agenda with illegitimate claims. This implies that the company has legitimate claims because it is apolitical:

39. ...the individuals who initiated the protests do not have a legitimate claim to represent the interests of the local communities and are part of a broader political agenda...

In Statement 40, the passive voice frames forceful suppression of opposition as agentless:

40. The police presence at the site was strengthened, and the Company immediately regained full control of the property without further violence.

In Statement 41, the passive voice depersonalises the people concerned. Their views and motives, which are not discussed, are then further delegitimised by the dismissive term a mob:

41. This good progress was interrupted during the week of 22 May, when a mob armed with rocks, slings and firebombs forced entry to the mine property, attacked police and workers, set fires, and looted and vandalised the facilities, causing the mine to shut down until safe working conditions could be restored.

In summary, the documents create an impression of company-community harmony, and implicitly diminish the perceived extent of any dissent. This contrasts with the analysis of conceptual relationships, which suggests a potential conflict between management assumptions and a concern for local communities. Upon closer inspection, statements in the documents assume a compatibility
between company and community interests. Where dissent is undeniable, certain language and grammar choices work to delegitimise opposition.

Summary of verbal text

In this analysis of the verbal text within company reports and websites, examination of conceptual relationships suggests that a tension exists between management assumptions and a concern for local communities. The verbal text draws interdiscursively from a variety of discourses, particularly from Business and management, but also from Community, Engineering, The natural world, Communication, and Ethics. Examining instances of nominalisations, modality, and voice, the verbal text conveys four impressions. Firstly, claims of the companies’ social responsibility appear incontestable. Secondly, through technocratic discourse, company interpretations of community engagement implicitly privilege corporate and managerial economic interests. Thirdly, the construction of community engagement relationships and processes appears to be agentless. Fourthly, company-community relations appear to be generally harmonious, delegitimising dissent.

Perhaps little here is surprising. After all, we expect companies to present themselves, and their community relationships, in a positive light, and we would be surprised if they portrayed themselves unfavourably. However, this analysis has demonstrated how some companies do so, by illustrating the discursive and linguistic choices they make as they construct their image for public consumption. This verbal text, however, constitutes only part of the entire text. To gain a broader, multimodal understanding of how the reports represent and constitute community engagement discourse, I need to consider the construction of visual text, and how it might influence our impressions of a company’s community engagement efforts.

Visual text

The four reports contain 202 photographic images, and 111 charts/graphs. My analysis comprises three stages, as outlined in Chapter Three. Firstly, I consider the photographs, categorising them into the discourses from which they appear to be principally drawn by examining the nature of the content of each image. This enables me to assess whether the discursive constructions of the verbal and visual texts are similar. Secondly, through a social semiotic approach (e.g., David, 2001; Economou, 2006; Martin, 2000; Watts, 2004), I consider a sample of five photographs, typical of those commonly presented in this genre, to assess the kinds of attitude—i.e., affect, appreciation and judgement—that they might evoke. Thirdly, following Beattie and Jones (1992), Courtis (1997), and Johnson et al. (1980), I examine all charts and graphs for possibly misleading scales or graphic effects.
Photographic images: Discursive construction

As described in Chapter Three, the photographic images can be analysed in terms of the various discourses from which they appear to draw, which I discuss here, and in terms of the kinds of attitude they evoke, which I discuss in the next section. To consider the discourses from which they draw, I examined all of the 202 images. Keeping in mind the discourses represented in the verbal text, but remaining open to the possibility that some may not be represented visually, and vice versa, I categorised each image according to the principal content. Although this is not a precise scientific process, in most cases the categorisations were fairly obvious, as I explain below.

Of the 202 photographs, the largest proportion (89, or 44%) appear to draw mainly from a discourse of *Engineering*. That is, they feature images of mines and minerals processing operations (e.g., Figure 2). Next, 44 (22%) draw from a discourse of *Community*, typically portraying ‘ordinary’ people apparently benefiting from company programmes (e.g., Figure 3). Thirdly, 32 (16%) draw from a discourse of *Business and management*, typically featuring male managerial staff in business attire. Fourthly, 29 (14%) draw from a discourse of *The natural world*, mainly via aesthetically appealing images of apparently pristine ecosystems. Figure 4, for example, shows coral from the Great Barrier Reef, an iconic symbol of Australia’s marine wilderness. Finally, eight (4%) draw from a discourse of *Communication*, represented by people in conversation, mostly informally.

Thus, the images construct an interdiscursive interpretation of community engagement. In this way, the visual text reflects the verbal text, as Jameson (2000, pp. 33-35) found in her study of financial reports.
Figure 2: Image drawing on a discourse of Engineering

Figure 3: Image drawing on a discourse of Community

Figure 4: Image drawing on a discourse of The natural world
However, as Table 6 shows, the respective discourses are not represented equally in the verbal and visual (photographic) texts, and two substantial divergences exist. Firstly, the Engineering discourse constitutes a substantial 44% of the photographs, but only 16% of the frequency of discourse identifiers in the verbal text. This may be because images of large industrial operations can be visually impressive, evoking efficiency and maybe even beauty in ways that verbal descriptions cannot match (David, 2001). Secondly, the Business and management discourse constitutes 39% of the frequency of discourse identifiers in the verbal text, but only 16% of the photographs. This suggests that this discourse is more difficult to represent photographically than verbally. Thus, while the documents are ostensibly intended to communicate messages concerning social and environmental impacts, visually they draw substantially from the Engineering discourse, and verbally they draw substantially from the Business and management discourse, to do so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCOURSE</th>
<th>VERBAL TEXT</th>
<th>VISUAL TEXT (photographs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business and management</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The natural world</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notwithstanding these verbal/visual discrepancies, the central message seems to be that mining and minerals processing can exist in harmony with social and environmental concerns. The aesthetically pleasing nature of the majority of the images supports David’s (2001) assertion that such images typically present an idealised impression that marginalises reference to adverse social and environmental externalities. There are no images, for example, representing pollution, degraded landscapes, or community conflict. So, how might the reader evaluate or appraise the companies, based on these images?

**Photographic images: Evoking attitudes**

To discuss the kinds of attitude the images might evoke, I now examine more closely five images that typify the genre. I consider how the different kinds of attitude—affect, appreciation, and judgement—evoked by each image might determine our overall impressions of the issues being represented. Of course, I cannot say objectively or definitively that an image evokes certain kinds of attitude; a more comprehensive study might ask a range of people to describe the attitudes that images evoke for them. To recap from Chapter Three:
• Appreciation refers to aesthetic response, such as proportion, colour, and texture.
• Affect refers to emotional response, such as love, hate, fear, or discomfort.
• Judgement refers to ethical/moral response, such as good, bad, right, or wrong (Economou, 2006; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1995; Martin & Rose, 2007).

Figure 5 presents a male employee apparently undertaking technological work, gazing intensely at some object, contextualised with modern machinery, and overlaid with the verbal text, *Integrity throughout*. This appears to associate the company symbolically with technological precision, rather than with the industrial business of extracting and processing minerals. It is consistent with the moral conviction that the minerals industry unlocks the ‘value’ of the land through technical achievement (Trigger, 1997, p. 165). In the background, the complex, modern machinery is arranged textually to represent the technological nature of contemporary mining processes. The use of light in the photograph appears to emphasise the intense gaze and the machinery. Thus, in terms of the kinds of attitude evoked, appreciation values may be highest, since the image evokes an aesthetic response of technological efficiency. Judgement values may be moderately evoked, since the man’s gaze suggests diligence and conscientiousness, reinforced by the caption *Integrity throughout*. Affect values may be lowest, since the scientific context conveys an impression of unemotional detachment.
The second photograph (Figure 6) comprises two black South Africans—a child undertaking an educational activity under adult supervision. Accompanying written text (omitted here to avoid company identification) indicates that the school is a beneficiary of the company’s community programme. The company’s intention, therefore, appears to be to convey an impression that these people’s good fortunes stem partly from the company’s existence. Such a connotation helps to instil social legitimacy in the company. The ‘security’ of this child is enhanced by the nurturing figure in the background. In terms of attitude, therefore, appreciation values may again be highest, because of the child’s apparently healthy features and clean, tidy school uniform. Affect values may be moderately evoked, because of a universal emotional response of empathy towards children (Economou, 2006). Meanwhile, the clean, tidy, content, and well-nourished appearance of both subjects may provoke relatively low judgement values, contrasting with ethical responses commonly evoked by images in the western media of poverty and conflict in Africa.

The third photograph (Figure 7) comprises semi-naked figures of Aboriginal children, painted traditionally to evoke Dreamtime stories. This image seems to convey an impression that the company acknowledges not only the presence of Indigenous peoples neighbouring their operations, but also that Indigenous cultures contrast with western culture. The ghost-like, rather than realistic, representation may evoke appreciation values highly here. The response of empathy towards children may again evoke affect values moderately, but perhaps diminished by the ‘otherness’ in the non-naturalistic presentation (Economou, 2006, p. 219). Judgement values may not be evoked highly, since there is silence regarding the social disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal
communities around minerals operations (DITR, 2007; Tiplady & Barclay, 2007). Instead, by highlighting timeless, traditional features, and hiding contemporary social realities, the image seems to construct an oversimplified and distorted version of the subject (Barthes, 1972; David, 2001).

Figure 8 is an artistic image of the top of the Australian Parliament building. The photograph is taken from below, making the viewer imagine looking upwards to the national flag. This is a conceptual, rather than narrative, image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1995), with the company’s product given symbolic value through association with the pinnacle of Australian democracy. Accompanying text associates the company with safety and security. In any setting other than a company report, the viewer would be unlikely to associate the structure with any company. The combination of clear blue sky, shiny steel, and geometrically symmetrical architecture, may act to evoke appreciation values highly once again. There is possibly some evocation of judgement values, via the connotation of integrity through democratic institutions. As in Figure 5, however, the cold, unemotional subject matter, combined with sharp edges, may evoke low affect values.
The fifth photograph (Figure 9) is a narrative, rather than conceptual, image, featuring a possum inside a hollow log, with the caption, *Possum released back into the wild*. In terms of attitude, the gaze of the possum, apparently directed towards the viewer, probably evokes high affect values, by encouraging emotional, and perhaps anthropomorphic, sentiments of ‘cuddly’ wildlife. Appreciation values here may be relatively low, because of the more amateurish style, although the central framing of the possum, and the big, beady eyes, may compensate. Judgement values may be evoked by conveying a ethical sense of caring for the environment. However, the caption suggests that the company has now fulfilled its perceived moral obligations; thus, an ethical/moral response may be evoked only moderately.

In summary, the images tend to evoke appreciation values more highly than they do either affect or judgement values (see Table 7). For the reader evaluating or appraising the companies, therefore, the images may evoke aesthetic responses more than they evoke either emotional or ethical/moral responses. Where emotional or ethical/moral responses are evoked, they tend to convey an impression that the companies symbolise integrity and responsible practice. Mirroring the verbal text, there is nothing to suggest that dissent may exist, that there are any adverse impacts of mining and minerals processing, or that others may interpret or perceive the companies’ operations differently.
Table 7: Degree to which different kinds of attitude may be evoked by images in the reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KINDS OF ATTITUDE EVOKED</th>
<th>Appreciation (aesthetic response)</th>
<th>Affect (emotional response)</th>
<th>Judgement (ethical/moral response)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photograph (a)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph (b)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph (c)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph (d)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph (e)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While these five images constitute only a small sample of the entire corpus, they do illustrate this genre’s visual construction of community engagement discourse. To conclude the visual analysis, then, I now consider the rôle of graphs and charts in constructing readers’ impressions of the companies concerned.

Charts and graphs

As explained in Chapter Three, graphs and charts can influence impressions of a company’s performance, potentially misleading their audience. For my analysis, I examined all charts and graphs in the reports, seeking evidence of misleading scales or graphic effects. I adopted Courtis’ (1997) definition of ‘misleading’ as violation of any of the following principles:

1. use of proper scales and a single zero baseline;
2. time values (in a time series chart) moving from left to right on the horizontal scale, or pie sectors progressing in a descending sequence;
3. use of clear negative numbers;
4. use of clear visual effects cautiously;
5. careful choice of the number of years and the number of sectors being presented.

Of the 111 charts and graphs, only 20 (18%) failed to comply with the above graphical construction principles, most commonly via violation of the principle of a single zero baseline. Compared with research by Courtis (1997) and Johnson et al. (1980), this is a relatively low proportion, suggesting that the companies have been relatively careful to avoid misleading audiences. Two examples of potentially misleading charts and graphs are illustrated below. Figure 10, a pie chart, violates principles 2 and 4 from Courtis’ list above. It has been distorted through a three-dimensional effect, creating a potentially misleading visual effect. This particular report contained five pie charts, all of which were presented in this manner. In addition, the item charitable gifts tops the list of...
community contributions, suggesting that it is the largest item numerically, when it is actually the smallest. The prominence thus attached to charitable gifts creates a potentially misleading impression of the company’s benevolence. Similarly, it is debatable whether management costs, positioned at the bottom of the list even though it is not the smallest item, should be classified as a community contribution.

Figure 11 violates principles 1 and 4. The right-hand scale does not start at zero, exaggerating the decline in the company’s greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, it could appear that the company’s target for greenhouse gas emissions in 2008 is close to zero. Further, the dotted line, representing the 2008 target, distorts the actual trend line.
These examples, then, illustrate potentially misleading distortions to the communication process. Although it is impossible to judge whether these distortions were intentional, it may be significant that they tend to exaggerate the companies’ apparent performance (Beattie & Jones, 1992; J. R. Johnson et al., 1980).

**Summary of visual text**

Conclusions from visual analysis must be deemed tentative, as methodology in this area is relatively underdeveloped. This analysis has found that, relative to the verbal text, the companies draw disproportionately from an *Engineering* discourse in choosing the photographic images for their reports, even though the reports’ purported purpose is to represent social and environmental dimensions. The images analysed more closely tend to have an aesthetically pleasing nature, which presents an idealised impression of the companies’ social and environmental impacts. Meanwhile, some charts and graphs potentially mislead the reader, although this effect may be unintentional, and it occurs in a smaller proportion of cases than in previous research. Nevertheless, where distortions do occur, they tend to convey an exaggerated impression of the companies’ apparent social and environmental performance.

As with the verbal text, the significance is not so much that the companies use visual text to convey a favourable impression of themselves, as this in itself is unsurprising. Rather, this analysis has illustrated *how* the companies do so, in terms of the choices they make as they construct their image for public consumption. They choose, for example, to foreground engineering activities and to represent them as being aesthetically pleasing, and they choose not to represent adverse impacts visually at all.

**Conclusion to Chapter Four**

This chapter considered secondary empirical material, in the form of sustainability reports and community-related website pages. The relevance of this material, I proposed, is that both sources constitute official media through which the companies broadcast and rationalise their community engagement strategies, activities and intentions. Thus, this material helps to construct, and reflect, the discourse of community engagement. Through analysis, therefore, I aimed to shed light on the choices companies make as they contribute to the construction of the discourse of community engagement.
Analysis of verbal text initially found that ‘engagement’ is not a significant concept in the
documents, that ‘community’ is discussed mostly in physical and tangible terms, and that business-
related and non-business-related discourses appear to be somewhat disjointed conceptually.
Investigation of lexical choices suggested that the documents draw interdiscursively from a variety
of apparently conflicting discourses. While the documents speak extensively of economics,
business, management, and engineering, they also speak of community, the natural world,
communication, and ethics. Nevertheless, the discourse of Business and management is highly
influential, and comprises a vocabulary significantly larger than other discourses. Conversely, the
documents’ vocabulary for articulating a Community discourse is small, relative to that for
Engineering. While the documents talk at some length about ‘communities’, there appears to be
relatively little description, analysis, and reflection regarding the companies’ relationship with these
communities.

Through analysis of other grammatical features—nominalisations, modality, and voice—I identified
four textual themes: incontestability, technocratisation, agentlessness, and harmony. Statements
lacking modality appear to assert ‘facts’, which can be neither verified nor refuted, regarding the
companies’ social responsibility towards its local communities. In some cases, truth claims position
a company as a ‘person’ with a capacity for mental processes. The documents also tend on
occasions to technocratis and quantify community engagement, implicitly privileging corporate
and managerial, economic values. Through use of the passive voice, the documents also appear to
deny the companies’ agency rôle in constructions of reality. Further, various communication media
are upheld as conveyors of objective information, overlooking their potentially rhetorical rôle.
Finally, the documents present an impression of harmony and congruence between company and
community interests, and tend to marginalise dissent and delegitimise opposition.

Photographs in the reports, meanwhile, largely mirror the words themselves in constructing an
interdiscursive interpretation of community engagement, and in marginalising discussion of
contentious issues. However, the visual representation of some discourses contrasts substantially
with the verbal texts. In particular, 44% of the photographs appear to draw from a Engineering
discourse, compared to 16% for the verbal text. Similarly, only 16% of the photographs appear to
draw from a Business and management discourse, compared to 39% for the verbal text. This
suggests that the aesthetic appeal of mining and engineering images was a strong determinant of
photograph selection.
Analysis of a sample of ‘typical’ photographs, similarly, found that, even though the companies appear to be trying to convey messages promoting their ethical credentials, the images are more likely to hold aesthetic appeal than to instil any ethical attitude. Thus, there is again an implicit assumption of harmony between minerals operations and community concerns, and an absence of visual representation of adverse social and environmental externalities. Finally, I found that only 18% of charts and graphs in the reports are potentially misleading, which is low compared to previous research. It is uncertain whether distortions were intentional, but they do tend to exaggerate the companies’ social responsibility performance.

So, by incorporating oppositional discourses, the documents generally convey the impression that minerals operations are compatible with community values and concerns, and that the companies are satisfactorily managing their social and environmental impacts. To reinforce this impression, contrary perspectives are largely marginalised. However, because interdiscursivity is characterised by ongoing contestation (Wodak, 2001), corporate discourse never achieves complete hegemony. Furthermore, these documents constitute only part of the community engagement discourse, and a fuller understanding demands an examination of its instantiations in social practice. As I noted in Chapter Three, discourse is “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that bring an object into being” (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 3, emphasis added). The following two chapters, therefore, consider participants’ own practices, experiences, and understandings, as they interact and interrelate. I discuss, analyse, and interpret the findings from observation and interviews at the two case study sites, considering how people, both within the companies and among the local communities, understand ‘community engagement’ from their own experiences. I then consider how language-as-discourse constitutes, and is constituted by, these understandings.
Chapter Five: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT SITE A

Introduction

The previous chapter constituted the first of the three analytical chapters of this study. I now discuss the findings from observation and interviews at the first of the two research sites. As explained earlier, following Visit One, I established that an issue of contention at Site A was relations between the company and the local Indigenous community. Thus, Visits Two and Three focused on this issue, as a manifestation of ‘community engagement’ discourse.

This chapter is in three sections. Firstly, I present and discuss the context, which derives partly from background reading, and partly from discussions with, and observations of, the company and the local Indigenous community. This enables me to describe the discursive tensions underlying participants’ subjective experiences. Secondly, analysing the interviews, I identify three phenomenographic conceptions, or understandings, of community engagement. Thirdly, applying textual analysis, I analyse and interpret these conceptions. My methods here are threefold: deductively triangulating the phenomenographic conceptions through textual analysis, inductively examining conceptual relationships and lexical choices, and deductively analysing instances of words potentially signifying competing worldviews.

Context

Minerals companies and Aboriginal communities: Historical tensions

“Mining companies normally comes in, do the prospect, find the minerals, dig them out and then go all the way to the bank, leaving us sitting there wondering what we should be doing with the holes and the mess they have made.” (Galarrwuy Yunupingu, on The 7.30 Report, 2008, 27 May)

Historically, minerals companies’ relationships with Aboriginal communities have been highly problematic (e.g., Ballard & Banks, 2003; Banerjee, 2000; Whiteman & Mamen, 2002). Until the 1970s in Australia, most mining companies denied responsibility towards the original inhabitants of the land they were mining (Crawley & Sinclair, 2003; O'Faircheallaigh & Corbett, 2005). Even as recently as the 1980s, the industry still vehemently opposed Indigenous land rights (Howitt, 2001,
p. 202). Indeed, until 1992, resource management systems assumed that Aboriginal people had not existed prior to British settlement, and minerals-based industrialisation had followed a “persistent pattern of dispossession, displacement, marginalisation and alienation” (Howitt, 2001, p. 208).

Although land rights legislation may date back to the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 1966 (SA), the watershed was the High Court’s 1992 Mabo decision and the subsequent Native Title Act 1993 (DITR, 2007). These events overturned terra nullius—the assertion that Australia was uninhabited before British settlement—and ruled that continuous occupancy could legitimate a claim to land ownership. This forced many mining companies to seriously consider their impacts on, and their relationship with, Indigenous communities for the first time, although some companies had acted earlier, despite ideological, developmentalist opposition from governments (Crawley & Sinclair, 2003; Howitt, 2001). The Act granted Traditional Owners a ‘right to negotiate’ with mining companies and governments, regarding the granting of mining leases (Tiplady & Barclay, 2007, p. 6). This Australian watershed was complemented by international declarations, such as the International Labour Office’s Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989), and the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1993). Thus, in Australia as elsewhere, the discourse has shifted towards greater recognition of Indigenous peoples’ rights.

However, even though the discursive and legal tides seemed to be turning during this time, several factors worked to constrain change in practice. For example, some in the mining industry initially continued to campaign fiercely against Native Title rights (AMEEF, 2002, p. 58), although few would publicly do so now. The Mabo decision also concluded that Native Title could be extinguished, for example on freehold land, and overlooked the possibility of residual sovereign rights (Howitt, 2001, pp. 205-206). In addition, the legislation requires Indigenous people to demonstrate a continuous connection with their traditional lands, a challenging requirement given the repeated phases of dispossession and displacement (DITR, 2007, p. 9). Finally, minerals companies can bypass the right-to-negotiate provisions under the Act by reaching independent agreements with Indigenous communities, formalised as Indigenous Land Use Agreements (AMEEF, 2002, p. 58). However, the inherently weak negotiating position of Indigenous communities means that the potential for their participation is often not realised (O’Faircheallaigh & Corbett, 2005).

A discourse perspective helps to understand how Indigenous land rights are interpreted contemporaneously, illustrating how legislation has not given Indigenous people control of their
land, especially when Indigenous and mining interests have conflicted (Ballard & Banks, 2003; Banerjee, 2000). Banerjee (2000) argues that western discourses of stakeholders, development and progress perpetuate colonial oppression of Indigenous communities, and that ‘knowledge’ regarding stakeholders is a product of power. The holistic nature of Indigenous knowledge conflicts with the technical, scientific, and rational approaches to environmental assessment and planning (O'Faircheallaigh & Corbett, 2005, p. 633). Thus, quantifiable ‘economic benefits’, such as new jobs, export income and royalties, are advanced as objective, rational evidence to justify minerals projects in Indigenous communities (Banerjee, 2000).

Minerals companies have generally considered their relationships with Indigenous communities in terms of instrumental and economic, rather than ethical, arguments (Crawley & Sinclair, 2003). The proposition that minerals companies should engage with Indigenous communities is typically presented as a ‘business case’ for the ‘social licence to operate’, reflecting dominant perspectives on CSR and stakeholder theory discussed in Chapter Two. This view typically cites instrumental rationalisations, such as improving access to land, developing a regional workforce, and enhancing industry reputation (DITR, 2007; Tiplady & Barclay, 2007, p. 10). In 2005, the Minerals Council of Australia and the Australian Government signed a memorandum of understanding, agreeing to deliver “increased employability”, “increased business enterprises”, “prosperous Indigenous individuals, families and communities”, and “a strong partnership between industry and government” (Australian Government & Minerals Council of Australia, 2005, p. 3). Thus, minerals companies typically assess their responsibility towards Indigenous communities through economic indicators, such as Indigenous representation in the workforce. The challenge remains that, in the principal mining states (Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales), Indigenous Australians are under-represented in the mining workforce, relative to their representation in the whole population (Tedesco, Fainstein, & Hogan, 2003; Tiplady & Barclay, 2007).

Whiteman and Mamen (2002, pp. 66-70), meanwhile, note that some minerals companies consult only with male leaders, marginalising women and young people, weakening communities’ cultural cohesion. In some cases, Indigenous perspectives in general have been deliberately denied (Lane & Chase, 1996). More generally, state-imposed economic development initiatives commonly fail to engage with Indigenous ways of doing things, and mainstream discourse privileges material problems over cultural dimensions (B. R. Smith, 2003). Nevertheless, recent years have undoubtedly witnessed a discursive shift, culminating recently in the Australian Government’s
apology to the Stolen Generations\textsuperscript{5}. Indeed, an emerging focus in the minerals industry on Indigenous health, education, and cultural belief systems indicates a more multifaceted conception of social responsibilities (DITR, 2007).

From a research perspective, Smith (1999, pp. 59-61) argues that the project of modernity involved an acceptance that individuals have the capacity to reason, and thus to debate ideas rationally and scientifically. While the temporal span of ‘modernity’ is contested, it is understood by historical sociologists as an epoch characterised by individualisation, rationality, control, and normalisation, and as oriented towards the future and progress (Rabinow & Rose, 2003, pp. xxiv-xxv). This epoch, Smith explains, was accompanied by an expansion of trade, leading to European ‘discovery’ of ‘new’ lands. Thus, colonisation of Indigenous peoples became interwoven with liberal individualism, and scientific ‘knowledge’ about Indigenous peoples became colonised for expansionist, capitalist exploitation. Discussions of relations between transnational minerals companies and Indigenous communities, therefore, takes place in the context of colonisation not only of lands, but also of knowledge. A sensitivity towards this context may be particularly important at Site A, where Indigenous peoples have almost ‘disappeared’ under intense industrialisation, and where their worldviews have been historically marginalised.

The company site

Site A actually comprises two minerals processing operations, located on opposite sides of a regional, industrial city in Australia. One operation is fairly new, while the other is well established. This research originally concerned only the new operation, but a company restructure prior to Visit Two broadened the responsibilities of many community relations staff to include the established operation. This provided the newer operation with an opportunity to implement contemporary ideas regarding community engagement, rather than, as at Site B, having to transform historically-embedded organisational practices. The operation has undertaken a number of initiatives under the umbrella of ‘Indigenous relations’, and latterly these have been seen as initiatives of both operations. However, both operations are on freehold land, effectively extinguishing the ‘right-to-negotiate’ provisions of the \textit{Native Title Act} (Howitt, 2001, p. 205).

Discursive tensions – company: Sensitivity vs control

All discursive sites are characterised by multiple, sometimes oppositional, discourses. As noted in Chapter Two, some discourses reinforce existing power relations, while others contest and challenge their legitimacy (Lemke, 1995, p. 12). At Site A, the interplay between discourses of

\textsuperscript{5} At least 10% of Indigenous children were forcibly removed (‘stolen’) from their families between 1910 and 1970, and either sent to an institution or mission, or fostered or adopted by non-Indigenous families (HREOC, 1997).
mining and business and those of community and environment produces constantly evolving
tensions and paradoxes. In my interactions with the company, therefore, I observed tensions
between dispositions of cultural sensitivity and a régime of control.

Three ethnographic observations illustrate a company disposition towards sensitivity to Indigenous
history and cultural practices. Firstly, when the new operation was undergoing construction from
2002, some iconic native plants that had been removed to clear the site were replanted around the
site. The species concerned has protected status, and was used traditionally by Aborigines for food,
drink, and hunting weapons (Isaacs, 2002, p. 124). Thus, the company’s replanting scheme can be
seen as a symbolic, deliberate act of respect for the local Indigenous community.

Secondly, I participated in a company ‘Indigenous cultural awareness’ half-day training session for
new staff. Nine (non-Indigenous) people, mostly in their 20s and 30s, from various occupational
areas, attended this session, which was facilitated by a member of one of the three Traditional
Owner claimant groups. The session involved two-way interaction, a written ‘quiz’ and extensive
group discussion. While the trainees knew the reason for my presence, as far as possible I
participated on equal terms, as a participant observer. Observing this session, the seriousness with
which the company treated Indigenous relations was evident. In particular, its willingness to allow
Traditional Owners to tell stories from their own perspectives seemed to challenge new staff to
reflect on historical injustices. The last slide that accompanied the session read, Thank you for
listening to Australia’s real history.

In the third observation, company sensitivity to local Aboriginal history was apparent during the
Community Fund Advisory Board meeting, attended by six company representatives and two
prominent local community members; none of these was Indigenous. The pertinent session of the
meeting comprised five brief presentations by proponents of projects seeking financial support from
the Fund. One proposed project concerned a local site where police had rounded up and shot a large
number of Aborigines. The proposed project involved revegetating the site, and installing
interpretive signs narrating the violent history, using Aboriginal interpretations and stories.
Following the presentation, board members discussed its merits, and unanimously agreed to
approve funding. They acknowledged that the signs would be controversial and confronting, but
appeared sympathetic to exposing historical crimes and injustices.

In general, therefore, company management appeared to demonstrate cultural sensitivity.
Simultaneously, however, traditional discourses of mining and business constructed a disposition
towards a régime of control. That is, various statements, actions, and behaviours both reflected and constituted discursive practices of control. For example, at the Community Fund Advisory Board meeting, the CEO, discussing the Fund’s public profile, suggested, *It may be that you need to help the journos by writing some of their* [i.e., the journalists’] *stories.*

The claim that the emerging discourse of CSR is a discourse of control (Conley, 2005) was evident at the start of Visit Two. The community relations staff were significantly displeased that I had already contacted community members without the company’s prior authorisation. Even though I had previously explained the nature of my research plan, they assumed that *they* would arrange meetings and interviews with community members, and thus asserted that I would need their approval in advance. They insisted that I cancel any existing community appointments until they advised otherwise. Further, they reneged on an earlier agreement to facilitate access for observation.

At a subtler level, control means constructing discursive boundaries, or determining what statements are admissible. The company’s stakeholder function, which I attended with approximately 400 people from the local community during Visit Three, is an annual pre-Christmas event. It took place in the town’s premier venue, and featured an apparently endless supply of free drinks and seafood. Although this was a ‘community’ event, company managers’ speeches referred only to business achievements; there was no mention of community projects or initiatives, and no acknowledgement of unresolved issues. On another occasion, the Community Relations Manager, uncomfortable with my choice of Indigenous relations as an issue to illustrate community engagement, enquired, *Why do you have to choose Indigenous relations? Why can’t you just choose something we do well, and showcase it for us?* Discursively, therefore, these events constitute attempts to construct a positive impression, and to marginalise contentious issues.

Discursive boundaries can also be controlled through technocratisation. As noted in Chapter Two, and as exemplified in Chapter Four, technocratic discourse works to defend power interests through a specific political and economic agenda. It can normalise neoclassical economic ideology by using the apparent objectivity of technical, scientific discourse, thereby concealing the contentiousness of highly ideological statements (McKenna & Graham, 2000). During the Community Fund Advisory Board meeting, committee members spoke of community engagement by drawing on discourses of management, objectivity, and quantification, using phrases such as *objective measure of outcomes; measure the change in community capacity;* and *quantify the community benefit.* These scientific discourses assume that community engagement is simply another technical dimension of corporate
management, diminishing the deeper political tensions in relations between minerals companies and Indigenous communities.

So, ethnographic observations suggested a discursive paradox, where dispositions towards cultural sensitivity and a régime of discursive control exist concurrently. However, seen in historical context, this may be less paradoxical. While minerals companies, operating in a new discursive terrain of community engagement, are now more sensitive to the views of Indigenous communities, historical injustices have bequeathed a persistently sensitive relationship. For this company, then, controlling discursive sites may be a way to navigate this sensitivity.

The local Indigenous community

The term ‘Indigenous peoples’ emerged in the 1970s from the struggles of the American Indian Movement and the Canadian Indian Brotherhood. The plural ‘peoples’ deliberately signifies heterogeneity, while enabling the views of colonised people internationally to be expressed collectively (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 24). Thus, despite their heterogeneity, the local Indigenous people at Site A spoke of our community, or the sometimes synonymous our family, or the more colloquial our mob, a term referring to families, clan groups or Indigenous peoples generally (G. Phillips, 2003, p. 1).

Indigenous people constitute about 3% of the local population, making them relatively invisible in a town highly dominated by industrial development. They are dispersed among several suburbs, geographically integrated among non-Indigenous residents. Most claim local traditional ancestry, while some have mixed ancestry from various areas, including Pacific Islands. This problematises the label ‘Indigenous community’, which suggests traditional, communal life by overlooking successive waves of relocation of Aboriginal family groups under colonial rule (Banerjee & Tedmanson, 2007, p. 11). Perhaps because of the local community’s cultural heterogeneity, local Indigenous history has been relatively poorly documented (Lilley & Ulm, 1999).

Both company operations are on freehold land, which officially ‘extinguishes’ Native Title claims (Howitt, 2001, p. 205), removing legal obligations for the company to negotiate with the Indigenous community. However, all minerals operations in the state must comply with State Cultural Heritage legislation, requiring developers to take all reasonable steps to ensure that heritage is not damaged or diminished. The company has pursued two distinct avenues to demonstrate responsibility. Firstly, it has committed to spend a certain sum over five years on projects that will benefit the Indigenous community, although it is currently behind schedule on this target. Secondly, through an Indigenous
employment programme, Indigenous people constitute about 5% of the total workforce, although only about 25% of these are from local Traditional Owner groups.

Under the Native Title process, three groups claiming Traditional Owner status have been identified in the region, and a fourth is sometimes cited. However, from informal conversations, I learned that most community members consider all groups to belong to the same family or community. They spoke about the importance of looking after each other, regardless of their ancestral identities. They see identification of separate groups as an externally-imposed construct that diminishes community cohesion. In particular, some dismiss Native Title as a non-Indigenous construct that divides close-knit families into competing, sectional interests, and which has not delivered any meaningful benefit locally. In the following analysis, therefore, to respect this sense of collective identity, and for clarity, ‘the Indigenous community’ refers to Indigenous people living in the local area, whereas ‘Indigenous communities’ refers to Indigenous peoples more broadly.

