Organisational Ventriloquism in a Project Centered Organization

A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE EFFECTS OF RITUALIZED MIMETIC ISOMORPHISM WITHIN A PROJECT CENTERED ORGANIZATION

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"Concepts developed by the academic community... must be recovered from operational and textbook definitions and reconnected to ways of seeing and thinking about the world. In the dialectics of the situation and the talk of individuals with different perspectives, the emergence of new ways of talking becomes possible" (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000: 146).

In the last 50 years we find that project management (PM), as formal discipline, has surpassed its origins in the defence and engineering sectors and is now used in the business and government sectors worldwide. With this global dissemination of project management we also find the augmentation of traditional project management tools and techniques, which was largely derived from operations research, filtering into procurement, team development, stakeholder management and project leadership (Winter & Szczepanek, 2009; Sewchurran, 2008; Winter, Smith, Morris, & Cicmil, 2006; Cicmil & Hodgson, 2006; Whitty, 2005). With the rapid growth of project management as a discipline, we also see the emergence of institutions, such as the UK Association of Project Management (APM) and the US Project Management Institute (PMI), which have also grown exponentially since conception (PMI, 2014). Their goal is simple, standardise and professionalise the practice of project management by offering accreditations and promoting bodies of knowledge. The latest step in the evolutionary of project management is the project-based organisation (PBO), where projects are the central mechanism for the completion of work (Loufrani-Fedida & Missonier, 2015; Bresnen, 2007; Turner & Keegan, 2000). It is safe to say that projects and project management have become pervasive and embedded in every facet of organisational life in the 21st Century.

However, with the rise of project management there has been a rise in project failure rates, and while these may not be directly related there has emerged academic movements questioning the relevance and efficacy of project management (Winter & Szczepanek, 2009; Sewchurran, 2008; Winter, Smith, Morris, & Cicmil, 2006; Cicmil & Hodgson, 2006; Whitty, 2005). The project management institutions have also identified many issues which arise when multiple simultaneous

projects are undertaken in an organisation. They identified the need for close coordinate and balance diverse range of interest, in managing the deployment of resources effectively (Cicmil & Hodgson, 2006). This is the contextual foundation for yet another evolution of project management practices, called Programme management. Programme management has been "…defined as the integration and management of a group of related projects with the intent of achieving benefits that would not be realised if they were managed independently" (Lycett, Rassau & Danson, 2009: 289). The rise and dissemination of programme management saw massive organisational structural changes, but no downward movement in the projects failure rates (Grant, Hackney and Edgar, 2010). Extant literature has indicated that programme management is merely a scaled-up version of project management and many have merely called for greater clarity (Gregory, Keil, Muntermann, & Mähring, 2015; Grant, et al., 2010).

Numerous prominent authors (Winter & Szczepanek, 2009; Sewchurran, 2008; Winter, Smith, Morris, & Cicmil, 2006; Cicmil & Hodgson, 2006) have questioned the relevance of a discipline, which involves the management of social activity, yet remains heavily reliant on an instrumental, functionalist and positivist perspectives of organisations, projects, programmes and people. These authors have urged the scientific community to reexamine the very philosophical underpinnings of project and programme management and have called for a movement away from the traditional Cartesian assumptions, of the natural sciences. Various researchers have asserted that unless we explore different schools of thought or incorporate other disciplines into our discussions, we will continuously seek to address the same concerns and agendas with the same assumptions while seeking to address project failures from the perspective of cost, time and scope. Whitty (2005: 575) states that "…we will not find answers to these questions or further our understanding of projects and their management by using our current research approach to PM."

The Goals of the Research

This research seeks to present a different outlook on the project domain, as opposed to the mainstream research focus. The goals of this research is to move 'outside' the current focus of mainstream project research and explore other theoretical explanations and perspectives that could provide new insights, concerns and agendas for the project domain. It aims to find synergies with different schools of thought by building a bridge between the project domain and organisational theory.

Pellegrinelli (2011: 236) expressed this urgency most eloquently stating: "our efforts might more fruitfully be directed away from deducing or inferring abstract generalisations towards elucidating practice to inform practice, purpose-fully, rather than just inevitably, changing the subject of our study. Perhaps, what practitioners are supposed to do might be better informed by what they tend to do and why, and how else they might do it?"

Several researchers have suggested an abductive approach is useful for uncovering new insights, whereby the researcher grounds him/herself within a specific empirical context of study (Blaikie, 2004; 2007; 2010; Reichertz, 2010). Thus it is for this reason that I have chosen to select an empirically grounded approach to abducted inquiry for this research. The abductive approach requires a specific type of fluidity, in which the researcher 'allows the context to speak' and 'does not speak for the context'. In conducting abductive inquiry it is important to have a point of entry and a question to orient the researcher while making the journey purposeful (Blaikie, 2004; 2007; 2010). From this perspective I sought to answer the following question:

> *Q1: What are the social forces that influence the adoption of mainstream project and programme management standards and structures?*

The Context of the Research

This study was part of a larger research project focusing on understanding existing organizing practices in order to create 'good-to-aspire-to' organizing practices. A research team was immersed in an organizational context for a 6-month period within a medium-sized multinational financial services organization to observe, experience and reflect on organizing practices being used to deliver, enhance and maintain business application systems. This presented me with an opportunity to gain access to multiple stakeholders within the organization as well as the ability to observe practices related to the project management domain within the organization.

The Structure of the Research

This thesis has been designed in a series of chapters. Chapter 2 presents a literature review, which seeks to uncover the ideological assumptions of project management and how these have affected the development of programme management. This chapter has been divided into distinct themes; Firstly it discusses the historical development of project management, its rise to global fame and the criticism of project management as movement of practice; Secondly, it presents a detailed account on the various effects that project management has had on the development of mainstream programme management, and it elaborates this perspective on multiple levels. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical perspectives that were utilized and aims to portray the relevance of these perspectives (social constructionism, critical hermeneutics, soft systems thinking, and abductive inquiry) in interpreting the phenomenon. Chapter 4 discusses the research method that was utilized to approach this study. Chapter 5 discusses the techniques that were utilized to analyze the data. Chapter 6 presents the empirical findings in accordance to the research method and data analysis techniques. This chapter seeks to source the organizational stakeholder perspectives on their rationale for adopting the mainstream best practices. Chapter 7 presents a theoretical discussion whereby the data analysis is corroborated with extant literature and theoretical propositions are presented. This chapter has been divided into 4 interconnected sections, namely: the systemic effects of institutionalisation on project management; unearthing the underlying assumptions within the project domain; connecting mimetic isomorphism with project management; and the emergence of organizational ventriloquism. Causal loop modeling

was utilized to illustrate the interconnectedness of the theoretical propositions. Chapter 8 is the final chapter and highlights the contribution that the research made, the limitations of the research and the reflections and implications for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this literature I will outline some of the key themes of project management from the period 1993-2013 that are relevant to my research. Therefore, I will focus my review on two themes within the project domain, namely Project Management and Programme Management. Within the project management theme I will discuss (1) the historical development of project management, (2) its rise to global fame and (3) the criticism of project management as movement of practice. Within the programme management theme I will present a detailed account of ideological assumptions were transferred from project management to programme management. When viewed from the perspective of ideological assumptions the literature reveals three core themes within the mainstream programme management approaches that have a Cartesian orientation, namely: (1) a linear lifecycle, (2) a hierarchy of roles, (3) and a set of defined unwavering activities.

Excavating the Ancestral Roots of Project Management

History plays an important role in understanding purposeful activity, determining what will be made to be significant and what will be noticed. Understanding the historical context of the project domain will illuminate that we are working with contexts that are continuously evolving and are perceived differently by different people. According to Heidegger (1962) it is history which determines, for a given group of people, both what will be noticed as significant and how what is noticed, will be judged. It reminds us that in working in real situations we are dealing with something which is both perceived differently by different people and is continually changing.

From the perspective of Checkland (2010) and Foucault (as sited Räisänen & Linde, 2004) knowledge of 'purposeful activity' is embedded in the usage of these tools, techniques and methodologies, as well as the 'world-views' which governs the behaviours of the users. Further, understanding purposeful activity, requires an understanding of the existing social realities that have shaped the current state of the art. Hence, in the following section I will focus on developing

an understanding of the purposeful activity as well as the underlying assumptions of the structural-functionalist approach embedded in project management practice.

The Provenance of Project Management

It is believed that PM started during the 12th century when improvisation gave way to rationalized preparation of the design stage. However, it was only in the 1960s that project management methods and techniques were developed and mastered by engineers. This mastery was the turning point in what ultimately led to the shift away from improvisation and occasional successes to rationalization and standardization of PM practices. In 1969, the Project Management Institute (PMI) was created by five volunteers, with the initial goal of creating an organization where its members could all share their experiences of project management and to discuss issues of project failure. Thereafter the PMI began bringing together engineers, scientists and technicians from public organizations such as NASA and large engineering firms (McKenna & Whitty, 2012; Garel, 2013).