Discursive tensions – community: Dissent vs acquiescence

Within the Indigenous community locally, discursive tensions appear to stem from the interplay between western discourses of business and traditional discourses of indigeneity. That is, Indigenous community members find themselves between competing subject positions relating to their traditional cultural identity on the one hand, and their existence within the dominant economic paradigm on the other. Living in a heavily industrialised region, most have integrated, to a greater or lesser extent, with western social practices of earning a living, buying and desiring consumer goods, and being relatively permanently settled. The outcome is that apparently contradictory dispositions towards dissent and acquiescence exist simultaneously.

Because recognition of Indigenous rights has not always translated into legal entitlement, Indigenous peoples have often gained recognition from minerals companies only after direct acts of dissent, such as litigation, protests, blockades, and sometimes violence (O'Faircheallaigh & Corbett, 2005, p. 630). While such direct acts were not evident at Site A, more restrained dissent was apparent, yet they occurred alongside acquiescence. For example, the issue of the company telephoning prospective interview participants, discussed above, provoked resentment among many community members. Three participants, when consenting to an interview, specifically asked me not to tell the company about my prospective visit, and described the company as patronising and autocratic. One noted that the Community Relations Manager had tried to dissuade her from participating, but she appeared to draw strength from resisting this pressure. Despite these

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6 The convention in Australia is to capitalise ‘Indigenous’. However, I have not extended the capitalisation to ‘indigeneity’, since this term functions here as a conceptual notion, not referring to any people specifically.
resentments, however, community leaders largely appeared to cooperate with the company’s Indigenous policies and processes, often attending meetings in their own time at short notice.

The simultaneous dispositions towards dissent and acquiescence were also evident in the community’s struggle for a meeting space. During Visit One, the community was renting a space in the town centre, which they used as an Indigenous health centre and community meeting facility. By Visit Two, they had reluctantly abandoned this space, being unable to meet the rental payments. Instead, they were using a small brick hut in a car park on the edge of town. Those who used this hut expressed deep frustration at the company’s apparent refusal to help them acquire a more appropriate community facility, when there was money lodged in the company’s ‘Indigenous fund’. Again exemplifying technocracy, company staff explained both that it was company policy not to help fund buildings. Yet, despite community resentment, community members expressed contentment at having any space at all, no matter how inadequate.

Community members thus had fairly humble expectations of the company. Some spoke complimentarily about the company’s cultural sensitivity efforts, applauded the symbolic replanting, and noted gratefully that the company had relocated a conveyor belt in order to avoid disturbing a cultural heritage site. Yet, given that such sites are actually protected under the provisions of two state Acts, apparently considerate acts are sometimes legal obligations.

During Visit Three, I had several conversations with community members, some of whom I had interviewed previously. The overall impression was that relations had deteriorated in the intervening nine months. One noted bluntly that: Nothing’s changed... There’s never any feedback to the community on what’s happening... In raw terms, it’s a whitewash. Another argued resignedly that: They’re almost harder to negotiate with than the government, because at least the government has clear guidelines... [but] you become conditioned to it after thirty to forty years. A third perceived company staff to have a patronising attitude, commenting: They want us to be like little performing monkeys, and get up and dance. Despite this perceived lack of progress, however, community members largely continued to cooperate with the company’s policies and processes.

In a more explicit act of dissent during Visit Three, several community members proposed to stop cooperating, to boycott the annual stakeholder function, and to mount a public protest up the main street. Their absence at the function suggests that they carried out this act of dissent, although there was no public protest. During Visit One, a community elder perhaps encapsulated the general
community sentiment when describing what the company gives to the community, relative to the company’s profits, as *crumbs from the table*.

Significantly, Christian discourses and values seemed to provide many community members with a way of dealing with ongoing injustices. Among the elders in particular, Christianity provides a source of considerable collective resilience, and is seen as closely aligned with traditional Indigenous values of kinship. This observation is consistent with Wells’ (2003, p. xviii) assertion that, at the time of early European settlement, Aborigines found Christianity easy to accept, since it comprised similarities with Aboriginal cultural practices. Nevertheless, an irony remains: Christianity was brought by the occupying colonial power, and was used to ‘civilise’ Aborigines away from their traditional culture and customs. Christian missions actively cooperated with government policies of forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families (Howitt, 2001, p. 209). Yet, many Aborigines find that Christianity helps them to cope with the adversities largely inflicted by that same colonial power.

These discursive tensions, then, within both the company and the community, contextualise the interviews. In the remainder of this chapter, I analyse the findings from those interviews, firstly from a phenomenographic perspective, and secondly through textual analysis. In this way, I describe, analyse, and interpret how participants experience these discursive tensions, and illustrate how participants’ conceptions and broader discourses are mutually constitutive.

**Interviews: Phenomenographic analysis**

**Method**

To build upon the observational field notes, I now turn to a phenomenographic analysis of the interview transcripts. To restate, through phenomenography, I interpret how people experience, perceive, understand, and conceptualise various dimensions of ‘community engagement’, and particularly to consider whether some conceptions are more comprehensive than others (Marton, 1994; Marton & Fai, 1999). In this section, then, I analyse 17 interviews – 16 from Visit Two, and one from Visit One, because the Community Relations Advisor changed between the two visits. I have not included other Visit One interviews because, in the case of company participants, they involved either staff interviewed again in Visit Two, or staff without regular contact with Indigenous community members. In the case of community participants, all Visit One interviews were excluded because those participants either were non-Indigenous, or were interviewed again in Visit Two.
Of the 17 interviews, twelve involved Indigenous community members (labelled ‘A.comm1’, etc. below), and five involved company staff (‘A.comp1’, etc.). One community participant was, at the time of my first visit, also a company employee, but had left the company by Visit Two. One company participant also identified as Indigenous, but not as a member of a local Traditional Owner claimant group. The company/community imbalance was inevitable, as these five staff were the only ones who had work-related involvement with the local Indigenous community.

Demographically, three (60%) company participants were male, compared to only five (42%) community participants. Company participants were aged mostly in their thirties, whereas community participants’ ages varied considerably (see Appendix 4, Table 29). The transcripts of these 17 interviews provided a corpus of 93,454 words.

By categorising transcripts into groups, comparing groups, repeatedly regrouping the transcripts, and then repeatedly revising the summary descriptions for each group, I derived three conceptions, or understandings, of community engagement among the participants: ‘maximising self-interest’, ‘social and economic justice’, and ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’. To help to describe the conceptions, I identified four dimensions of community engagement, based on my hermeneutic interpretations (Gibbons, 2006; Noordahaven, 2004; Ricoeur, 1981) of participants’ conceptualisations. So, **conceptions** refer to participants’ ways of understanding community engagement as a phenomenon, whereas **conceptualisations** refer to their ways of understanding the four **dimensions** within community engagement. The dimensions are: the nature of community; the nature of engagement; the responsibility of the company to the local community; and the corporate objective of community engagement. The twelve italicised terms and phrases in Table 8, then, summarise how participants conceptualise each dimension (the bottom four rows) of the three conceptions (the three shaded columns). At this stage, the focus is on comparing conceptions, rather than on comparing company and community participants. However, participants are not represented evenly across the three conceptions.
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**Conception One (C1): Community engagement as maximising self-interest**

Participants expressing this conception understand community in terms of exclusion, and consider engagement as a conduit for information. They see the company’s responsibility to the local community as being to provide economic benefits, especially jobs. They perceive the corporate objective in engaging the local community as being legal compliance, not for goodwill or strategic reasons. Three community participants, but no company participant, expressed this conception. The small number of participants expressing this conception means that the findings are more tentative—and brief—than those for the other two conceptions.
Nature of community: Exclusion

In this conception, only one participant articulated a notion of community to an extent sufficient for analysis, and so the finding must be regarded as extremely tentative. For this participant, her subject position was a narrow, exclusionary, and rather inward-looking one:

\textit{My family are my main reasons for, you know; I’m very family orientated... I say to my, my kids, “Well, we know who we are; we know who we’ve come from; let’s just get on with our lives”}. (A.comm3)

Rather than perceiving commonalities and unity among Indigenous communities, this participant tends to emphasise differences, seeing Indigenous people in competition with each other:

\textit{[Nearby city] gets everything, [town] gets nothing, like you know, they’ve got a health, a medical centre, and everything... I call ‘locals’ that have been here for many, many, many years. I don’t call a local that’s only come to town ten years ago}. (A.comm3)

Nature of engagement: Conduit

C1 participants’ conceptualisations of ‘engagement’ constitute a conduit for communication; that is, a one-way process of informing. Their concern is that the company should provide timely and accurate information to those concerned:

\textit{To me it would be a company or something going into a community, actually letting them know what’s going on}. (A.comm10)

Responsibility of company to local community: To provide economic benefits

The company’s responsibility towards the Indigenous community is seen mainly in economic terms. That is, participants are concerned with employment and royalties, or lack thereof:

\textit{There should be a certain percent of Indigenous people, local, born and bred here, they should be employed out there... They’re on our land out there; we don’t get anything for it}. (A.comm3)

The view of Indigenous employment here reflects Tiplady and Barclay’s (2007, p. 10) view that, “Access to paid work is a fundamental prerequisite to participation in the mainstream economy”. There is little sense of possible incongruence between Indigenous values and those of the mainstream economy:
Q: Can you still fulfil your obligations to family and community if you’re working 12-hour shifts?

A: Oh yeah, why not? There’s still the weekends, or your days off. (A.comm10)

In turn, possible adverse externalities of industrial activity are seen from a utilitarian perspective, as a price worth paying for the perceived economic benefits:

There’s a lot of pollution in the town, but I mean that’s, um, advancement... If they can’t have it here, they’ll probably go somewhere else. (A.comm3)

**Corporate objective: Legal compliance**

C1 participants see the company’s principal objective as being one of legal compliance. That is, the company engages the Indigenous community simply to meet its legal obligations, rather than because of a perceived business-based or moral motive:

You can guarantee that if there was no law that you have to do that, they wouldn’t bother about it. (A.comm6)

In summary, C1 participants see community engagement as self-interest, in which community is something exclusionary, and engagement is a conduit. The company’s responsibility is to provide economic outcomes, and the corporate objective is legal compliance. In this sense, the sentiments expressed here align with the observed disposition towards acquiescence, since participants generally do not challenge dominant assumptions.

**Conception Two (C2): Community engagement as social and economic justice**

C2 participants understand community as something that involves inclusion and selflessness, and consider engagement to comprise economic outcomes and respect. They see the company’s responsibility to the local community as being to provide fair recompense, and perceive the corporate objective in engaging the local community as being one not only of legal compliance, as in C1, but also of profit maximisation. Five community participants, and one company participant, expressed this conception. Thus, the discussion here disproportionately concerns community participants.

**Nature of community: Inclusion and selflessness**

As noted above, the term ‘Indigenous peoples’ suggests that, despite cultural heterogeneity, a notion of collectivity exists, based on shared colonial experiences (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 7). This is reflected among C2 community participants, who see community as being about inclusion and
selflessness. Definitionally, they tend to see their community as all Indigenous people living locally, regardless of their traditional ancestry:

*He’s not part of our traditional community, but he is part of our community.* (A.comm1)

For the one company participant here, inclusion similarly means treating all Indigenous people equally when compiling statistics on Indigenous employment:

*I go and say to them, “...We’d very much like to include you in our figures.”* (A.comp2)

The conception of community as something inclusionary is also implied when community participants discuss Native Title. Community participants here see Native Title as a western imposition that tends to exclude, contradicting traditional notions of community, and exacerbating community divisions:

*I always say Native Title never did anything for us except tear our families apart, because they’re fighting for the money. And they’re fighting for land, country and everything.*

(A.comm1)

Thus, these participants see their subject position as ‘Indigenous Australian’ first, and then as part of a particular Traditional Owner group. This subject position embodies an ethic of consideration for others, or selflessness, partly rooted in Christian influences:

*We’ve got a Christian ethic here now, a biblical ethic, and it tells us to love our enemies... That’s a big asset to the community.* (A.comm8)

**Nature of engagement: Economic outcomes and respect**

While C1 participants conceptualise engagement as a process, C2 participants conceptualise it as both process and outcomes. In discussing outcomes, they draw on the C1 notion of the company’s responsibility being to facilitate Indigenous employment and enterprise, but they see this as evidence of engagement itself:

*Community engagement is about building that sort of, in the long term, you know, like, if it starts with jobs, but then it’s other things as well; it is businesses.* (A.comp2)

In discussing processes, contrasting with the conduit perspective of C1, community participants imply that engagement demands respect, or being treated equally, rather than paternalistically:
They’ve actually been acting like Mum sending you to the shop with a shopping list now, and, “This is what you’ll get; you’ll get a loaf of bread, a pound of butter, a couple of litres of milk, ... and this is the change I want back”, sort of thing. (A.comm2)

There is also a sense that claims of respecting Indigenous culture are contradicted in practice, despite legal obligations:

My experience has told me that cultural heritage doesn’t matter; if it’s in the way, it’s gonna go, and you can’t stop it. (A.comm2)

Engagement-as-respect, then, implies an inclusive approach; everyone is involved or represented:

Community engagement for me is when you have all the NGOs represented at the table, all the elders, and all the TOs [Traditional Owners], and community members ... the process would be shared equally; the input would be shared equally. (A.comm7)

**Responsibility of company to local community: Fair recompense**

Community participants expressing this conception spoke in terms of the company owing some recompense to the Indigenous community:

They have money that belongs to this community; why it’s not being used to benefit the community I don’t know. (A.comm7)

There is also frustration at their perceived poor treatment, relative to other, remote Indigenous communities, and where Indigenous communities are more visible. This is framed as a perception of injustice, coupled with an expressed desire for equal treatment and respect, without the message of exclusion in the C1 conceptualisation of community:

We always used to wonder, though, how come [company]...could recognise our brother and sister nations in [place], and yet when they reached [Site A], they didn’t seem to accept that there were Aboriginal people here ... they just didn’t, um, afford us the respect that they may have given to the people in [place]. (A.comm2)

Some community participants sense that the company had used the notion of consensus or unanimity as an excuse to prevaricate, thereby deferring fair recompense:

They wanted total support of the community; every cross-section of the Indigenous community, they wanted support from, so there wouldn’t be problems later on. Well, hello, I mean you don’t get that anywhere. (A.comm9)
When discussing the nature of the recompense, community participants tend to view the company’s responsibility mainly in terms of economic or material outcomes:

*The agreement that was made was that the Indigenous community get a percentage of their profit.* (A.comm7)

A significant contrast to C1, however, is that when community participants were probed further, the desired economic outcomes comprise actions that would facilitate autonomy and self-determination, rather than perpetuate dependence:

*We don’t want hand-outs, we want a hand up.* (A.comm8)

**Corporate objective: Legal compliance and profit maximisation**

While C1 participants see the corporate objective as compliance, C2 community participants additionally perceive, sometimes quite cynically, that companies engage Indigenous communities for instrumental, business reasons. Legal obligations may have changed, but companies’ underlying rationalisation is unyielding:

*It’s nothing that they’ve done voluntarily… their hand was forced by government policy.* (A.comm7)

*It doesn’t matter where you work, who you are, black or brindle, profits count.* (A.comm8)

Thus, community participants cite profit maximisation and legal compliance concurrently as being corporate objectives, rather than one overriding the other. The one C2 company participant, similarly, portrays legal obligation and profit maximisation as intertwined. Here, therefore, legal compliance itself is not a motivation for community engagement; rather, it is a prerequisite of economic sustainability:

*Companies or organisations do what they have to do to make money, you know. If there’s a legal requirement… all stops are out to do that…. With Mabo, in regards to Traditional Owners, [you] need to consult Traditional Owners… you’ve gotta do that.* (A.comp2)

In summary, participants here see community engagement as social and economic justice, in which community is inclusive and selfless, and engagement comprises economic outcomes and respect. The company’s responsibility is to deliver fair recompense, and the corporate objective is profit maximisation and legal compliance.
Conception Three (C3): Community engagement as culturally sensitive relationship-building

Participants expressing this conception understand community as something heterogeneous yet unifying, and consider engagement to comprise genuine relationship-building. The company’s responsibility is to deliver outcomes with cultural sensitivity, and the corporate objective is to navigate multiple expectations. Four company participants and four community participants expressed this conception.

Nature of community: Heterogeneous yet unifying

Participants expressing this conception see community as extending beyond Traditional Owners, to groups and people who are not necessarily represented by those Traditional Owners. Company participants see community as diverse and heterogeneous:

> I think it’s a very complex, layered landscape... with all sorts of lines drawn, that separate and bind members of the Indigenous community... There’s that much diversity in the Indigenous community. (A.comp3)

Thus, company participants here view the world as multidimensional and complex. One noted that heterogeneity is not only about alternative perspectives, but also of people changing their perspectives at different times. Thus, community is also temporally contextual and dynamic:

> You ask them what they want; what’s the answer is a product of that moment, and, you know, whoever else is in the room. (A.comp3)

Community participants referred to the diversity among Indigenous communities by noting that, when people move away from their traditional country, their new home is never their ‘real’ home. This highlights the complexity of contemporary Indigenous communities, and the diversity of ancestry among what appears to many outsiders to be one ‘community’:

> They find it difficult to maintain their culture, and to be in with community the way that they would previously. (A.comm11)

> Cathy [Freeman]’s been all over the world... yet she can come back to her communities, where her people are still living, and be part of that, still be who she is, you know, just a natural person who wants to be with her mob. (A.comm4)

Yet, community participants proposed that Indigenous communities have unifying values, such as sharing, non-materialism, and cooperation, which contrast with those of non-Indigenous Australians. This implies a conceptual, rather than geographical, notion of community:
White man’s culture is different to the black man’s culture, you know, and whitefellas, I’ve found, are just money-hungry, you know, materialistic. They’ve gotta have their house, they’ve gotta have their two four-wheel drives, you know; but blackfellas just don’t care about, are not like that, you know. As long as we’ve got a house over our head, and we’ve got our food in our cupboard, you know; or, if we see someone who hasn’t got food in their cupboard, we’ll help them, even if we’re on our last couple of dollars, you know. (A.comm5)

Thus, in common with community participants expressing C2, these participants have a subject position that emphasises unifying Indigenous values. However, their subject position additionally appreciates innate characteristics bestowed upon them by traditional Indigenous customs.

**Nature of engagement: Genuine relationship-building**

C3 participants clearly differentiate between communication and engagement, with company participants implying that engagement is something dialogic, requiring interest, commitment, and active listening:

*When I went to the first [place] update, which was, um, you know, the then General Manager standing in front with a slide show, telling people, giving an update, I walked away from that thinking, well, that was crap, because all that was was communication. Where was the engagement in that? (A.comp1)*

*I’ve come to understand it as being, you know, something more than communication, something more than consultation… to be engaged in something is to be interested and committed. (A.comp3)*

Genuine engagement, for these company participants, requires a capacity to reflect critically, and to demonstrate an awareness of how the legacy of Aboriginal dispossession shapes contemporary discourse:

*I often remind people that Native Title is a whitefella concept, not a blackfella concept, you know. (A.comp1)*

In this company conceptualisation, while outcomes are important, the interpersonal relationship-building process, and the notion of respect, appear to be more significant in endowing a sense of engagement:
I think you need to invest time into it... You need to have built up that...relationship or trust
or respect and understanding of each other... It's like a marriage, you know – you've got to
keep working at it... It doesn’t mean there's agreement, but there’s respect. (A.comp5)

Both company and community participants see genuine dialogue as being marked not only by two-way communication, but also by collective decision-making and a preparedness to change behaviour:

I think it's listening, asking what the needs are, and then working to actually get some
outcomes. (A.comm11)

Either you make a decision together, and then do what you agree to do, or you can walk
away from the table, and then demonstrate that you're going to do something differently as
a result of what somebody’s told you. (A.comp1)

The community participant who was previously the company’s Indigenous Employment Advisor suggested that this interpersonal process of engagement extends to personally supporting community members:

We fought for the lad ... supported him from day one... and kept on encouraging him.
(A.comm12)

Indeed, the engagement process brings personal fulfilment:

I love to help people for nothing, you know; there’s no monetary gain or whatever ... I get
fulfilment and joy by just helping people in the community. (A.comm12)

Two company participants further reflected that an effective engagement process cannot be defined objectively, and will be context-specific:

I’ve got to be really careful to, um, to make sure that, you know, as someone who’s come in,
that I really understand the context. (A.comp1)

Similarly, the following company participant articulated the notion that ‘perception is reality’, meaning that different people can make different interpretations of the same thing:

You really have to really understand where they’re coming from, and their day-to-day
reality, to understand how they perceive you and your reality. (A.comp3)
For this company participant, engagement also comprises critical reflection of the corporate language of engagement, and sensitivity to the power relations between company and community. This suggests a relatively high awareness of her subject position as a symbolic representative of a powerful entity, and a thoughtful approach to how she should act:

Partnerships is about people sitting around a table and feeling like they all have the same weight; but they never do... I’ve found that really frustrating, just trying to create that equitable space, and yet at the same time not deny what comes with this uniform. (A.comp3)

**Responsibility of company to local community: To deliver outcomes with cultural sensitivity**

In this conception, participants emphasise the importance of delivering both meaningful outcomes (money and projects) and processes (consulting). In this view, therefore, conscientious engagement processes are no substitute for outcomes:

They need to come and say to us, “OK, well, we’ve got this bucket of money; we’ve talked to the community, and this is probably the best thing to do.” (A.comm11)

But I think you’ve gotta bloody deliver... you can have all the conversations in the world, can’t you, but if it doesn’t ultimately deliver what you want, then you’re wasting time.

(A.comp4)

For community participants, there is the same frustration expressed in C2 regarding what was perceived as relatively poor financial outcomes. Here, however, this is tempered by a non-materialistic perspective. The company’s responsibility is seen less in terms of financial recompense, and more in terms of community development and recognition of intrinsic connection with the land (e.g., DITR, 2007). In other words, responsibilities should be determined with cultural sensitivity:

Not so much, “This is our land, they owe us”, but just that recognition that there was people here... and just help with community development. (A.comm12)

Thus, the company is seen to have a responsibility to consider cultural factors when engaging Indigenous people, for example by offering alternative forms of employment, and alternative outcomes besides employment. Company responsibilities, like engagement itself, are contextual:

But we say, “But what about the people outside, that don’t have a job, can’t work, you know, 12-hour shifts. What about shorter jobs for ’em, you know, working outside the gate, doing a bit of landscaping, you know, put them in training, and let them just do, like, six hours a day or something.” (A.comm4)
If it’s not jobs, then we’ll do something else; like, if it’s someone who says basically, “I don’t want a job; this is what my expectations are out of [company]”, well then you deal with that. (A.comp4)

Just as community participants downplay the significance of financial recompense, the following company participant is wary of seeing money as the solution, preferring community capacity-building as a more sustainable approach:

The big challenge facing this community, in my opinion, is building capacity... we could pour an absolute bucket into that, but on Monday, it’s the same community, you know. (A.comp4)

Nevertheless, reinforcing the point above regarding meaningful outcomes, money itself can be part of the capacity-building process:

Imagine a situation where they needed a heap of rent for a short time, you know, to save that facility where, you know, community organisations can meet. That’s a tremendously important, a critical part of building capacity in this community. (A.comp4)

Corporate objective: Navigating multiple expectations

C3 participants see the corporate objective as navigating the multiple expectations of business and society. Community engagement, and social responsibility more broadly, comprise an interplay between instrumental and moral imperatives, reflecting convergent stakeholder theory (Jones & Wicks, 1999). Furthermore, these imperatives are not necessarily distinguishable, creating overlapping perspectives:

There are numerous altruistic reasons, and numerous business reasons for it. (A.comp1)

While company participants see that a rational business case is necessary to clinch an argument, they also acknowledge that the current economic system is not incontestable, and that alternative paradigms and perspectives, while marginalised currently, are possible:

A company exists to make money for its shareholders. If you want to turn us into a socialist state, and change all that, and say companies exist for the wellness of people, let’s overthrow the Government and start again. (A.comp1)

Sometimes if you wanna justify a project, you have to...appeal to...business drivers, which is all about profit... It doesn’t drive me...but it helps me persuade others. (A.comp3)
While an instrumental argument seems to be necessary ultimately, a changing social landscape has altered perceptions of the rôle of business in society, such that economic and social concerns are inextricably intertwined:

*What at one time was exceptional is now expected… The company’s understanding of how to create long-term shareholder value has changed.* (A.comp1)

Additionally, in this view, legal requirements are seen as a significant catalyst, but now as insufficient alone, and as having been overtaken by a broader discursive shift:

*You’ve gotta be legally compliant, right? But that’s secondary to, if your philosophies are driven by that, then you’re buggered, you know, and it has to be about more than that.* (A.comp4)

*Well, I suppose, initially, it was legislation that came into place; I think today it’s part of that, but it’s part of also, um, being a good corporate citizen.* (A.comm11)

In summary, participants here see community engagement as culturally sensitive relationship-building, in which community is heterogeneous yet unifying, and engagement comprises genuine relationship-building. Reflecting the observed disposition towards cultural sensitivity, the company’s responsibility is to deliver outcomes with cultural sensitivity, and the corporate objective is navigating multiple expectations. Furthermore, reflecting the observed disposition towards dissent, both company and community participants appear willing to challenge dominant assumptions regarding the company-community relationship.

**Summary of phenomenographic analysis**

From the 17 Site A interviews, I have derived three conceptions of community engagement: ‘maximising self-interest’, ‘social and economic justice’, and ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’ (Figure 12). According to writers on phenomenography, conceptions may form a hierarchical progression, in which ‘higher’ conceptions incorporate or subsume the understandings within ‘lower’ conceptions (Marton, 1994; Marton & Fai, 1999; Sandberg, 2000). In this case, for example, those who understand a company’s responsibility as being to deliver outcomes with cultural sensitivity (C3) also see a rôle for delivering fair recompense (C2), and for providing economic

![Figure 12: Hierarchy of conceptions at Site A](image-url)
benefits (C1). Conversely, those who understand a company’s responsibility as being to provide economic benefits do not conceive the other two, ‘higher’ understandings.

While a hierarchy exists among the three conceptions, the nature of this hierarchy differs from previous phenomenographic studies, because ‘higher’ conceptions do not incorporate or subsume the understandings within ‘lower’ conceptions in all dimensions. If they did, the conceptions might be represented diagrammatically as three concentric circles. Here, however, a trapezoid seems more appropriate since, in some instances, a ‘higher’ understanding contradicts or refutes a ‘lower’ understanding, but is ‘higher’ by virtue of comprising deeper and/or broader conceptualisations, and by better appreciating tensions and contradictions. For example, those who understand ‘community’ as heterogeneous yet unifying (C3), or as inclusion and selflessness (C2), implicitly refute the exclusionary notion of community (C1) as being oversimplistic. Thus, we can meaningfully organise the overall conceptions in hierarchical terms, based on the principle that successive conceptions better appreciate tensions and contradictions. That is, the conception ‘social and economic justice’ appreciates tensions and contradictions more than the conception ‘self-interest’, and the conception ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’ appreciates tensions and contradictions further still.

A further significant finding is the discrepancy in the distribution of company and community participants among the three conceptions (Table 9). The community participants are fairly evenly distributed, with three expressing C1, five expressing C2, and four expressing C3. The company participants, meanwhile, are highly skewed towards C3, which was expressed by four out of five, while one expressed C2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Company participants</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community participants</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This uneven distribution could have two possible explanations. It could suggest that the staff have been enculturated, through company policy and practice, into having a relatively deep and broad understanding of community engagement. Such a theory is consistent with the proposition that the recent commissioning of one operation afforded management an opportunity, noted above (p. 121), to implement contemporary ideas regarding community engagement. Alternatively, or additionally, it may be that some staff are attracted to community relations positions because of a personal
propensity towards such work. This explanation accords with Meyerson & Scully’s (1995) notion of ‘tempered radicals’, who must navigate an ongoing tension between professional identities and personal causes. Applying either explanation, the worldviews of community relations staff may differ from those of other site staff, and their statements may not wholly represent broader discourses of either the site or the industry. Such a finding is supported by research conducted for the broader project, of which this study is a part. In that project, it was found that engagement efforts are often dependent on the personal commitment and motivation of community relations staff and operational managers, and in some cases that other staff are not involved with local communities either formally or informally (Beach et al., 2005).

As noted in Chapter Three, interpretations are intersubjective products of social negotiation (Astley, 1985, p. 499), influenced by historically and culturally situated experiences. Other interpretations are possible, and another researcher could arrive at different dimensions, conceptions and categorisations. Thus, in the next section, I interrogate the above analysis, by probing more closely the textual features of the interview transcripts. I do this in three ways: firstly, by triangulating the phenomenographic conceptions textually; secondly, by comparing the discourses from which company and community participants draw; and thirdly, by deductively examining how they draw on these discourses.

**Interviews: Textual analysis**

**Triangulating the phenomenographic conceptions**

Since phenomenographic conceptions are intersubjective interpretations, rather than objective categorisations, this part of the analysis interrogates the three conceptions via an alternative analytical method. As explained in Chapter Three, this multi-method approach may be seen as triangulation (Gummesson, 2000, pp. 142-143), which aims to produce more comprehensive understandings (Lewis & Grimes, 1999), or alternative lenses through which to view ‘reality’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 6). Many writers on qualitative research (e.g., Flick, 2002; P. Johnson & Harris, 2002; Scandura & Williams, 2000) advocate such an approach, since no methodology uniquely represents ‘truth’, and breaking down disciplinary boundaries may help in representing those neglected in dominant discourses (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997). Triangulation in qualitative research, then, is consistent with the “poststructuralist emphasis on contradiction, heterogeneity, and multiplicity… [producing] a quilt of stories and a cacophony of voices speaking to each other in dispute, dissonance, support, dialogue, contention and/or contradiction” (Fine et al., 2000, p. 119).
For this task, I deductively identified, within each phenomenographic dimension, the major differences between the three conceptions. Re-reading the transcripts, I looked for terms that might signify such differences, thus interrogating my phenomenographic categorisations. Looking for certain terms among all participants enabled me to consider absences, as well as presences. O’Halloran (2005) notes the concern that critical discourse analysts can tend to find presences and absences to support their own interpretations (Widdowson, 1998). I ameliorated this concern, however, by drawing terms for analysis from the phenomenographic model, rather than from subjective notions about what terms should, or should not, be present, and then by comparing the relative presence/absence of the same terms across groups of participants. Thus, I searched for textual signifiers of collectivist conceptualisations of community, of dialogic conceptualisations of engagement, of economic vs cultural-sensitivity conceptualisations of the company’s responsibility to the local community, and of heteroglossic conceptualisations of the corporate objective.

Note that, in this and in subsequent sections involving numerical comparisons, I have deliberately not conducted any tests of statistical significance. This follows Widdowson’s (2000, p. 9) assertion that textual findings may alert us to possible discursive significance, but cannot provide conclusive evidence of significance.

**Dimension One: Nature of community (individualist vs collectivist)**

In Chapter Two, I noted that the dominant debate on ‘community’ concerns liberalism, which prioritises individual freedom, and communitarianism, which sees individualism as the cause of social division (Little, 2002). In the phenomenographic analysis, meanwhile, I proposed that C1 participants conceptualise community in exclusionary terms, and that C2 and C3 participants express more collective notions. These notions approximately mirror liberal and communitarian perspectives respectively.

To investigate these ideas at a textual level, I searched the transcripts for terms, such as *group* and *together*, signifying a collectivist, as opposed to individualist, conceptualisation of community. I then compared the frequencies per participant with which each participant group used these ‘collectivist’ words. Table 10 provides a summary of the full data, which are listed in Appendix 5 (Table 31).

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7 When searching the texts, I included all forms of each lemma term (e.g., ‘listen’ includes listens, listening and listened). For the sake of simplicity, I have listed lemma terms only, except where clarification is needed.
Table 10: Relative use of ‘collectivist’ terms among Site A participants (summary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1 participants</th>
<th>C2 participants</th>
<th>C3 participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>((n = 3))</td>
<td>((n = 6))</td>
<td>((n = 8))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total frequency</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total frequency per participant</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On average, C3 participants used ‘collectivist’ words 21.3 times each, compared to only 14.5 times and 12.3 times for C2 and C1 participants respectively. This suggests that C3 participants have a relatively collectivist worldview compared to other participants, whose worldviews are more individualistic. These findings reflect the liberal/communitarian dichotomy, and partly support the phenomenographic model. However, that model suggests that we might expect C2 participants, as well as C3 participants, to articulate a relatively collectivist worldview. Thus, in conceptualising community, the difference between C1 and C2 participants may be less than is suggested by the labels ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’ in the phenomenographic model.

**Dimension Two: Nature of engagement (monologic vs dialogic)**

In Chapter Two, I differentiated conduit communication from dialogic relationships. Conduit, or monologic, communication occurs when language is simply a channel for communicating ideas and ‘truths’ (Reddy, 1979). Conversely, dialogic relationships, or ‘symmetrical’ dialogue (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001), mean that others’ contributions are welcomed (Yeatman, 1990, pp. 161-163), leading to “shared understanding and ‘compulsion-free’ consensus” (Foster & Jonker, 2005, p. 53).

In the phenomenographic analysis, I found that C1 participants, when discussing the nature of engagement, conceptualise a conduit-type, or monologic, model. In contrast, C2 and C3 participants articulated more dialogic notions, such as listening, understanding, and sharing. To interrogate my phenomenographic model, therefore, I calculated the relative frequency of participants’ use of terms suggesting a dialogic view of engagement (see Table 11 and Appendix 5, Table 32).

Table 11: Relative use of ‘dialogic terms’ among Site A participants (summary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1 participants</th>
<th>C2 participants</th>
<th>C3 participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>((n = 3))</td>
<td>((n = 6))</td>
<td>((n = 8))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total frequency</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total frequency per participant</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C1 participants used these terms 10 times on average, C2 participants had a slightly higher average (11.7), while C3 participants had easily the highest (22.0). Assuming that the identified terms
signify dialogism, these findings support the proposition that C3 participants conceive ‘community engagement’ in relatively dialogic terms, while C1 and C2 participants may be relatively close conceptually. This mirrors the conceptual gaps in conceptualisations of community.

Within this broad finding, however, the textual analysis reveals heterogeneous patterns among different dialogic terms. For example, the term *understand* shows the largest contrast between participants, appearing on average only 0.3 times per C1 participant, 2.0 times per C2 participant, and 6.9 times per C3 participant. Conversely, the average frequencies per participant for the term *hear* are 4.3, 2.3 and 2.4 respectively, belying the trend of the dialogic terms overall. However, *hear* is not necessarily interactive, and therefore may not signify dialogism to the same extent as other words, notably *listen*.

**Dimension Three: Responsibility of company to local community (economic vs ethical)**

In Chapter Two, I noted that the meaning of corporate social responsibility (CSR) remains contested, and that the extent of a corporation’s responsibilities to society remains unclear. Conceptually, authors have identified alternative positions, or progressive scales, of CSR, such as Moir’s (2001) scale from ‘neoclassical economics’, through ‘enlightened self-interest’, to ‘moral obligations’, and Windsor’s (2006) ‘economic responsibility’, through ‘corporate citizenship’, to ‘ethical responsibility’. Also in Chapter Two, I noted a theoretical differentiation between instrumental stakeholder theory and normative stakeholder theory (T. Donaldson & Preston, 1995). The common theme in these models, then, is the contrast between a predominantly economic/instrumental focus and a predominantly ethical/normative focus.

Meanwhile, in discussing the third phenomenographic dimension—the responsibility of the company to the local community—I proposed that the principal distinction between C1 and C3 is that participants’ statements concern economic benefits and processes of cultural sensitivity respectively. To interrogate this proposition, I calculated the relative frequency of participants’ use of terms suggesting economic/instrumental (e.g., *employment*) and ethical/normative (e.g., *obligation*) perspectives respectively, in line with the contrasting foci of CSR and stakeholder theory noted above (see Table 12 and Appendix 5, Table 33).
The ratio of ‘ethical/normative’ terms to ‘economic/instrumental’ terms is 0.98 for C1 participants, 1.13 for C2 participants, and 1.47 for C3 participants. Assuming that the identified terms signify an economic/instrumental focus and an ethical/normative focus respectively, this trend supports the proposition that C3 participants have a relatively high ‘ethical/normative focus’, or concern for processes of cultural sensitivity, and a relatively low ‘economic/instrumental focus’. Especially divergent are the terms culture, expressed on average 0.3 times per C1 participant and 6.5 times per C3 participant, and power (0.7 and 3.3 respectively). Once again, the gap between C3 participants and C2 participants is larger than the gap between C2 participants and C1 participants, although the difference here is smaller than in the previous two analyses.

It is also significant here to consider the ratios for each conception, since these may present a challenge to the theoretical models noted above. Those models imply, maybe unintentionally, that alternative positions on CSR and stakeholders can be labelled exclusively as, for example, ‘economic responsibility’ versus ‘ethical responsibility’ (Windsor, 2006), or ‘instrumental’ versus ‘normative’ (T. Donaldson & Preston, 1995). In Table 12, however, even those participants with the lowest ‘ethical/normative focus’ used such terms with almost the same frequency as they used ‘economic/instrumental focus’ terms (38 vs 39). Thus, while they are concerned with notions such as jobs, employment, and profit, they are similarly concerned, overall, with notions such as care, listen(ing), and values. C2 participants, similarly, used ethical and economic terms to a comparable degree (151 vs 134). Even C3 participants’ concern with ethical notions is not at the expense of concern for economic notions (227 vs 154). This finding supports the perspective of C3 participants, that economic and social concerns, and instrumental and moral arguments, are inextricably intertwined. Thus, while theoretical models can help to identify alternative positions, categorising people according to these positions oversimplifies complex realities. It would be misleading to infer
from the phenomenographic model, therefore, that C1 participants live in an ethical vacuum and that C3 participants live in an economic vacuum, with C2 participants at the mid-point. Rather, all live in an interdiscursive world in which discourses interact dialogically and dialectically; the distinction is that they interpret this world differently, some placing greater emphasis on economic concerns, and others placing greater emphasis on ethical concerns.

**Dimension Four: Corporate objective (monoglossic vs heteroglossic)**

In the phenomenographic analysis, I found that participants differ in their perceptions of the company’s objective in engaging local communities. I proposed that C1 participants focus on legal compliance, that C2 participants augment this focus with the notion of profit maximisation, while C3 participants see the corporate objective as one of navigating multiple expectations. This idea that expectations might conflict recognises the possible co-existence of multiple subject positions (Fairclough, 1992).

Subject positions are not stable and fixed; subjectivity is inherently unstable. Discourses come and go as dialogic and dialectic processes intertextually (combining various texts) and interdiscursively (combining whole systems of language) reshape texts over time. Thus, the subject, as discourse participant, is, to varying degrees, fragmented as s/he is “constituted, reproduced and transformed in and through social practice” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 44). This is not to propose a deterministic view of subjects as passive manifestations of macrostructural rationalities. Rather, people’s subject positions derive primarily by drawing from the discursive possibilities in particular contexts at particular times (Foucault, 1972; Rose, 1996). For example, a minerals company manager might draw on certain discourses in a management meeting, and other discourses in a community meeting. As a result, even among apparently similar subjects, a range of utterances, drawing on a range of possibly contradictory discourses, is possible, albeit limited by the prevailing discursive formation. The ensuing interdiscursivity can be discerned through lexical choices and through likenesses between sets of statements (Silverstein, 2005).

Implicitly refuting the possibility of multiple subjectivities, western colonial perspectives have historically constructed universalising notions of Aboriginal identity, overlooking cultural heterogeneity (Tedmanson, 2007). Batty (2005) documents some of the tensions that have shaped Aboriginal subjectivity. He notes that historical policies aimed towards Aboriginal self-determination have actually entrenched governmental power over Aboriginal subjectivity, through ‘rationalities of accountability’ in which Aborigines must ‘lease’ their identity to non-Aboriginal administrators. Thus, colonial practices have historically eroded and homogenised Aboriginal
subjectivities. Acknowledging the multiple and contestable nature of subjectivity, therefore, requires the capacity to reflect on and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, and an open-mindedness to alternative voices.

In searching for textual signifiers of the contrasts between the three conceptions, re-reading the transcripts led me to the proposition that C3 participants may more readily acknowledge multiple voices in their statements. This proposition concerns the notions of heteroglossia and attitude. In Chapter Three, I explained Bakhtin’s (1994/1935) theorisation of heteroglossia as a dialogic site of contestation between centripetal and centrifugal forces, or dominant and alternative worldviews. In Chapter Four, meanwhile, I introduced the concept of ‘attitude’, the outcome of appraising or evaluating things and people. Attitude incorporates three types of response that statements or texts can evoke: affect (emotional response); appreciation (aesthetic response) and judgement (ethical/moral response) (Economou, 2006; Hunston & Thompson, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2007). In this context, a heteroglossic statement is one that expresses attitudes from someone other than the author, while monoglossic statements express attitudes only from the author (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 49). Thus, heteroglossic statements more readily acknowledge multiple voices and alternative worldviews.

To interrogate this phenomenographic dimension, therefore, I need to identify heteroglossic statements in the transcripts. Martin and Rose (2007, pp. 48-59) explain that three forms of heteroglossia exist: projection, concession and modality. ‘Projection’ is heteroglossic because it involves quoting or reporting what other people say or think (e.g., He said…). However, many such statements do not express others’ attitudes, but merely report a dialogue. For example:

...he said to me, “Well, do you know anyone who can do that job?” I said, “Yes”. He said, “Who?” I said, “Me”. He said, “Well, you can start work next week”. (A.comm5).

Since computerised searching inherently treats all such statements equally, I have excluded projection in my analysis, focusing on more reliable signifiers of heteroglossia. So, ‘concession’ is heteroglossic because it involves acknowledging, and then countering, the reader’s expectations; it is typically signalled by the conjunctions but, however, and although. Finally, ‘modality’, a notion I introduced in Chapter Four, “acknowledges alternative voices around a suggestion or claim”, and “opens up a space for negotiation” (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 54). It contrasts with polar certainties, which indicate bald, categorical statements (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 123-125). Modality therefore

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8 The technical term for this region of meaning is ‘engagement’ (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 58), but I have not used this term, to avoid confusion with ‘community engagement’.
indicates the degree of certainty of a presented reality, and it comprises modalisation and modulation. Modalisation, or epistemic modality, refers to the degree of likelihood or usuality. Modulation, or deontic modality, modalises the lexical verbs of statements and, therefore, implies the degree of obligation, permission, or inclination (Groefsema, 1995; Halliday, 1994; Pique-Angordans, Posteguillo, & Andreu-Beso, 2002; von Wright, 1951).

Grammatically, modality is most commonly signalled either by a modal verb (or ‘finite modal operator’) or a modal adjunct. Modal verbs are auxiliary verbs that modalise sentences by acting on lexical (or ‘main’) verbs; those that signal the most heteroglossic statements may be: can, could, may and might. Modal adjuncts are adverbials that express judgement of probability or usuality; those that signal the most heteroglossic statements may be: probably, possibly, perhaps, maybe, often, sometimes, usually, occasionally, generally (Chalker & Weiner, 1994; Halliday, 1994). Thus, I searched the transcripts to compare the frequencies with which the three participant groups used these ‘heteroglossic terms’ (Table 13 and Appendix 5, Table 34).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 3)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 6)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONCESSION CONJUNCTIONS</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODAL VERBS</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODAL ADJUNCTS</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total frequency</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total frequency per participant</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>111.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C3 participants used ‘heteroglossic’ terms 111.3 times on average, compared to 83.2 and 65.0 for C2 and C1 participants respectively. Thus, C3 participants’ statements seem to be more heteroglossic than those of other participants. This supports the above proposition, derived from the phenomenographic model, that C3 participants’ statements more readily acknowledge multiple voices. Further, there is again a greater conceptual gap between C2 and C3 participants than there is between C1 and C2 participants.

There may be three principal shortcomings of this analysis, both relating to the idea that computer-aided analysis overlooks contextual factors (Widdowson, 2000, p. 7). Firstly, in common with the
analysis of the previous three phenomenographic dimensions, it assumes that participants’ use of the identified terms signals the presence of the attribute being analysed (in this case heteroglossia). I chose to overlook this shortcoming on the basis that it applies equally across all participant groups. Secondly, I could have also searched for monoglossic statements, and drawn comparisons. However, because monoglossia is signalled by the absence of modal verbs and modal adjuncts, it is difficult to identify definitively. Thirdly, I counted all terms as equally indicative of heteroglossia. Martin and Rose (2007, pp. 53-56) propose scales of modality where, for example, probably and often are closer to positive polarity than are possibly and sometimes. I have chosen to include only those terms that intuitively signal relatively high modality, and to exclude those close to positive polarity, such as must, certainly and always, which least acknowledge alternative voices. Given these shortcomings, while the above analysis benefits through being applied uniformly across all participants, in the final section of this chapter, the textual analysis is manual. This facilitates a closer investigation of discursive influences and worldviews, recontextualised in broader texts and macrostructural rationalities.

Summary

In summary, this textual examination of the interview texts has broadly complemented, and supported the findings of, the phenomenographic model. In analysing Dimension One, I found that C3 participants articulated more collectivist themes, compared to C1 and C2 participants. In analysing Dimension Two, I found that C3 participants conceive ‘community engagement’ in relatively dialogic terms, compared to C1 and C2 participants. In analysing Dimension Three, I found that C3 participants appear to have a higher concern for processes of cultural sensitivity, relative to other participants, and a relatively low concern for economic or instrumental outcomes, but that all participant groups have some concern for both. In analysing Dimension Four, I found that C3 participants seem to have a greater appreciation of multiple voices than do C1 and C2 participants. The findings also suggest that the conceptual gap between C1 and C2 appears to be smaller than that between C2 and C3. This raises the possibility that C1 and C2 may be relatively close conceptually, compared to how both differ from C3.

As noted in the analysis of Dimension Four above, a shortcoming of this analysis is that computer-aided word searching inevitably means including instances where the intended meaning is something other than what I have claimed. However, applying the same method across all participants, and removing researcher interpretation of intended meanings, minimises the risk of researcher bias. Further, I avoided the possibility of potentially ambiguous words (viz. people, community and should) skewing the data by omitting them from the analysis. Nevertheless, below I
redress the balance, augmenting this computer-aided corpus analysis through closer, manual textual analysis.

I have now identified, described, and interrogated Site A participants’ conceptions of community engagement, based on interpretive understandings. In the final two sub-sections of this chapter, I analyse and interpret these conceptions, paying closer attention to textual manifestations (instantiations) of discursive formations. Being cognisant of Widdowson’s (2000, p. 11) challenge to discourse analysts’ claim of discovering “ideological intentions which are deliberately disguised to persuade opinion”, I am not seeking to determine whether people deliberately disguise ideological intentions. Rather, my analysis and interpretation consider how people’s worldviews are socially constructed through discourse, and how lexical choices and other textual features contribute to this process. Of significance is the notion that meanings are constituted through discursively produced texts, whether deliberately or otherwise. To begin, I used Leximancer to generate an independent map of conceptual relationships, in a manner similar to that used for document analysis in Chapter Four.

**Conceptual relationships and lexical choices**
This penultimate stage of the analysis is inductive, taking the same corpus as that used in the phenomenographic analysis, but delivering independently derived conceptual maps. These maps provide initial, rather than conclusive, evidence of conceptual relationships; thus, the analysis at this stage is tentative. Subsequent analysis probes more deeply into the texts themselves. From the original corpus, then, I now describe the Leximancer output, initially for all participants, and then by comparing community and company participants. Subsequently, I focus on the lexical level, categorising participants’ lexical choices into the discourses from which they are drawn.

**Overall conceptual relationships**
The transcripts of the 17 interviews provided a corpus of 93,453 words. To begin the analysis, I entered the entire corpus into Leximancer. Having examined the initial, ‘raw’ output, I refined the data to maximise Leximancer’s usefulness, a process that comprised four tasks. Firstly, I removed all interviewer text from the data, to ensure that Leximancer considered only interviewee text when developing its concept map. Secondly, I deleted certain concepts that Leximancer had identified, such as ‘bit’, ‘sort’, ‘terms’, and ‘yeah’, which were interfering with the analysis. Thirdly, I merged intuitively synonymous concepts, so that Leximancer treated the following as single concepts: Aboriginal/Indigenous; company/companies; talk/talking; and work/working. Fourthly, I adjusted the settings to analyse two-sentence segments, since three-sentence segments (Leximancer’s default for detecting a concept’s presence) were excessively large, and therefore risked creating misleading
claims of a concept’s presence. Now, *Leximancer* was able to process the text by considering two-sentence ‘moving windows’, identifying whether or not certain concepts were present in each window, using its in-built thesaurus. I then generated a new map of conceptual relationships, which was reasonably stable after 3000 iterations (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Concept map for all participants, Site A**

Visual analysis of the map in Figure 13 indicates that the concepts ‘community’ and ‘engagement’ appear in similar conceptual contexts. This much is barely surprising, given that the term ‘community engagement’ was discussed throughout the interviews. In addition, ‘business’, ‘mining’, and ‘company’ appear in similar conceptual contexts to both ‘community’ and ‘engagement’. This finding again hints at the possible interdiscursive nature of community engagement, since participants discussed apparently antithetical concepts in similar conceptual contexts. This is consistent with findings from the company documents. However, in the map of company documents, ‘business’, ‘mining’, and ‘company’ were somewhat separate from ‘community’, suggesting that discourses have joined or overlapped more deeply in participants’ subjectivities than in official company discourses. This interdiscursive nature also mirrors the discursive tensions and paradoxes interpreted through my observations. Conversely, ‘job’, ‘kids’, ‘money’, and ‘land’ appear to be relatively separate conceptually from the concepts listed above, suggesting that community issues and concerns are conceptualised somewhat separately from discussions of community engagement itself.
The analysis hitherto has treated all participants collectively. However, it is possible that various discourses shape company and community participants’ subjectivities in different ways, based on different relationships with macrostructural rationalities. For the remainder of this analysis, then, I separate the corpus to facilitate such comparisons.

**Conceptual relationships – Community participants**

Figure 14 shows the concept map for all 12 community participants (corpus size = 58,810 words), generated by *Leximancer*, following a similar process of refining the data as described above. This was also reasonably stable after 3000 iterations. Since this map represents 12 out of the 17 participants, it is not surprising that some conceptual relationships on this map mirror those for all participants. The concepts ‘community’ and ‘engagement’ again appear in similar conceptual contexts. The concepts ‘mining’ and ‘company’ are also fairly proximate to both ‘community’ and ‘engagement’. However, there are several significant differences between the two maps.

![Figure 14: Concept map for community participants, Site A](image)

Firstly, in this map, the concept ‘Indigenous’ appears to be more strongly related to ‘community’ and ‘engagement’ than in the previous map. This suggests that, perhaps not surprisingly, indigeneity is an important aspect of how community participants understand community engagement. Secondly, ‘business’ is absent from this map, indicating that community participants see it as marginal. Thirdly, ‘should’ is present, suggesting the presence of deontic modality, which, as previously explained, implies the degree of obligation, permission, or inclination (e.g., Groefsema, 1995). Further, the position of ‘should’ among several other concepts, such as
‘Indigenous’, ‘land’, ‘give’ and ‘money’, indicates that it appears in several contexts. This may mean that participants often frame these latter concepts in normative or deontological terms, perhaps suggesting a sense of injustice, or a sense that something ‘should’ be different to their current experiences of reality. To consider community participants’ construction of reality more closely, therefore, I now investigate the discourses from which they draw, by identifying their lexical choices.

**Lexical choices – Community participants**

As explained in Chapter Four, lexical choices implicitly signify certain social orders (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 113), and provide insights into the perspectives from which we interpret experience (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 190-191). I have examined the 400 most frequently occurring words used in community participants’ interviews, again looking for possible ‘discourse identifiers’. Since the discourses present were not objectively predefinable, this was a heuristic process, in which I labelled discourses, and categorised discourse identifiers, iteratively. This enables me to identify and describe the discourses that shape community participants’ understandings of community engagement as follows: *Business and management*, which constitutes 39% of the frequency of discourse identifiers; *Community* (27%); *Indigeneity* (18%); *Communication* (12%); and *Ethics* (3%). I have listed the discourse identifiers in Appendix 3 (Table 25).

*Business and management*, signified by terms such as *company/ies, work, money, job(s), business(es) and employ(ment)*, appears to exert a strong influence. *Community* is also influential, comprising entities such as *family, kids/children, group(s), school*, as well as *community* itself, and social processes such as *helping* and *teaching*. A discourse of *Indigeneity* is in evidence, incorporating descriptive terms, such as *Indigenous, black/blackfellas* and *white/whitefellas*, and conceptual notions such as *culture/al, heritage, respect* and *custodians*. Also, discourses of *Communication*, comprising processes of *engaging*, and *listening*, and of *Ethics*, comprising conceptual terms such as *values, responsibility, rights*, and *care*, appear to be present. Thus, *Business and management* is juxtaposed alongside apparently antithetical discourses that centre on people and society, providing further indication of the interdiscursive nature of ‘community engagement’. In the next two sub-sections, then, I investigate whether similar conceptual relationships and discourses are evident in company participants’ texts.

**Conceptual relationships – Company participants**

Figure 15 shows the concept map, which was also fairly stable after 3000 iterations, for the five company participants (corpus size = 34,643 words), generated by *Leximancer*. 
‘Community’ and ‘engagement’ again appear in similar conceptual contexts here. Also, ‘company’ is similarly proximate to ‘community’, but less strongly related to ‘engagement’, than in the other maps. ‘Business’ and ‘industry’, absent on the community participants’ map, are present here. These initial findings suggest that discourses centring on business concerns play a relatively strong constitutive rôle in framing company participants’ conceptions of community engagement, although the small sample size renders such findings tentative, pending closer textual analysis.

There are three other findings that may be particularly significant. Firstly, contrasting with the community participants’ map, ‘Indigenous’ is distant from ‘community’ and ‘engagement’. This suggests that indigeneity is not central to how company participants conceive community engagement. Secondly, ‘should’ does not appear here, suggesting fewer normative statements, perhaps meaning relative contentment with the status quo. Finally, ‘mining’, which appears in similar conceptual contexts to ‘community’ and ‘engagement’ among community participants’, is absent here. This may indicate that company participants conceive minerals processing operations quite distinctly from mining itself, while community participants see both as ‘mining’. To consider company participants’ conceptualisations further, therefore, I now comparatively investigate their lexical choices.
Lexical choices – Company participants

Having described the conceptual map, I consider the discourses from which company participants drew. I did not assume *a priori* that the discourses present would be identical, and remained open to new discourses while compiling the list. Ultimately, the discourses appeared to be the same as for community participants, but in different proportions.

A discourse of *Business and management* appears to exert a somewhat stronger influence on company participants’ understandings of community engagement (44% of the frequency of discourse identifiers) than it does on community participants’ understandings (39%), but not substantially so (see Appendix 3, Table 26). Company participants refer to the same descriptive terms as do community participants—*company/ies, work, money, job(s), business(es), and employ(ment)*—and, mirroring the conceptual map, to *industry*. *Community*, meanwhile, also appears somewhat more frequently here (32% vs 27%), but features few of the processes articulated by community participants, instead focusing on entities such as *community/ies, group(s), kids, and school(s)*. The word *family* is absent here, but the word *local* appears more frequently.

*Communication* features slightly more strongly here (13% vs 12%), including *consultation* and *conversations* alongside processes of *engaging* and *listening*. *Indigeneity*, less prominent here (7% vs 18%), largely comprises the word *Indigenous* itself. Conceptual notions such as *culture, heritage, and respect* are relatively marginal, and *black, blackfellas, and custodians* are absent. Finally, *Ethics* features to a similar extent as for community participants (4% vs 3%), but notable differences are the inclusion here of *accountability* and *moral*, the absence of *rights*, and the comparatively low frequency for *responsibility*.

In summary, company participants’ lexical choices also constitute an interdiscursive tapestry, with *Business and management* represented slightly more strongly than in the lexical choices of community participants. The statistically greatest difference is in *Indigeneity*, which is comparatively weakly represented in company participants’ lexical choices. Table 14 may help to examine comparisons between the participant groups more closely. Here, the percentage frequencies of discourse identifiers in each discourse are presented for each participant group. In addition, as in Chapter Four, I have counted the number of discourse identifiers, since this may indicate the extent of the vocabulary that participants expressed within each discourse.
Table 14: Summary of discourse identifiers, Site A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCOURSE</th>
<th>COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>COMPANY PARTICIPANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no. of discourse</td>
<td>% frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identifiers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and management</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigeneity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of similarities, as already noted, the actual discourses represented are the same for each participant group. That is, both groups drew on discourses of Business and management, Community, Communication, Indigeneity, and Ethics; further, Business and management dominates for both groups. Similarly, for both groups, Community is the second most frequently represented, Ethics is the least frequently represented, and Communication constitutes 12% and 13% of the frequency of discourse identifiers for community and company participants respectively.

However, Indigeneity constitutes 18% of the frequency of discourse identifiers for community participants, but only 7% for company participants. Since the community participants are themselves Indigenous, and only one company participant identified as Indigenous, this finding is probably unsurprising, the suggestion being that indigeneity is a relatively significant influence in how community participants understand and experience community engagement. Supporting this assertion is the finding that community participants articulated 14 words signifying Indigeneity, whereas company participants articulated only six. Further, these findings support the interpretations of the Leximancer maps above – that indigeneity, as a concept, strongly influences how community participants described their realities, whereas it is relatively marginal to the construction of company participants’ worldviews.

While this is unsurprising based purely on the identities of community participants as Indigenous and of company participants as non-Indigenous, in another sense it is paradoxical. Specifically, the phenomenographic analysis suggested that company participants are highly skewed towards a comprehensive conception of community engagement (i.e., as ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’), whereas community participants are more evenly distributed across conceptions. From this finding, we might expect a discourse of Indigeneity to be more strongly represented in company participants’ lexical choices than it is. The implication, then, may be that, while organisational
processes of enculturating staff in ‘Indigenous awareness’ may help staff to articulate deep and broad conceptualisations, the subject positions of those staff may remain relatively strongly influenced by dominant discourses. In Bakhtinian terms, centripetal forces are working to centralise and unify meaning around dominant discourses (Morris, 1994a, p. 15). The significance of these findings lies in the implication that, in some respects, company and community participants may understand community engagement from competing, or even antithetical, worldviews, and that meaning is therefore contested.

A similar implication may be derived from the data for Business and management. Although the frequency with which company participants draw on this discourse is only 5% higher than that for community participants, the former articulated 27 words for this discourse, compared to 18 for the latter. This suggests that company participants have a somewhat broader vocabulary for Business and management than do community participants, which may indicate that this discourse is more influential in constituting company participants’ worldviews. Nevertheless, it is apparent that this discourse also significantly shapes community participants’ worldviews. In the final section, then, I adopt a deductive approach, analysing how participants use certain words, and considering what such use tells us about the ‘object’, or how participants view the world.

**Discursive recontextualisation**

In the above discussion of conceptual relationships and lexical choices, I suggested that company and community participants may have different understandings of certain concepts and words. Such a suggestion supports the preceding phenomenographic analysis, in which I found that some participants understand the dimensions of community engagement in different ways to other participants. The task of this final section, then, is to add another layer of understanding to the analysis, by examining the nature of company and community differences more closely. This deductive analysis also aims to address a potential shortcoming in the foregoing textual analysis.

So far, the textual analysis has operated at the word level. The triangulation of the phenomenographic conceptions, and the analysis of lexical choices, used word counts to investigate the material. Leximancer analysis, similarly, uses word counts to construct its thesauruses, which in turn construct ‘concepts’. A limitation with this computer-aided corpus analysis is that “it cannot account for the complex interplay of linguistic and contextual factors whereby discourse is enacted” (Widdowson, 2000, p. 7). Just finding that people draw on a discourse of, for example, Community, does not illuminate similarities and differences in the ways in which they draw on that discourse, or
in their underlying assumptions. Rather, textual analysis must consider wider practices within which discourses are embedded (Fairclough, 1995, p. 9); in other words, it must be recontextualised.

This final analytical method, then, recontextualises the foregoing word-level textual analysis. Recontextualisation means situating lexical choices (micro level) in the context of organisational practices (meso level), and situating organisational practices in the context of wider social discourses (macro level). Such an approach draws on the notion, explained in Chapter Three, that language is ‘imbricated’ in social relations (Fairclough, 1995, p. 73). That is, the macrostructure facilitates certain discursive formations, within which meso-level discourses develop; these, in turn, deeply influence micro-level utterances.

For the following analysis, I reviewed the foregoing findings, focusing on the two discourses where the company/community contrasts appear to be greatest: *Indigeneity* and *Business and management*. Within these discourses, I identified those words that might particularly illuminate ambiguities and tensions between company and community participants’ worldviews. I included words only if both participant groups used them sufficiently frequently for meaningful analysis. The word *blackfella*, for example, was used by company participants only twice in total, making comparative analysis problematic. To examine tensions within *Indigeneity*, therefore, I analysed instances of *Indigenous*, *land*, and *respect*. To examine tensions within *Business and management*, I analysed instances of *development*, *industry/ies*, and *money*. I also analysed instances of *should*, which might indicate normative statements, thus interrogating my earlier finding that company participants may be relatively content with the *status quo*, while community participants may articulate their views in relatively normative or deontological terms. These word instances totalled 689 text segments for contextual analysis.

The overall aim, then, following Widdowson (2000), is to recontextualise instances where participants used these words, to consider how macro-level and meso-level discourses are enacted at the micro level. Re-reading the transcripts, I actively searched through the 689 text segments for statements that might illustrate or refute the notion of competing worldviews. So, while the foregoing discussion of conceptual relationships was based on the presence of *Leximancer*-defined concepts, the following discussion focuses on instances of the words themselves. Table 15 lists the words analysed, and the frequencies with which participants used them.
Table 15: Words potentially signifying competing worldviews, Site A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>COMPANY PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total frequency</td>
<td>average frequency per participant</td>
<td>total frequency</td>
<td>average frequency per participant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCOURSE OF INDIGENEITY</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>land</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>respect</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCOURSE OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>development</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>industry/ies</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>money</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORMATIVE STATEMENTS</td>
<td>should</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discourse of Indigeneity**

In the above analysis, I suggested that indigeneity is a significant influence in how community participants understand and experience community engagement, while company participants seem to refer to community engagement and Indigenous issues quite separately. I now consider instances of three words to investigate this contention – *Indigenous* itself, followed by *land* and *respect*.

**Indigenous: Company participants’ use**

Company participants’ use of the word *Indigenous* predominantly refers to company systems, structures, and strategies. It becomes part of a noun phrase, such as *Indigenous engagement* or *Indigenous employment*. This textual feature occurs in 25 of the 68 instances:

*I’ll be, um, be able to concentrate more of my time on doing the heritage and socio-economic stuff, and not only the heritage, but the whole *Indigenous* engagement stuff.*

*(A.comp1)*

Terms such as *Indigenous engagement* and *Indigenous employment* are noun phrases incorporating nominalisations; that is, they re-phrase processes, or verbs, as nouns. The discursive significance of nominalisations is that they present phenomena as static and non-negotiable, rather than as dynamic and contestable (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 131). In the above statements, therefore, there is no articulation or reflection of what Indigenous or indigeneity might mean, or of possible contestability. Rather, there is an implicit assumption that the meaning of *Indigenous* is non-problematic and universally understood. The same can be said of 17 further instances, where the word is used descriptively to refer to a group of people, as in *Indigenous people, Indigenous employees, Indigenous stakeholders* or *the Indigenous community*. This implicit homogenisation
effectively lumps a diversity of peoples into one uniform entity, and assumes that responsibility (or, in the following example, perceived lack of it) for one means responsibility for all:

_The needs and aspirations of Indigenous people in [town] have got to be met by the Government, and not by us; that’s not our responsibility._ (A.comp1)

One exception to this implicit homogenisation is a company participant who expresses sensitivity to heterogeneity, and to the complexity of relationships, within the local Indigenous community:

_There’s that much diversity in the Indigenous community... The social landscape; um, I think it’s a very complex, layered landscape, you know, with all sorts of lines drawn, that separate and bind members of the Indigenous community._ (A.comp3)

**Indigenous: Community participants’ use**

Where community participants use the word *Indigenous*, the principal effect (in 69 of the 144 instances) is to differentiate themselves from non-Indigenous people, and their own worldviews from those of non-Indigenous people. Grammatically, it may be significant that these statements typically lack modality. The views here, therefore, which explicitly or implicitly challenge western worldviews by foregrounding Indigenous perspectives, are expressed definitively:

_When Indigenous people go to interviews, they don’t feel comfortable talking to the interview panel._ (A.comm11)

The following community participant uses the analogy of a clock’s revolution to illustrate rhetorically the differentiation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and to lend greater credibility to Indigenous worldviews:

_If you put it in terms of the clock, you know, if Aboriginal people have been here for 40,000 years – that’s one hour – and non-Indigenous people have been here for nine seconds._ *(A.comm11)*

In 54 cases, community participants also use *Indigenous* in noun phrases to refer to a group of people, such as *Indigenous people* and *the Indigenous community*. In some cases, these noun phrases also constitute expressions of Indigenous identity, so these two textual features are not mutually exclusive. However, while company participants present these terms as implicitly non-problematic, community participants see them as exposing political tensions:

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9 By my own calculations, if Europeans settled in Australia approximately 220 years ago, this is 0.0055 of 40,000, equivalent to nearly 20 seconds of one hour. Nevertheless, the rhetorical value of the analogy remains. Furthermore, Aboriginal people may have been in Australia for longer, perhaps 60,000 years (Wells, 2003).
Um, if you was to count the jobs of Indigenous people in the industry here, there’s a lot of unemployed Indigenous people. (A.comm9)

In some statements, participants discuss community members’ efforts to integrate with non-Indigenous society. Ironically, however, these statements also highlight paradigmatic differences:

Our job as Indigenous people is to make ourselves employable, and believe me, it’s not a bloody easy thing to do. (A.comm9)

As noted above, I also looked for statements that might refute the notion of competing worldviews. Of the 144 statements, five could be categorised in this way, and all were expressed by one participant. Here, for example, he asserts the similarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives:

I think if you worked it out on percentage per capita, you’d find there’s equally as many Indigenous people who are as mercenary as any other person you can come across – I got no problems making a lot of money. (A.comm9)

To deepen the analysis, I now consider two other words potentially signifying a discourse of Indigeneity, since they are central to Indigenous identity: land and respect.

**Land: Company participants’ use**

In the phenomenographic analysis, I noted that land is a deeply significant issue for Indigenous people, forming a central focus of their identity. Article 25 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) refers to Indigenous peoples’ “distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas”. It is notable, therefore, that company participants used the word *land* only 1.6 times on average, compared to 8.8 for community participants. Furthermore, company participants’ statements involving *land* mostly referred to discussion of Land Councils, and thus do not incorporate a meaningful conception of land itself. One exception is the following statement, in which *land* is framed in economic terms:

Fantastic... that means that we might get better access to *land* somewhere. (A.comp1)

**Land: Community participants’ use**

In contrast, community participants’ statements involving *land* speak in terms of connection, dispossession, and (land) rights. Furthermore, as with the above statements differentiating
Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews, these statements lack modality, suggesting certitude in the worldviews being presented. Of the 105 instances, 24 refer to the indivisible connection between Indigenous peoples and the land:

You were born in that land, you’re spiritually tied to that land, that’s it, you know. (A.comm7)

Land is your heart; land is the land of your people. (A.comm8)

A further 23 statements articulate a resigned sense of dispossession and injustice when this indivisible connection is broken, a sense that is deepened by the use of the possessive our:

You know, they’re taking, they’re using our ground, our land to do all this. (A.comm5)

Supporting notions of a connection with the land, and a sense of dispossession from it, are 14 statements claiming certain rights:

They owe us much more than that, because they’re using our own land for their economic benefit. (A.comm11)

Understandings of land, therefore, expose deep fissures between company and community worldviews. Respect, similarly, has different meanings for different people.