The dissemination of the PMI practices gained leverage when the American Federal Government began requesting PMI certification in order to be considered for tenders. The Pentagon also contributed to this dissemination of PMI standards when they initiated training of the PMI tools and techniques for European military engineers (McKenna & Whitty, 2012). When these PMI-trained engineers eventually departed from the defense industry to work as independent consultants in other industries, they further propagated the PMI's project planning methods (McKenna & Whitty, 2012; Garel, 2013). However, it was in the 1980s that PMI practices attained global acceptance. The key actors in the proliferation of PMI were the US Departments of Defense, and Energy, and NASA which forced all their suppliers to conform to the PMI project monitoring tools as criteria for tendering. This in turn influenced thousands of subcontractors around the world to conform to the PMI standards (McKenna & Whitty, 2012; Garel, 2013). According to McKenn aand Whitty (2012) and Garel (2013), two initiatives have influenced the institutionalization of PMI standards as 'best practice' were:

1. The development of the certified project manager designation and certification of members who had to comply with their code of ethics, and a standardized body of knowledge,

2. The introduction of a Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) which was made available free of charge for many years.

The PMI very quickly became the world's leading non-profit association with 265 chapters, based in 185 countries. In 2014 the PMI membership is 447,006 showing an overall increase of 8.5 percent increase from the previous year (PMI, 2014). The numbers indicate that there is a growing inclination towards adopting PMI best practices, this research seeks to unearth the idealogical assumption which serve as key drivers towards the adoption of best practices. While the tools and techniques vary, and various bodies of knowledge (BoK) emerged, the view of project management remains positivist and deterministic. However, the last decade has seen a growing movement of researchers criticizing the dogmatic, rationalist and positivist models that have dominated project management practices (Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006; Lenfle, 2008; Winter, et al., 2006; Sewchurran 2008; McKenna & Whitty, 2012;).

Time to market for new products, global market competition and growth expectations facing organizations are all having an impact on how companies organize and manage their product portfolios (Aubry, et al. 2007). There has been a rise in the number of projects undertaken simultaneously within firms and consequently to the complexity of managing them" (Aubry, et al. 2007, pg: 1). To address this change the PMI and the International Project Management Association (IPMA) attempted the expansion of the field of project management beyond a focus on the management of projects to embrace the management of programs, portfolios and organisations that achieve their strategic objectives through projects, programs, and portfolios. The explicit goal of PMI is to move beyond "deliver[ing] projects on time, on budget and in conformity with technical and quality specifications. The goal [appears to] have evolved to create value for the business." (Aubry, et al, 2007: 1).

While the PMI has made explicit their intentions to move beyond the iron triangle (time, cost and scope), they have failed to step out of the worldview of project management, which advocates the rational, universal, and deterministic approach. According to Winter and Szczepanek (2009) human beings are unable to cognise anything anew; as all knowledge gained, from the time of one's nativity, is connected to past experiences and therefore influences future enactment. Therefore the development of Project Portfolio Management (PPM) by the PMI could be seen as an attempt at being creative but limited by the intellectual prisom of yesteryear. Viewed from this vantage point, it becomes apparent that the altering of the description of PM practices does not imply a fundamental change in perspective.

For the PMI to say that they have moved away from their deterministic model, is to say they have stripped away their 'historical-consciousness' of thinking. In this sense the 'historical-consciousness' is the substance which impinges, shapes and alters our ontological stance or way of seeing the world, and it is at all times connected to our 'acquaint-consciousness'. For example the majority of the literature in the PPM field provides similar lists of objectives to be achieved through the adoption of PPM approaches, all of which are deeply rooted in the traditional deterministic views of project management. Research (Dickinson et., 2001; Council, 2002; Reyck, et al., 2005; Whitty & Schulz, 2007; McKenna & Whitty, 2012) has identified five key PMI goals that exemplify this perspective, namely:

1. Goals and objectives are clearly definable and articulable
2. Risks can be identified, minimized, eliminated, and even diversified;
3. Trade-offs can be seen, understood, accepted and made;
4. Human performance is quantifiable and monitorial, because the goals and objectives are clearly definable and articulable; and
5. Once all of the above four goals have been met, the practitioner would be able to establish a confidence to achieve the objectives.

The Cries for Change: elucidating the growing concern in Project Management

Research examining the field of project management has unearthed various bodies of knowledge, all attempting to depict what is typically recognized as good PM practice. Over the past several years, there have been calls for an alternative approach to good practice. Sewchurran (2008: 318) indicated that "…the Taylorist flavour of command and control does not suit projects dependent on high levels of innovation; the focus on tools and techniques marginalizes the experience and restricts opportunities for success and engagement with the issues project participants are concerned with." Cicmil and Hodgson (2006, p. 14) argued that the 'iron triangle', which could alternatively be viewed as the mainstream conformism of project research, which has 'bedeviled' the research of project management. Furthermore Cicmil and Hodgson (2006) built on this when outlining weaknesses in dominant research methodologies frequently used in project management studies. Cicmil (2006, p. 36) asserted that the project management practice would be better represented by a qualitative approach which integrates a critical interpretive approach that might "generate alternative understandings of what goes on in project practice and how practitioners participate in and manage complex organizational arrangements." Ivory and Alderman (2005, p. 5) postulated that the project management practice needs to somehow try and distance itself from the prevalent rationalistic assumptions which govern the current research field. Winter et al (2006) asserted that the field of project management is not only an undeveloped field of research, but many of the normative and traditional contributions are also unhelpful when it comes to understanding what is really occurring in projects.

There appears to be various discourses that have been embedded within the mainstream conformism of project research, which has consequently led to the widespread adoption by organisations:

1. The practice itself appears rational and well-grounded. The image is implicitly presented as self-evidently scientific, which presents itself as correct, and provides a prescriptive set of techniques and tools to reach an objective. Thus, is no need for justification, since there is no need to question as to whether the approaches are correct (Williams, 2005; Cicmil et

al., 2012; Cicmil, 2006; Winter et al,. 2006; Whitty & Schulz, 2007; McKenna & Whitty, 2012).

2. The ontological stance of the PPM approaches, like the BoK, are essentially positivist, i.e. there is an underlying assumption that the practitioner is separate from his lived reality and that they are always in a state of 'objective-reflection', the reality of what needs to be managed is fixed and the facts are clearly observable and quantifiable, (Williams, 2005; Cicmil et al., 2012; Cicmil, 2006; Winter et al,. 2006; Whitty & Schulz, 2007; McKenna & Whitty, 2012). An implication of this stance, is that while the BoK claim their toolkits to be universal and neutral, the social conduct imposed by the organizational 'historical-consciousness' leads the actor to see through a particular lens, consequently blinding the actor from other views (Williams, 2005; Cicmil et al., 2006; Cicmil, 2006; Winter et al,. 2006; Whitty & Schulz, 2007; McKenna & Whitty, 2012). This image of 'historical- consciousness' is often explicitly imposed by organizations as it is based on the control of conduct of the actors, the positivist stance holds the belief that losing control of actors conduct will lead to inevitable failure and doom (Williams, 2005; Whitty & Schulz, 2007).

3. The decomposition of work or objectives into smaller pieces will lead to success, this is more commonly seen as the management of scope (Williams, 2005; Cicmil et al., 2006; Cicmil, 2006; Winter et al,. 2006; Whitty & Schulz, 2007; McKenna & Whitty, 2012). Consequently, a product of the positivist image of 'historical-consciousness', the decomposition of work or objectives into smaller chunks, implicitly see's projects as having clearly defined inputs and outputs. As though these tasks are independent and fixed. The image permits one to believe that through proper planning all objectives can be attained and managed (Williams, 2005; Cicmil et al., 2012; Cicmil, 2006; Winter et al,. 2006).

4. There is an underlying discourse, from the stakeholder perspective, that the effectual tactical and operative governing tools are essential to guarantee that projects are aligned with the business goals and visions of the organization. Therefore one consequence of the projectification trend seems to be a move towards a new form of hegemony through project organizations (Räisänen & Linde, 2004; Whitty & Schulz, 2007)

5. According to Räisänen and Linde (2004) the emergence of the project manager and team leader roles has ensued in fundamental changes in organizational identities. Since its emergence these new project-based organizational identities have been competing for authority and autonomy with traditional management identities, consequently giving rise to the emergence of tangible tensions on a macro level, between traditional and project organizations. Tensions also emerge on an intragroup level, between projects, as a result of the tense competition for resources and precedence. Furthermore, the conflicting discourses of the competing parties often exasperated theses tensions (Räisänen & Linde, 2004; Whitty & Schulz, 2007).

6. The rise of project organization has required management to find new ways of recreating employees' work identities so as to internalize self-discipline, trust and motivation within the managerial body, and consequently making it difficult to question. The discourse of standardizing project management models can be seen as a way of regaining control of projects through the extensive and well-rounded textual inscriptions (Räisänen & Linde, 2004; Whitty & Schulz, 2007; McKenna & Whitty, 2012).

7. The predetermined sequential stages adopted by many project management models, is yet another discourse of maintaining control as each stage/phase is bounded by the specified formal managerial decision points. The project management models are, thus, a set of discursive practices which further impose the social ontology, ideology, epistemology and norms of the organization that created it; and so they form and reform project management through ensuring its symbolization and perpetuation (Räisänen & Linde, 2004; Whitty & Schulz, 2007; McKenna & Whitty, 2012).