**Respect: Company participants’ use**

Historically, during the time of colonial dispossession, minerals companies had little respect for the interests, wishes, or inherent worth of Indigenous Australians (e.g., Banerjee, 2000). Now, however, the contemporary idea that local Aboriginal people are ‘stakeholders’ suggests that new practices of respect have superseded colonial worldviews. The increasingly popular view is that minerals companies seeking consent from Indigenous communities “need to develop trusting and mutually respectful relationships” (DITR, 2007).

Among company participants, four of the 11 instances of respect were actually synonyms for sense or regard, as in in that respect. The remaining seven instances were all articulated by one participant (not the Indigenous one). Of these, six referred to some notion of mutuality:

Engagement is more than just communication in terms of talking, I think it’s a mutual respect; it’s a mutual recognition and a mutual willingness to work together. (A.comp5)
The remaining instance, conversely, suggested an implicitly privileging of company interests, portraying community relations as an instrumental means of furthering these interests:

*I have a lot of respect for the art of community relations, I guess, because I think when it’s done properly it can add a lot of value to a company.* (A.comp5)

There are conflicting messages here, therefore. On the one hand, this participant suggests that mutuality is desirable. On the other hand, she implicitly privileges one party over another, a situation that constricts the space for mutuality. Perhaps her understanding of respect in the sense of mutuality, then, is delimited by western discourses that privilege economic values.

**Respect: Community participants’ use**

In contrast, community participants offer a perspective drawn from an alternative, Indigenous discourse, in which respect ensures balance and harmony (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 120). Of their 15 instances of respect, eleven imply that it has a specific, if elusive, meaning to Indigenous peoples, deeply tied to their self-concept. Essentially, these statements again refer to a yearning for recognition of Indigenous peoples’ historical, intergenerational connection with land. In this way, respect may be realised in relatively everyday, tangible things that non-Indigenous people often take for granted, such as land, a place to meet, and recognition:

*So I’ll probably be dead and gone, and we still won’t have a building, but I want to instil in my children... and my grandchildren, that we do deserve respect, you know.* (A.comm4)

In the following statement, finally, one participant differentiates the concept of Native Title, which he sees as alien to his worldview, from his own view of respect:

*Native Title is where people think they're gonna make a lot of money, and traditional ownership is recognition of prior occupation, and an indication of respect.* (A.comm9)

As suggested by the earlier Leximancer conceptual maps and the comparison of lexical choices, therefore, this deductive analysis has shown that company and community participants have differing ways of conceptualising indigeneity. Notwithstanding the more sensitive and reflexive perspectives of some company staff, dominant corporate discourses risk marginalising Indigenous conceptualisations of indigeneity, which foreground the constitutive rôles of land and respect. Analysing words concerning the rôle of industry and business, similarly, offers opportunities to identify conflicting worldviews.
Discourse of Business and management

In the above analysis of conceptual relationships, I found that the Leximancer-defined concepts ‘business’ and ‘industry’ are absent on the community participants’ map, but present on the company participants’ map. I also found that both company and community participants’ lexical choices are strongly influenced by a discourse of Business and management, with a somewhat higher representation among the former. Additionally, company participants seem to have a broader vocabulary for Business and management than do community participants. I inferred that this discourse may be more influential in constituting company participants’ worldviews than those of community participants. To investigate, therefore, I now recontextualise instances of three words that may illuminate tensions in participants’ worldviews – development, industry/ies, and money. These are words whose meanings may be taken for granted, but which are contestable upon closer inspection. Initially, I did also investigate instances of the word business itself, but its use is mainly descriptive, offering few insights into underlying worldviews.

Development: Company participants’ use

Within the minerals industry itself, professionals tend to equate ‘development’ with moral progress, and to view their operations as making the Australian landscape productive, civilised and familiar (Trigger, 1997). Among company participants, eight of the nine instances of the word development assume a notion of natural progress (stage of development), or something inherently desirable (development opportunities; sustainable development). This assumed desirability is then embedded within capitalist discourses:

We are trying to work through some issues...in the development of businesses for the local community. (A.comp4)

Company participants, then, implicitly assume that business and development are interdependent and inherently desirable.

Development: Community participants’ use

While dominant discourses typically assume ‘development’ of minerals projects to be inherently desirable for Indigenous communities (Howitt, 2001, p. 213), the discourse of development, sustainable or otherwise, has long marginalised Indigenous perspectives, according to Banerjee (2003). Thus, community participants also refer to sustainable development, and want to be involved in the development of industry, but they additionally want social development and community development. Moreover, in three instances, they express an alternative, dissenting view,
challenging the apparent incontestability suggested by nominalisation. Here, development highlights socio-economic inequalities, and privileges western capitalist interests:

*Sustainable development, engaging with community... making the natives happy, trinkets and beads, a bit of this and a bit of that, so that big business can keep running, making the billions of dollars that it does, and just give them a little bit of a share.* (A.comm12)

Just as development, then, can be reinterpreted from alternative perspectives, the meaning of industry may be taken for granted, but is contestable upon closer inspection.

**Industry/ies: Company participants’ use**

For company participants, industry is an unproblematic notion in contemporary society, so its use is mainly descriptive, as in the noun phrase the mining industry. Furthermore, in three instances, it is personalised as a human subject:

*You talk to the people at [place], and they will hand-on-heart say that, “No industry has ever treated us like this, or has ever taken the trouble to have their General Manager come to our town.”* (A.comp1)

Thus, industry becomes an almost benevolent force, similar to development. There is no suggestion that, as a discursive concept, it may be somehow antithetical to Indigenous perspectives, through association with colonialist and capitalist power relations.

**Industry/ies: Community participants’ use**

Community participants, similarly, in ten of the 36 instances, see industry as a source of potential employment. Mostly, this is interpreted positively, as something that offers economic opportunities, even if this involves some compromise. This reflects the statements above on integrating with non-Indigenous society:

*I’m not a great lover of the idea of twelve-hour shifts myself, but if I was to work in the industry, that’s what I would have to work.* (A.comm9)

Where community participants differ, in nine instances, is in positioning industry as something that has somehow disrupted traditional culture. Here, industry has exploited its discursive power, leaving many Indigenous people sensing disadvantage and loss:
And I think that’s part of the problem we have with industry on our country; that land has been given to us by a creator god... I’ll probably go to the grave saying industry has not supplied our needs. (A.comm8)

Development and industry thus may not be as unproblematic and incontestable as corporate discourses might imply. Similarly, statements on money reveal conflicting worldviews.

Money: Company participants’ use
For company participants, money is essentially cash that needs to be managed, as part of business decision-making. This takes two forms. Firstly, in 19 of the 40 instances, it is something to be distributed by minerals companies to community organisations and projects:

We gave them a little bit of money just to start up. (A.comp3)

Secondly, in five cases, money is a non-negotiable imperative of business, and thus its accumulation is an inherently desirable objective:

Companies or organisations do what they have to do to make money. (A.comp2)

Thus, for company participants, money is simply one facet of business decision-making, and its desirability is, like development and industry, unproblematic.

Money: Community participants’ use
For community participants, conversely, money performs rather different functions, and illustrating competing worldviews. In 39 of the 140 instances, money perpetuates social dislocation and contradicts Indigenous culture:

The natural culture of the Indigenous people was communist... everything was shared, everything was communal. Communism messed up when money came into the game; we didn’t have money, we didn’t worry about money. (A.comm9)

In 26 instances, money is something that companies use to maintain and exploit social power:

I think money’s been the manipulating factor of how to keep people on side. (A.comm7)

More fundamentally, perhaps, just as land and development illustrate differentiations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews, money (in 16 instances) symbolises conflicting perspectives:
In money terms, they get millions, but then, I don’t know if that’s what we actually want... If you work at [company], you earn big money, but at the same time, money’s never been a part of our culture. (A.comm11)

The discourse of Business and management, therefore, signified by the words development, industry, and money, has different meanings for company and community participants, apparently based upon different underlying assumptions about the world. These assumptions are constructed and re-constructed through historical, colonial experiences and relative positions of social power. These assumptions, then, may influence notions of what should be.

Normative statements

In addition to differences between the ways in which company and community participants draw on discourses of Indigeneity and Business and management, the maps of conceptual relationships suggested that community participants frame several statements in normative terms, whereas company participants do not. To investigate normative statements more closely, therefore, I now recontextualise instances of the word should.

By normative statements, I mean broadly those that advocate ‘what should be’, as opposed to ‘what is’ (positive statements). In my analysis, I was sensitive to statements that might accord with teleological, deontological, justice, or virtue ethics. Teleological, or utilitarian or consequentialist, ethics bases decisions on the relative utility of alternative outcomes. Deontological, or non-consequentialist, ethics bases decisions on universal moral rules that advocate certain rights, or moral obligations, regardless of the consequences. Justice and fairness ethics examines questions of distribution, retribution, and compensation to determine ethical decisions. Virtue ethics, conversely, focuses not on the choice of actions, but on the development of character (Velasquez, 1998, pp. 67-163). Thus, in identifying normative statements, I considered all these possible ethical perspectives.

Should is a modal verb. As noted above (p. 21), authors differentiate between epistemic modality (modalisation), which questions the likelihood or usuality of a statement, and deontic modality (modulation), which concerns obligation, permission, or inclination (e.g., Groefsema, 1995). Here, only deontic modality is relevant, because it implies the degree of judgement and obligation, suggesting a certain moral disposition. Thus, I also considered instances of other modal verbs, such as must, may, might, and gotta (got to), but these were rarely used deontically.
**Should: Company participants’ use**

Of the 22 instances of *should* among company participants, 18 refer to operational business processes, rather than reflecting on macro-level philosophical or political alternatives:

*Indigenous employment...we *should* operate underneath the HR system. (A.comp2)*

Such statements, therefore, do not envisage alternative ontologies, but imply contentment with the *status quo*, as proposed above. The following quote more explicitly defends an existing policy, in this case expressing reluctance to become involved in controversial social issues:

*Drug and alcohol risks came up as a very large issue in this town; *should* we drive change in that? I don’t think so. (A.comp5)*

Thus, while these company participants’ statements are normative, they are not articulations of any particular moral position, and are thus delimited by dominant discourses.

**Should: Community participants’ use**

In contrast, community participants’ 67 instances of *should* commonly express a desire for an alternative reality. In 24 instances, statements are consistent with an ethics of justice, based on either distributive or compensatory, rather than retributive, principles:

*They *should* be giving some land back to us, the local people. They *should* be giving land back; they got the money. (A.comm4)*

In 17 instances, community participants’ expressions of a preferred reality suggest a sense of universal moral obligations, consistent with a deontological perspective:

*I think, um, we *should* be part of; if it’s got something to do with us, and the Indigenous people, and things to do with our land, or, just anything Indigenous, I suppose, we *should* have a say, um, how things *should* go. (A.comm5)*

In the above cases, as when community participants use the words *Indigenous* and *land* definitively, with little modality. Consideration of normative statements, then, supports the interpretation of the conceptual maps. Company participants’ use of *should* tends to reinforce macrostructural rationalities, whereas community participants indicate an alternative ontological perspective, to reflect perceptions of either rights or justice. Further, these conflicting notions seem to be based upon paradigmatically different ways of conceptualising indigeneity and business.
This textual analysis, then, highlights a shortcoming of phenomenographic methodology, in that the latter can overlook the constitutive rôle of discourse in shaping people’s conceptions. The phenomenographic analysis suggests that both company and community participants can conceive community engagement in relatively comprehensive ways, but the textual analysis suggests that these participants may construct meanings of these conceptions in different, perhaps antithetical, ways.

**Conclusion to Chapter Five**

In this chapter, I described, interpreted and analysed the findings from three visits to Site A, in the context of the overarching research question, *How do the people concerned understand ‘community engagement’, and what shapes these understandings?* I considered the meanings that community engagement has for the people concerned, and how language-as-discourse shapes these meanings. In the Context section, through ethnographic observation, I discerned discursive tensions between sensitivity and control among the company, and between dissent and acquiescence among the community. Next, through phenomenographic analysis of interview transcripts, I interpreted participants’ conceptions of community engagement as forming a hierarchical progression from ‘self-interest’, through ‘social and economic justice’, to ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’. I found that, on average, company participants tend to have deeper and broader understandings than do community members.

In the final section, I used three stages of textual analysis to analyse and interpret these conceptions. Triangulation through textual analysis broadly supported the findings of the phenomenographic model. That is, at Site A, a conception of ‘community engagement’ approaches ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’ when it comprises a collectivist perspective on community, dialogic communication, a relatively high concern for cultural sensitivity, compared to economic/instrumental outcomes, and an acknowledgement of multiple voices.

Inductive analysis of conceptual relationships and lexical choices firstly hints at the possible interdiscursive nature of the discourse of community engagement, among participants as a whole. Both company and community participants’ texts blend a discourse of *Business and management* with discourses of *Community, Indigeneity, Communication*, and *Ethics*. However, there appear to be two key differences between company and community participants’ articulations of community engagement. Firstly, indigeneity is central to how community participants describe their realities, whereas for company participants it is relatively marginal. Secondly, the discourse of *Business and*
Management appears to be more influential in constructing company participants’ worldviews than it is in constructing community participants’ worldviews. Thus, centripetal forces work to centralise and unify meaning around dominant discourses, in the manner that Bakhtin describes (Morris, 1994a, p. 15).

Deeper deductive textual analysis, finally, found that company participants implicitly present indigeneity as static, non-negotiable, and non-problematic. For community participants, conversely, indigeneity is inextricably bound up in notions of identity, land, and respect. Their expressions of indigeneity expose deeply political issues, and challenge dominant worldviews by advancing alternative perspectives. Similarly, company and community participants have different understandings of economic notions such as development, industry, and money. Perhaps as a result, when company participants express a normative statement, it generally concerns micro-level business operations, whereas for community participants it generally concerns macro-level philosophical and political positions.

In summary, the interdiscursive terrain of community engagement at Site A derives from competing worldviews, and is characterised by ongoing contestation between various discourses. The subject positions available to participants are circumscribed by these discourses. However, the identification of three prevailing conceptions indicates that subject positions are not pre-determined by these discourses. Furthermore, the idea that interdiscursive contestation is ongoing implies that subject positions are not stable or fixed (Bakhtin, 1994/1986). Rather, the particular context underlying community engagement at Site A, of historical tensions derived from the ongoing legacy of colonial capitalism, embodies certain discursive possibilities, which in turn make available certain subject positions. So, if discursive possibilities circumscribe available subject positions, will participants in a different context, constituted by different discourses, have different conceptions and subject positions?
Chapter Six: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT SITE B

Introduction

This chapter is structured similarly to Chapter Five, being divided into three sections. Firstly, I present and discuss the context, based on background reading, informal discussions and observations. The second and third sections then constitute the interview analysis. Initially, I again identify three phenomenographic conceptions, or understandings, of community engagement. Then, applying textual analysis, I analyse and interpret these conceptions, both inductively and deductively, and compare company and community participants, in an effort to identify tensions, ambiguities, and contradictions. As explained earlier, I focus on disputes over Site B’s use of groundwater, an issue that constitutes a manifestation and illustration of ‘community engagement’ as a discursive practice.

Context

Groundwater: Allocating a depleting resource fairly

Globally, fresh water supplies are under significant pressure from competing demands: domestic, industrial, irrigation, recreational, and environmental. To illustrate, compared to the 1950s, twice as much food is being grown globally today, but this requires three times as much water (Vidal, 2006). In Australia, in response to these competing demands, governments typically state that water will be allocated ‘equitably’, but the definition of ‘equitable’ is unclear (Syme, Nancarrow, & McCreddin, 1999). Its definition, therefore, depends on the prevailing discursive formation, which in turn is determined by the macrostructural rationalities of contemporary capitalism.

Syme, Nancarrow, and McCreddin (1999) conducted seven studies in Australia, over ten years, investigating what the public perceives to constitute ‘fairness’ in water allocation decisions. They found that water was seen as a public good, that the environment itself was considered to have rights to water, and that local public involvement was a significant determinant of such perceived fairness. My observations at Site B largely support these principles, which seem to underlie many company/community tensions. This background, then, underlies my observations of company and community, which comprised events outlined in Chapter Three, and most of which occurred during the two weeks of Visit Two.
Site B, a minerals processing operation, has been operating for over 30 years, approximately 30km from a regional city. At September 2006, there were 1,150 staff, 600 of whom were contractors. In addition, 1,100 others—mostly contractors—were working on an extension project. The site is surrounded by mostly semi-rural residential properties, but only 6% of staff live in that local area, with the majority living in the nearby city. Moreover, a survey conducted during Visit One found that fewer than a quarter of all staff who responded felt that they were part of their neighbourhoods. This suggests a potential for staff to be relatively unconcerned about the company’s local impacts.

While the practice of impact assessment for minerals operations is now institutionalised (Ballard & Banks, 2003, p. 288), this was not the case when Site B commenced operations in 1974. In the 1970s and 1980s, the site was labelled colloquially among community members as a ‘fortress’, because of its perceived disregard for community opinion. Thus, in contrast to Site A, site management has had to adjust to emerging practices of environmental stewardship and community consultation. However, several staff members told me that, while safety and environmental issues had enjoyed an increased company profile in recent years, community relations had not received similar attention. Community relations work seemed not to be integrated with other work areas, as illustrated when the Borefield Operator, who has regular contact with local residents, referred to community relations as “customer relations or whatever they call it”. The groundwater issue, however, has raised community expectations of the company’s engagement practices.

Groundwater occurs in the area within alluvial sediments (sand and gravel), and in fractures in the underlying basement rock. The aquifer is recharged by both direct rainfall infiltration and catchment run-off. However, groundwater levels have shown a general downward trend since Site B commenced operations. Across the aquifer, the company operates more than 40 bores, though not necessarily running all concurrently. The company’s right to extract 8,638 megalitres (ML) of groundwater per year, at a maximum rate of 24 ML/day, was enshrined in state legislation in 1970. However, a recent report commissioned by the local council argues that extraction should be restricted to 5,000 ML/year, and then only if this level were restricted further during dry periods. Conversely, a report commissioned by the company proposed that 8,900 ML/year would be sustainable, suggesting that conflicting assumptions may underlie the two reports. The company report further asserts that the company’s actual extraction during the previous ten years had

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10 For this section, and for the section below, The local community, I consulted various sources, including internal company reports. To avoid possible identification, I have not divulged these sources here.
averaged only 5,120 ML/year. However, it is unclear whether the company voluntarily extracted less than its allowance, or whether it was simply unable to extract more because of the depleted supply. The Environmental Manager estimated that the site extension, when operational, would increase water use by 2,190 ML/year. However, this will not necessarily be sourced from the borefield, since the company has other sources—mains water and recycled water from its tailings facility—and is investigating the potential for using treated effluent. Company management appears willing, therefore, to use non-borefield sources; this may reflect supply concerns, but it also may be a response to contrary discourses.

**Discursive tensions – company: Functionality vs social concern**

At Site A, I noted that all discursive sites are characterised by multiple, sometimes oppositional, discourses. I proposed that the interplay between discourses of mining, business, community, environment, and indigeneity produced discursive tensions of sensitivity *versus* control within the company, and of dissent *versus* acquiescence within the community. At Site B, I observed similar discourses operating, with only indigeneity being absent, because of the different issue under focus. Within the company, then, I found that this discursive interplay produced dispositions towards both functionality and social concern.

Workplace design, and people’s approach to work, seem to be geared principally towards the practical function of efficient industrial production. Reflecting the culture of the minerals industry generally (DITR, 2007, p. 21), an uncompromising, industrial atmosphere surrounds Site B. Approaching the site, the most immediate feature is the imposing, rust-coloured plant and machinery. Indeed, reddish-brown dust pervades the entire site. Reinforcing an industrial discourse, the only on-site catering facility is called the *Hard Hat Café*.

The reception area is unapologetically functional, comprising a basic office for staff, with visitors required to wait outside, where there is minimal protection from the strong sun and dusty atmosphere. Nearby, the building housing the Health, Safety, Environment, Community, and Quality Division, where I was based during Visit Two, was similarly functional. Despite the long presence of the operation, the office buildings have a temporary feel, with no obvious aesthetic features. The men’s toilet facilities were notably dirty, with the washbasins apparently boasting several years’ worth of ingrained grime. A sign under the windows requests, *To minimise the build up of dust, please keep this window closed.* Within this setting, then, the work I observed reflected a similar functionality.
While the term ‘Community Relations’ suggests a substantial component of physically ‘engaging’ with local residents, the everyday work of the Community Relations Advisor was mostly office-based. Her job advertisement had invited applications from those with *tertiary qualifications in communications or public relations*, and her previous position had been as a journalist with the local newspaper. During Visit Two, she was developing a standardised form for funding requests, requiring applicants to address key selection criteria. In two weeks, she met with only one community member. In these ways, then, the rôle of Community Relations Advisor seems to have been interpreted from a functional perspective. This contrasts with the more human-oriented qualifications contemporaneously sought by many other minerals operations.

The meetings I attended reinforced this functional perspective, proceeding in a fairly formal manner, with staff appearing keen to finish quickly. Drawing on an industrial discourse and an instrumental view of organisational practices (L. L. Putnam et al., 1996, p. 380), one meeting was known officially as a *Toolbox Talk*, and involved instruction in software for safety management. While the audience of 20 seemed to be listening, no one took notes, and one person actually conducted some other work. In another meeting, a regular divisional review, the Chair asked those present to “stick to highlights”. Each person then reviewed their work area briefly, and no one offered any comments or questions. In meetings, therefore, staff seemed to prioritise efficiency over discussion and reflection.

Together with an industrial environment and an efficiency focus, functionality also comprised framing community engagement in an economics discourse. For example, the Community Relations Advisor, discussing whether a sponsorship was justifiable, referred to the *return* on sponsorship *investments*. Thus, community projects are assessed according to whether they perform a similar practical function to any other financial investment. More generally, there was an implicit privileging of economic considerations. In discussions during Visit Three, the Community Relations Advisor noted that any change to the site’s current rights to bore water *has to be an economically viable option*. Similarly, in reference to the possibility of using treated effluent, a move that would involve a financial cost, the Environmental Manager commented that, *We want to ensure that we’re not being unfair to our shareholders*. Yet, despite this functional perspective, contrary discourses have led to concern for local communities and the natural environment, creating a discursive tension.

As discussed earlier, emerging discourses of corporate social responsibility and sustainable development suggest that large organisations are now expected to demonstrate social and
environmental concern. Several observations suggest that a disposition towards this concern exists at Site B. As a symbolic illustration, and contrasting with functionality, the site’s Visitor Access Passes bore two slogans: *Zero Harm* and *Our People Making a Difference*. Various episodes during Visit Two resonated with these principles.

On one occasion, I accompanied the Community Relations Advisor and an Environmental Scientist to visit a neighbouring resident, who had asked the company to remove several trees on the company’s land, adjacent to his own property. The company had initially refused, arguing that the trees constituted a crucial environmental buffer zone, and helped to stabilise the soil in a flood-prone area. During our visit, the Community Relations Advisor was visibly disheartened to find that the neighbour had already felled some of the trees illegally. In another meeting, with a different resident, the Community Relations Advisor adopted an informal, empathetic approach. On another occasion, when discussing a local programme helping young solvent users, she conveyed genuine care for the people concerned. Similarly, she told me she was looking for more sensitive ways to decline funding requests, perhaps involving individual, rather than standardised, letters to applicants.

So, within the company, a discursive tension exists between functionality and social concern. This was evident in the difficulty site management had in locating its Community Relations ‘function’. During Visit One, (September 2004), the Community Relations Advisor worked within the *Human Resources* department, and was also responsible for internal communications. By Visit Two, (December 2005), there was a new Community Relations Advisor, located in a new function called *Health, Safety, Environment, Community, and Quality*. Nevertheless, the position retained responsibility for internal communications. By Visit Three (September 2006), the position had been moved back to *Human Resources*, then renamed *Human Resources and Community*. However, the new Human Resources and Community Manager had no experience of community relations, and referred to the Division simply as *Human Resources*, suggesting that the *Community* component was somewhat marginalised.

The Community Relations Advisor seemed disillusioned with the latter restructure, commenting to me, *I sometimes wonder how much thought went into it.* Her way of dealing with the situation suggests self-isolation: *I’m quite happy chugging along doing my own thing.* This supports the finding from the broader project, that community engagement efforts often depend substantially on the commitment of individual community relations staff (Beach et al., 2005). Shortly after Visit Three, the Community Relations Advisor resigned from the company.
More broadly, many staff seemed indifferent or uninterested when I tried to discuss community engagement informally. One day over lunch, however, two staff members did talk more openly, commenting that, while the profile of safety and environment issues had risen recently, the profile of community relations had been stagnant.

At Site A, I proposed that the company’s sensitivity/control paradox may be reconciled by thinking of controlling discursive sites as a means of navigating sensitivity. At Site B, the paradox seems hitherto relatively unresolved. That is, management struggles to accommodate its emerging social concern within its traditionally functional approach. Thus, while controlling tendencies at Site B do not constitute a ‘régime’, fragments of the old ‘fortress’ mentality resurface when management confronts a sensitive situation. For example, when a community member requested a meeting with the company, I asked to observe the meeting. However, the company declined, arguing that my presence might interfere with a ‘fragile’ relationship. Similarly, during Visit One, the General Manager indicated that he perceived a moral obligation to give the water back, but by Visit Three he had been removed and the company President, who had relocated from head office to oversee operations, appeared more protective of the company’s legal entitlements.

The local community

Four separate semi-rural residential areas exist near the site: a nearby hamlet, a beachside resort, and two larger areas comprising small acreage properties. During Visit One, I interviewed residents from all four areas. For Visits Two and Three, I focused on one of the two larger areas, where residents are subject to groundwater use restrictions resulting from the company’s legal rights, making them well placed to discuss tensions. People had first settled in the area over 30 years previously, when there were few amenities, typically to start small-scale farms. Homes then were relatively functional. More recently, people have been attracted to the area by the prospect of a ‘semi-rural lifestyle’, in some cases still as small-scale farmers, but more typically as commuters or to retire. Local residents are mostly of European descent; thus, subject positions available to them differ from those at Site A.

In contrast to the company’s allowance of 8,638 ML of groundwater per year, 539 ML/year are allocated for total domestic use, and 1,127 ML/year for irrigation. Residents can apply to the State Government for a bore licence, but legislation renders most residents ineligible. In 1987, the company won a court injunction ruling that further issuing of domestic licences would unduly
diminish the company’s supply. The fact that the company sought such an injunction is itself an indication of historical antagonisms.

With uncertainty regarding the sustainability of the company’s water use, and in the absence of mutually-agreed notions of ‘equity’ or ‘fairness’, much community opinion derives from anecdotal and visual evidence. Several residents recalled the river flowing throughout the year. According to the Council-commissioned report and many community members, many large trees (particularly *Melaleuca leucadendra*, or Weeping Paperbark) have died because their roots can no longer reach the aquifer. Over recent years, several trees have been uprooted during high rainfall events such as cyclones. Community members reported seeing whole trees being swept out to sea. To illustrate the change, Figure 16 shows part of the river system in 1977. Figure 17 shows the same section 15 years later, where the ecological transformation is particularly evident in the loss of trees along the river. Finally, Figure 18 shows a section of the river in December 2005.

**Figure 16: Aerial view of the river system near Site B, 1977**

![Figure 16: Aerial view of the river system near Site B, 1977](image)

**Figure 17: Aerial view of the river system near Site B, 1992**

![Figure 17: Aerial view of the river system near Site B, 1992](image)
The general impression among residents, therefore, is that the groundwater level has fallen, that the environment has suffered, that residents cannot obtain their own bore licences, and that this situation is largely caused by the company’s ‘excessive’ allowance. In addition, groundwater quality seems to have deteriorated over time. State Government research during the 1990s found that some samples failed to meet World Health Organisation guidelines for drinking water. Similarly, in 2003, eight out of nine properties’ samples failed to satisfy National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines. Accordingly, local residents have communicated extensively with Commonwealth, State, and Local Government representatives, requesting reticulated water connection. However, these efforts have been frustrated by disputes among governments, councils, the company, and community representatives. These disputes ostensibly concerned how to apportion the financial cost, but also apparently became interwoven with power struggles. As one local resident remarked:

One side comes up with a great scheme, it looks like it’s workable, but the other guy doesn’t want to participate, because he wants to do his own little thing, because, you know, every couple of years, the Mayor’s gotta get up there on a drum and beat his chest like a gorilla, and say, “Man, I am the greatest, you’ve gotta elect me.”

In 2006, an agreement was reached to connect reticulated water to 120 properties in the lower catchment area, with householders contributing $6,700 up front or $10,000 over ten years. While this partly ameliorated the situation, upstream residents continue to seek a resolution, and the broader question of the environmental sustainability of local groundwater extraction remains unresolved.
**Discursive tensions – community: Social concern vs individualism**

Community members also sometimes demonstrated social concern, discussing groundwater in terms of collective community interests and the local environment. Several residents showed me the environmental degradation around their properties. Pointing out wide expanses of sand (e.g., Figure 18), they noted that the river now flows only after substantial rain. Many appeared distressed, particularly at the loss of the Weeping Paperbarks. Long-term residents nostalgically recalled riverside community picnics. Some looked nostalgically at old photographs of the river, and of the previously greener environment.

These views, then, may be based upon an ethical notion of intergenerational justice, where we should bequeath to the next generation a situation no worse than the one we inherited (Rawls, 1972). Alternatively, this may reflect an ecological ethic, where nonhuman parts of the ecological system have intrinsic value, perhaps based on moral rights or simply respect (Velasquez, 1998, pp. 270-273). For these people, groundwater depletion is a shared problem, demanding collective action.

Social concern, therefore, also materialised as collective effort to secure the community’s water supply and protect the environment. While security of personal supply was part of the issue, it was not the dominant concern. Four residents in particular had taken active roles in the local community association, giving considerable time to organise meetings, write petitioning letters, and galvanise community effort. One had conducted a door-to-door opinion survey, no small task in a semi-rural community. Further, following the reports that had condemned the groundwater quality, several residents publicly expressed concern for the health of local community members generally.

In tension with social concern, however, was an apparent individualism, or a disposition towards framing things in reference to personal, rather than social, interest. For some residents, the groundwater issue was a question simply of securing their own water supply. Equally, some castigated neighbours who had voted against reticulated water connection.

Small-scale fruit growers, similarly, were principally concerned with securing water for their crops, despite suggestions that some crops (e.g., mangos and zucchini) required excessive water for the local conditions. I observed some residents using sprinkler systems, which are notably inefficient, in the midday sun. Wider questions of groundwater sustainability and environmental degradation appeared to be peripheral, as were neighbours’ views. Another resident expressed anger at the
company’s environmental impacts, such as river bank erosion near his house, and asbestos deposited on his property. His principal concerns, however, appeared to be property damage and family health risks, not broader environmental damage.

A context of discursive tensions, then, exists also at Site B. Contradictory discourses of mining, business, community, and environment create tensions of functionality versus social concern within the company, and of social concern versus individualism within the community. Following the previous chapter’s format, next I analyse the findings from interviews, both phenomenographically and textually. This enables me again to describe, analyse, and interpret how participants experience the discursive tensions created by ‘community engagement’ in the context of a different issue.

**Interviews: Phenomenographic analysis**

**Method**

As in Chapter Five, I now interpret how participants experience, perceive, understand, and conceptualise ‘community engagement’. I analyse the 15 interviews I conducted during Visit Two, plus one interview from Visit One, since Community Relations Advisors also changed here between visits. I have not included other Visit One interviews because, in the case of company participants, they involved either staff interviewed again during Visit Two, or staff without regular contact with community members. In the case of community participants, all Visit One interviews were again excluded, because those participants either did not live in the groundwater catchment area, or were interviewed again in Visit Two.

Eight of the 16 interviews (labelled ‘B.comm1’, etc. below) involved residents of the catchment area, and most were aged in their 50s and 60s (see Appendix 4, Table 30). Five of these eight were interviewed as couples, and three (one male and two female) were interviewed as individuals. A further five interviews (‘B.comp1’, etc.) involved company staff with community relations responsibilities. They were aged in their 30s and 50s, and four (80%) were male. The remaining three (‘B.c/c1’, etc.) were both local residents and company staff, placing them in a position of potential tension between workplace and community interests. However, they did not have community relations responsibilities. The transcripts of these 16 interviews provided a corpus of 87,587 words.

I applied the same analytical process as for Site A, except that I repeatedly considered whether any of the three Site A conceptions could apply here. To facilitate comparative analysis, I initially
retained the Site A conceptualised dimensions of community engagement. I also remained open to alternative or additional dimensions, but analysis and interpretation suggested that the same dimensions seemed applicable. Following progressive hermeneutic interpretation (Gibbons, 2006; Noordahaven, 2004; Ricoeur, 1981), I derived the following conceptions: ‘maximising self-interest’, ‘an instrumental stakeholder relationship’, and ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’. The twelve italicised terms and phrases in Table 16 summarise how participants conceptualise the four dimensions of these three conceptions.

Table 16: Phenomenographic conceptions of community engagement, Site B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPTION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>Company participants expressing this conception</th>
<th>Community participants expressing this conception</th>
<th>Company / Community participants expressing this conception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Community engagement as ‘maximising self-interest’</td>
<td>B.comp5</td>
<td>B.comp2, 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>B.comp1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Community engagement as ‘an instrumental stakeholder relationship’</td>
<td>B.comm2, 3 &amp; 6</td>
<td>B.comm1, 4</td>
<td>B.comm5, 7 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Community engagement as ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPTUALISED DIMENSIONS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility of company to local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate objective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conception One (C1): Community engagement as maximising self-interest

As at Site A, C1 is ‘maximising self-interest’. ‘Community’ means self-interested individuals; engagement is conduit communication; the company’s responsibility is to provide economic benefits; and the corporate objective is functionality. Three community participants, and one company participant, expressed this conception, as did all three company/community participants.

Nature of community: Self-interested individuals

Mirroring the ‘exclusion’ notion at Site A, and consistent with the observed individualism, community participants here see their neighbourhood, and the groundwater issue, from a self-interested perspective:

> Well, see, the bore water really wasn’t an issue with us, ’cause we had an irrigation licence to start with. (B.c/c2)

From a company perspective, similarly, the community is a set of individuals:

> Day-to-day operations, we choose to respond individually to complaints. (B.comp5)

Individualisation of community, then, arguably subverts both nostalgic notions of mutually supportive people living together harmoniously (Bauman, 2001), and social capital notions of trust and reciprocity (R. D. Putnam, 1995). Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter Two, it seems paradoxical to conceptualise community from an individualistic perspective. So, what does this individualisation mean for ‘engagement’?

Nature of engagement: Conduit

As at Site A, conceptualisations of ‘engagement’ constitute conduit communication, or a one-way, informing process for communicating ideas and truths (Reddy, 1979). Community participants, then, experience engagement by receiving ‘information’:

> They did send newsletters out, you know, telling us what they’re going to do. (B.comm3)

From a company perspective, similarly, engagement means efficiently providing information:

> Keeping them informed, you know; we’ve got a newsletter goes out to everyone in [neighbourhood] ... to let ’em know what we’re doing. (B.c/c1)
This conceptualisation resonates with the lower positions on the theoretical scales of participation discussed in Chapter Two, such as ‘informing’ (Stewart Carter, 1999; Wilcox, 1994). Such a narrow conceptualisation, in turn, inevitably confines notions of the company’s responsibilities.

**Responsibility of company to local community: To provide economic benefits**

The dominant interpretation of corporate social responsibility is that corporations have responsibilities beyond those towards shareholders, and beyond those prescribed by law or contract (Jones, 1980). However, as noted in Chapter Two, the extent of these responsibilities is contested. As at Site A, C1 participants conceptualise the company’s responsibility relatively narrowly as providing economic outcomes, but the different context means that economic outcomes imply sponsorship and charity:

> They have helped out; we’re in a pony club down the road; I know that they have helped out there, donations and, they gave them different stuff, like conveyor belting and stuff like this. (B.comm6)

This relatively narrow conceptualisation extends in turn to a functional view of the company’s objective in engaging local communities.

**Corporate objective: Functionality**

Above, I noted that functionality draws on an economics discourse. Similarly, C1 participants perceive the company’s objective in engaging the community as a necessary function helping the company to achieve economic ends, for example by avoiding bad publicity. Nevertheless, this view may be slightly more comprehensive than the ‘legal compliance’ conceptualisation at Site A, because participants perceive a functional connection between actions (engaging) and outcomes (economic benefit):

> Q: So why do you think he sees a need to look after the community?

> A: They’re not having people standing outside the gate, like I did… You don’t want that, do you, because that’s bad publicity. (B.comm2)

Consequently, from a company perspective, community engagement must entail a business benefit, consistent with the notion of ‘return on investment’ described above:

> It’s got to be good for the business first in my opinion,…because they are there to make money. (B.c/c2)
In summary, seven participants see community engagement as ‘maximising self-interest’, mirroring C1 at Site A. Here, community is a set of self-interested individuals; engagement comprises conduit communication; the company’s responsibility is to provide economic benefits; and the corporate objective is functionality. This conception appears broadly aligned with the functionality and individualism described in the Context section.

Conception Two (C2): Community engagement as an instrumental stakeholder relationship

At Site A, C2 participants see community engagement as ‘social and economic justice’. At Site B, the different context produces a different conception, ‘an instrumental stakeholder relationship’, since it approximates the instrumental perspective on stakeholder theory. This conception, therefore, “implies that corporate managers must induce constructive contributions from their stakeholders to accomplish their own desired results” (T. Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 72). Here, ‘community’ means stakeholders; instrumental communication constitutes engagement; the company’s responsibility is to create economic wealth; and the corporate objective is mainly economic sustainability. Two community participants, and three company participants, expressed this conception.

Nature of community: Stakeholders

Just as C2 participants at Site A conceptualise community as inclusion and selflessness, the focus here is beyond self-interested individualism. Indeed, because groundwater is an environmental issue, the environment itself is a ‘stakeholder’:

*Well, I would say that the environment’s gotta come first.* (B.comm4)

Within the company, ‘the community’ is seen as a stakeholder, in the sense of Freeman’s (1984) definition. Thus, the company envisages a capacity to affect the community, and *vice versa*:

*You need to make sure that not only are we not affecting the community now, but we are not affecting them into the future... We need to be part of that community, and have that social licence to operate, not just the legal licence to operate.* (B.comp2)

Community participants, similarly, envisage a capacity to influence the company, and perceive that the company consequently seeks to ‘manage’ that influence:

*I think there’s a ploy to improve their image in the local population... The more ‘good guy’ focus you can put on yourself, um, you know, the less the criticism will have effect on the bad things that they are doing.* (B.comm1)
Thus, participants conceptualise community in a relatively collective, not individualistic, sense. So, if a community comprises ‘stakeholders’ who can affect, and be affected by, the company, ‘engagement’ becomes more complex than conduit communication.

**Nature of engagement: Instrumental communication**

At Site A, C2 participants conceptualise engagement as economic outcomes and respect. At Site B, the conceptualisation concerns mainly processes; specifically, communication processes that again go beyond the conduit perspective, but whose purpose is instrumental in facilitating company activities. Thus, while communication here is two-way, it is not necessarily dialogic, because it is not symmetrical (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 238). From the company’s perspective, therefore, engagement means gathering information:

> Engagement, I guess, is speaking to the community on a particular issue that comes up; making sure that we’re informed as to what they perceive. (B.comp2)

The objective of effective information-gathering processes, then, is to manage community opinion; engagement, in this sense, is instrumental:

> Engagement is...where people believe that the community on balance is enhanced by having you in it... You’re never going to convince everybody, you have to convince the majority. (B.comp4)

For community participants, similarly, engagement is instrumental for the company to secure a ‘licence to operate’:

> Community engagement...is really a ratification...for the ability to be able to own and operate a business that makes a profit. (B.comm1)

Consequently, community participants have relatively modest expectations from engagement, generally being content with infrequent consultation:

> They could go visit the neighbours where there are bores, and ask them, you know, “Mate, how’s things going; can we do anything?” (B.comm1)

It follows, then, from the conceptualisation of community as stakeholders with some power, that engagement involves a two-way relationship. However, this relationship is an instrumental one, reflecting a view CSR that is closer to a ‘shareholder approach’ than to a ‘societal approach’ (van Marrewijk, 2003), since it is focused on creating economic wealth.
Responsibility of company to local community: To create economic wealth

At Site A, C2 participants spoke of securing fair recompense through economic outcomes that would facilitate autonomy and self-determination. At Site B, similarly, participants conceptualise the company’s responsibility to the community as creating economic wealth via production and employment. This view is broader, then, than C1 participants’ focus on sponsorships and charitable donations. Reinforcing the instrumental stakeholder view, positive community outcomes are instrumental in achieving company objectives. For company participants, creating wealth constitutes social responsibility:

*If the region develops, more services come in, better standard of living, more services we can take advantage of, and the system just flows.* (B.comp3)

*I mean we’re here, we’re creating wealth, providing employment.* (B.comp4)

As a corollary, the nature of this responsibility depends partly upon company performance, supporting studies correlating corporate charitable giving with a firm’s resources (Buchholtz et al., 1999; Burlingame & Frishkoff, 1996):

*[Spending on community projects] will be on an ability-to-do-so basis, and obviously our ability changes with our EBIT [earnings before interest and tax] and that sort of thing. That figure will go up and down as such.* (B.comp2)

By creating economic wealth, in this view, the company fulfils its responsibility to community stakeholders. Consistent with this view is the conceptualisation of the corporate objective as economic sustainability.

Corporate objective: Economic sustainability

At Site A, C2 participants conceptualise the corporate objective as both legal compliance and profit maximisation. C2 at Site B, similarly, goes beyond the ‘self-interest’ theme of C1 to focus on the profit motive, but the different context negates legal compliance as an issue. Thus, the objective is seen as economic sustainability, and community engagement is an instrumental strategy consistent with this objective:

*But if you can demonstrate that you have met the needs of the community…it’s gonna be far easier for you to do the business when you go into another area.* (B.comp2)

While a shareholder approach dismisses corporate social responsibility as superfluous, since “the selfish pursuit of profit” makes everyone better off (*The Economist*, 2005), here ‘the community’ is
a stakeholder that must be acknowledged and managed. While the profit motive might underlie this view, community engagement reduces risk and protects reputation, which in turn enhance economic sustainability:

_The reason that people do it is managing their reputation._ (B.comp4)

In summary, five participants see community engagement as ‘an instrumental stakeholder relationship’, in which community means stakeholders; engagement comprises instrumental communication; the company’s responsibility is to create economic wealth; and the corporate objective is economic sustainability. Linking with the Context section, within participants’ conceptualisations lies a greater social concern than among C1 participants. However, this social concern is framed within an instrumental view of stakeholders. C3 participants, conversely, envisage a more complex, dialogic landscape.

**Conception Three (C3): Community engagement as a process of collaborative dialogue**

At Site A, C3 comprises ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’. At Site B, there is similar appreciation of complexity, which can be summarised as ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’. C3 participants understand ‘community’ as constructive collaboration, and consider dialogic communication to constitute engagement. The company’s responsibility is one of reflexive ethics, and the corporate objective is to navigate multiple expectations. Three community participants, and one company participant, expressed this conception.

**Nature of community: A site of constructive collaboration**

While C3 participants at Site A emphasise diversity and heterogeneity in community, participants here envisage a site for collaboration, negotiation, and discussion. This echoes notions of plurality and conflict within communities (Frazer, 1999; Jordan, 1998; Mouffe, 2000). Community here involves constructive collaboration, where people come together to resolve some issue or to strive towards some objective:

...working together as a community to solve a problem. (B.comm7)

Indeed, perceived self-interest and individualism induce frustration:

_Australians are very, very lax when it comes to environmental issues; when it affects them, they’ll get up and rally behind; if it doesn’t affect them, they’re not worried._ (B.comm7)

The one company participant here acknowledged that silence does not necessarily signify consent, and portrayed ‘community’ as a process requiring some effort:
It’s generally thought that if they’re silent then they’re not upset… [You need to] find out whether that is actually the case, or whether they’ve just given up complaining. (B.comp1)

Thus, resonating with Burkett (2001), community here is a process, rather than a static, objectively definable thing. People have to work together to achieve it, and actively seek others’ opinions; this implies dialogic communication.

**Nature of engagement: Dialogic communication**

For C3 participants, engagement is an interactive process. The focus here is on qualitative, interpersonal characteristics of the relationship-building process, rather than on sending ‘information’ (conduit) or on instrumental rationalisations. This conceptualisation resonates with the notion of genuine relationship-building at Site A:

> I think it’s about having a working relationship with the community… to the point where they would feel that they can come to discuss issues with you … that you actually care about what they think,… and I think putting more of a personal face to the business. (B.comp1)

Engagement is dialogic communication, therefore, because people welcome others’ contributions towards contestable concepts (Yeatman, 1990, pp. 161-163):

> If you have workshops, and people come in with ideas, and there’s fantastic ideas out there sometimes which I’ve never thought of, and to me that’s how community consultation should take part. (B.comm7)

For the company participant here, engagement also incorporates an awareness of the company’s power relative to that of the community:

> I don’t think we should exploit the fact that we have access to the water rights… because otherwise it looks like a very arrogant position. (B.comp1)

This participant sees alternative, conflicting perspectives co-existing. In contrast to the issue management model, in which communication rhetorically creates reality (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 239), reality here is contestable:

> It’s interesting how one group of people… say how generous we are, and how good we are about being involved in the community, and what a positive kind of business we are, and then to have other people who think that we are big, rotten people who are spoiling the
environment, stealing all the water, you know; it’s just interesting to have that dynamic.
(B.comp1)

This conceptualisation, then, differs from instrumental communication, because engagement
requires ‘symmetrical’ dialogue (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 238). This implies a view of
the company’s responsibility that emphasises reflexive ethics.

**Responsibility of company to local community: Reflexive ethics**

At Site A, C3 participants spoke of delivering meaningful outcomes with cultural sensitivity. Here,
the conceptualisation is again altered by the different context, but reflects a similar perspective. The
company’s responsibility is to be reflexively sensitive to its powerful position *vis-à-vis* the
community:

> I see that they’re no different to a neighbour... You know, “Am I doing anything that will
> hurt my neighbours?” ... A proper citizen is, “I know your rights and I need to respect your
> rights”. It is about understanding. (B.comm5)

The company’s responsibilities, therefore, go beyond instrumental, economic ones:

> There’s not a great deal of branding opportunities that come from sponsoring a junior
> cricket team; it’s just that it helps the community. (B.comp1)

Determining responsibility for each party, then, requires a moral framework:

> The person making the decision has to say, “This is a good moral position that I’m
> making”. (B.comm5)

Community participants reflect the view that power is shared, negotiated, and divided, rather than
being a top-down process of control. They recognise subtle forms of silencing dissent, reflecting the
notion of hegemonic power achieved via the discursive construction of apparent consensus

> It also gives them credibility in the community as being a good corporate citizen, and that’s
> good for them as well; ... it makes the community think before they criticise them.
> (B.comm7)

This conceptualisation of the company’s responsibility, therefore, incorporates a heightened
awareness of the rôle of power. The potential for hegemonic power endows the company with an
ethical responsibility to respect its neighbours’ intrinsic worth, rather than focusing merely on economic interests. The capacity to do this means navigating multiple expectations.

**Corporate objective: Navigating multiple expectations**

Participants here, as at Site A, envisage managerial decisions as being subject to various competing influences, beyond mere functionality and economic sustainability. Rather, the company perceives a need to navigate the multiple expectations of business and society. Building on the notions of community as a collaborative process, and of engagement as symmetrical dialogue, the corporate objective incorporates intersubjective dialogue:

> I want to try and get out and meet community members and talk to them about, you know, what their problems are. (B.comp1)

Similarly, because the company’s responsibilities go beyond instrumental, economic ones, it may not matter if a ‘business case’ cannot be proven:

> And I guess some of it is, you know, serves its own interest, in terms of the scholarships it’s offering with... the Engineering Department, that will hopefully, in the end, help the refinery as well, recruit good engineers ... [but the company has] done it for eight years, and we haven’t had a single engineer with a scholarship come and work for us [laughs]. (B.comp1)

This relegation of instrumental, economic rationalisations exemplifies broader changes in the nature of corporations:

> I do think there’s a nicer, a kinder, more generous feeling about corporations than there ever used to be. A more humanistic sort of a sharing, caring society than it used to be, which was all about, you know, than in the 70s and the 80s. (B.comm5)

The resulting situation, as described in the Context section, is a tension between social concern and functionality, which the company must navigate:

> It’s a very fine edge, like walking on a tightrope. (B.comm5)

> I think there’s some way you can find a middle ground. (B.comm7)

In summary, four participants see community engagement as ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’, in which community is a site of constructive collaboration, and engagement comprises dialogic communication. The company’s responsibility is one of reflexive ethics, and the corporate objective is to navigate multiple expectations. Linking with the Context section again, C3 participants appear
not only to emphasise social concern, but also to have a greater awareness of the tensions between social concern and functionality and individualism.

Summary of phenomenographic analysis

From the 16 Site B interviews, I have derived three conceptions of community engagement: ‘maximising self-interest’, ‘an instrumental stakeholder relationship’, and ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’ (Figure 19). As noted in Chapter Five, phenomenographic conceptions tend to form a hierarchical progression (Marton, 1994; Marton & Fai, 1999; Sandberg, 2000). However, this case also differs from previous phenomenographic studies, since the hierarchical nature is based only partly on successive conceptualisations incorporating ‘lower’ ones, and partly on contradicting or refuting them. For example, the notion of engagement being dialogic (C3) refutes, and does not incorporate, conduit communication (C1). Therefore, successive conceptions again comprise deeper and/or broader conceptualisations, and better appreciate tensions and contradictions.

At Site A, company participants, on average, have more comprehensive conceptions of community engagement than do community participants. I proposed that this might result from the new operation endowing site management with an opportunity to implement contemporary ideas on community engagement. Site B, conversely, is well established, obliging management to adjust to emerging ideas. This may explain why, at Site B, only one company participant expressed C1 and C3, while three expressed C2 (see Table 17). Meanwhile, community participants, as at Site A, were fairly evenly distributed among the three conceptions. The three company participants who were also community members all expressed C1. This finding may relate to occupational position, since all three were operational staff, with no community relations responsibilities, and it supports the contention that engagement efforts can be dependent on the personal commitment and motivation of community relations staff and operational managers (Beach et al., 2005).
Table 17: Distribution of participants among the phenomenographic conceptions, Site B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company participants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community participants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company / Community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following textual analysis, then, I interrogate the above findings, and focus on company/community comparisons. Firstly, I triangulate the phenomenographic conceptions textually; secondly, I compare the discourses from which participants drew; and thirdly, I examine how they do so, in a comparative investigation of worldviews.

**Interviews: Textual analysis**

**Triangulating the phenomenographic conceptions**

In Chapter Five, I noted that triangulation can produce more comprehensive understandings (Lewis & Grimes, 1999), or alternative lenses through which to view ‘reality’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 6), consistent with the poststructuralist emphasis on contradiction, heterogeneity, multiplicity, and dissonance (Fine et al., 2000, p. 119). Thus, I now again interrogate the three phenomenographic conceptions textually. Initially, I compared Site A and B’s conceptions, deductively considering whether the same conceptual differences might apply among the three conceptions, across the four dimensions, at both sites. I concluded that, while not identical, these differences are sufficiently similar to warrant using the same method, and that doing so would aid inter-site comparisons. Thus, I searched for textual signifiers of collectivist, dialogic, economic/instrumental vs ethical/normative, and heteroglossic worldviews.

**Dimension One: Nature of community (individualist vs collectivist)**

In Chapter Five, I found that C3 participants use ‘collectivist’ words more frequently than other participants, suggesting that the former have a relatively collectivist, rather than individualist, worldview. In the phenomenographic analysis for Site B, I proposed that a similar dichotomy exists, viz. individualism (C1) and collaboration (C3), with C2 participants articulating a ‘stakeholder’ view of community. Applying the same analytical process as at Site A, participants again differ in the frequency with which they express ‘collectivist’ words. Table 18 provides a summary of the full data, which are again listed in Appendix 5 (Table 35).
Table 18: Relative use of ‘collectivist’ terms among Site B participants (summary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total frequency</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total frequency per participant</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are largely similar to those at Site A, with C3 participants, on average, using ‘collectivist’ words 20.0 times each, compared to 9.9 times for C1 participants. As at Site A, therefore, C3 participants appear to have a relatively collectivist worldview compared to other participants, whose worldviews are more individualistic. This again reflects the liberal vs communitarian distinction, and supports the phenomenographic model. Here, however, C2 participants are positioned more closely to the mid-point than at Site A, suggesting that there is a similar degree of difference in the extent to which each participant group has a collectivist conceptualisation of community.

**Dimension Two: Nature of engagement (monologic vs dialogic)**

As at Site A, Site B participants conceptualise engagement along a continuum from conduit to dialogic. Thus, to interrogate my phenomenographic model, I again calculated the relative frequency of participants’ use of terms, such as *listen* and *understanding*, suggesting a dialogic view of engagement, as opposed to a conduit, or monologic, view.

Table 19: Relative use of ‘dialogic’ terms among Site B participants (summary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total frequency</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total frequency per participant</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C1 participants used dialogic terms 10.0 times on average, as shown in Table 19 and Appendix 5 (Table 36). C2 participants had a slightly higher average (11.8), while C3 participants had the highest (14.5). As at Site A, this supports the proposition that C3 participants conceive ‘community engagement’ in more dialogic terms than do other participants. However, the differences, especially between C1 and C2 participants, are less pronounced than at Site A, where the figure for C3 participants was almost double that of C1 participants.
Dimension Three: Responsibility of company to local community (economic vs ethical)

In Chapter Five, I noted that perspectives on both corporate social responsibility and stakeholder theory make contrasts between a predominantly economic or instrumental focus and a predominantly ethical or normative focus. This theoretical contrast is mirrored in Site A participants’ focus on either economic outcomes or processes of cultural sensitivity. Site B participants conceptualise the company’s responsibility similarly, in either economic terms (C1 and C2) or as reflexive ethics (C3). Consequently, I performed the same textual analysis as at Site A, comparing participants’ use of terms suggesting each focus (Table 20 and Appendix 5, Table 37).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS SUGGESTING ECONOMIC / INSTRUMENTAL FOCUS</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS SUGGESTING ETHICAL / NORMATIVE FOCUS</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td>132</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratio of ‘ethical / normative’ terms to ‘economic / instrumental’ terms</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.77</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.42</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.50</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ratio of ‘ethical/normative’ terms to ‘economic/instrumental’ terms is 1.77 for C1 participants, and 1.42 and 3.50 for C2 and C3 participants respectively. These figures support the phenomenographic model, in which C3 participants conceptualise the company’s responsibility as reflexive ethics, whereas C1 and C2 participants focus on economic concerns. Especially divergent are the terms power, expressed on average 0.9 times per C1 participant and 5.3 times per C3 participant, and responsibility, expressed 1.7 times and 6.8 times respectively. Power, then, features at both sites as a term expressed disproportionately frequently by C3 participants, suggesting that they are relatively highly aware of the rôle of power in mediating company-community relationships.

At Site A, the ratio for C2 participants was somewhat larger than that for C1 participants. Here, however, the reverse is true; C2 participants actually have a smaller ratio than C1 participants, and have a substantially stronger focus on economic/instrumental concerns than do C1 or C3 participants. This places some doubt on the phenomenographic model, but may reflect the
‘economic’ and ‘instrumental’ themes in the phenomenographic description of C2. It also further supports the proposition that the three conceptions are not equidistant conceptually, perhaps even suggesting that C1 and C2 could be integrated.

**Dimension Four: Corporate objective (monoglossic vs heteroglossic)**

In Chapter Five, I investigated participants’ use of heteroglossic terms, *viz.* concession conjunctions, modal verbs, and modal adjuncts (Martin & Rose, 2007, pp. 48-59). I found that C3 participants more readily acknowledge the possibility of multiple voices than do other participants. In the phenomenographic analysis above, meanwhile, I found that, in conceptualising the corporate objective in engaging the local community, C1 participants focus on functionality, C2 participants focus on economic sustainability, while C3 participants, as at Site A, conceptualise it in terms of navigating multiple expectations. Thus, the parallels between the sites justify a similar analysis of heteroglossia.

| Table 21: Relative use of ‘heteroglossic terms’ among Site B participants (summary) |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                               | C1 participants \((n = 7)\) | C2 participants \((n = 5)\) | C3 participants \((n = 4)\) |
| **CONCESSION CONJUNCTIONS**                   | 241            | 178            | 169            |
| **MODAL VERBS**                              | 251            | 214            | 217            |
| **MODAL ADJUNCTS**                           | 134            | 67             | 72             |
| **total frequency**                          | 626            | 459            | 458            |
| **total frequency per participant**          | 89.4           | 91.8           | 114.5          |

As Table 21 shows (see also Appendix 5, Table 38), C3 participants used ‘heteroglossic terms’ 114.5 times on average, compared to 91.8 and 89.4 for C2 and C1 participants respectively. Thus, as at Site A, C3 participants’ statements seem to be more heteroglossic than those of other participants. This again supports the proposition that C3 participants’ statements more readily acknowledge multiple voices. However, in common with Dimension Two, the differences between participant groups here are less pronounced than at Site A, and C1 and C2 participants again appear to be relatively close conceptually, casting further doubt on the empirical justification for separating them.
Summary so far

This textual analysis has again broadly supported the phenomenographic model. C3 participants appear to have a relatively collectivist, rather than individualistic, worldview, and they conceive ‘engagement’ in relatively dialogic terms. Their use of ‘ethical/normative’ terms, versus ‘economic/instrumental’ terms, was higher than that for other participants, as was their use of heteroglossic terms. Accordingly, this analysis suggests that conceptual differences exist between the three participant groups. As at Site A, the conceptual gap between C1 and C2 appears to be smaller than that between C2 and C3. At both sites, therefore, C3 may be significantly more comprehensive than both other conceptions. Indeed, at Site B, there may be a case for amalgamating C1 and C2, since only within Dimension One does the textual analysis suggest a discernable difference conceptually. Furthermore, the overall differences between conceptions appear to be smaller than those at Site A, suggesting that tensions between the discourses from which Site B participants draw may be less pronounced.

I have now identified, described, and interrogated participants’ conceptions of community engagement at both sites. Next, I analyse and interpret the Site B conceptions at a textual level, considering how participants’ worldviews are socially constructed through discourse, and how lexical choices and other textual features contribute to this process. To begin, I again used Leximancer to generate an independent map of conceptual relationships.

Conceptual relationships and lexical choices

To reiterate, in this inductive analysis, I apply Leximancer to derive independent maps of major concepts. Starting with a conceptual map for all participants, I then compare the maps for community and company participants. I also identify lexical choices of community and company participants, categorising these into various discourses.

Overall conceptual relationships

To start, I entered the entire volume of 16 interview transcripts, or 87,587 words, into the Leximancer programme. Having examined the initial, ‘raw’ output, I refined the data to maximise Leximancer’s usefulness. Here, this process comprised five tasks. Firstly, I removed all interviewer text. Secondly, I deleted potentially interfering concepts, such as ‘bit’ and ‘yeah’. Thirdly, I merged intuitively synonymous concepts, which here applied only to ‘year’ and ‘years’, so that Leximancer then treated these as one concept. Fourthly, I adjusted the analysis settings from three-sentence to two-sentence segments, to reduce the risk of creating misleading claims of a concept’s presence. Fifthly, I enabled a feature that treats successive paragraphs as continuous text segments. Given that
many of my community interviewees comprised married couples, enabling this feature meant that, if both husband and wife made a statement in response to the same question, those statements were analysed concurrently, rather than treated as separate text segments. I then generated a concept map for initial analysis, which was reasonably stable after 3000 iterations (see Figure 20).

![Figure 20: Concept map for all participants, Site B](image)

To recap, if two concepts are proximate in the map, they appear in similar conceptual contexts in the texts. Thus, ‘community’ and ‘engagement’ again appear in similar conceptual contexts. As at Site A, ‘business’ and ‘company’ appear in similar conceptual contexts to ‘community’ and ‘engagement’, providing further evidence of the interdiscursive nature of community engagement. That is, apparently antithetical discourses are overlapping to form a new discursive order, subject to ongoing contestation. Again, this explains the observed tensions and paradoxes described earlier. At Site A, community issues and concerns (‘job’, ‘kids’, ‘money’, and ‘land’) appear to be discussed separately to community engagement itself. The same pattern exists here: the concepts ‘bore’, ‘water’, and ‘river’ appear in a separate conceptual context to ‘community’ and ‘engagement’. The question now, then, is how do community and company participants conceptualisations of community engagement differ?

At this point, I had to consider how to treat the three participants who were both company staff and local community members. As noted above, they differed from other staff by not having community relations responsibilities, and from other community members by being company employees. To
consider whether I could identify them with either category, I compared a *Leximancer* map for the eight community participants with another map incorporating the three company/community participants. Then, I compared the map for the five company participants with another map incorporating these other three participants. In both cases, I found that incorporating the three company/community participants did not alter the actual concepts present, but did alter the order in which they appeared. I concluded that amalgamating them with either group risked skewing the data, so I omitted them from this stage of analysis.

**Conceptual relationships – Community participants**

Figure 21 shows the *Leximancer* map, which was also reasonably stable after 3000 iterations, for all eight community participants (corpus size = 39,657 words), having refined the data, as described above.

![Figure 21: Concept map for community participants, Site B](image)

Once again, ‘community’ and ‘engagement’ appear in similar conceptual contexts, while ‘bore’, ‘water’, and ‘river’ also appear in a similar, but separate, conceptual context. However, the concept ‘company’ appears somewhat separate here. A similarity with Site A is that the concept ‘business’ is present in the map for all participants, but absent from this map. This suggests that community participants see ‘business’ and ‘company’ as somewhat distinct from community engagement. Conversely, the two concepts closest to ‘community’ and ‘engagement’ are ‘money’ and ‘give’. This suggests that economic outcomes are quite prominent for community participants in general. Also mirroring Site A, the concept ‘should’ is present, proximate to ‘company’, suggesting the
articulation of normative statements concerning the company. A significant contrast with Site A is the absence of any one concept, equivalent to ‘Indigenous’, featuring strongly among community participants only. This supports the proposition that tensions between the discourses from which participants draw may be less pronounced than at Site A.

**Lexical choices – Community participants**

As explained in Chapter Five, lexical choices signify certain social orders, providing insights into our worldviews. I examined the 400 most frequently occurring words in community participants’ interviews, searching for ‘discourse identifiers’, which I then grouped into their respective discourses (see Appendix 3, Table 27). While I expected similarities with Site A, I made no *a priori* assumptions. Indeed, the different context here elicited some similar, and some different, discursive influences: *Business and management* (38% of the frequency of discourse identifiers); *The natural world* (31%); *Engineering* (16%); *Communication* (9%); and *Ethics* (6%).

These results further illustrate the interdiscursive nature of community engagement. Discourses of *Business and management* and *Engineering*, collectively constituting 54% of the frequency of discourse identifiers, are juxtaposed alongside *The natural world*, *Communication*, and *Ethics*. While this interdiscursive juxtaposition mirrors that at Site A, there are contextual differences. At Site A, *Community* and *Indigeneity* collectively constitute 45% of the frequency of discourse identifiers among community participants, while *Engineering* and *The natural world* are absent. By contrast, *Community* and *Indigeneity* are absent\(^\text{11}\), while *Engineering* and *The natural world* collectively constitute 47% of the frequency of discourse identifiers. These inter-site differences would seem to result from the different contexts and issues under discussion, suggesting that community engagement is a highly contextual, rather than universal, phenomenon. To explore these comparisons further, therefore, I now consider similar data for company participants.

**Conceptual relationships – Company participants**

Figure 22 shows the *Leximancer* map for the five company participants (corpus size = 35,532 words), having again refined the data. This was also reasonably stable after 3000 iterations.

\(^{11}\) The word *community* itself featured 230 times, but there were insufficient other community-oriented words to conclude that a ‘discourse’ of community was signified.
The concept ‘engagement’, which is prominent on all other maps at both sites, is absent here, suggesting that company participants did not substantially articulate notions of engagement. Further, in the community participants’ map, while ‘company’ is conceptually somewhat distinct from ‘community’, and ‘business’ is completely absent, these three concepts are fairly proximate here. This suggests that company participants conceptualise community and company issues as relatively interrelated, compared to community participants. Conversely, ‘bore’ and ‘water’ again appear in a similar conceptual context, somewhat separate to ‘community’. Unlike at Site A, ‘should’ is present, suggesting a more prominent rôle for normative statements. Perhaps significantly, ‘river’ is absent here, indicating that company participants do not see the groundwater issue in environmental terms to the same extent as community participants. Examining company participants’ lexical choices may elucidate these propositions.

**Lexical choices – Company participants**

Following the same analytical procedure as before, I found that company participants’ lexical choices signify the same discursive influences as do those of community participants, again contrasting with Site A. Here, 43% of the frequency of discourse identifiers signify *Business and management*; 27% signify *The natural world*; 15% signify *Engineering*; 10% signify *Communication*; and 5% signify *Ethics* (see Appendix 3, Table 28). Thus, discourses of *Business and management* and *Engineering*, together constituting 58% of the frequency of discourse
identifiers, are juxtaposed interdiscursively alongside discourses of The natural world, Communication, and Ethics. Since these discourse mirror those of community participants, these findings provide further evidence of the contextual nature of community engagement. What might be called the context-specific discourses here (Engineering and The natural world) collectively constitute 40% of all discourse identifiers, just as they constitute 47% among community participants. Table 22 compares the participant groups, again presenting both the percentage frequencies of discourse identifiers, and the number of discourse identifiers, to compare the extent of participants’ vocabularies within each discourse.

Table 22: Summary of discourse identifiers, Site B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Community Participants</th>
<th>Company Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no. of discourse</td>
<td>% frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identifiers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The natural world</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At Site A, one discourse (Indigeneity) is much more prevalent among community participants than company participants. In contrast, no one discourse here is substantially more influential in constructing either participant group’s worldviews. One distinction is that The natural world is represented more strongly among community participants, supporting the suggestion that company participants see the groundwater issue more in technological than environmental terms. In apparent contradiction, however, community participants also have a broader vocabulary, and a very slightly higher frequency, for Engineering. Similarly, while Business and management constitutes 43% of company participants’ discourse identifiers, and 38% for community participants, the latter, perhaps counterintuitively, articulated a broader vocabulary for this discourse. This finding provides further support for the idea that tensions here may be less pronounced, or that worldviews may be less antithetical, than at Site A, and I interrogate this proposition through closer analysis in the final section below.

The claim that certain discourses are ‘present’ is, of course, contestable. The absence of the concept ‘engagement’ in company participants’ conceptual map is mirrored here in there being only two other words signifying Communication. Following my determination that Community is not sufficiently signified here (see Footnote 11, p. 200), Communication may be similarly uninfluential.
More broadly, it is unclear how many discourse identifiers are required to deduce that a discourse is significantly influencing participants’ worldviews. The final analytical method, therefore, again explores worldviews and company-community tensions more closely, by recontextualising participants’ lexical choices.