Programme Management: Project management's younger, prettier sister

The growth of organisations and the constant economic pressure to reduce the time to market has, according to Aubry, et al., (2007), resulted in the rise of numerous projects being undertaken simultaneously. According to Aubry, et al., (2007: 328) "…the PMI and the IPMA have confirmed the expansion of the field of project management beyond a focus on the management of projects

to embrace the management of programs, portfolios and organisations that achieve their strategic objectives through projects, programs, and portfolios. The goal…is not just to deliver projects on time, on budget and in conformity with technical and quality specifications. The goal is to create value for the business."

While this sounds sensible, programme management has emerged within the same fundamental principles as the mechanistic approaches to project management; namely control and structure. Generally these standardized approaches perpetuate shared themes, which are mainly: (1) a linear lifecycle, (2) a hierarchy of roles, (3) and a set of defined unwavering activities.

The Lifecycle of linearity

A key feature of the mainstream approaches is that their lifecycle model is pervasive to the current popular frameworks for project management including the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBoK, cf. PMI, 2008) preserved by Project Management Institute (PMI, 2012) and Project in Controlled Environments (PRINCE2) (Murray & Director, 2010). These frameworks also represent the mainstay for management practices. Prince2 is a process driven project management methodology. It views the project as a set of process areas, each consisting of guidelines for progressing through the stages of a project. This is a prescriptive methodology with a clearly defined framework for directing a project (Grant, Hackney and Edgar, 2010). Some of the perceived benefits of Prince2 are greater control of project related resources, a defined framework of practice, common lexicons, improved risk mitigation due to more stringent management control mechanisms (Grant et al., 2010).

Prince 2 is based on the assumption that there are pre-defined inputs, which exist at the birth of every programme, these inputs are perceived to provide a definitive outline of the overall direction and composition of the programme. Consequently, there is a perception that the programme can be strategically aligned to business objectives by simply defining the appropriate groupings at the beginning and then adjusting those groupings to keep the programme and strategy aligned. There

are stages which are generic to the majority of approaches are: programme identification, programme definition, programme execution and programme closure.

Programme identification

This phase primarily defines ‘‘the overall objective for the programme and positions the programme within the organisations corporate mission, goals, strategies and other initiatives’’ (Lycett, Rassau, & Danson, 2004: 291-292). IBM’s approach to programme management, suggests that at this phase the best candidate groupings of projects should be determined, whilst we find that OGC’s approach defers the determination of project groupings until Programme definition phase. Haughey (2001) postulates that it is vital to construct programme boundaries which will explain exactly what needs to delivered. The OGC expresses the same message but by means of the Programme Brief, with expectations to outline the programme benefits, risks or issues, vision, as well as approximations of cost-time-effort, mimicking the Project Brief, it is expected that the project size, composition and duration be presented at the onset (Haughey, 2001; OGC, 2007; Murray & Director, 2010).

The Programme Definition stage

Most of the approaches adopt an analogous process of the Programme definition stage, namely: (1) the fine-tuning of the vision and objectives of the programme, (2) the creation of the programme office or organization and (3) the formation of process and support structures needed to aid the management of the programme. At this stage it is perceived that the inter-dependencies of the project which form the programme will be clarified and used as the foundation for the high-level plan, which will illustrated the sequencing of the projects (Haughey, 2001; OGC, 2007; Murray & Director, 2010).

The Programme Execution stage

During this stage it is expected that the project managers manage their identified projects and it is the duty of the Programme manager to ensure the overseeing of the progress, assess the risk implications and then report again on the progress (Haughey, 2001). There are specific activities which have been identified for this stage, namely: (1) guaranteeing that the specified business

environment is amply positioned for the changes and (2) guaranteeing that risks and benefits are managed properly throughout the programme. One can observe that in both IBM and OGC methodologies, projects are implemented in a ordering of groups, and following each grouping are periodic review points. The parallel connection is that this idea directly relates to the concepts of rolling wave planning and evolutionary project management, which are perceived to provide business alignment (Haughey, 2001; OGC, 2007; Murray & Director, 2010)

The Programme Closure stage

This stage is solely interested with benefits realization, it is perceived that within this stage the programme would deliver the identified benefits; those identified benefits are, perceived to be, realized through formal assessment, at which the programme manager would receive confirmation of all the projects being formally closed (Haughey, 2001; OGC, 2007; Murray & Director, 2010).

Hierarchical roles and the reductionist view of responsibilities

Defining the roles within the programme office appears to be one of the crucial elements of a programme. Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) (Orlikowski, 1991; Murray & Director, 2010) is a representative of designs offered by the literature. The MSP approach has typically identified three distinctive roles, namely: (1) the Programme director is someone who has been granted with chief responsibility and accountability for the programme; (2) the Programme manager, is someone who has been granted with the responsibility of developing and managing the programme; and (3) the Business change manager, who has been granted with the responsibility of benefits management and the realization of the process. Pellegrini (1997) has proposed a somewhat different hierarchy of roles, as he suggests that the role of the Programme Client (who acts for the business as a whole) is to determine the strategic requirements and the Programme manager responsibility is benefits realization. The common feature throughout these approaches is that there is a linear hierarchy between the Programme and project manager, which implies that a direct reporting relationship exists. Interestingly there has been no acknowledgement, by these

standardized approaches that the programme manager, while distinctly different role, might not necessarily be a hierarchically grander role to that of project managers.

The Unwavering Programme management activities

There has been range of various programme management activities which have been suggested (Pellegrini, 1997; Haughey, 2001; OGC, 2007; Murray & Director, 2010), however all of these activities appear to be centered on the underlying assumption of the hierarchy of programme roles and responsibilities, as well as a linear lifecycle as mentioned above. Fundamentally there are common areas which the literature has presented, namely: (1) planning and resource management, in order to accomplish the specified programme objectives and actualize the benefits across the programme of projects; (2) Monitoring and Control, which involves the tracking of project progress which very much comparable with the project management discipline, notwithstanding the difference within reporting structures (Pellegrini, 1997; Haughey, 2001; OGC, 2007; Murray & Director, 2010); (3) Configuration management and change control, throughout all the standard approaches there is a common view that it is essential for all programmes to have baseline through which to measure the costs and benefits (Pellegrini, 1997; Haughey, 2001; OGC, 2007; Murray & Director, 2010); (4) Risk and issue management, the literature presents an image that is not much more than another view of issue logging and escalation processes, which exists at the project level; (5) Benefits management, the literature descriptions of this activity does not differ fundamentally from the project level concept, albeit in relation to hierarchical division of responsibilities (Pellegrini, 1997; OGC, 2007; Murray & Director, 2010); and (6) stakeholder management, while just in relation to aforementioned roles it is clear that the engagement requires more plasticity than the equivalent project level domain. However, it appears that the standard approaches have not taken this into account (Pellegrini, 1997; Haughey, 2001; OGC, 2007; Murray & Director, 2010).

The Effects on Programme Management and Project Management

The mainstream approaches inherently seek to exercise an unsuitable degree of control in the striving for an inappropriate level of detail; which indirectly lead to planning and control systems that are unmanageable (Gray & Bamford, 1999; Lycett et al, 2004; Reiss, 2013). There are two distinct dangers which arise: (1) Excessive hierarchical bureaucracy and control; and the (2) Focus on an inappropriate level of detail.

Excessive hierarchical bureaucracy and control

Thiry (2002) suggested that the mainstream programme management approaches implicitly radiate excessive control; this bias is accentuated by available programme management software, which emphasizes the management of resources and integrated planning elements. Research has suggested that an exuberant amount of control and bureaucracy creates rigidity, bureaucratic outlays of reporting requirements and the tendency to reduce programme management to a mechanism for reporting (McElroy, 1996; Gray & Bamford, 1999; Reiss, 2013). This overly bureaucratic approach to programme management tends to deteriorate the relationship between the project and programme manager, which further perpetuates a culture of blame, and deviation of drive from value based activities (Lycett et al, 2004; Pellegrinelli, Partington, Hemingway, Mohdzain, & Shah, 2007).

Focus on an inappropriate level of detail

The mainstream approaches tend to emphasize detailed integrated planning, because of these large integrated plans are so difficult to formulate one often finds that the programmes becoming excessively complex and cumbersome (Payne, 1995; Levene & Braganza, 1996; Pellegrinelli et al, 2007). Lycett et al (2004) suggested that the excessive focalizing on detailed planning dramatically increases the risk of programme managers failing to establish the core issues that are of real significance to programme. Rather Levene and Braganza (1996) believe that the interdependencies within a program are often associated with issues of ownership, programme managers should divert their energies away from detailed planning and towards the interfaces between projects. A study by Yaghootkar and Gil (2012) revealed how a focus detailed planning

within programme management policy, can harm the long-term capability of the programme to meet its desired outcomes.

The Effects on Organisational Strategy & Integral Projects of the programme

Pellegrinelli (1997) and Pellegrinelli et al (2007) noticed that the mainstream approaches largely tended to neglect the importance of shaping, embedding and aligning programmes to the constantly evolving business context. Lycett et al (2004) highlighted that this is clearly problematic since the role of the programme manager is to ensure that connections are established and maintained between task-centric perspective or projects and the strategic mechanisms of the emergent organization. The mainstream approaches emphasis on the project-level of change-control tends to lead to an intrinsic rigidity (Pellegrinelli et al, 2007), which reveals itself in two interconnected yet distinct ways: (1) The Programme lifecycle of Linearity; and (2) Programme incumbency.