Discursive recontextualisation

In Chapter Five, I explained that the foregoing textual analysis was limited by operating at the word level, and that this final section aims to recontextualise the analysis, i.e., to situate lexical choices (micro level) in the context of organisational practices (meso level), and to situate organisational practices in the context of wider social discourses (macro level). Again, therefore, I reviewed the above findings, focusing on the two discourses where the company/community contrasts appear to be greatest here: The natural world and Business and management. I then selected words signifying these discourses, based on their potential to illuminate ambiguities and tensions. From The natural world, I analysed instances of river and environment(al), and from Business and management, I analysed instances of industry and business. I also again analysed instances of should, to examine possible normative statements. These word instances totalled 611 text segments for contextual analysis, comparable with 689 at Site A. The overall purpose, therefore, is to consider what various statements tell us about tensions between participants’ worldviews. Table 23 lists the frequencies with which participants used the words analysed.

Table 23: Words potentially signifying competing worldviews, Site B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCOURSE OF THE NATURAL WORLD</th>
<th>COMPANY PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total frequency</td>
<td>average frequency per participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>river(s)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment(al)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCOURSE OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>total frequency</td>
<td>average frequency per participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>money</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORMATIVE STATEMENTS</td>
<td>should</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discourse of The natural world

Above, I noted that community participants’ worldviews seem to be somewhat more influenced by The natural world than do those of company participants. I also proposed that, because the concept ‘river’ was absent from company participants’ conceptual map, they may not see the groundwater issue in environmental terms to the same extent as do community participants. Yet, company
participants used the words environment(al) and river more frequently on average than did community participants (see Table 23). To investigate further, therefore, I recontextualise participants’ uses of environment(al) and river.

River(s): Community participants’ use
The dominant theme among community participants, in 28 of the 51 instances, is of rivers as being naturally or previously pristine, and now degraded by human activity. Rivers have intrinsic, unquantifiable worth that should be respected, or even revered. Community participants thus spoke of rivers with some nostalgia:

Richard, that river system has been degraded; there’s no two ways about it. It’s gone from a beautiful creek to a desert now. (B.comm4)

In seven of these 28 instances, they conceived this idealised past as having a social, as well as an environmental, dimension:

The Sunday School picnics, the Salvation Army, and the butchers had their picnics... When I was younger, that was a real treat. (B.comm7)

In 15 other instances, the company is the agent perceived responsible for the damage:

They’ve just decimated the river beyond repair, and I really believe that [site] has a responsibility to the environment and to the community. (B.comm7)

The above statements, in lacking modality, suggest a high degree of certainty about the river system’s original state, and its subsequent degradation. Nevertheless, community participants imagine recreating the idealised past:

People are restoring rivers back to where they were, and I think starting off by planting paperbarks, and getting them going, would be a perfect way of starting to get that river back to where it was. (B.comm7)

For community participants, therefore, rivers are sensitive ecosystems vulnerable to human interference, and they incorporate a social dimension. This supports Syme, Nancarrow and McCreddin’s (1999) findings that people see water as a public good, and consider the environment itself to have rights to water. However, there is no suggestion that assumptions underlying company worldviews could impede the realisation of these rights, even in the 15 instances where the company is held responsible for the degradation.
River(s): Company participants’ use

Company participants, conversely, implicitly privilege scientific evidence over oral history and human memory. Thus, in seven of the 36 instances, they challenge community perspectives, in the absence of conclusive evidence that the river’s apparent degradation is the result principally of the company’s extraction:

*The issue I have with the [river name] is that we just don’t know...[A study] may say, “All that’s happening is the river is flowing its natural course, according to the seasons”. So until you have that data, it’s very hard to put something back in place.* (B.comp3)

Similarly, in 12 instances, company participants see rivers as things that change naturally, regardless of human activity. Furthermore, the generalised reference to rivers diminishes the validity of evidence relating to this river specifically, so that anecdotal evidence of degradation, and community memory itself, become contestable:

*I appreciate that it has changed, 'cause you can see photos of it when there was clearly a lot of water in it, and now there isn’t, but I mean, rivers do change.* (B.comp1)

The absence of conclusive scientific evidence to the contrary, therefore, implicitly legitimises (in 12 instances) human exploitation of rivers. The assumption is that economic wants supersede environmental concerns:

*[Name] River is one of the few renewable sand sources around [town], so if you want sand and you want to go building new buildings and that, you’ve got to get that material.* (B.comp2)

While community participants, therefore, see rivers, perhaps idealistically, as sensitive and vulnerable ecosystems with a social dimension, company participants see rivers through a technocratic and scientific lens, and as an exploitable resource. These conflicting perspectives on rivers may reflect alternative views of the environment more generally, and of its relationship with humanity.

Environment(al): Community participants’ use

In common with their view of rivers, in 17 of 43 instances, community participants idealise environment as a delicate, pristine ecosystem vulnerable to human interference. In statements again lacking modality, environment is something that categorically should not be damaged or ruined.
These statements imply that the environment has rights, again echoing Syme, Nancarrow, and McCreddin (1999):

Well, they shouldn’t be damaging the environment, number one, and if they do, yeah, they should be, you know, reconditioning the environment, by replanting the vegetation. (B.comm1)

Similarly, in five instances, environmentally implies something inherently desirable:

I mean, for environmental purposes and the future, they should be looking at re-using effluent… I think it would make [site]...look like a really fantastic, environmentally conscious – you know. (B.comm7)

Just as the idealised past of rivers has a social dimension, in four instances environment implies a collective, intergenerational notion of humanity as guardians of the planet:

I think they have a great deal to do with the impact on the environment that people live in, and they don’t look to the future, what future generations will have to live under. (B.comm7)

Thus, community participants envisage a brighter future if the company operated more responsibly. There is no suggestion, unlike at Site A, that the company’s underlying assumptions contradict their own worldviews.

Environment(al): Company participants’ use

Company participants, by contrast, see nothing intangible or unique about environment. Reflecting the observed functionality described above, it is predominantly (in 23 of 42 instances) a functional business area, to be managed alongside other functions. This reflects the discursive transformation of ‘nature’, which has multiple, contested meanings, into ‘environment’, which is separate from social and cultural practices, and can be managed to produce measurable outcomes (Banerjee & Linstead, 2004, p. 238):

It actually gets paged through to myself or the environment person or the executive secretary... And that person will make the decision that environment need to know about this, the community need to know, or operations and maintenance or supply need to know, or sales and marketing. (B.comp5)

In turn, environment becomes something to be managed through the media:
Um, I guess; something like the [company newsletter] is quite proactive, in terms of getting positive stories, showing off environmental things, and stuff like that, getting mail out there. (B.comp1)

Just as humans are seen as being entitled to exploit rivers, in four instances environment becomes subsidiary to economic considerations:

*The triple bottom line is not only the environment and the social, but is the economic as well and, you know, if we didn’t have water, we wouldn’t be in production.* (B.comp2)

Also reflecting their perspectives on rivers, in six instances company participants see environment as something to be managed technocratically:

*I’d like to probably see the same type of thing whereby...a water resource plan...would have determined where the water should go, and, er, if that means it goes back to the environment, then that’s where it should go.* (B.comp2)

Accordingly, the discourse of The natural world appears to be influential in shaping both company and community participants’ worldviews, but other, competing discourses are influential, again exemplifying interdiscursivity. Community participants adopt a deontological perspective, viewing environment and rivers as pristine ecosystems that have been degraded and should be regenerated, and that have a social dimension. However, they appear to assume that the company could accept responsibility and regenerate the river system, without contradicting the discourse of Business and management. In contrast to Site A, there is no suggestion here of fundamental incompatibility between worldviews. Company participants, meanwhile, adopt a utilitarian, technocratic perspective, emphasising scientific evidence, and seeing environment and rivers as things to be managed, alongside other business functions. This highlights a capacity for internalising contradictory discourses within dominant discourses of Business and management.

**Discourse of Business and management**

Previously, I found that Business and management appears to influence both company and community participants’ worldviews to a similar extent. I proposed that tensions at Site B may be less antithetical than at Site A, where tensions are often founded in contradictory worldviews. Hence, I suggested that economic outcomes may be important to many community participants. However, the concept ‘business’ is absent from their conceptual map, and they used the word business only 4.4 times on average, compared to 22.2 times for company participants. Conversely, they used the word money 13.4 times on average, compared to 8.8 times for company participants.
To investigate these apparent contradictions, therefore, and to examine the influence of *Business and management* generally, I recontextualise participants’ uses of *business* and *money*.

**Business: Company participants’ use**

In 35 of the 111 instances, company participants imply that *business* has a predetermined, mutually understood ‘nature’, independent of human construction, thus appearing to be non-ideological:

*It’s just good *business* practice.* (B.comp3)

It appears mutually understood, in turn, that *business* means being unemotional and objective, and prioritising economic efficiency. These statements, often framed as ‘facts’ or ‘needs’, are highly lacking in modality, intensifying their apparently objective nature. This enables outcomes to be presented as the natural result of applying business logic:

*From a *business* point of view…the fact is that they need the water to make the *business* function.* (B.comp1)

Similarly, in 16 instances, *business* is essentially about profitability. Participants refer to *success in the business*, and to *sustainability of the business*, reappropriating the term ‘sustainability’ from its ecological meaning to refer more narrowly to financial longevity. Thus, social outcomes are dependent on, and subsidiary to, profitability:

*It used to be a *business* that was extremely volatile financially… so it certainly wasn’t in a position to be pumping large amounts of money into sponsorships and things like that.* (B.comp1)

If the logical norm, therefore, is interpreted as prioritising economic efficiency and profitability, then valuing social and environmental considerations becomes ‘abnormally’ generous or responsible. Thereby, the company appears *benevolent* by bestowing its largesse. Even employing workers, when framed as providing ‘career opportunities’, becomes evidence of social responsibility:

*Er, the community now looks to see us as a good organisation, not purely from the fact that we spend our money; it’s the fact that the type of things that we sponsor, they see as being good practice, and er, very benevolent of the *business*.* (B.comp3)

*You’ll have parents that work out here and they’re happy because they know it’s a good *business* and there’s career opportunities for their children.* (B.comp5)
Perhaps because of the apparently objective, predetermined, non-ideological nature of business, community relations serve to manage public opinion (in 12 instances). Community discontent thus implies merely an image problem, to be resolved through more effective communication of company ‘needs’, rather than by questioning company practices:

Businesses need to explain why they need to do what they need to do... The media coverage that we do seek...is either business development or it’s reputational type of stuff. (B.comp5)

Business: Community participants’ use

Community participants appear to have similar assumptions about business, but articulate it much less frequently. In nine of 35 instances, they also prioritise profitability and economic efficiency, which need not be incompatible with sensitivity to community opinion:

We respect that right of any company to be able to come along and operate and make a profit, but we think that they should be doing it within the confines of good business practice. (B.comm1)

Just as company participants see business as objective, predetermined, and non-ideological, community participants (in four instances) envisage an inescapable, natural logic to business:

So, to me, I think it makes good business sense. (B.comm5)

Similarly, when community participants speak of big business (in nine instances), they imply a sector of society with rights equal to those of any other interest group:

[Community engagement is about] trying to get the powers, whether it be local council, government, and big business to work together. (B.comm8)

Thus, unlike at Site A, business itself does not philosophically contradict community values. Rather, dissent surfaces mainly at the operational level. Both company and community participants see business unproblematically as having objective needs and rights, and as circumscribed by non-ideological logic that implicitly prioritises economic interests. To explore further how participants draw on the Business and management discourse, I now investigate their articulation of money.

Money: Company participants’ use

While the words examined hitherto differ from those at Site A, I did discuss how participants use the word money there, finding that such statements illustrate competing worldviews. For company participants at Site A, money is just part of business decision-making, and its acquisition is
objectively desirable. For Indigenous community participants, money perpetuates social dislocation and power inequalities, and contradicts Indigenous culture. At Site B, by contrast, statements on money imply no such conflict in worldviews. As at Site A, the dominant theme for company participants, in 19 of the 44 instances, is money as the outcome of a rationing process. Mostly, it is presented in terms of ‘costing’, ‘spending’, ‘paying’, or ‘wasting’:

*The whole process has to be sustainable,... so I mean, where do you spend your money?* (B.comp4)

Perhaps resulting from this view, the rationing process often implicitly privileges outcomes consistent with company interests, suggesting an instrumental stakeholder perspective:

*I think that usually, when we consider sponsorships and giving money, generally there is some kind of benefit for the business involved in it, which is why we choose it.* (B.comp1)

Thus, in 12 further instances, and contrasting with Site A, relinquishing money for non-instrumental projects seems to induce a begrudging undertone:

*There are certainly elements of we’ll be spending money simply to, um, appease the community.* (B.comp2)

*How far do you go, you know? I mean here we are, paying, er, taxes for the state to go ahead and do these things, and then we add money into, er, the community side of it... And we’ll have some bleeding-heart liberal that says, “Well, give it all away, you know, how much money does a company need to make?”* (B.comp4)

**Money: Community participants’ use**

Community participants broadly appear to share views on money with company participants here, rather than with community participants at Site A. There is no philosophical questioning of a company’s right to exist and make profits, only an implied expectation that it will share some of those profits to meet community wishes. Money here (in 29 of 107 instances) is inherently desirable, as a potential solution to a problem if distributed equitably:

*They could give us more money; they could be more generous... More money for, say, putting in like the headworks (for connecting a reticulated water supply).* (B.comm5)

Secondly, in 15 instances, money is something that demonstrates the company’s benevolence:
What was a good thing, they give us money towards the implementation of the scheme, you know, they put their hands in their pocket and say, “Here’s $400,000”. (B.comm2)

The only challenge to this apparent consensus is a position envisaging money as endowing power, by creating certain impressions or by deflecting opposition. However, one participant (B.comm7) articulated 17 of the 19 instances of this view, indicating that it is not widespread:

Companies have realised that, when they give money to the community, then they get power over the community... Money is power, and you can buy anything. And I think by giving money to the community, they’ll get, “Oh, they give us money for everything; they’ll give money for this, and money for that”. And all of a sudden, instead of the naughty boys, they’ve become the nice guys. (B.comm7)

In general, therefore, the Business and management discourse influences company and community participants’ worldviews in similar ways. For both, it is desirable to acquire and accumulate money, which represents a potential solution to problems, and business has objective economic needs and rights. This relative similarity in worldviews suggests that participants’ notions of how things should be may be less oppositional than at Site A.

Normative statements

In Chapter Five, I searched for normative statements, indicated by the word should, for a deeper insight into participants’ worldviews. I found that Site A company participants’ use of should refers only to operational, not ethical, matters, implicitly reinforcing, rather than challenging, the status quo. Community participants’ normative statements, conversely, advocate an alternative reality, expressed in terms of justice or deontological ethics. Similar analysis here enables me to further compare company and community participants’ worldviews at Site B, and to compare participants’ worldviews between sites.

In analysing the conceptual maps above, I noted that, while the concept ‘should’ is present only for community participants at Site A, it is present for both company and community participants here, proximate to the concept ‘company’. This suggests that both sets of participants articulated normative statements relating to the company.
**Should: Company participants’ use**

In 18 of 49 instances, participants assert environmental and social responsibilities, adopting either deontological or justice and fairness perspectives on ethics. They suggest an intergenerational, guardianship view:

*There should be no lasting negative legacies of our being here, um; quite the contrary, there should be a positive legacy of us being here.* (B.comp3)

Meanwhile, nine further instances concern the company’s functional operations:

*But to smooth the process through, there should probably be at least some communication going to the homes.* (B.comp5)

Thus, company participants’ normative statements suggest both functional and ethical perspectives, reflecting the observed tension between functionality and social concern.

**Should: Community participants’ use**

Community participants, similarly, reflect the tension between individualism and social concern. Ten of the 96 instances of *should* concern property rights and self-interest, suggesting individualism:

*We should be getting town water, then we won’t have to worry about it.* (B.comm3)

16 instances, conversely, suggest social concern, expressed deontologically as categorical imperatives. The conviction behind these statements is enhanced through lacking modality:

*You know, they should have a limit on where your water table’s going to and then stay at that.* (B.comm6)

Most common, however (30 instances), are ethical statements affirming social responsibility, but also implying a compatibility with profitability. Consequently, community participants make relatively modest demands, compared to their counterparts at Site A. This modesty is enhanced by heteroglossic terms and phrases, such as *I think* and *maybe* (Martin & Rose, 2007), suggesting some uncertainty in assertions of social responsibility:

*I think* it’s only fitting that they *should*, you know, pay a bit back. (B.comm1)

*You know, we could have a look at what their dividends were, maybe, and say, “Well, they should have been able to afford more”.* (B.comm5)
In summary, there appears to be no fundamental antithesis between company and community participants’ worldviews. Discourses of *The natural world* and *Business and management* are both influential, sometimes in different ways, in shaping participants’ notions of what *should* be. Differences emerge regarding *The natural world*, but both participant groups see *business* as equipped to address any community concerns.

To a greater degree than at Site A, then, all participants’ worldviews are constituted by the prevailing discursive formation of contemporary capitalism. That is, both company and community participants either explicitly or implicitly privilege values such as individualism and profitability, while articulating an awareness of emerging discourses of social and environmental responsibility. The result is that, unlike at Site A, statements asserting some social or environmental obligation on the company tend to assume that meeting these obligations need not contradict the pursuit of profit, and that the objective of profit maximisation itself is non-negotiable. Indeed, the capacity to meet perceived social and environmental obligations is commonly understood here to be dependent upon maintaining profit margins.

**Conclusion to Chapter Six**

This chapter sought to describe, analyse, and interpret the findings from three visits to Site B. In the first section, I discerned discursive tensions between functionality and social concern within the company, and between social concern and individualism within the community. Next, I interpreted participants’ phenomenographic conceptions of community engagement as forming a hierarchical progression from ‘maximising self-interest’, through ‘an instrumental stakeholder relationship’, to ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’.

Triangulation through textual analysis again broadly supported, and built upon, the phenomenographic model. As at Site A, I found that conceptions of ‘community engagement’ are most comprehensive when comprising a relatively collectivist and dialogic perspective, a relatively high ratio of ‘ethical’ to ‘economic’ terms, and when acknowledging multiple voices. Through examination of conceptual relationships and lexical choices, I again found an interdiscursive juxtaposition. Compared with Site A, however, there appears to be less differentiation between the discursive influences on company and community participants’ worldviews; no single discourse influences one participant group disproportionately. Thus, company-community tensions here B may be less antithetical, a proposition supported through discursive recontextualisation.
Comparing the two sites has suggested that context plays a crucial rôle in shaping people’s subjective understandings of community engagement. Community engagement appears to be something that cannot be described or defined objectively or universally, but is instead understood and constructed locally, deriving from socially and historically-situated experiences. Thus, people whose realities are shaped substantially by a history of colonial capitalism experience and understand community engagement differently from those whose realities are shaped largely by individualist and materialist values. In the final two chapters, therefore, I integrate the above findings into a contextual model that views community engagement as socially constructed through interrelations of macro, meso, and micro levels of discourse.
Chapter Seven: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study set out to answer the question: *How do the people concerned understand ‘community engagement’, and what shapes these understandings?* In Chapter Two, I outlined the areas of literature relating to this question, deducing that community engagement is the latest interdiscursive manifestation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the stakeholder concept. To recap, I noted that heterogeneous discourses of business, society, and the environment have met in dialogic negotiation and, occasionally, dialectic struggle, destabilising neoclassical and neoliberal assumptions regarding a corporation’s responsibilities. I proposed that, in response, corporate discourse has incorporated, or appropriated, interdiscursive ideas such as business ethics, sustainable development, and corporate citizenship, leading to widening conceptions of corporate responsibilities. In particular, the ‘rational’ ideology of unadulterated neoliberalism, which had been ascendant through the 1980s as a reaction against welfare statism, has ceded dominance to the view that self-regulated CSR, and a stakeholder view of corporations, can adequately address social and environmental concerns. I then reviewed perspectives on CSR and the stakeholder concept.

CSR is usually understood as the idea that corporations have responsibilities beyond those towards shareholders, and beyond those legally or contractually prescribed (Jones, 1980). However, there are competing perspectives regarding the extent of these perceived responsibilities (Moir, 2001; van Marrewijk, 2003; Windsor, 2006). A proliferation of studies has interrogated the relationship between social initiatives and financial performance. This proliferation implies an assumption that CSR must be justified partly on economic grounds. I inferred that the dominant perspective on CSR appears to be a ‘stakeholder approach’ (van Marrewijk, 2003), or ‘enlightened self-interest’ (Moir, 2001), representing a discursive ‘middle ground’ (Livesey, 2002). In this perspective, organisations adopt social initiatives principally because managers envisage an ensuing economic benefit. However, the studies investigating this relationship have proven inconclusive (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; McWilliams et al., 2006).

The stakeholder concept, meanwhile, emerged from the strategic management field, and usually understands stakeholders as those who can affect, or be affected by, an organisation’s activities (Freeman, 1984). The ‘instrumental’ view may derive from functionalism (Jones & Wicks, 1999),
and appears to reflect a utilitarian perspective, since it focuses on the economic consequences of a stakeholder approach. The ‘normative’ view, conversely, asserts moral obligations regardless of economic consequences (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Moir, 2001). I proposed, therefore, that instrumental stakeholder theory concurs with the ‘enlightened self-interest’ perspective on CSR, and that both are dominant because they appear to address social and environmental concerns without fundamentally challenging neoclassical economic assumptions (Kaler, 2003; Korhonen, 2002; Margolis & Walsh, 2003).

The idea that corporations should ‘engage’ the ‘community’, therefore, can be seen more specifically as consistent with interdiscursive precursors such as the instrumental stakeholder view of corporations and the enlightened self-interest perspective on CSR. However, I also noted that, although the terms ‘community’ and ‘engagement’ are contestable, they are rarely unpacked in management discourses. Among minerals companies, a geographical notion of ‘community’ typically predominates. This overlooks postmodern conceptualisations of community as an unstable, creative process (Burkett, 2001). It also assumes ‘community’ to be desirable (Richards, 1990), perhaps drawing on a nostalgic desire for an idealised past (Bauman, 2001; Brent, 2004).

The meaning of ‘engagement’, similarly, is often assumed, but numerous authors (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; Crawley & Sinclair, 2003; Oxley Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003; R. Roberts, 1995; Wilcox, 1994) have proposed scales representing the extent of community participation in corporate decision-making. Alternatively, engagement approaches can approximate various points along a scale from conduit communication (Reddy, 1979) to symmetrical dialogue (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001; Foster & Jonker, 2005), a distinction that acknowledges the rhetorical potential of corporate communication.

Finally, therefore, I argued that an appreciation of how social power functions ideologically to create an ‘invisible consensus’ of seemingly naturally occurring qualities offers insights into the constitutive rôle of language (Fairclough, 1989, p. 2). Thus, just as ‘sustainable development’ has been interrogated from a Foucauldian perspective (Livesey, 2002), I concluded that a critical-interpretive study of community engagement would be incomplete without incorporating a poststructural emphasis on language-as-discourse. In particular, I highlighted the notion that the subject positions available to us are circumscribed by the discursive possibilities of particular contexts and times (Foucault, 1972; Rose, 1996).

In the light of the above literature, I explained my theoretical contribution as follows. In terms of broad orientation, I aimed to advance understanding of community engagement through qualitative
research, within the emerging sub-discipline of critical management studies (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). To achieve this understanding, I proposed to investigate people’s subjective interpretations of community engagement, and to apprehend the discursive influences of these interpretations. In Chapter Three, I explained my methodological approach as being based predominantly on a poststructural orientation, and as combining phenomenography, critical discourse analysis, and, to a lesser extent, ethnography, all within a case study framework. Now, therefore, I can summarise and integrate the findings, and thereby propose a new conceptual model for the sites in this study, viewing community engagement as socially constructed through discourse. I then draw implications for practices of community engagement, before revisiting the literature above, in the light of the findings.

**Community engagement: An interdiscursive construction**

**Summary of the findings**

In the first of the three findings chapters (Chapter Four), I concluded that the discursive impact of company literature, through verbal and visual text, is to convey the impression that minerals operations can be compatible with community concerns; indeed, contrary perspectives are marginalised. By drawing on discourses of *Business and management*, *Community*, *Engineering*, *The natural world*, *Communication*, and *Ethics*, the documents are clearly interdiscursive. As explained in Chapter One, interdiscursivity can serve to legitimate and preserve some elements of dominant discourses while accommodating some elements of opposing discourses, and is characterised by ongoing contestation. Thus, corporate discourse works to incorporate oppositional discourses relating to community values and the natural world, but never achieves complete hegemony. Rather, the emerging, interdiscursive discourse of community engagement may represent “a space for dissension and sociopolitical struggle” (Livesey, 2002, p. 316), and may “allow for new fields of action” (Wodak, 2001, p. 66). This explains why I observed discursive tensions at both research sites, and why participants have varying conceptions of community engagement. So, how is interdiscursivity manifested at the two sites?

From observations informed by critical ethnography, I discerned discursive tensions at the micro level. At Site A, company staff demonstrated cultural sensitivity to Indigenous cultural practices, yet concurrently constructed a régime of control. Meanwhile, Indigenous community members sometimes exhibited dissent towards the company, yet often acquiesced to its agenda. At Site B, the company’s physical site and working practices exemplified functionality, yet some staff demonstrated social concern for local communities and the natural environment. Meanwhile, among
community members, there was a tension between viewing groundwater depletion as a shared problem requiring collective solutions and focusing narrowly on individual water access. Thus, at both sites, these competing dispositions exist in discursive tension.

From phenomenographic interviews, at each site I derived three conceptions of, or ways of understanding, community engagement. Since these conceptions reflect the subjective ways in which participants understand the world, these findings also relate to the micro level of individuals. At Site A, these conceptions, in ascending order of comprehensiveness, are ‘maximising self-interest’, ‘social and economic justice’, and ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’. At Site B, these conceptions, again in ascending order of comprehensiveness, are ‘maximising self-interest’, ‘an instrumental stakeholder relationship’, and ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’.

The apparent conceptual variations were then largely supported, at both sites, by triangulating the phenomenographic analysis with textual analysis. I found that participants expressing the most comprehensive conceptions (viz. ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’ at Site A and ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’ at Site B) articulated statements in relatively collectivist, dialogic, ethical/normative, and heteroglossic ways, as opposed to relatively individualistic, monologic, economic/instrumental, and monoglossic ways. It also appeared that the conceptual distinctions between conceptions may be unequal, with Conception Three being more differentiated from both Conceptions One and Two than Conceptions One and Two are from each other. This finding applies particularly at Site A, suggesting that tensions between the discourses at Site A are more strongly antithetical than those at Site B. These variations in conceptions of community engagement, then, further illustrate the observed discursive tensions. In general, therefore, we can say that the degree, or strength, of discursive tensions will differ in various contexts.

Examination of conceptual relationships and lexical choices shed light on the nature of these discursive tensions, and enabled me to compare company and community participants. I then considered how participants draw on certain discourses, by comparing their use of certain words potentially signifying competing worldviews. At both sites, I found that both company and community participants, to varying degrees, incorporate heterogeneous discourses into their lexical choices. That is, all participants’ worldviews are constructed by multiple, sometimes oppositional, discourses, so that we cannot talk meaningfully about a universal, homogeneous ‘company discourse’ or ‘community discourse’. Overall, the most influential discourse is that of Business and management, which constitutes approximately 40% of lexical discourse identifiers for both company and community participants at both sites. At Site A, both company and community
participants draw on discourses of *Business and management, Community, Indigeneity, Communication,* and *Ethics,* but they do so to contrasting degrees and often in different ways. Most notably, community participants appear to be significantly more strongly influenced by the discourse of *Indigeneity* than do company participants, apparently deriving from contrasting positions with respect to colonial capitalism, imbuing participants with different underlying assumptions about the world.

At Site B, company and community participants also draw on multiple discourses, but the different context of groundwater use produces some different discursive influences. While discourses of *Business and management, Communication,* and *Ethics* also influence Site B participants’ lexical choices, discourses of *The natural world* and *Engineering,* rather than the Site A discourses of *Community* and *Indigeneity,* are also influential. Furthermore, the differences between the degrees to which, and the ways in which, company and community participants draw on these discourses are less pronounced than at Site A. In other words, company and community participants’ worldviews at Site B appear to be less antithetical than those at Site A.

Having summarised the findings individually, the task now is to integrate these findings into an overall model that understands and portrays community engagement as socially constructed through discourse. This task is consistent with poststructural concerns for relations between the local, ‘capillary’ level of the subject and more general, global mechanisms of power (Foucault, 1980, pp. 96-101), adding an extra dimension by considering how these micro and macro levels are interrelated with the ‘meso’ level of organisational discourses (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Conrad, 2004; House et al., 1995).

**Developing a multi-level model of community engagement discourse**

Figure 23 shows macro, meso, and micro levels of discourse, and their inter-relationships. In the top left are macro-level discourses; these are the macrostructural rationalities that overarch social realities in contemporary western capitalist democracies such as Australia. As outlined in Chapters One and Two, these discourses include notions such as individualism, neoliberalism, and development, which are infused with ideological assumptions about the world yet appear to be ‘rational’ or ‘natural’. This is not to argue that macrostructural rationalities comprise a system of structures with predetermined causal powers, as a critical realist position might assume (Morton, 2006, p. 2). Rather, they regulate, influence, circumscribe, and delimit possible statements and subject positions, both indirectly through meso-level discourses, and directly by constructing boundaries of knowledge and subjectivity.
At the meso level (bottom left of Figure 23), macrostructural rationalities regulate the development of various discourses. In other words, the nature of the meso-level discourses identified in this study is deeply influenced by the values and assumptions underpinning contemporary capitalism.
Represented at the meso level are the discourses identified through lexical choices in the documents (Chapter Four) and/or in the interviews (Chapters Five and Six). Note that, while there are seven discourses here, not all discourses are evident in all three sets of texts. Some (viz., Business and management, Communication, and Ethics) are evident in all three chapters; that is, in the documents and at both sites. Others (viz., Community, Engineering, Indigeneity, and The natural world) are site-specific, depending on the issue under investigation.

Concurrently, macrostructural rationalities construct boundaries of knowledge and subjectivity at the micro level of everyday utterances, which comprise individual ontologies (worldviews), subject positions, and ethics (on the right of Figure 23). Additionally, in a process of ‘imbrication’ (Fairclough, 1995, p. 73), as explained in Chapter Three, since everyday utterances and meso-level discourses strongly enmesh in each other, micro-level discourses further manifest macrostructural rationalities. These constitutive processes are not rigidly determined, so that people have competing conceptualisations12 of various notions, such as ‘community’ and ‘engagement’. Nevertheless, these processes lead to a potentially hegemonic ‘invisible consensus’ of seemingly naturally occurring qualities, in which possible utterances, and individual agency, are circumscribed; that is, only certain statements and subject positions are admissible.

To illustrate, at Site B, the rationality of economic development diminishes the capacity for someone to argue that the operation should cease all further groundwater extraction until the aquifer has fully recovered, since the implication—substantial economic and employment losses—would appear to contravene macrostructural rationalities. It is not simply that contrary environmental considerations are irrelevant, but that they are subservient to the ‘reality’ of economic ‘imperatives’. Thus, while neoliberal and neoclassical discourses may dominate, they never achieve complete hegemony; as a centripetal, or centralising, force, they must continually respond to and anticipate contrary, dissenting statements that work as centrifugal, or decentralising, forces. Equally, extending these Bakhtinian terms (Bakhtin, 1994/1935; Voloshinov, 1994/1929), since all utterances are moulded dialogically by all previous utterances and by their anticipated responses, contrary statements are inevitably circumscribed by the boundaries of knowledge and subjectivity constructed by the rationality of economic development. Thus, pro-environment statements must acknowledge economic considerations, and pro-economic-development statements must acknowledge environmental considerations, though to a lesser extent because the former already conform to dominant discourses. At Site A, meanwhile, similar dialogic—and to some extent

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12 To recap, ‘conceptions’ refer to participants’ ways of understanding community engagement as a phenomenon, whereas ‘conceptualisations’ refer to their ways of understanding the four dimensions within community engagement.
dialectic—processes operate. Here, neoliberal and neoclassical discourses again act centripetally, while Indigenous discourses act centrifugally, in heteroglossic contestation. However, the macrostructural rationality of economic development constitutes a ‘régime of truth’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 133), in which people govern themselves, circumscribing the contrary statements that are possible, and constraining agency of thought.

In summary, this ongoing contestation of contradictory voices, or multiple discourses, forms a heteroglossic juxtaposition of various languages that can reflect alternative worldviews. Discourses operate at macro, meso, and micro levels; community engagement as a discourse, as a social practice, is constituted by interactions between these levels, as well as by contestations within each level. This is the interdiscursive terrain of community engagement, manifested in texts that can be relatively monologic, dialogic, or dialectic, and observed in discursive tensions. Thus, viewing community engagement as a social, (inter)discursive construction enables us to appreciate its dynamic, unstable, and contestable nature. In this way, the discursive tensions observed at both sites can be seen as manifestations of interdiscursive struggle and negotiation between the discourses identified by lexical choices.

Further, the word ‘ongoing’ signifies the diachronic nature of these interdiscursive contestations. That is, subjects engage in these ongoing contestations over time, giving rise to a new, unstable discursive order, which again exhibits certain tensions. The nature of this diachronicity, or the degree and nature of discursive change that is possible over time, is mediated by power relations. Change does not progress linearly according to historical schema (Foucault, 1972, p. 8), so that the trajectory of community engagement discourse cannot be predetermined, and will depend on the specificity of power relations within local contexts. At this point, therefore, I focus on the micro, or local, level of Figure 23—the site of individual worldviews, subject positions, and ethics—to illustrate how subjective understandings of community engagement are constructed through discourse.

**Constructing subjective understandings of community engagement**

From the phenomenographic analysis, I found that participants have varying conceptions of community engagement. However, why do conceptions vary? Why do some participants understand community engagement as ‘maximising self-interest’, for example, while others understand it as ‘social and economic justice’, or as ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’? Further, why do the conceptions at one site partly differ from those at the other site? From a poststructural perspective, we can see the phenomenographic component of this study not as an empirical end in itself, but as
providing an interpretive insight into subjective understandings, specifically, into participants’
worldviews, subject positions, and ethics. Indeed, this hints at the principal limitation of
phenomenography, which I discuss below. The reason for the conceptual differences is that, when
constructing their worldviews, subject positions, and ethics, different people have different sets of
available discourses from which to choose. Through textual analysis, therefore, I aimed to augment
the interpretive findings with a consideration of language, discourse, and power relations. Now, I
re-present the phenomenographic conceptions not as independent findings, but as part of a dynamic
process of discursive construction. Figure 24, therefore, depicts subjective understandings as both
deriving from, and contributing to, macro-level and meso-level discourses, in a diachronic process.
The labels ‘Relatively economic/instrumental’ and ‘Relatively ethical/normative’ refer to the ratios with which participants expressed such terms. All participants expressed both types of terms to some extent, since their subject positions are shaped by similar discourses, but the ratios with which they did so differed.
Context

At the top of Figure 24 is the context underlying community engagement: that is, macro-level discourses (e.g., capitalism) and meso-level discourses (e.g., business and management), as specified in Figure 23. These are manifested both in the discursive tensions found through ethnographic observations, and in the interdiscursive tapestries found through examining the lexical choices in the interviews and company documents. These two analyses, therefore, facilitated the identification of discourses at the two sites. As explained above, and as illustrated in Figure 23, macro-level discourses influence micro-level discourses both indirectly by regulating meso-level discourses, and directly by constructing boundaries of knowledge and subjectivity. This process is not one of rigid determination, but of discursive construction. As a result, people’s worldviews, subject positions, and ethics are clearly bounded by macrostructural rationalities such as individualism and neoliberalism. However, to reiterate, these rationalities are not completely hegemonic, since they are subject to ongoing interdiscursive contestation.

Micro-level discourses

Micro-level discourses, then, are articulated in three ways. Firstly, in common with macro-level and meso-level discourses, they are evident in discursive tensions found through ethnographic observations. For example, I found dispositions towards social concern, dissent, and functionality. Secondly, micro-level discourses are evident in lexico-grammatical choices. For example, in the final sections of textual analysis in Chapters Five and Six, I found contrasting and competing worldviews on notions such as land, development, money, and rivers. Thirdly, micro-level discourses are evident in various individual conceptions of community engagement. That is, drawing on various macro-level and meso-level discourses, individuals conceptualise the four dimensions of community engagement in varying ways, some relatively broadly and some relatively narrowly. Micro-level discourses, then, are articulated in three ways:

1. in discursive tensions found through ethnographic observations (e.g., dispositions towards social concern, dissent, and functionality);
2. in lexico-grammatical choices (e.g., contrasting and competing worldviews on notions such as land, development, money, and rivers);
3. in varying individual conceptions of community engagement.

The level of individual conceptions, then, forms the detailed focus of Figure 24. Now, therefore, I can reconsider the phenomenographic conceptions from an alternative perspective, to accommodate the rôle of discourse in constructing these conceptions.
Conception of community engagement

Above, I noted that the triangulation of phenomenographic conceptions through textual analysis largely supported the conceptual variations regarding community engagement at both sites. However, I also found that the three conceptions may not be equidistant conceptually. Consequently, in place of three discrete conceptions, in Figure 24 I have applied the descriptors used in the textual triangulation to distinguish between relatively broad and relatively narrow conceptions. In other words, I have re-presented the phenomenographic findings in the light of the deeper understanding gained through textual analysis. Rather than labelling discrete points to represent distinct conceptions, and rather than implying that people can be categorised into one or other such conception, Figure 24 implies that conceptions exist on a continuum. On this continuum, people may understand the nature of community in relatively collectivist or individualist ways; they may understand the nature of engagement in relatively dialogic or monologic ways; they may understand the responsibility of company to the local community in relatively ethical/normative or economic/instrumental ways; and they may understand the corporate objective in relatively heteroglossic or monoglossic ways. Further, this model enables the phenomenographic findings from both sites to be presented collectively, since similar distinctions between broad and narrow conceptions were found at both sites.

Utterances

So, we can now see that the micro level of individual, subjective understandings of community engagement is constructed by macro-level and meso-level discourses. The nature of someone’s conception of community engagement as either relatively broad or relatively narrow derives from the particular discourses available to them. As indicated at the bottom of Figure 24, these subjective understandings then determine individual utterances, statements, or texts. Finally, the arced arrow on the right represents diachronicity; that is, over time, individual utterances, statements, or texts continually work to reconstitute macro-level and meso-level discourses. As explained previously, this leads to a new, unstable discursive order, with its associated discursive tensions. Thus, the top and bottom of this model do not represent start and finish points; rather, all parts of the model work concurrently in processes of constitution and reconstitution. Importantly, echoing Giddens’ structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), people are not wholly constituted through discourse, since they have some degree of agency. Their actions are shaped, but not exclusively predetermined, by contexts. Nevertheless, understanding the significantly constitutive rôle of macro-level and meso-level discourses points to the rôle of context as mediating, or circumscribing, people’s subjective understandings.
The influencing rôle of context

As explained in Chapter Two, much literature proposes ‘scales’ of community participation along a linear progression, and implies that these scales can be applied in all manner of contexts (Arnstein, 1969; Aslin & Brown, 2004; Crawley & Sinclair, 2003; Oxley Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003; R. Roberts, 1995; Ross et al., 2002; Stewart Carter, 1999; Wilcox, 1994). The assumption appears to be that an organisation’s current position on such a scale can be identified, and that, over time, managers should work towards ascending the scale, as suggested by Arnstein’s (1969) use of the metaphor ‘ladder’. These scales suggest that some kind of universal linear schema exists as society advances, overlooking processes of contestation and fracture lines between different contexts. They also imply that a closer, or deeper, relationship between communities and corporations is always desirable, overlooking the possibility that corporate involvement in social issues can exacerbate social problems (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Reed, 1996, p. 39).

In Chapter Three, meanwhile, I noted that central themes of Foucault’s poststructural approach were to focus on local events, to rediscover ‘subjugated knowledges’, to view events as being formed through multiple processes, and to challenge the idea of continuous historical progression (Smart, 1985, p. 16). Together, these themes point to a greater significance attached to context than had been suggested by the structuralist emphasis on global processes, systematising theory, and a single determinant. The present study, by explicitly comparing two sites, illustrates this significance in the case of understanding community engagement. That is, the identification of contrasts in the empirical findings between the two sites suggests that context plays a crucial rôle in mediating people’s subjective understandings. Comparing the findings between the two sites illustrates the nature of this contextuality in two related ways: firstly, different discursive influences, tensions, and conceptualisations exist at each site; and secondly, the contrast between company and community participants’ statements is greater at Site A than at Site B.

Firstly, as illustrated in Figure 23, certain meso-level discourses (viz., Community, Engineering, Indigeneity, and The natural world) are evident only at one site. In turn, the particular tapestries of discourses produce different discursive tensions, and different conceptualisations, at each site. At Site A, tensions and conceptualisations revolve mainly around deeply political issues, such as Indigenous marginalisation and dispossession. At Site B, meanwhile, tensions and conceptualisations revolve mainly around economic and practical issues, such as sponsorship and access to water. If I had visited another site, or focused on a different issue and thus interviewed different participants, different discursive influences, tensions, and conceptualisations would have been evident. While certain overarching rationalities are relevant more generally, therefore,
people’s particular historically-situated experiences will determine the discourses from which they draw when articulating their understandings of community engagement.

Secondly, I found textual evidence for the proposition that discursive tensions at Site B may be less pronounced, or that worldviews may be less antithetical, or oppositional, than those at Site A. As explained in Chapter Two, people’s subject positions manifest the discursive possibilities in particular contexts at particular times (Foucault, 1972; Rose, 1996); thus, in a given context at a given time, only some statements are admissible. The particular context at Site A—Indigenous relations—inherently concerns antithetical worldviews, exposing deep cultural divisions in values and assumptions. This bestows upon participants a broader range of discursive possibilities, leading to greater tensions. As a result, interdiscursive processes, in which the various discourses interact dialogically and dialectically, comprise greater contestation at Site A than at Site B. Most notably, at Site A, one discourse (Indigeneity) is much more prevalent among community participants than among company participants, whereas the competing discourses at Site B appear to be similarly influential for both company and community participants.

At Site B, company and community participants are relatively homogeneous culturally, and share largely similar underlying assumptions about the world; thus, there appears to be no fundamental antithesis between their worldviews. Rather, both company and community participants implicitly assume that acting responsibly need not contradict the pursuit of profit, and that the objective of profit maximisation itself is non-negotiable. Unlike at Site A, community participants at Site B do not challenge the values and assumptions underpinning industrial capitalism, instead negotiating dialogically for relatively marginal reform, specifically a reduction in the company’s groundwater use. In many cases, this is to further their own interests, illustrating the oversimplification of dualistic portrayals of the dominating and the dominated (Deetz, 2008). In short, what is distinctive here is the relative absence of dialectical challenge to hegemonic discourses.

At Site A, conversely, various statements expose deep fissures between worldviews, specifically concerning the (in)compatibility between Indigenous values and industrial capitalism, however ‘responsible’ or ‘sustainable’. Thus, some company participants’ views of development and industry as generally desirable can be described as dialectically opposed to some community members’ views that development and industry privilege western capitalist interests to the detriment of Indigenous cultural values. Of course, not all relations at Site A involve dialectic struggle, as interactions around some issues, or involving some community participants, are negotiated more dialogically. More generally, therefore, we can say that the intensity of challenge to hegemonic,
macrostructural discourses varies; in some contexts, a challenge is negotiated dialogically, and in others it is opposed dialectically.

The theoretical implication is that portraying community engagement along universal scales inevitably fails to appreciate contextual factors influencing the social world, and thereby fails to acknowledge how power relations function to construct an ‘invisible consensus’ regarding the rôle of business in society. Rather than assuming that a linear progression towards ever deeper and closer corporate-community relationships is inherently desirable, we can see how the particular configuration of power relations within each context influences both subjective understandings and the intensity of opposition between competing discourses.

This emphasis on contextuality, therefore, renders universalist attempts to gloss over local understandings and alternative conceptualisations as less explanatory. However, it equally rejects relativist notions of infinite possible subject positions. Indeed, it explicitly acknowledges the rôle of macrostructural rationalities in constructing certain worldviews, through the operation of language-as-discourse. As explained previously, when making statements in particular contexts, we draw from a range of possible subject positions, which derive from various macro-level and meso-level discourses. Thus, our statements are neither predetermined nor potentially infinite, but are circumscribed by the prevailing discursive formation, which is reshaped dialogically and dialectically as discourses interact through intertextual and interdiscursive processes over time. Hence, we can appreciate local, contextualised understandings of phenomena such as community engagement, while also appreciating that these understandings are inevitably constrained by the discursive possibilities of each context and time.

For example, community participants at Site B, being generally of European descent, do not argue about groundwater use based on Indigenous notions of land and respect, since a discourse of *Indigeneity* does not influence their subject positions. Conversely, some community participants at Site A argue that the company should ‘give back’ some land to the Traditional Owners, on the basis that a discourse of *Indigeneity*, imbued with particular understandings of land, deeply influences their subject positions. Of course, simply being able to make a statement is different to the degree of possible change, which depends on power relations. A contextualised model of community engagement, then, better appreciates the rôles of both context and power in constructing company-stakeholder relationships. A sensitivity to this contextual nature of community engagement, and a reflexive awareness of alternative worldviews, are thus crucial to navigating company-community relations in practice.
**Implications for change**

Critical management research aims not only to provide insights and to critique conventional ideas, but also to facilitate change (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, pp. 1-20). Based on the findings of this study, I have derived three implications for practices of community engagement.

As explained in Chapter Three, the tasks of critical management research are threefold: providing insight into local phenomena, developing a critique of conventional ideas, and facilitating change (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, pp. 1-20). Hitherto, this thesis has concentrated on the first two of these tasks. The purpose of this appendix, then, is to consider what practical changes might be implied by the foregoing analysis.

In Chapter Two, I noted that the field of ‘community relations’ has emerged only recently (Kemp, 2004), suggesting that, compared with health and safety, and environmental, concerns, the notion of minerals companies’ responsibilities to ‘communities’ is less institutionalised. This is reflected in the International Council on Mining and Metals’ ten *Principles of sustainable development* (ICMM, 2003), in which the two principles concerning community relations are at the bottom of the list. While we cannot deduce that the industry treats community concerns as less important than other dimensions of sustainable development, the list suggests that the practice of community engagement has plenty of scope for development. Specifically, the findings of this study suggest that practical developments might include applying a contextual approach, progressing beyond economic rationalisations for social initiatives, and engaging with dissent.

**Implication One: Contextual community engagement**

In Chapter Seven, I proposed a new theoretical model of community engagement that acknowledges its contextual nature. I described the nature of this contextuality, in the cases studied here, as being twofold. Firstly, certain discourses are evident at one site, but not at the other. Secondly, company and community worldviews are more oppositional at one site than at the other. These differences appear to be founded, I noted, in the different socio-historical experiences of the respective communities. Thus, I argued that context influences people’s conceptions of community engagement, reflecting multiple subject positions, and that, in turn, the specific combination of discourses at each site produces different discursive tensions. This contextuality, then, problematises linear, hierarchical models that imply that managers should always strive to develop relatively participatory, rather than relatively informational, modes of participation (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; Aslin & Brown, 2004; Crawley & Sinclair, 2003; R. Roberts, 1995; Stewart Carter, 1999; Wilcox, 1994). Instead, it seems that context itself should significantly guide the nature of
company-community interactions. Furthermore, given the poststructural orientation of this study, the term ‘context’ here refers not simply to an apparent circumstance or situation, but to a reflexive awareness of socio-historically constructed relationships of power, and of the discursive tensions thereby arising. This distinction becomes clearer in the light of previous research.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, two previous papers have challenged the hierarchical models of community participation. Ross, Bucky, and Proctor (2002) propose that participation types should be determined circumstantially and considered laterally, not hierarchically. They propose that the appropriate participation type depends on: which party has agency of the process; who has control over relevant resources; the characteristics of the participants; what type of task is planned; and, the expected duration of the relationship. Oxley Green & Hunton-Clarke (2003, p. 296), meanwhile, advocate that an appropriate participation type “should be selected according to the situation or problem to be solved”. While these two models usefully challenge the assumptions of hierarchical models, their focus respectively on circumstance and situation implicitly concentrates synchronically on the present, apparently taking the current situation as given. Conversely, I suggest that a contextual approach would foreground the rôle of history, reflexively interrogating the present as it has evolved through socio-historical processes imbued with relationships of power. In contextual community engagement, then, the context itself, rather than the company, would determine the nature of participation.

Oxley Green & Hunton-Clarke (2003), whose model otherwise differs from the hierarchical models, explicitly adopt a ‘company perspective’, meaning that the participation type should be determined by the company’s definition of the type and level of decision being made. They stress that a key consideration is the degree of commitment that the company is prepared to make. Thus, in their model, the company effectively retains the right to determine how participation should occur, perpetuating relations of power. For example, taking Site B in this study, the company, rooted in historically antagonistic community relations, may decide that the question of replacing its groundwater use with treated effluent is a commercial decision, and thus may not be especially committed to extensive community participation. Community members, conversely, perceiving historical wrongdoings, may be very keen to participate in this decision-making process. In this way, therefore, the company can unilaterally determine whether to ‘allow’ people to participate, thus failing to challenge power structures (Ross et al., 2002, p. 206). In other words, simply identifying various possible participation types theoretically is no guarantee that a company will adopt a more participative style in practice, especially if managers perceive a threat to their autonomy.
Contextual community engagement, therefore, means that the company’s perspective of a circumstance or situation would not exclusively determine the type of participation. It means reflexively acknowledging how socio-historical processes have shaped particular situations and communities to produce particular relationships of power. For example, the ‘Indigenous community’ at Site A has not evolved ‘naturally’, independently of social agents, but rather is a socially heterogeneous amalgam constructed by various political, economic, and social processes associated with colonialism and capitalism. Acknowledging these processes of construction, in turn, should facilitate an understanding of why people conceive community engagement in varying, and sometimes competing, ways. Unpacking this idea further, following the dimensions of community engagement identified in the phenomenographic analysis, acknowledging contextuality means understanding the influence of macro-level and meso-level discourses in circumscribing people’s conceptualisations of the nature of community, the nature of engagement, the responsibility of the company to the local community, and the corporate objective of community engagement. It means developing a reflexive awareness of alternative worldviews, and a capacity to adjust one’s subject position in sensitivity to the context, as illustrated in this comment from a company participant at Site A:

>You really have to really understand where they’re coming from, and their day-to-day reality, to understand how they perceive you and your reality. (A.comp3)

Of course, ‘context’ itself cannot speak, and therefore cannot literally determine the type of participation. So, in practical terms, how might a particular socio-historically constructed context determine what form of participation is appropriate?

I propose that such determination would comprise ‘symmetrical’ dialogue between company staff and community members on the historically-situated context underlying a certain issue. This process would illuminate the nature of discursive tensions and competing subjectivities, allowing alternative interpretations of history to carry equal weight. In this manner, participants would be encouraged to develop a heteroglossic, or multi-perspective, understanding of the issue, highlighting competing worldviews, principles, and values (Bakhtin, 1994/1935, p. 115). During this conversation, it may emerge that the issue is highly sensitive and contested, in which case a participative approach would be appropriate, or it may emerge that the context is relatively uncontested, in which case a more informative or consultative approach would be appropriate (see Figure 25). Either way, it is the dialogically-negotiated context, not any particular agent, that determines the appropriate type of participation. Any company attempt to deny community
participation in a sensitive matter would be more difficult, as its contested nature would be transparent to all. Furthermore, this contextual approach allows for the possibility that an apparently similar issue at two sites may require a different form of participation at each site, if the historical context of the relationships differs. For example, in the present study, the location of a pipeline may merit a consultative decision-making process at Site B, where community concerns revolve mainly around economic and practical issues, but a more participative process at Site A, where land use is inextricably bound up in historical conflicts surrounding Indigenous dispossession. Finally, over time, people’s understandings of an issue may change. Thus, at the top of Figure 25, there is an ever-present, reflexive capacity to renegotiate understandings of the context.

Although I am proposing a prominent rôle for dialogic discussion here, this does not equate to advocating a participative approach in all instances. Rather, following dialogic discussion, the appropriateness of a relatively participative, consultative, or informative approach should become mutually apparent. Nevertheless, since I have advocated that dialogism should underpin the initial negotiation process, it may be worth distinguishing further between a participative approach and dialogism.

At first, dialogism may appear comparable with the ‘higher’ end of the scales of participation. However, dialogic communication, or ‘symmetrical’ dialogue (G. Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 238), concerns not so much the level of participation; rather, it means acknowledging that concepts are contested, and welcoming others’ contributions to the development of those concepts (Yeatman, 1990, pp. 161-163). It aims for a balance between individual autonomy and organisational constraint, through coalescing diverse voices (L. L. Putnam et al., 1996, p. 393). In this sense,
dialogism is concerned with social power. Thus, dialogic discussion of the context would precede the determination of participation type, which could then take place on a less inequitable footing than if the company had exclusive agency. Such a ‘symmetrical’ relationship resonates with the idea that the trajectory of change in contemporary capitalism inevitably means reconsidering underlying assumptions.

**Implication Two: Moving beyond economic rationalisations**

“In the current vocabulary of condemnation there are few words as final and conclusive as the word ‘uneconomic’. If an activity has been branded as uneconomic, its right to existence is not merely questioned but energetically denied” (Schumacher, 1974, p. 39).

The principal debate arising from corporate social responsibility (CSR) concerns the ‘extent’ of an organisation’s responsibilities. Conversely, the present study suggests that an alternative approach might involve reflecting on our assumptions, and on how those assumptions shape the ways in which we view the world. For example, if we assume that accumulating wealth is inherently desirable, we are likely to privilege a materialistic and individualistic view of the world, and to make decisions that reflect and reinforce that view. In turn, we may see the land as a source of physical ‘resources’ that could—or should—be transformed into financial wealth, rather than as something intrinsically connected to, and interdependent with, all living beings. In other words, this assumption encourages us to conceptualise corporate responsibilities principally from an economic perspective, and to evaluate and justify decisions based on whether we can rationalise them economically. In turn, it obliges us, perhaps unconsciously, to marginalise alternatives. Yet increasingly, this view may become anachronistic.

In Chapter Two, I noted that the dominant views on CSR and stakeholder theory appear to adopt a utilitarian view, which assumes that social initiatives must be justified on instrumental, economic grounds, a view commonly known as ‘enlightened self-interest’ (Moir, 2001). Similarly, in Chapter One, I noted that large corporations, including minerals companies, have generally justified their increasing involvement in community concerns with rational, utilitarian arguments. This position assumes that corporate-community relationships can be ones of ‘mutual benefit’ or ‘partnership’ (Hamil, 1999, p. 18). A utilitarian approach, however, rationalises the externalisation of adverse social and environmental impacts, “conveniently forgetting about the need to compensate those who lose out” (Marsden, 2004). In effect, the dominance of the instrumental perspective perpetuates existing power relations, since it assumes that economic objectives supersede social and environmental objectives. Following instrumental logic, nature and people become means towards corporate ends, and managers are value-neutral, economically rational actors (Deetz, 1995, pp. 218-
Non-economic objectives become desirable only, or principally, on the basis that they are thought to deliver economic benefits, even though such a causal relationship is unproven (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; McWilliams et al., 2006). Hence, the merits of CSR are contestable. By implication, the continuation of CSR practices is highly uncertain, since it depends largely on a discursively constructed belief, rather than on empirical evidence.

In Chapter Four, similarly, I found that company literature implicitly privileges corporate and managerial, economic interests. These ‘official’ versions of the companies’ approaches to, and practices of, community engagement convey the impression that community interests can be accommodated while still meeting the business interests of minerals operations, or indeed that doing the former promotes the latter. The implication, then, is that the companies are unlikely to support social and environmental initiatives unless a supposedly rational ‘business case’ can be made to justify it ‘objectively’. Just as companies construct sustainable development to fit with whatever they are already doing (Tregidga & Milne, 2006), there is little space to negotiate the meaning of social responsibility or community engagement, which seem to comprise existing activities. In terms of the essential *raison d’être* of business—the pursuit of profit—this position constitutes a centripetal force representing hegemonic discourses, as suggested by this company participant at Site A:

*I don’t pursue projects that don’t have a business case. (A.comp4)*

The problem with this position is that it entrenches dominant discourses, thereby failing to address social and environmental challenges. It assumes that no major trade-offs exist between business and social/environmental interests, and that the former can adequately accommodate the latter. This claim is uncertain, since it can be argued that “corporate strategies will always be made in the interests of enhancing shareholder value and return on capital, not social justice or morality” (Banerjee, 2008, p. 74).

Yet, as Deetz (1995, p. 219) notes, managers are not value-neutral or economically rational. Thus, I also found that, in practice, some company participants do not necessarily privilege an economic or instrumental perspective. Instead, they sometimes adopt a deontological view of ethical decision-making, justifying decisions on principally moral grounds, with economic considerations consciously relegated. For example:

*There’s not a great deal of branding opportunities that come from sponsoring a junior cricket team; it’s just that it helps the community... (B.comp1)*
I mean we are part of the community, and therefore we should be putting back into the community. (B.comp2)

The outcome can be a tension between the dominant economic paradigm and individual values:

*Sometimes if you wanna justify a project, you have to lay down, you know, all the requirements to get the resources for that project, and often to appeal to...business drivers, which is all about profit... It doesn’t drive me...but it helps me persuade others.* (A.comp3)

Thus, staff may prioritise social and environmental considerations at a personal level, but feel obliged to justify such considerations along rational, economic lines when communicating their views to senior managers and shareholders. In other words, they perceive a need to perpetuate the view that there are no major trade-offs between social and environmental considerations and business interests. The above sentiments encapsulate tensions between dominant and subordinate discourses. In the discussion of social power in Chapter Two, I noted that the Gramscian notion of hegemony explains how discourses of business and economics have partially accommodated challenges, without relinquishing their dominant social position (Levy, 1997; Levy & Egan, 2003). Contrary to the rhetoric assuming no major trade-offs, the existence of ongoing discursive tensions suggests that managers will increasingly have to negotiate processes of challenge and contestation in negotiating the rôle of business in society.

The social expectations of business have changed, but business concerns remain dominant, as illustrated by the *Business and management* discourse being significantly influential for both company and community participants at both sites. This situation highlights a broader paradox: neoliberalism remains resilient as an ideology, yet it accommodates oppositional discourses of social justice, community, and environmentalism. In turn, company claims of being ‘socially responsible’ have an uncertain meaning, since they suggest a moral position, but with largely unchanged underlying assumptions. Further, the meaning of responsibility is always shifting as discourses are contested.

Contemporary capitalism has embarked on a trajectory towards a different premise. Corporations can no longer act as though their actions are without social and environmental consequences. Accordingly, in place of economic and instrumental rationalisations, which may engender cynicism (Beach et al., 2005), managers may increasingly justify actions on moral grounds. Paradigmatic change occurs when business alters its priorities. For example, in Chapter Three, I noted that the company’s General Manager had indicated that he perceived a moral obligation to “give the water
back” to the community. Although legislation made such an act difficult, this was quite a radical statement for a company with a reputation for fiercely protecting its economic interests. If managers consider that, for example, replacing some groundwater use with recycled effluent, or helping the local Indigenous community to secure a meeting place, is morally justifiable, perhaps the perceived need for a ‘business case’ becomes relegated. However, to challenge the perceived need for economic rationalisation is to confront the social power of economic discourses, whose implied technocentrism and anthropocentrism constrain their capacity to address social and environmental externalities (Banerjee, 2002, p. 108). This may be particularly applicable in the Australian minerals industry, which, according to Trigger (1997), has a “culture of development ideology”. That is, the idea of transforming ‘barren’ land into economically productive use is assumed to be morally desirable, and is embedded in everyday social action, such that “alternative ways of viewing the land appear esoteric, impractical and without equivalent cultural foundation” (Trigger, 1997, p. 176).

Thus, a community relations practitioner who proposes company financial support for a social initiative on the basis of a moral position, without recourse to a rational, economic argument, risks being dismissed as ‘idealistic’, ‘irresponsible’, or ‘not living in the real world’, since such a position would seem to contradict the prevailing rational, utilitarian assumptions underlying dominant discourses. Further, following agency theory, there may be governance mechanisms and incentive schemes in place to ensure that executive decisions prioritise shareholder interests, although this theory assumes that executives can be motivated primarily by extrinsic factors (Davis et al., 1997). Conversely, claiming that spending money on community initiatives is good for business, even if unprovable, presents no contradiction, and therefore appears rational. Yet, assuming a moral position may elicit the respect of work peers and community members (Marsden, 2004). Research suggests that many people place a high personal value on working with an organisation they perceive to be socially responsible (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007). Respect among the wider community may translate into enhanced corporate reputation, which, if foreseen, could have been used initially as an instrumental justification for the social initiative. Ironically, this would satisfy Friedman’s (1970) condition that an act of social responsibility is defensible only if it benefits shareholders.

Some companies, therefore, recognise problems with relying on economic rationalisation to deliver responsible and sustainable outcomes, and have explicitly re-aligned their priorities. In Australia, for example, Bendigo Bank responded to the widespread closure of regional banks by adopting a community development approach to business (see Daly & Cobb, 1994). In 1998, it launched a
community banking initiative, in which branches are wholly owned by local community
shareholders, 80% of profits are reinvested locally, and relationships are based on trust, loyalty,
integrity, volunteerism, and cooperation (Stubbs & Cocklin, 2007). British Telecommunications
(2003, p. 10), similarly, notes that company executives may perceive supposed economic benefits
of social responsibility to be insufficient, they may fail to look for a ‘business case’ in the first
place, or it simply may not exist. As these examples testify, relying too heavily on economic
rationalisation constrains our capacity to address perceived moral imperatives and social challenges.

It could be argued, therefore, that business managers will become more confident about, and
comfortable with, making decisions on moral grounds. Even the argument that corporations,
because they have no morality or conscience, ‘pathologically’ pursue profit and power (Bakan,
2004) does not imply that staff themselves are devoid of more socially-oriented values, such as
empathy, compassion, and respect (Marsden, 2004; Zadek, 2001). Indeed, a number of company
participants in this study articulated such values. If, in the new interdiscursive terrain of sustainable
development and corporate social responsibility, society increasingly expects business to undertake
social and environmental initiatives, and to engage communities, then the perceived need for
economic, instrumental, or utilitarian rationalisation may ultimately evaporate into irrelevance.

Given the diachronic nature of discourse, described in relation to Figure 23, and illustrated in Figure
24, social responsibility is always subject to new challenges in negotiating its meaning. Thus, the
managerial task is never complete, as new practices create new expectations. For social justice and
environment campaigners, this can be seen as an opportunity. The partial accommodation of
contradictory discourses allows space for dissenting voices, both internally and externally, to push
for further change. The new discursive landscape progressively raises expectations that corporations
will treat social and environmental challenges seriously (Levy, 1997). As corporate efforts to
address these challenges becomes the norm, rather than the exception, so society’s expectations
shift to more ambitious goals. This dynamic relation between corporate practice and social
expectation can be witnessed in the gradual shift towards companies becoming ‘carbon neutral’ in
response to the challenge of climate change.

In turn, if CSR and stakeholder theory are bound up in neoclassical economic assumptions (e.g.,
Banerjee, 2008; Korhonen, 2002), an organisation wishing to demonstrate a genuine concern for
social and ecological values may need to think beyond dominant conceptualisations of CSR and
stakeholder theory. Conventional notions, such as ‘triple bottom line’ (Elkington, 1997), typically
claim some kind of ‘balance’ between economic, social, and environmental considerations, while
implicitly privileging the former, as explained above. They also tend to operate at the level of individual organisations, and to privilege organisational interests, when a broader, macro-level reconceptualisation and restructuring is required (Banerjee, 2008). An alternative view requires a different set of assumptions that explicitly prioritise the socio-ecological world over the economic world. This view, in turn, implies rethinking the principal legal obligation of corporations, since laws reflect particular power dynamics in society, rather than being the expression of some universal will (Banerjee, 2008, p. 75). If corporations are unwilling to meet this challenge voluntarily, it could be argued that CSR needs to mature from its voluntarist foundations towards a more regulated régime (Conley, 2005; Mah, 2004; Maren, 2004; Marsden, 2004; Sklair, 2001). Nevertheless, regulation alone is unlikely to change corporate perceptions of responsibility, or to catalyse change (Aguilera et al., 2007). In an internationalised business context, in which communities compete to attract businesses and jobs, regulation can be problematic; not only does it encourage firms to relocate to areas of lower standards, but also it tends to be ineffective at instilling values of responsibility (Deetz, 1999, pp. 299-302). Alternatively, as Banerjee (2008) suggests, a universal charter may be more effective than voluntary initiatives in increasing corporate accountability to local communities.

Ultimately, the implication of the tensions between business and economic interests on the one hand, and social and environmental challenges on the other, may be a need to address some critical questions. For example, at the micro level, what would a genuinely socially sensitive and moral organisation look like? How would a manager actually demonstrate this kind of sensitivity and morality? At the macro level, what institutional changes are required to facilitate the shift towards more socially sensitive and moral organisations? What changes are required in the power dynamics of corporate-community relations, and how would they be achieved? What assumptions and values would underpin this new landscape?

Implication Three: From order and rationality to dissent and dialogue

“Man is many things, but he is not rational.” (Wilde, 1949/1891, p. 36)

In discussing the dominance of the instrumental, economic perspective above, I proposed that this dominance seems to derive from its apparent rationality. For community relations professionals, even those not principally motivated by economic concerns, the objective often is to create the appearance of a logical, utilitarian ‘business case’ to determine the potential costs and benefits of social initiatives. Given the traditional management view of outsiders as dissenters potentially complicating market decisions (Jackall, 1988, p. 14), the utilitarian approach may be seen as an effort to replace dissent with order and rationality. However, the hope for order and rationality
suggests a futile yearning for the certainties of a previous age, and a fear of collaborative decision-making (Deetz, 1995). This study has shown that questions of business and society cannot easily be ordered, since they involve complex, sometimes conflicting realities, shaped by ongoing interdiscursive tensions and characterised by multiple subjectivities. Order and rationality, therefore, are at best oversimplifications, and at worst illusory ideologies constituting relations of power. Trying to impose order and rationality on an interdiscursive phenomenon such as community engagement denies its inherently dynamic, unstable, and contestable nature. This implies that managers may need to engage more readily with dissent, and, as I have suggested previously, to challenge their own assumptions.