The Programme lifecycle of Linearity

The mainstream approaches have shown to have deep inclination towards linearity embedded within their lifecycle. There is an underlying worldview that the programme can be outlined in detail at the beginning and once it has been clearly defined it will be carried through to clearly outlined closure point, while meticulously managing the programme scope throughout (see Haughey [2001] for example). Within this worldview, activities such as adding new projects or adjusting the course of the programme are exceptions. In principle it would be possible to adjust a programme as a reaction to the evolving the business context, however, the current focus on defining and control will only increase the rigidity of programme. Surprisingly this focus on clearly defined boundaries and outlines actually negates the value of having a programme (Pellegrinelli, 1997; Pellegrinelli et al, 2007).

Programme incumbency

Another underlying worldview is that programmes have a fixed and defined life (Haughey, 2001). According to Mintzberg and Waters (1985) this perception is counterintuitive as the underlying processes, which are meant to identify, strategies are fragmented, intuitive, emergent and evolutionary. Grundy (1998) actually suggests that the territorial and emotional sensations, which are excavated during the formulation of the strategy, are in fact magnified during the implementation of that particular strategy, which will only heighten the uncertainty and emergence. Consequently, it makes one question why one would want to push fixed time-scales at the beginning of a programme. Pellegrinelli (1997) holds a contrasting perspective, that in fact the programme should have indefinite time-scale, which appears more realistic if the programme can be justified to lead to business value. McElroy (1996), Pollack (2007) and Biedenbach and Söderholm (2008) concur with this perspective in that it is vital that a programme have the ability to absorb projects incrementally.

The Effects on Projects within a Programme

There is a tendency for mainstream approaches to neglect the complications, which arise at the interface among the projects themselves. Eskerod (1996) and Hatcher, Chang, and Kim (2012) agree that competition within a multi-project environment is a natural occurring phenomenon, which surfaces through as the rivalry to ensure specific resources and to attain high prioritization ratings. There are mainly two destructive consequences from these natural occurring phenomena: (1) Inter-Project Rivalry; and (2) Inability to leverage organisational learning.

Inter-Project Rivalry

According to Lycett et al (2004) large organisations often function like an internal market system which competes for project resources, which is typically reinforced by performance-related rewards for the individual and team. This presents an underlying assumption that focusing on individual project effectiveness will result in organisational effectiveness. Studies conducted by Alexander Lord (1993) and Partington, Pellegrinelli and Young (2005) indicate that this inter-project competition does not serve the best interest of the organization, instead this competition

increases the anxiety within teams leading to projects operating autonomously, so much so that they simply have no idea what other employees outside team are working on (Eskerod, 1996).

Yaghootkar and Gil (2012) noticed that within these intense competitive environments one often finds that programme managers tend to take resources from one project and allocate them to a project considered more important and that was running late. The causal loop diagram below attempts to capture the systemic effects of taking resources from one project to another:

"*first, as one project loses resources, it also becomes under schedule pressure after a time delay; second, as more projects become under schedule pressure, resources switch back and forth more frequently in response to increased oscillation in project priorities; and third, with increased fluctuation in the teams' size, productivity decreases. These effects compounded exacerbate schedule pressure in a self-reinforcing vicious cycle, generating a persistent steady state that degrades the organization's long-term performance in terms of its capability to deliver projects efficiently.*" (Yaghootkar & Gil, 2012: 136).

Inability to leverage organisational learning

There has been some reference in the mainstream methodologies to convey learning between projects (see OGC [2007: 3] for an example), however there is no information on creating an environment that would in reality enable the learning to happen, the learning is almost objectified as a finite object that would emerge at the end of the project. Instead we find that the learning that is communicated tends to be biased towards the representation of success (Eskerod, 1996).

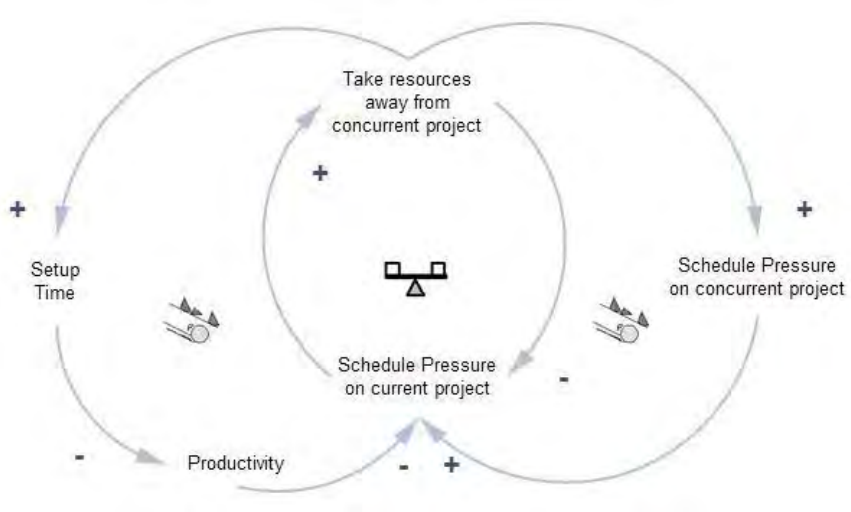


Figure 2-1: Inter-Project Rivalary

Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspectives of Research

"No matter how careful you are, there's going to be the sense you missed something, the collapsed feeling under your skin that you didn't experience it all. There's that fallen heart feeling that you rushed right through the moments where you should've been paying attention. Well, get used to that feeling. That's how your whole life will feel some day. This is all practice." — Chuck Palahniuk, Invisible Monsters

The theoretical perspective of this research encompasses soft systems thinking and abductive inquiry (Checkland, 2000; Attwater, 1999; Jackson, 2006; Blaikie, 2008; Reichertz, 2010). For this research, I chose to use Checkland's (1984, 1994, 2000) 'soft' systems thinking perspective, as it is rooted in a social constructionist philosophy of science and critical hermeneutics, furthermore it adopts an abductive approach to inquiry (Checkland, 2000; Attwater, 1999; Jackson, 2006; Rose, 1997). In this chapter I will discuss the relevant concepts of my theoretical perspective and abductive inquiry method. I will first describe the key principles of the social constructionist philosophy and its relevance to my work before discussing critical hermeneutics and its importance to my empirical analysis and interpretation of the data. I will then discuss the key concepts of 'soft' systems thinking relevant to this research, it is important to note that I utilized the soft systems approach more as a strategy for interpreting the empirical data collected while conducting this research. Finally, I will present key concepts of the abductive approach to inquiry that is the preferred approach of soft systems thinking.

Social Constructionism

The social constructionist approach is concerned with developing theory to enrich our understanding of how actors in social situations inter-subjectively create, understand, and reproduce them (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Turnbull, 2002; Winch, 1958, 1990). The social constructionist approach embraces a subjective ontology and espouses two foundational assumptions to ground its research: (1) the meanings which actors ascribe to their actions and artifacts in a social situation are essential to the constructing of knowledge about it; (2) knowledge of social actions and social situations is socially constructed by the social scientist by inquiring into

the actors' interpretations of the social situation (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Garfinkel, 1967; Mead, 1934; Schutz, 1967).

The theory development objective of this research is congruent with the principle of qualitative inquiry, which holds that "theories are interpretations made from given perspectives as adopted or researched by researchers," (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 171). It complements the underlying assumptions of both critical hermeneutics and systems thinking.

Critical Hermeneutics

As indicated above I sought to use critical hermeneutics as a way of interpreting the empirical situation. Hermeneutics can simply be defined as "…the theory or philosophy of the interpretation of meaning" (Bleicher, 1980, p. 1). Its primary concerned is with the 'meaning' of a text or text-analogue. A text-analogue is anything that can be treated as a text, such as any human artefact, action, organization or culture. Hermeneutics main objective is about human 'understanding', understanding of what people say and do, and providing an explanation as to why. Despite there being various types of hermeneutics, from 'pure' hermeneutics through to critical hermeneutics, the golden thread which is consistent is that all of those types are "…concerned with the textual treatment of social settings" (Myers, 2004: 103). Hermeneutic efforts are all attempts at greater or richer clarity of the subject of study.

Although hermeneutic philosophy has existed for centuries, it was the twentieth century social philosophers, which gave its prominence to modern day thought, whereby they gave hermeneutic interpretations not only to written texts but also to speech and actions. According to Myers (2004) it was Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur that initiated the application of the techniques of hermeneutics in the social sciences (Thompson, 1981). Diesing (1991) states that this hermeneutic school of thought 'derives most directly from Heidegger, Gadamer's teacher, but also draws on

concepts and logic from the whole German philosophical tradition back to Schleiermacher, Hegel, Kant, and beyond' (Diesing, 1991, p. 105).

It was constant the dialogue and debates between Habermas and Gadamer that gave rise to the emergence of critical hermeneutics (Myers, 2004, Thompson, 1981). Critical hermeneutic philosophers "…recognize that the interpretive act is one that can never be closed as there is always a possible alternative interpretation. In critical hermeneutics the interpreter constructs the context as another form of text, which can then, of itself, be critically analysed. In a sense, the hermeneutic interpreter is simply creating another text upon a text, and this recursive creation is potentially infinite. Every meaning is constructed, even though the very constructive act of seeking to deconstruct, and the process whereby that textual interpretation occurs is self-critically reflected upon." (Myers, 2004:103).