In Chapter Four, I found that company literature conveys the impression that community and company interests exist in harmony and congruence, and that it rhetorically delegitimises and marginalises dissenting perspectives. Yet, in the case studies, and particularly at Site A, I found that company-community dissent sometimes does exist, but that the company struggles to accommodate it in its community relations processes. For example, community members appeared exasperated that money was deposited in the Indigenous Fund, but that, in their view, the company seemed reluctant to spend it:

*But there’s money they’ve put in the bank… been in there for five years; what have we gotta do to get that money? (A.comm8)*

The company sensed this community dissent, but responded by seeking refuge in the order endowed through unanimity. The most immediate issue for many, but not all, Indigenous community participants, and the most problematic issue for company participants, was the former’s desire for assistance in acquiring a meeting space. In discussions on Indigenous disadvantage, there is increasingly a tendency to view financial assistance as perpetuating an unsustainable handout mentality, or a culture of dependence and passivity, and therefore to promote longer-term capacity-building efforts (Pearson, 2006), as this company participant argued:

*There’s no point handing over a heap of dough, for whatever reason, if it’s gonna be an abject failure. (A.comp4)*

Yet, many community members saw a meeting space as a prerequisite for capacity-building. The company, therefore, may be genuinely trying to minimise dependence and to build capacity, but community members feel that the company is actually perpetuating dependence by effectively denying them the space in which they might build capacity. To resolve this dilemma, the company
apparently insisted on unanimous community support for company help in securing a community meeting space. This insistence suggests a preference for order and rationality, and a discomfort with dissent. However, it provoked community dissent, with community leaders explaining that such unanimity was unattainable in practice, because of deep historical divisions rooted in successive colonial practices of relocation (Banerjee & Tedmanson, 2007, p. 11). The company’s approach, therefore, caused intense frustration among some community members, and tended to entrench divisions between company and community:

I’ve said it straight to ’em... “You’re not doing our community any good; you’re not capacity building, you’re keeping them in the place where you know you can manipulate them.” (A.comm7)

Most fundamentally, perhaps, company staff at Site A attempted to dissuade me from investigations Indigenous relations, imploring, “Why can’t you just choose something we do well, and showcase it for us?”. This again suggests a preference for order and rationality, and a reluctance to discuss issues involving dissent. Such a preference was reflected in the lexical choices of company staff, which enable community issues to be framed in terms of a Business and management discourse. Similarly, Community Fund Advisory Board members portrayed decisions affecting community members as non-contentious, rational, technocratic processes, such as objective measure of outcomes; measure the change in community capacity; and quantify the community benefit.

At Site B, similarly, the company privileges rationality over oral history and human memory. That is, the absence of incontrovertible scientific evidence that the company has caused degradation to the river system facilitates the perpetuation of the dominant view of rivers as exploitable resources, marginalising anecdotal evidence and community history. Indeed, one community member interviewed during Visit One viewed the company’s community engagement efforts critically as tokenistic ‘greenwash’, meaning that the company can represent itself as environmentally responsible while entrenching power relations by reducing government scrutiny. Once again, therefore, the effectiveness of voluntary and self-regulatory CSR at delivering meaningful change is called into question. The danger, then, is that a tendency towards privileging rationality could be interpreted as an inability or unwillingness to step outside the perceived safety of managerial discourse by dialogically engaging with the diverse world of community life, and its attendant complexities, conflicts, and contradictions.

More broadly, therefore, this study suggests that, while some within minerals companies conceptually appreciate notions of plurality, diversity, and conflict within communities (Frazer,
1999; Jordan, 1998; Mouffe, 2000), others in the industry have difficulty navigating this ‘swampy terrain’ (Burkett, 2001). Participants expressing the more comprehensive phenomenographic conceptions view community as ‘heterogeneous yet unifying’ at Site A, and as ‘a site of constructive collaboration’ at Site B. In contrast, as noted in Chapter Two, the resources sector tends to adopt an implicitly narrow, geographical conception, in which ‘communities’ are simply neighbouring residents (e.g., MCA, 2004, p. 26; MCMPR, 2005, p. 5). Conceptualising community geographically makes it more tangible, but it attributes people with only one subject position—that of neighbouring resident—overlooking other possible subject positions, such as worker, carer, elder, artist, or bushwalker. Thereby, it homogenises the entire community itself, and marginalises less tangible notions associated with the idea of ‘community’, such as mutuality, empathy, diversity, trust, reciprocity, and cooperation. Thus, the challenge is to recognise the shifting priorities regarding the responsibilities of corporations, and to navigate dialogically the inherent complexities within notions of ‘community’.

The overall implication, then, is perhaps that both community relations staff and senior industry executives need to develop dialogic processes for engaging with dissent. Engaging with dissent is, however, a demanding challenge. As with the prospect of moving beyond economic rationalisations for social initiatives, the idea of accepting, or even welcoming, dissent implies rethinking deeply-held assumptions. It means seeing dissent not as a threat, but as a potentially constructive catalyst for change (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, pp. 140-181). As Deetz (1999, p. 319) proposes, “conflict, argument and debate would not be avoided but embraced for it is in conflict that we can begin to see a potential ethical path that may otherwise be hidden by our everyday routines as ‘taken-for-granted’ ways of understanding the world”. As one company participant put it:

*It means that the organisation has got to be prepared to listen to what people have got to say, and to change what we were planning to do as a result of what people have told us.*

(A.comp1)

**CSR and stakeholder theory: Oversimplifications?**

In Chapter Two, I proposed that the dominant perspective on corporate social responsibility (CSR) appears to be the ‘enlightened self-interest’ position, in which managers perceive that an economic benefit will ensue from adopting social initiatives. I also proposed that this position is consistent with instrumental stakeholder theory, a utilitarian approach that focuses on the economic consequences of adopting a stakeholder approach. Both are dominant, I suggested, because they appear to address social and environmental concerns without fundamentally challenging
neoclassical economic assumptions, thus appealing to business interests (Kaler, 2003; Korhonen, 2002; Margolis & Walsh, 2003). However, this study suggests that, in certain contexts, some company participants conceptualise a moral imperative for community engagement, regardless of instrumental or economic considerations. This view was particularly evident in the observed dispositions towards cultural sensitivity (Site A) and social concern (Site B), and in the phenomenographic conceptions of ‘culturally sensitive relationship-building’ (Site A) and ‘a process of collaborative dialogue’ (Site B). The dominant, instrumental position, then, overlooks the role of context in constructing stakeholder relationships that are either relatively dialogic or dialectic, and thereby fails to appreciate that the degree of possible change depends on relations of power.

Stakeholder relationships as dynamic and contestable

As noted above, community engagement appears to be interdiscursive, which implies ongoing contestation, rather than stasis. Meanwhile, as described in Chapter Two, authors have labelled alternative CSR positions as, for example, ‘economic responsibility’ or ‘ethical responsibility’ (Windsor, 2006), and alternative stakeholder positions similarly as, for example, ‘instrumental’ or ‘normative’ (T. Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Jones & Wicks, 1999). However, these labels implicitly oversimplify organisation-stakeholder relationships. They assume such relationships to be static, they overlook both the continually evolving nature of these relationships and the multiple possible ways of understanding and interpreting them, and they overlook intersubjective relations of power.

For example, as noted above, instrumental arguments seem to represent a discursive ‘middle ground’ (Livesey, 2002), and may be masking underlying ‘moral obligations’ or ‘neoclassical economics’ positions (Moir, 2001). Furthermore, in the triangulation of phenomenographic conceptions through textual analysis, I found that all participants, to varying degrees, are concerned with both instrumental and ethical notions simultaneously. This study has shown, therefore, that it is inadequate to describe an organisation’s approach as, for example, instrumental, since it may be experienced and understood in multiple ways concurrently, and inevitably it is continually evolving through dialogic and dialectic processes. Similarly, perceiving the corporate objective as either legal compliance or profit maximisation overlooks complex, contradictory, and dynamic realities.

In identifying motives for community engagement, and for CSR more broadly, many participants in this study implicitly challenge the theoretical instrumental-vs-moral dualism. This position is evident, for example, in Conception Three participants at both sites conceptualising the corporate
objective as navigating the multiple expectations of business and society. They perceive various social phenomena operating simultaneously, all influencing companies to act in certain ways. This suggests a reflexive awareness of alternative worldviews and multiple subjectivities, deriving from competing discourses. Accordingly, rather than attempting to identify universal motives, a more useful perspective may be to consider how particular configurations of macrostructural rationalities and meso-level discourses construct particular worldviews and subjectivities, in the manner explained above. Competing discourses interact interdiscursively and diachronically, constituting an evolving social landscape in which neoliberal and neoclassical discourses dominate but never achieve complete hegemony. In this way, community engagement can be seen not so much as a predictable reaction to one specific catalyst or another, but more as a dynamic process of negotiation and re-negotiation of discursively constructed worldviews and subjectivities.

Stakeholder theory and power

As noted above, extant theory on CSR and stakeholders also appears to exclude recognition of the rôle of intersubjective relations of power in constructing stakeholder relationships. The dominant view, as described previously, is that a stakeholder is someone who can affect, as well as be affected by, the organisation’s activities (Freeman, 1984). However, this view does not consider the interrelationship of language-as-discourse and politics (Lemke, 1995, pp. 1-2). As explained in Chapter Two, and illustrated particularly in the company documents in Chapter Four, organisational talk is political in nature, and can perform the ideological function of concealing yet reinforcing relations of dominance (Mumby & Clair, 1997). Freeman’s (1984) influential conceptualisation of stakeholder theory views the organisation as the hub of a wheel, with stakeholders at the ends of the spokes, potentially able to compromise organisational autonomy; the explicit objective is to devise means of strategically managing them. This view generally does not ask why these people or groups might desire to change organisational practices, or why their worldviews might differ from those of company managers. Nor does stakeholder theory acknowledge the rôle of language-as-discourse in constituting power relations by constructing ideological meaning.

However, at Site A particularly, a number of participants, both company and community, appeared to be sensitive to the effects of historically-situated power relationships, and to the possibility of alternative, competing worldviews. In particular, one company participant expressing Conception Three articulated this sensitivity:

*So when I sit at a table with someone, just because of this uniform, I can’t deny what I have behind me, compared to someone else.* (A.comp3)
A company uniform, therefore, can convey some kind of ‘official’ authority and credibility, thereby materially constituting a power relationship. Thus, stakeholder theory’s concern with the capacity of people or groups to compromise organisational autonomy overlooks structural constraints on this capacity. Site A community participants, therefore, typically perceive the company’s capacity to affect them to be far greater than their own capacity to affect the company’s activities. At Site B, participants in general appear to be less cognisant of the rôle of power relations. For example, company participants tend to defend the operation’s right to extract groundwater using technocratic language, without reflexive awareness of power differences; in this manner, they are conducting a scientific discourse, marginalising local knowledges and anecdotal evidence as insufficiently scientific. For Site B community participants generally, meanwhile, industrial capitalism has become a ‘régime of truth’ or rationality through which they govern themselves (Foucault, 1980, p. 133; Smart, 1994, p. 72). As explained above, therefore, Site B is notable for its relative absence of dialectical challenge to hegemonic discourses. Compared to Site A, it more closely illustrates Smart’s (1994, p. 210) notion, drawing on Foucault, that hegemonic social cohesion arises through “practices, techniques and methods which infiltrate minds and bodies, cultural practices which cultivate behaviours and beliefs, tastes, desires, and needs as seemingly naturally occurring qualities and properties embodied in the psychic and physical reality (or ‘truth’) of the human subject”.

Reinterpreting stakeholder theory from a poststructural perspective, therefore, illuminates the ways in which power relations and language-as-discourse influence company-community relationships. This may help community relations practitioners to reflexively acknowledge competing worldviews and to appreciate alternative subject positions, a prospect I discuss further in Appendix 6. Methodologically, meanwhile, adopting a poststructural orientation has also demonstrated that, while phenomenography can offer useful interpretive insights at the individual, subjective level, it cannot account for macro and meso levels of discourse, or for discursive tensions, or for competing worldviews and subject positions.

Methodological issues and limitations

Limitations of phenomenography

Phenomenographic methodology generally proposes that ‘higher’ conceptions incorporate or subsume the understandings within ‘lower’ conceptions, and are thus more comprehensive (Marton, 1994; Marton & Fai, 1999; Sandberg, 2000). It assumes that conceptions essentially build cumulatively upon each other. However, this assumption leaves no space for dissent, refutation, or dialectical challenge, which are essential components of critical management studies (Alvesson &
Deetz, 2000). It also oversimplifies complex, multiple realities, and portrays subjectivities synchronically, overlooking diachronic processes of ongoing change.

In Chapters Five and Six, I found that, in some cases, ‘higher’ phenomenographic conceptions actually contradict or refute ‘lower’ conceptions, rather than simply subsuming them. For example, a dialogic perspective on ‘engagement’ intrinsically refutes a conduit, or monologic, perspective. Rather than dismissing phenomenography at this point, however, I proposed an alternative justification for advancing a phenomenographic hierarchy, to incorporate critical sensitivity into the phenomenographic search for conceptual variations. I argued instead that phenomenographic conceptions could be described as ‘higher’ by virtue of comprising deeper and/or broader conceptualisations, and by better appreciating tensions and contradictions in the social world. This approach potentially broadens the application of phenomenographic methodology, replacing the assumption of cumulative, linear progression with an accommodation of discursive tensions and competing worldviews.

This reconceptualisation of phenomenographic variation, then, redefines the nature of a ‘hierarchy’ of conceptions, or what it means for one conception to be ‘higher’ than another. However, at the individual level of subjects, there remains the implicit suggestion that people have particular, stable subject positions, since they are categorised into specific conceptions, with no reference to internal contradictions or to change over time. From a poststructural perspective, subject positions are not stable and fixed; rather, subjectivity is inherently multiple, and it can change over time.

The aim of phenomenographic interviewing is to get as close as possible to participants’ lived experiences of the world, by asking progressive follow-up questions (Francis, 1996; Sandberg, 2000). However, because we can have multiple subject positions, participants will also express less comprehensive, or apparently contradictory, conceptions. For example, the first statement below supports my categorisation of this Site B company participant within Conception Three (‘a process of collaborative dialogue’), since it indicates an appreciation of alternative, competing perspectives. Yet the second statement below, from the same participant, suggests a narrower, instrumental view of the company-community relationship, more consistent with Conception Two (‘an instrumental stakeholder relationship’):

*It’s interesting how one group of people... say how generous we are, and how good we are about being involved in the community, and what a positive kind of business we are, and then to have other people who think that we are big, rotten people who are spoiling the*
environment, stealing all the water, you know; it’s just interesting to have that dynamic. (B.comp1)

I think that usually, when we consider sponsorships and giving money, generally there is some kind of benefit for the business involved in it, which is why we choose it. (B.comp1)

On another occasion, similarly, she spoke of the return on sponsorship investments, reinforcing an economics discourse. Consistent with phenomenographic interpretation, however, I have deliberately overlooked such ‘narrower’ understandings in the search for participants’ most comprehensive understandings. Thus, it is important to recognise that I have categorised each participant to reflect the most comprehensive conception expressed, rather than the only conception expressed. Inevitably, therefore, phenomenography offers only a partial representation of subjective experience. In effect, phenomenographic conceptions treat apparently contradictory statements, or those that suggest a less comprehensive conception, as though they were never uttered. Thus, there are substantive reasons for challenging phenomenographic claims to represent subjective experience.

More fundamentally, because phenomenography downplays discursive tensions, it ignores the techniques of power that categorise individuals as subjects, and the antagonisms and oppositions that resist these techniques of power (Foucault, 2003b, pp. 128-130). Similarly, it ignores Bakhtin’s (1994/1935, pp. 75-76) notion of heteroglossia, where new meaning is created dialogically and dialectically by the conflictual interaction of contradictory voices, or centripetal and centrifugal forces, or processes of centralisation and decentralisation. Further, through its assumption that ‘higher’ conceptions subsume ‘lower’ conceptions, phenomenography inadvertently accepts structuralist assumptions of a cumulative progress of consciousness, rather than acknowledging discontinuities (see Foucault, 1972).

As explained in Chapter Three, phenomenography does not claim an explicitly critical element in its epistemological orientation. It focuses on lived experience, perhaps downplaying the influence of wider social structures, such as power relations. Yet, for some, a fundamental purpose of qualitative research is to connect interviewees’ stories to the historical, ideological, structural, and economic conditions in which those stories are situated (Fine et al., 2000), or to investigate “how and why the social world comes to have the meanings that it does” (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, pp. 12-13). Phenomenography, therefore, seems to overlook the ‘linguistic turn’ in organisation studies, which sees language as having a constitutive and constructive rôle, rather than simply reflecting and representing reality (N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002, pp. 12-16).
In summary, the phenomenographic claim of interpreting and describing meanings oversimplifies complexities and contradictions, and fails to acknowledge the socially constitutive rôle of macrostructural rationalities, seeming to accept people’s conceptions unquestioningly as ‘the way things are’. Used on its own, it cannot fully appreciate the interwoven relationships between social practice, knowledge, language, discourse, and power (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Foucault, 1972; N. Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Meanwhile, phenomenographic conceptions might be better interpreted as alternative ways of partially understanding a certain socially constructed phenomenon, rather than as encapsulating individuals’ entire understanding of a phenomenon. Nevertheless, this study has other limitations relating to validity, reliability, and generalisability.

Validity, reliability, and generalisability

In Chapter Three, I explained my perspective on validity and reliability. I argued that the pursuit of objective knowledge, a legacy of the positivist tradition, is inappropriate to the epistemological position of this study. The social constructionist paradigm ‘sculpts’ knowledge, rather than ‘excavating’ phenomena for naturally occurring insights (Mir & Watson, 2000). Thus, for the interpretive component of this study, I drew upon Sandberg’s (2005) approach towards justifying knowledge claims, which aims for ‘communicative’, ‘pragmatic’, and ‘transgressive’ validity, and for ‘interpretive awareness’. I noted further that critical perspectives largely reject conventional notions of validity.

Critical perspectives focus on concepts such as trustworthiness, sincerity, comprehensibility, credibility, and emancipatory potential (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, pp. 89-91; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000), or on reflexive management of the relationship between the testimony of research participants and a broader process of historical and structural analysis (Wainwright, 1997). In an attempt to integrate interpretive and critical perspectives on validity and reliability, therefore, I listened to participants’ accounts of their experiences, and interpreted these accounts in the context of relevant historical, ideological, structural, and economic conditions. Nevertheless, analysis and knowledge only ever can be partial and incomplete, and open to change and improvement (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 14-15). Thus, three limitations apply to the validity, reliability, and generalisability of this study’s findings.

Firstly, this study’s findings are limited in the sense that all qualitative research constitutes ‘mimesis’, or the transformation of social worlds into symbolic worlds according to interpretations
(Flick, 2002, pp. 29-37). To some extent, these interpretations are inherently subjective, influenced by my own political, ideological, and axiological perspectives, which explains the potential usefulness of ‘interpretive awareness’. As with all models, the models of community engagement proposed in Figure 23 and Figure 24 above cannot perfectly and objectively represent people’s experiences and the social world. Even with the most conscientious application of communicative, pragmatic, and transgressive versions of validity, further reinterpretation is always possible, and another researcher might derive different interpretations. Being cognisant of reflexivity, this limitation has political, as well as methodological, implications. Specifically, authors’ claims to represent others’ worlds is an unequal and undemocratic dialogue, an act of ventriloquism, such that polyphony is fictive: “We can become at best spokespersons for others, translating their speech by saying something that we think they mean” (Czarniawska, 1999, p. 107, original emphasis).

Secondly, two case studies cannot be generalised to the whole population. As explained in Chapter Three, case study requires clear parameters of time and place, or ‘boundedness’, to delimit the parameters of the object of study (Creswell, 1998, p. 61; Merriam, 1998, pp. 27-28). While cases may have similarities in other settings, the principal interest lies within the cases themselves, and in comparisons between them (Eisenhardt, 1989). This is not to diminish case study as an approach, however, since the narrative knowledge gained through case studies can capture life’s complexities in ways that generalised explanations cannot (Czarniawska, 1999, p. 15). Furthermore, Stake (2000, p. 439) proposes that case study can be a step towards generalisability, especially when a case provides insight into a theory. Comparing the cases in the present study, as Eisenhardt (1989) suggests, has unveiled several contrasts in understandings of community engagement, leading to my emphasis on the influencing rôle of context. Comparing company participants between sites, comparing community participants between sites, and comparing company participants with community participants at each site, has shown that universal theories cannot capture the complexities of historically-situated experiences. While these findings cannot be generalised into universal theories, then, they have illuminated theoretical shortcomings in CSR and stakeholder theory, and illustrated how macrostructural rationalities and meso-level discourses dialogically and dialectically shape experiences and understandings of company-community relationships.

Thirdly, the relative under-representation of company participants induces a risk that I have privileged community participants’ perspectives. Of the 33 interview participants, only ten were exclusively company staff. As explained in Chapters Five and Six, this imbalance was unavoidable. I interviewed all staff who had work-related involvement with the respective communities. However, the findings cannot be deemed representative of the workforces as a whole. I could have
interviewed a sample of company staff who do not have work-related involvement with local communities, and such a sample might elicit useful comparisons. Indeed, compared to those interviewed here, other staff may spend less time reflecting on company-community relations, and on wider questions of a corporation’s rôle in society; thus, they may have less appreciation of the tensions and complexities surrounding community engagement.

Conclusions

The term ‘community engagement’ is increasingly pervasive in management and minerals company discourses. Its meaning and its desirability seem to have been rarely questioned, even though it potentially epitomises the contestability of mainstream economic discourses. The dominant interpretation of ‘community engagement’ seems to derive from the instrumental stakeholder view and the enlightened self-interest perspective on corporate social responsibility. These perspectives propose that community concerns can be adequately addressed without fundamentally challenging neoclassical economic assumptions. Such a position overlooks the rôle of language-as-discourse in constituting power relations by constructing ideological meaning. In this study of two sites, therefore, I sought to problematise dominant interpretations, by investigating people’s subjective interpretations of community engagement, and by exploring the discursive influences of these subjective interpretations from a poststructural orientation.

I found that company documents, both verbally and visually, tend to convey the impression that minerals operations can be compatible with community concerns. I observed discursive tensions at each site, but discerned that those at Site A are more strongly oppositional than those at Site B. Investigating subjective understandings, I found that company staff and community members conceptualise community engagement in varying ways, some relatively broadly and some relatively narrowly. At a lexical level, ‘broad’ conceptualisations are identified by relatively collectivist, dialogic, ethical/normative, and heteroglossic terms.

I also found that participants’ worldviews are constructed by multiple, sometimes oppositional, discourses; there is no universal, homogeneous ‘company discourse’ or ‘community discourse’. Nevertheless, the most influential discourse for all participants is that of Business and management. Further, different discursive influences, tensions, and conceptualisations exist at each site, and the contrast between company and community participants’ statements differs between sites, consistent with the contrast in discursive tensions. In other words, the intensity of challenge to hegemonic, macrostructural discourses varies, sometimes being negotiated dialogically, and sometimes being
opposed dialectically. This suggests that context plays a crucial rôle in mediating people’s subjective understandings.

This study, then, suggests that community engagement can be understood as a contextual, interdiscursive phenomenon. In different contexts, at different times, people will have different conceptions of what community engagement is, and of what it should be. This is because they manifest their subject positions primarily by drawing from the discursive possibilities in particular contexts at particular times. In other words, macrostructural rationalities predispose us, but do not force us, to view the world, our subject positions, and hence our ethical dispositions, in particular ways. Here ‘macrostructural rationalities’ means those macro-level discourses, such as individualism and neoliberalism, that are infused with ideological assumptions yet appear to be ‘rational’ or ‘natural’. These macrostructural rationalities are not deterministically totalising, but they regulate, influence, circumscribe, and delimit possible statements and subject positions, both indirectly through meso-level discourses such as Business and management and Communication, and directly by constructing boundaries of knowledge and subjectivity. Thus, in communicative exchanges between individuals, certain utterances are possible, while other utterances are not possible without being seen as oppositional, alien, or incommensurate.

In turn, individual utterances, statements, or texts continually work to reconstitute macro-level and meso-level discourses, leading to a new, unstable discursive order, with its associated discursive tensions. Thus, subjective understandings both derive from, and contribute to, macro-level and meso-level discourses, in ongoing diachronic processes. These processes of mutual constitution mean that the trajectory of community engagement discourse cannot be predetermined; rather, it will depend on the particular configuration of power relations within local contexts. From this perspective, we can reconceptualise people’s understandings of community engagement not only as socially constructed, inseparable relationships between subjects and social contexts, but also as intrinsically interwoven with ideologically-laden rationalities of contemporary capitalism.


Knight, P. (1998). *Profits or principles - does there have to be a choice?* London: Shell International.


Appendix 1: Research Information Sheet

Name of Project: A critical evaluation of corporate-community engagement

Researcher: Richard Parsons, UQ Business School and Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining (CSRM)

Contact information: Richard Parsons
UQ Business School, The University of Queensland
St Lucia, QLD 4072
Tel. 0402 475 951
r.parsons@business.uq.edu.au
www.csrm.uq.edu.au

Project overview

For this project, I am looking at the relationships between large minerals processing operations and local communities at two sites in Queensland, Australia. This means that I am critically analysing how these operations manage relations with local communities, and I am considering how these relations can be improved. It forms part of research for my PhD, which I expect to complete in late 2006.

At each of the two sites, I aim to collect research material, and to listen to what people have to say, about:

- the ways in which the companies are currently involved with local communities;
- how community members feel about the relationship with the company;
- how company staff feel about the relationship with community members and groups.

Findings from the research will be used to gain a better understanding of the relationships between large minerals processing operations and local communities. In particular, I am seeking to understand why companies try to engage local communities, and how certain ways of communicating can influence the relationships. This research, therefore, aims to contribute to better outcomes for communities that are affected by mining and minerals processing operations, as well as helping to improve engagement processes.

Participation in this study is mainly via interviews, which will last approximately one hour. Additionally, participation is through allowing the researcher to observe meetings between company representatives and community members.

Interviews will be conducted on a one-to-one basis, in a location convenient to you. If you are happy to consent, I will record the interview. This will help me to ensure that, when I write up the findings, I represent your words faithfully. I will not record your name, and each interview will be identified by a number only, so that no other person can identify you. A list which matches the names to the numbers will be held in a separate location to the recordings themselves, and both will be held securely. I will be transcribing the interviews, for my own use only, and will also store these transcriptions securely, and separately from the list of names. Neither the recordings, nor the
transcriptions, nor the list of names, will be accessible by any other person. The recordings will be listened to by myself alone, and will be transcribed for my use only.

All research material will remain confidential. Any written outcomes from this research, such as reports and articles, will not reveal the identities of the participants, except with explicit written agreement. Typically, when writing up my research, I will refer to participants as ‘company participant 4’, ‘community participant 6’, etc.

Participation in this study involves no foreseeable added risk above the risks of everyday living. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time.

Towards the end of the research a short report of the results will be prepared and distributed to participants. Please let me know if you wish to receive this feedback. You can do this either by completing the relevant section on the Informed Consent form at the time of the interview, or by filling in the form below, and posting to Richard Parsons, UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, St Lucia, QLD 4072, or by emailing your contact details to r.parsons@business.uq.edu.au.

This study has been cleared by one of the human ethics committees of the University of Queensland, in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines. You are, of course, free to discuss your participation in this study with the researcher (contactable on 0402 475 951). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 3365 3924.

I am interested in receiving feedback following completion of this research. Please send me information when it becomes available.

Address

..........................................................................................................................................................

Email ......................................................................................................................................................

Send to:
Richard Parsons,
UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, St Lucia, QLD 4072
or email your contact details to r.parsons@business.uq.edu.au
Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

Name of Project: A critical evaluation of corporate-community engagement

Researcher: Richard Parsons, UQ Business School and Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining (CSRM)

I hereby agree to be involved in the above research project as a participant. I have read the research information sheet for this project, and I understand the nature of the research and my role in it.

Name of participant ………………………………………………………………………...

Signature of participant ………………………………………………………………………

Date ……………………………………………………………………………………………

I am interested in receiving feedback following completion of this research. Please send me information when it becomes available.

Address ………………………………………………………………………………………

Email ………………………………………………………………………………………...

Send to:
Richard Parsons,
UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, St Lucia, QLD 4072
or email your contact details to r.parsons@business.uq.edu.au
## Appendix 3: Lexical Choices

Table 24: Lexical choices in documents

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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>office</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<th>DISCOURSE 3: INDIGENEITY</th>
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<th>DISCOURSE 3: INDIGENEITY</th>
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<td>earn</td>
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<tr>
<td>boss</td>
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<td><strong>1253</strong></td>
<td><strong>total %</strong></td>
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<th>DISCOURSE 3: INDIGENEITY</th>
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Table 26: Lexical choices for company participants, Site A

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<tr>
<td>culture/al</td>
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<td>land</td>
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<td>white</td>
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Table 27: Lexical choices for community participants, Site B

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<th>DISCOURSE 2: THE NATURAL WORLD</th>
<th>DISCOURSE 3: ENGINEERING</th>
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<td>profit(s)</td>
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<td>rain</td>
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<td>corporate/tion</td>
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Table 28: Lexical choices for company participants, Site B

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<th>Discourse 2: The Natural World</th>
<th>Discourse 3: Engineering</th>
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<td>industry</td>
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<td>recycling</td>
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<td>manage/d/ing/ment</td>
<td>sustainable/ility</td>
<td>refinery</td>
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<td>job</td>
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<td>system(s)</td>
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<td>build</td>
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</table>
## Appendix 4: Participant Demographics

### Table 29: Participant demographics, Site A

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<tr>
<th>COMPANY PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE AGE</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
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<tr>
<td>A.comp1</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.comp2</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.comp3</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.comp4</td>
<td>30s</td>
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</tr>
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<td>A.comp5</td>
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<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.comm1</td>
<td>60s</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.comm2</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.comm3</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>female</td>
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<td>A.comm4</td>
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### Table 30: Participant demographics, Site B

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<th>GENDER</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.comp2</td>
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<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.comp3</td>
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<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.comp4</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.comp5</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>male</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>60s</td>
<td>male &amp; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.comm2</td>
<td>60s</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.comm3 (couple)</td>
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<td>male &amp; female</td>
</tr>
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<td>male &amp; female</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>male &amp; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>B.comm8</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>B.c/c1 (couple)</td>
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<td>male &amp; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.c/c2 (couple)</td>
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Appendix 5: Textual Triangulation of Phenomenography

Site A

Table 31: Relative use of ‘collectivist’ terms among Site A participants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>‘COLLECTIVIST’ TERMS</th>
<th>Frequency for C1 participants (n = 3)</th>
<th>Frequency for C2 participants (n = 6)</th>
<th>Frequency for C3 participants (n = 8)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>everybody/one</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutual</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>society</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total frequency</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
<td><strong>170</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Initially, I included the terms people and community, but they were used so frequently, and in so many different contexts, that they are not very useful analytically here. I also considered searching for individualist terms, to draw further comparisons, but found that there were insufficient such terms to be analytically useful.

Table 32: Relative use of ‘dialogic’ terms among Site A participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘DIALOGIC’ TERMS</th>
<th>Frequency for C1 participants (n = 3)</th>
<th>Frequency for C2 participants (n = 6)</th>
<th>Frequency for C3 participants (n = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discuss</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hear</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negotiate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensitive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total frequency</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>176</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: I also considered counting terms signifying a monologic perspective, to draw further comparisons, but again found that there were insufficient such terms to be analytically useful.
Table 33: Relative use of ‘economic’ and ‘ethical’ terms among Site A participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS SUGGESTING ECONOMIC / INSTRUMENTAL FOCUS</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 3)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 6)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>businesses[superscript 14]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employ(ment)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jobs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pay</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>profit</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>royalties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sponsor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>134</strong></td>
<td><strong>154</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS SUGGESTING ETHICAL / NORMATIVE FOCUS</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 3)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 6)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>care</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genuine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heart</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obligation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsibility</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rights</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensitive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>values</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>151</strong></td>
<td><strong>227</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ratio of ‘ethical / normative’ to ‘economic / instrumental’ terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C1 participants (n = 3)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 6)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Initially, I included the word *should*, as potentially indicating a normative statement, but I found that, as with *people* and *community* above, its frequent use, in many contexts, rendered it analytically misleading here. Note that the comparative nature of this analysis distinguishes it from the two analyses above, where it was not analytically useful to count ‘individualist’ or ‘monologic’ terms.

\[superscript 14\] I included only the plural *businesses*, which participants referred to specifically as a potential focus of the company’s community economic development efforts, whereas the singular *business* had more general meaning.
Table 34: Relative use of ‘heteroglossic’ terms among Site A participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 3)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 6)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONCESSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONJUNCTIONS</strong></td>
<td>but</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>however</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>although</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODAL VERBS</strong></td>
<td>can</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>could</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>may</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>might</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>ADJUNCTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>probably</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>possibly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>perhaps</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>maybe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>often</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>usually</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>occasionally</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>generally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td><strong>per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>65.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>83.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 35: Relative use of ‘collectivist’ terms among Site B participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘COLLECTIVIST’ TERMS</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>everybody/one</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutual</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbour</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>society</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 36: Relative use of ‘dialogic’ terms among Site B participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘DIALOGIC’ TERMS</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discuss</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hear</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negotiate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensitive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 37: Relative use of ‘economic’ and ‘ethical’ terms among Site B participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS SUGGESTING ECONOMIC / INSTRUMENTAL FOCUS</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>businesses</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employ(ment)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jobs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pay</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>profit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recompense</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sponsor</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS SUGGESTING ETHICAL / NORMATIVE FOCUS</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>care</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genuine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heart</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moral</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obligation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflect</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsibility</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rights</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensitive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>values</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td><strong>132</strong></td>
<td><strong>142</strong></td>
<td><strong>140</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>35.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratio of ‘ethical / normative’ terms to ‘economic / instrumental’ terms</th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: To avoid misattribution, I omitted two terms specific to the Site A context, viz. royalties and culture. I also reviewed the transcripts for evidence of any equivalent terms specific to the Site B context, but none were apparent. Following further reading, no equivalent site-specific words emerged here.
Table 38: Relative use of ‘heteroglossic’ terms among Site B participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1 participants (n = 7)</th>
<th>C2 participants (n = 5)</th>
<th>C3 participants (n = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONCESSION CONJUNCTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>although</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODAL VERBS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>could</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>might</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODAL ADJUNCTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probably</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possibly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perhaps</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maybe</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usually</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occasionally</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generally</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency</strong></td>
<td>626</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total frequency per participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>89.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>91.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>114.5</strong></td>
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