Critical hermeneutics embodies the double hermeneutic, the idea that a social scientists study people and social activity from within, and that he/she must understand the language of the social actors and social context in order to interpret meaning from it (Ngwenyama and Lee, 1997). Critical hermeneutics acknowledges the "…reflective critique of the interpretation applied by the researcher" (Myers, 2004:113) and requires the researcher to become aware that he or she is essentially situated in history, the history of the situation and of the interpretation, but also that he/she is embedded within a wider social, economic and political structure. Moreover, critical Hermeneutics suggests that whenever human communication is taking place there is some form of socioeconomic or political bondage intertwined within the text. The purpose of interpretation, within critical hermeneutics, is emancipatory; as the conventional wisdoms within the particular community of study are challenged in order to illuminate potential power asymmetries.

Soft Systems Thinking

I used the soft systems thinking because it offers a set of tools and techniques that supports an empirically driven strategy for interrogating empirical situations and developing an understanding the worldviews, actions and interactions of the organizational members and the beliefs, meanings, social rules that enable and constrain their organizational actions (Checkland, 1984, 1989, 2000, 2010; Checkland & Holwell, 1993, 1998). It is important to note that I utilized the 'soft' systems thinking more as a strategy for analysing the empirical data collected while conducting this research. This approach presents an abductive analytical strategy and a set of techniques for sense-making, analysis, modeling and a visualization of the causal connections embedded within empirical situations (Checkland, 2000; Rose, 1997). Moreover, I selected the use of the soft systems thinking as it embraces a social constructionist philosophy, the critical hermeneutic approach and emphasizes abductive reasoning: the strategy of moving back and forth from empirical observations to theoretical concepts in order to construct empirically based theoretical explanations of the research findings (Checkland, 1984, 2010; Checkland & Haynes 1994; Rose, 1997; Mingers, 1980; 1984). Before elaborating on systems thinking it is important to understand the intellectual background of systems theory. Systems theory posits that there are multiple interrelated elements within a system. It places focus on identifying and analyzing linkages between these various elements and promotes a perspective of thinking holistically (Checkland, 2010). An intellectual thread of systems theory is systems thinking (Mathews & Jones, 2008).

Barton and Haslett (2007, p. 143) assert that a system is best defined as "a cognitive construct for making sense of complexity and the organization of knowledge". They further argue that the scientific method is most usefully interpreted as a dialectic (interplay between seemingly opposite ideas; process that recognizes the strengths and limitations of human cognition; provides checks and balances to avoid the excesses of extreme reductionism and extreme holism) between analysis (provides explanation of how things work) and synthesis (provides understanding of

purpose by putting things into context) (Barton and Haslett, 2007). According to Barton and Haslett (2007), soft systems thinking provides a distinctive approach to the manner in which both analysis and synthesis operate within the scientific method through providing a way of framing the dialectic process involving synthesis and analysis supported by the logics of abduction, deduction and induction.

Systems' thinking enables the abstraction of complex problems as holistic complex realities, according to Checkland (1989, 2000, 2010) it allows users to create models of purposeful activity, which are intellectual devices, which will aid in shaping the different emerging perspectives of the problem situation. It is important to note that Checkland (1989, 2000, 2010) did not intend these intellectual devices to be true representations of the real world situation, rather they are merely devices used to stimulate, fertilize and construct a debate about the complex problem (Checkland, 2000, 2010). Ledington (1992: p. 18) described it eloquently, in that it "…provides a general set of concepts and an intellectual framework for articulating the search for 'images of reality' which are relevant to taking purposeful action within some problem situation". Mathews (2008: 76) eloquently portrayed the purpose and the uses of systems thinking, namely that: "Systems thinking uses mapping of inter-relationships as a means to improve decision-maker understanding of how to intervene and improve system performance. Soft Systems thinking is a heuristic, a tool of analysis that encourages discovery rather than behavioral predictions. Thus, systems thinkers do not produce deterministic models but rather models that facilitate an understanding of the interworkings of systems through visualizations of the behavior occurring within the system. Understanding the interworkings of a system, or the relationships between the various actors of a system, is useful because it improves understanding of the outcomes of the system. […] [it] builds theories for how the system works and uses them to develop insights about the behavior of the system over time, with the goal of improving system performance."

Checkland (2000: 17) highlights that there are four key points in systems thinking, namely: "(1) Every situation in which decision making is involved is a social situation in which people attempt

to take purposeful action that is meaningful to them. The identification of this purpose is an emergent outcome of interaction among multiple actors. (2) Many interpretations of a declared purpose (goal or objective) are possible; therefore, for every purposeful activity, the perspective or world view on which it is based has to be declared. (3) There is a need to move away from the identification of a problem that requires a solution and toward the idea of a situation that some people may regard as problematic. (4) Management action takes place when people in a given situation agree on a course of action that is desirable and feasible given their individual histories, relationships, culture, and aspirations."

Systems' thinking differs from the linear styles of thinking of conventional thinking in that it requires ones thinking to move in a variety of different directions (Mingers, 1980; 1984). It pays more attention to the identification and capturing of the flow, movement and dynamics of a particular phenomenon (Rose, 1997; Checkland, 1984, 2000, 2010). Systems thinking is a way of seeing the world, seeing the effects of interactions, patterns and processes and the position opposes the efforts to create detailed foreseeable outcomes (Checkland, 1984, 2000; Rose, 1997; Mingers, 1980; 1984). This way of seeing the world is mostly about being present in the now, living and embracing randomness and unforeseeable consequences (Checkland, 1984; Checkland, 2000; Rose, 1997; Mingers, 1980; 1984; Senge, 1997). When one embraces such a view, one must be willing to embrace the notions of evolution, discovery, and emergence of that which is humanness. Embracing systems thinking is thus embracing ones humanness to the world and everything that is constructed within this world. In order to embrace the humanness of systems thinking, one must reject the illusions of objective knowledge and that it is readily available for collection, because no knowledge is independent and separated from its context (Checkland, 1984, 2000, 2010; Rose, 1997; Mingers, 1980; 1984; Senge, 1997). Therefore when a researcher describes a particular reality, the reality is that of which the researcher has consciously or unconsciously chosen to see, which is why the researcher must see his research as a piece of clay, constantly sculpting until truth presents itself. When one is a sculptor in search of truth one must put ideologies and dogma aside, and harness the diversities of the present in order for truth to emerge (Senge, 1997; Checkland, 2000, 2010).

Abductive Inquiry: Principles of a novel discovery

I sought to use an abductive analytical strategy as it compliments 'soft' systems thinking and social constructionist philosophy science (Checkland, 2010; Blaikie, 2010). Aristotle originally introduced the concept of abduction, however, it was Charles Sanders Peirce (1955) that advanced the concept of abduction into a theory of inference. Pierce (1955) asserted that abduction was the process through which all new knowledge was gained. Pierce's theory of abduction focused on human sense making, covering both practical reasoning and scientific inquiry. Abduction "consists of assembling or discovering, on the basis of an interpretation of collected data, such combinations of features for which there is no appropriate explanation or rule in the store of knowledge that already exists" (Reichertz, 2010, p. 6).

Blaikie (1993, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010) referred to abduction as the process of generating social scientific accounts from social actors, viewing concepts and theories as being derived through the researchers interpretations of the social life. Blaikie (2000) expanded on Charles Pierce's idea of abduction and believed that abductive research was idiosyncratically different from other types of qualitative research as it aims to answer the 'why' questions through producing an understanding which couples the explanation and pairs reasons with causes.

Blaikie (2010: 90) holds that abductive research incorporates what the inductive and deductive research strategies ignore, "…the meanings and interpretations, the motives and intentions, that people use in their everyday lives, and which direct their behaviour…" and elevates them to the central place in social theory and research. The role of the researcher is to uncover and describe this 'insiders' view and not impose an 'outsiders' view on it. Thus, the principal purpose of the researcher is to interpret why people do what they do by "…uncovering the largely tacit, mutual

knowledge, the symbolic meanings, intentions and rules, which provide the orientations for their actions." (Blaikie, 2010: 90)

"Mutual knowledge is background knowledge that is largely unarticulated but which is constantly used and modified by social actors as they interact with each other." (Blaikie, 2010: 90). Blaikie (1993, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010) believes that abduction is more than mere discovery and explanation of how social actors view and understand the world. By adopting a reflective stance, the 'abductivist' must also be able to connect his/her findings to technical concepts and theories in order to obtain understanding of why the observed phenomena is occurring. Once understanding is obtained the 'abductivist' must decide to either venture down the path of refinement or further elaboration, such as the consequences of the observed phenomena (Blaikie, 1993, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010). Blaikie (2010: 92) noted that it is important that the researcher adopt an "…iterative process of immersion…and reflection" into the social context of study, in order to gain rich understanding of the observed phenomena. With abductive research data and theoretical ideas are intimately intertwined they "…are played off against one another in a developmental and creative process. Regularities that are discovered at the beginning or in the course of the research will stimulate the researcher to ask questions and look for answers. The data will then be reinterpreted in the light of emerging theoretical ideas, and this may lead to further questioning, the entertainment of tentative hypotheses, and a search for answers. Research becomes a dialogue between data and theory mediated by the researcber. Data are interpreted and reinterpreted in the light of an emerging theory, and, as a result, change in the process. The emerging theory is tested and refined as the research proceeds. While this dialogue could continue forever, a satisfactory explanation will have been produced when theoretical saturation is achieved and satisfying answers to the research questions have been arrived at" (Blaikie, 2010: 156). Therefore, abductive research can be summarized into the following principles:

1. “The basic access to any social world is the accounts that people can give of their own actions and the actions of others.

2. These accounts are provided to the social scientist in the language of the participants and contain the concepts that the participants use to structure their world, the meanings of these concepts, and the 'theories' that they use to account for what goes on.

3. However, much of the activity of social life is routine and is conducted in a taken-far-granted, unreflective manner.

4. It is only when enquiries are made about their behaviour by others (such as social scientists) or when social life is disrupted, and/or ceases to be predictable, that social actors are forced to consciously search for or construct meanings and interpretations.

5. Therefore, the social scientist may have to resort to procedures that encourage this reflection in order to discover the meanings and theories.

6. Ultimately, it is necessary to piece together the fragments of meaning that are available from their externalized products.” (Blaikie, 2010: 91-92)

In other words, the Abductive research approach involves developing descriptions and puzzling together theories and concepts that is grounded in everyday activities, and/or in the language and meanings of social actors. According to Blaikie (2000: 116-117) an abductive research approach basically has four main phases:

1. “Observe the activities of social actors that are related to the research problem and, then, try to elicit their accounts of these activities. This stage is satisfied through researchers immersing into the everyday social world of the people to grasp their socially constructed meanings;

2. Describe their activities and meanings (conceptualization and interpretations) closely to everyday language (First-order concepts);

3. Find suitable second-order concepts (socially scientific concepts or technical concepts) to capture the differences and similarities in these accounts; and

4. Derive social scientific accounts [or implications] (descriptions and understanding) of the problem at hand."

Chapter 4: Research Method

The empirical situation of this research is a case study. In this chapter I will discuss the relevant concepts and techniques of my research method. First I will discuss the key principles and short-comings of case study research; then I will then provide a description of the empirical situation of the case study, in order to provide more a richer contextual position for the reader; and finally I will explain how the data was collected and substantiate why those particular techniques were used in the case study.

Interpretive Case Study

Case studies have been commonly used for developing rich understanding of phenomena or phenomenal behavior when the theoretical perspective of the research is social constructivist (Walsham, 1995, Walsham, 2006). Further, the pragmatist real-world orientation of the soft systems perspective makes the case study the preferred empirical setting for inquiry (Checkland, 2000; Attwater, 1999; Jackson, 2006; Rose, 1997). In Easton's view case studies are useful for "investigating one or a small number of social entities or situations about which data is gathered using multiple sources of data and developing a holistic description through an iterative research process" (Easton, 2010, p. 119). The case study approach is well established for conducting IS research (Klein and Myers, 1999; Ngwenyama and Nielsen, 2014). Case study research assists in answering the 'how' and 'why' questions in relation to a phenomenon as these require an understanding of the operational links that need to be traced over time rather than merely the frequency (Yin, 2003; Verschuren, 2003; Easton, 2010). It allows for the disentanglement of complex sets of factors and relationships, and requires iterative non-linear motions between diverse research project stages (Yin, 2003; Verschuren, 2003).

Within qualitative and interpretive case studies researchers are directly engaged in the process of data collection and analysis (Klein & Myers, 1999; Walsham, 1995; 2006). However, interpretative case studies goes a step further, as it encourages the researcher to become a 'passionate

participant' through close interaction with the social actors (Klein & Myers, 1999; Walsham, 1995; 2006, Andrade, 2009). According to Andrade (2009) some might regards this as a downside, instead he contends that it is actually its greatest advantages; as it enables a much deeper insight into the problem because an "interpretive explanation documents the [participant's] point of view and translates it into a form that is intelligible to readers" (Andrade, 2009: 45). Another advantage of the interpretive research is that it enables the researcher to present his own constructions of the reality as well those of the participants (Klein & Myers, 1999; Walsham, 1995; 2006, Andrade, 2009). However interpretive case studies, places further onus on the researcher to include multiple participants.

Case study research has been prone to much critique, with many questioning its validity as a research method, highlighting a lack of ability make generalizations from a case study and asserting that it is prone to researcher subjectivity (Benbasat, Goldstein and Mead, 1987). Many authors have argued that case study research can, not only falsify an existing theory, but also offer the possibility to make generalizations from the empirical observations to theoretical statements (Campbell, 1975; Eisenhardt, 1989; Klein and Myers, 1999; Lee and Baskerville, 2003; Yin, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Ngwenyama and Nielsen, 2014). Siggelkow's (2007) analysis on persuasiveness provided a convincing argument for the relevance and correctness of the case study design, even from a single case; and noted that case studies provide a pathway to a much deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Furthermore, Siggelkow (2007) claims that any form criticism concerning the bias in choosing the sample and the lack of representativeness, should be outright rejected because of value and richness of insight the case provides to researchers, even for the greatest sceptics. Siggelkow (2007) believed that our knowledge prospects would ultimately be restricted if we missed the opportunity to investigate, document and explain phenomena.

Flyvbjerg (2006) affirms the validity of case study research through addressing the five common misunderstandings about case study research, positing context-relevant knowledge as being more valuable than the search for predictive theories and universals in the study of human affairs.

Further, Flybjerg (2006: 237) asserts “The case study contains no greater bias toward verification of the researcher’s preconceived notions than other methods of inquiry. On the contrary, experience indicates that the case study contains a greater bias toward falsification of preconceived notions than toward verification”. He (Flyvbjerg, 2006) recommends that good case studies should be read as a narrative in their entirety and admits that the summarizing of case studies is often difficult, however, the problems arising from this are more often “due to the properties of the reality studied than the case study as a research method” (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 241). There are multiple types of case selections and associated rationale for these selections.

The Empirical Situation of The Research

This case study was part of a larger research project focusing on understanding existing organizing practices in order to create ‘good-to-aspire’ organizing practices. The research team was immersed in an organizational context for a 6-month period within a medium-sized multinational financial services organization to observe, experience and reflect on practices being used to deliver, enhance and maintain business application systems. This presented me with an opportunity to gain access to multiple stakeholders within the organization as well as the ability to observe practices related to the project management domain within the organization. In selecting key informants for my study I used sampling for heterogeneity in order to account wide range of views (Executives; Senior management; Project Managers; and IT practitioners).

Data Collection

In order to gain a richer understanding of the context, data was collected using semi-structured, unstructured interviews and participant observations, within meetings and feedback sessions, conducted over a 6-month period. The interview questions sought to unearth an understanding of the stakeholders’ worldview and understanding of project management as a construct. In order to ensure this, the structure of the interview incorporated technical (interested in role-specific information), organizational (interested in organizational information, including an understanding of the organizational perceptions) and personal questions (interested in socio-political power and

autonomy). Each interview lasted for about one to two hours, depending on the situation. The interview sessions included four researchers and after every interview the researcher followed up with discussions on the interviews in order to highlight and rearticulate the key issues raised, with the purpose of reducing the researcher subjectivity bias, gain consensus on the meeting outcomes and concretize overall understanding among researchers. The meetings and feedback sessions enabled me to gain an understanding of the stakeholders' context, experience and perspective related to organizing practices, including project management. Meeting outcomes were captured in the meeting notes and digitally recorded.

Figure 4-1. Data Sources and Utility

Data Source	Organisational Situation	Duration/Volume	Captured	Utility of Data	Purpose
Semi-Structured Interviews	¢ Head of Product Development ¢ Head Programme Manager ¢ Chief Information Officer ¢ Chief Operations Officer	¢ 2 hour for the initial interview session per candidate; ¢ 1 hour feedback interview session per candidate.	Participant responses were digitally recorded and manually captured within researcher journal	Provided in the participants' own words, their interpretation and understanding of the key problems, issues and areas that need further investigation related to the adoption of project and programme management standards and structures, within xYz.	Assisted in discovering activities, events, forces, entities and processes from the contexts that influenced, constrained or enabled the adoption of project and programme management standards and structures, within xYz.
Unstructured Interviews	¢ Head of Product Development ¢ Chief Information Officer ¢ Chief Operations Officer	Approximately 2 hours in total per candidate (Multiple sessions were conducted with an average session period lasting 30 - 45 mins).	Participant responses were manually captured within researcher journal.	Provided a richer account of the participants' own words, their interpretation and understanding of the key problems, issues and areas that need further investigation related to xYz development.	Assisted in discovering activities, events, forces, entities and processes from the contexts that influenced, constrained or enabled the adoption of project and programme management standards and structures, within xYz.
Observations	¢ Vendor Roadshows ¢ IT department ¢ Project Managemen t Department ¢ IT-Execo meetings	Approximately 6 full days in total.	Key observations were manually captured within researcher notes.	Provided a rich account within organisational dynamics; Validated the data gathered with other sources.	Assisted in collecting descriptive details about the existing as-lived xYz and to interpret and understand the data gathered in the semi-structured and unstructured interviews.
Document Analysis	Textual data in the form of: ¢ Official records;	A total 432 pages was analysed.	Key insights were manually captured within	Provided an understanding of the espoused organisational practices and state, regarding project and programme	Assisted in discovering activities, events, forces, entities and processes from the contexts that

	¢ Strategy roadmaps; ¢ Project documentation; ¢ PMO Implementation plans; ¢ Project process and activity artifacts; ¢ Vendor agreements; ¢ Administrative procedures.		researcher notes.	management standards and structures.	influenced, constrained or enabled the development of xYz

Semi-Structured Interviews

I used semi-structured interviews upon my first interaction with candidates, as it provided me with systematic guidance within the interview. According to Blaikie (2010) within semi-structured interviews it is important that the researcher have a list of questions or fairly specific topics that he wishes to be covered, this is most commonly referred to as an interview guide (Appendix A). Interviewee's have a great deal of freedom with regards in the way in which they reply and often within questions do not follow coherently or as structured within the guide; because the questions are used more as gateways to probe further and so often there are questions which are asked that was not included within the guide (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005; Blaikie, 2010).

"The qualitative research interview is a construction site for knowledge. An interview is literally an 'inter' 'view', an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (Kvale, 1996:14). Qualitative interviews are effective research instruments for getting deep insights about how people experience, feel and interpret the social world (Mack et al., 2005). However, semi-structured interviews are also known to alienate the informant from the interview process, if there is lack of contextual empathy with the informant (Mack et al., 2005). The most critical part of the

Unstructured Interviews

I used unstructured interviews as it enabled the informants to speak freely. According to Wildermuth and Zhang (2012) the unstructured interview relies on the social interaction between the researcher and the informant, because they provide ways to understand the complex behavior without the imposition, which often limits the field of inquiry, of any *a priori* categorization. According to Patton (2002) this form of interviewing requires the researcher to be present in the moment, as the researcher is forced to rely entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions that have a natural flow of interaction.

Wildermuth and Zhang (2012:2) highlighted that "…the researcher has conversations with interviewees and generates questions in response to the interviewees' narration. As a consequence, each unstructured interview might generate data with different structures and patterns. The intention of an unstructured interview is to expose the researcher to unanticipated themes and to help him or her to develop a better understanding of the interviewees' social reality from the interviewees' perspectives." However, Patton (2002) stressed that unstructured interviews are not random and non-directive, just because they do not use predefined questions. Patton (2002) went on to highlight that if the researcher aims to uncover deep insights into people lives, it would require detailed preparation and knowledge. Fife (2005) points out that the researcher must keep in mind the purpose and scope of the research, so as to not get lost.

According to Wildermuth and Zhang (2012:2) "the decision to use unstructured interviews as a data collection method is governed by both the researcher's epistemology and the study's objectives. Researchers making use of unstructured interviews often hold a constructivist point of view of social reality and correspondingly design studies within an interpretive research paradigm." When capturing the data Wildermuth and Zhang (2012:5) presented a very important point "note-taking is a traditional method for capturing interview data. But in an unstructured interview, note-taking is likely to disrupt the natural flow of the conversation. Thus, when possible, it is preferable to audio record the interviews by tape or digital recorder. In situations where only note-taking is possible, you will need to take brief notes during the interview, writing up more detailed notes immediately after each interview."

Like all methods unstructured interviews comes with challenges, namely: 1) It requires a significant amount time in order to gain trust, develop rapport, gain access to interviewees and the collect the needed information (Patton, 2002; Wildermuth & Zhang, 2012); 2) The researcher must be able to read the flow of the conversation, so as to exert the right amount and type of control over the conversation, it is difficult for the researcher to know whether to stay on the major theme and

risk missing additional useful information (Patton, 2002; Wildermuth & Zhang, 2012); 3) This challenge lives in the analysis of the data gathered by interview, because the questions that get asked are dependent on the context and so could vary dramatically across multiple interviews, the researcher must be able to identify patterns within the variability (Patton, 2002; Wildermuth & Zhang, 2012).

Direct Observation

I used direct observation of meetings and work activities because it enabled me to observe and listen to way events unfolded directly, furthermore more it allowed me to see the way the managers interacted with their subordinates and the way the vendors interacted with the managers. Yin (2003) believes that entering an empirical site to collect data through other methods, such as interviews, presents an opportunity to make direct observation. Patton (2002) has identified the advantages of direct observation within case study research, namely: 1) it enables the researcher to directly understand the environment of case under study; 2) it enables the researcher to identify things and behavior that was previously taken for granted; 3) and it enables the researcher to capture the events that people are reluctant to talk about in an interview. However Patton (2002) also identified the challenges, which are: 1) the distortion of data due to mere presence of the researcher; 2) the information is limited to what is observed within the setting; and 3) the observation primarily focuses on external behavior, as it does not allow the researcher to engage and explore in the understanding of those perspectives.

Document Analysis

Firstly, a document is any form or medium that provides information about the investigated phenomenon and must exist independently of the researcher's actions. These documents are usually produced with a specific purpose. Patton (2002) highlighted that they are particularly useful because the researcher can correlate the interviews with documents and possibly unearth distortions and it enables the researcher to study the past in a cost effective manner.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

This research utilized episodic narrative analysis as its method of data analysis; this simply implies that my data was analyzed in various cycles. In this chapter I will present the relevance of narrative analysis for my research; then I will present a table that illustrates the data sources, types, and the way the data was utilized; and lastly I will illustrate how each cycle unfolded, and the steps I followed to ensure that the research remained valid and ethical (Blaikie, 2007).

Narratives have been regarded as a basic and universal mode of verbal expression. Telling about past events is the bedrock of a socially constructed society, because in everyday conversations we recount experiences or tell stories to inform, impress, or empower among other things (Gee, 1991; Smith, 2000; Blaikie, 2007). Narrative analysis permits a holistic approach to discourse, and many advocates hold the belief that narratives yields information that are not available to by other methods (McCabe, Capron & Peterson, 1991; Gee, 1991; Harvey, 1995; Smith, 2000; Blaikie, 2007). For this research, narratives are used to refer to accounts of personal experiences and the experiences of others. Narrative accounts have are complex social artefacts that create "storylike constructions containing description, interpretation, emotion, expectations, and related material" (Harvey, 1995: 3).

Narratives are characterised by two concepts, perspective and context. Perspective refers to the fact that a narrative comprises a point of view toward what happened; most importantly narratives are about telling the reader what is significant (Gee, 1991). Perspective also refers to a narrator taking into account what the listener needs to know (McCabe, et al., 1991). Context refers to 1) the external influences on the narrator, 2) ways in which the narrator constructs the narrative, and 3) characteristics of the text (Gee, 1991). Various researchers (Gee, 1991; Smith, 2000; Blaikie, 2007) hold that when analyzing narratives it vitally important to develop a process of reflection on the events so that they can provide perspective and coherence. The reflective process serves as the glue that enables me to connect the absorbed perspectives with existing literature, which

further enriches the story. According Blaikie (2007) it is good practice to identify the sources and types of data, as it enables the researcher to have a systematic process of analysis; below Table 1 illustrates the data sources, types, and the way the data was utilized.

The Cycles of Sense-Making

I wrote the narratives in three cycles, this is commonly known as episodic narrative analysis (Smith, 2000). The approach to episodic coding was both abductive and iterative (Blaikie, 2007). In other words, I allowed the theory to emerge from the data through multiple rounds of analysis and interim explanation building, rather than beginning with a pre-existing set of theoretical propositions (Smith, 2000). However, there are researchers which hold that patterns, themes, and categories do not emerge on their own (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009; Harper, 2003). "They are driven by what the inquirer wants to know and how the inquirer interprets what the data are telling her or him according to subscribed theoretical frameworks, subjective perspectives, ontological and epistemological positions, and intuitive field understandings. In short, rather than being an objectivist application of analysis procedures, the process is highly reflexive" (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009: 77). In line with taking a reflexive approach, it is vital to recognize the role of the "I" in each question.

There were three cycles of analysis with different focus points, namely:

1. Cycle one was centered on uncovering of basic structures and concepts (First-Order). This was focused on asking 'what' the observed phenomenon is. The purpose of this phase is getting an initial understanding of the patterns and categories to be investigated (Blaikie, 2007).
2. The second cycle was focused around understanding the underlying structures and concepts (Second-Order). This was focused on asking 'why' this phenomenon is occurring, in order to understand. The purpose of this cycle is to uncover underlying themes or concepts that may assist in explaining the observed phenomena (Blaikie, 2007).

3. The third cycle is focused on articulating what the implications of the observed phenomena and identified concepts will have on the subject area. It is focused on asking 'so what', in order to explain the potential consequences and provide a relevant theoretical explanation (Blaikie, 2007).

Within each cycle I followed a set of key activities was utilised, which was adapted from Blaikie (2010). Table 5-2 presents a list of the all the key activities that occurred within the research. In Figure 5-3 I constructed a systematic process of how I utilized all the key activities (adapted from Blaikie, 2010) within each cycle of my research, the numbered icons in the Figure 3 are directly connected to the key activities in Table 2. Each cycle had a unique sequence of activities, namely:

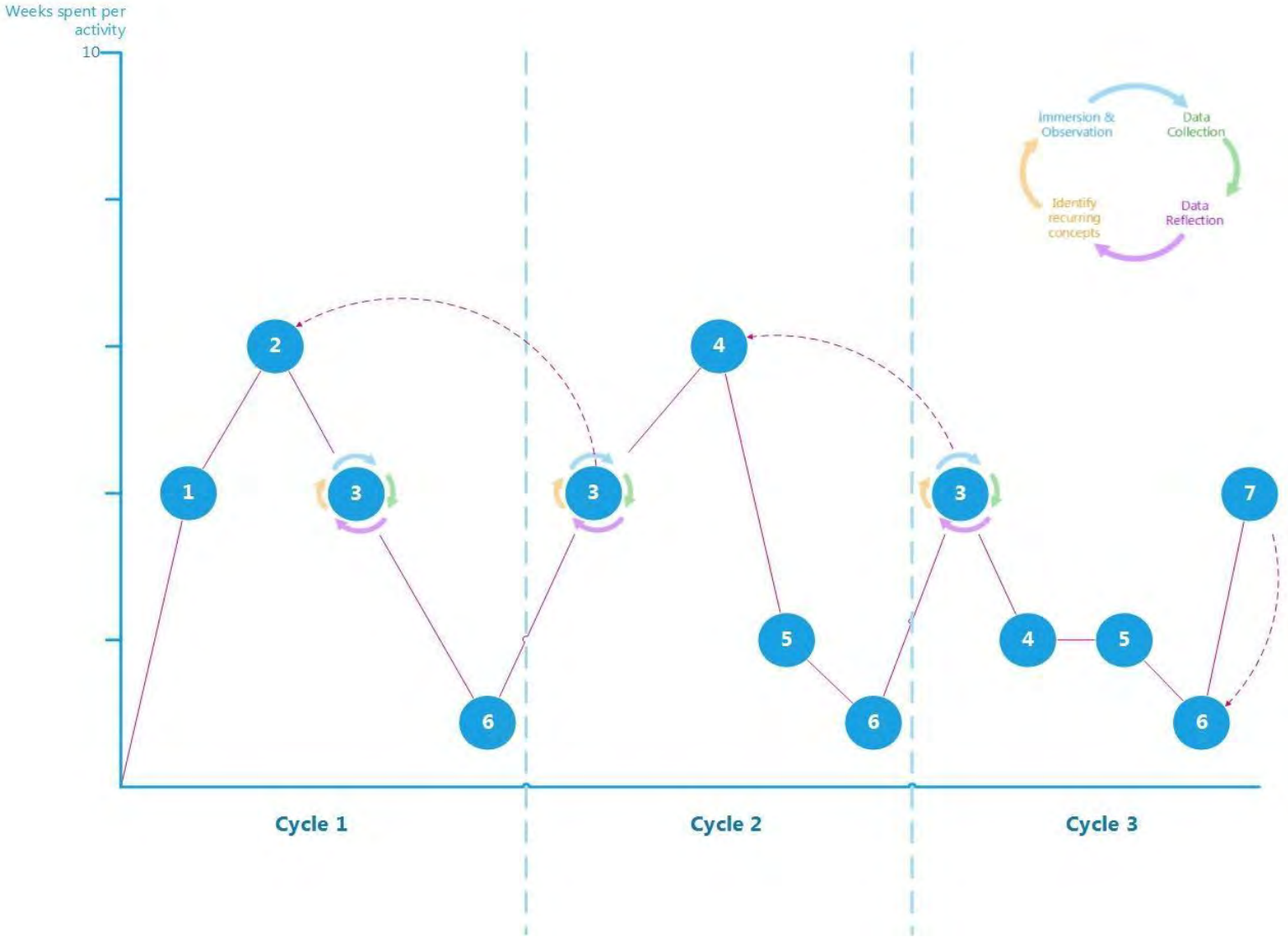
1. Within cycle 1 activities numbered 1, 2, 3 and 6 were utilised;
2. Within cycle 2 activities numbered 3, 4, 5 and 6 were utilized; and
3. Within cycle 3 activities numbered 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 were used

Table 5-2: Key activities of the Research Process (Adapted from Blaikie, 2010)

No	Activity Description
1	Begin with a general formulation of the problem to be investigated: This involves gathering an understanding of the empirical context and phenomenon to be studied.
2	Some relevant literature should be reviewed: This involves reviewing literature to elicit insights.
3	Data Analysis Framework: Was adopted from Srivastava and Hopwood (2009).
3.1	Immersion and Observation: This involves immersion into the context and gathering an initial understanding of the dynamics.
3.2	Data Collection: This involves collecting data related to the phenomenon; it was conducted through interviews, documentation analysis and/or observation.
3.3	Data Reflection: This involves the process of answering two interdependent questions. 1) What is the data telling me? This involves an explicitly engaging with the theoretical

	perspectives of the research; and 2) What is it I want to know? This involves engaging with the research objectives and questions
3.4	Identify recurring concepts: This involves the process of refining my focus and linking it back to my research question. It is a dialectical relationship between what the data is telling me and what I want to know.
4	Search the 'relevant' literature for ideas that might help to order or explain the 'data'
	Identify and create a general formulation of underlying themes: This involves getting an understanding of elements that may cause the phenomena to occur or explain the occurrence of observed phenomena.
5	Identify and create a general formulation of underlying themes: This involves getting an understanding of elements that may cause the phenomena to occur or explain the occurrence of observed phenomena.
6	Present feedback to stakeholders: Once the researcher is reasonably confident about the appropriateness of the typology, it should be translated into everyday language to see whether the social actors are prepared to accept it as an account of their and others' actions. If this is not the case, some revision will be required.
7	Consolidate Findings: This involves creating a coherent explanation for describing the observed phenomena.

Figure 5-3: Case Study Research Process



Chapter 6: The Empirical Context and Findings

This chapter has been divided into two core themes, namely: (1) the empirical context, which aims to position the reader around the organizational context, the project domain and the position of the researcher; and (2) The empirical findings, which has been divided into three cycles as per Figure 5-3, it is important to note that with every cycle there was an emergence of a set of questions, which served as a phenomenological compass in the sense-making process.

The Empirical Situation of xYz

The case company, xYz, was established to provide cross-border legal and tax advisory services to private and corporate clients in 1976. Over the past 38 years, xYz expanded into a multi-jurisdictional business offering services to the full range of investment funds, utilizing best-of-breed systems. It is internationally regarded as a leading services provider in its category by multiple benchmarking organizations. xYz serves an international client base and employs over 700 people in 13 offices across 12 countries. xYz IT is a division of xYz and provides IT solutions for the entire organization. This division is particularly important, as IT is the key channel through which xYz accesses and provides services to its clients. This division began as a back- office function to enable xYz operations. xYz's top management consist of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO), with the Chief Information (CIO) reporting to the COO.

XYZ IT top management consists of the CIO and four regional heads of IT (each located in a different geographical area) with the South African (SA) region (based in Cape Town) having the largest set of employees in the group. The XYZ IT South African region was utilized as the unit of analysis for this case study. There are seven functions/units within this region (Infrastructure, Software Application, Software development, business intelligence, straight through processing,

Information risk & security and Knowledge management), in addition to these; the project office and management structures were also included in the study. A unit manager leads each of these units. The unit managers' report to the head of IT SA, and the head of IT reports to the global CIO (also based in the South African Region). For the purposes of ensuring appropriate representativeness within the case study, each of the unit managers, an IT practitioner within their function, the head of the project office, the head of IT SA and the global CIO were interviewed. xYz has undergone 3 major restructurings since 2009, decreasing the original employee base to approximately half.

The Project Management domain within xYz

It is important to note that xYz is a project-driven organization and the project management office has partnered with the product solutions division. These divisions operate between the xYz operations division and xYz IT. They function to coordinate projects and ensure successful project delivery within xYz. Culturally the project management office views itself as a being an innovation agency within the organization. xYz have been adopting mainstream institutionalized methodologies and frameworks, since its conception, they have project and programme management frameworks deeply ingrained within the organisation. The PMO is responsible for delivery of big projects as well as establishing and propagating the project management principles, methodology and practices within the organization. This function operates on approved business cases received from the product solutions function.

The core team is comprised of three individuals and they are responsible for coordinating all organizational projects. They are also responsible for the proliferation of best practices within the organization. Since its inception, it has adopted project management best practices, programme management best practices and project management office best practices. Since 2009, the reporting structure of project management office has shifted, initially requiring the project office to report directly to the CIO, shortly after, the reporting structure shifted to reporting to the COO, and in 2013 the reporting structure has shifted back to the CIO.

Position of the researcher

Whilst this research was conducted, the researcher was part of a wider research study focusing on software development organizing practices. This project utilized a research team (composed of four analysts and the principal investigator) and focused on developing contextually relevant business models that would assist in promoting excellence and competitiveness in the South African software industry. The research team was immersed in an organizational context for a 6-month period with a medium-sized multinational financial services organization to observe, experience and reflect on practices being used to deliver, enhance and maintain business application systems.

A key outcome of the larger research project was evaluating the project management domain within an organization and garner an understanding of the elements that assist in the creation of a contextual, inclusive and 'good-to-aspire' set of project organizing practices. The wider research study provided access to various stakeholders within the organization, thereby enabling the researcher to conduct observations and interviews (semi-structured and unstructured) in relation to the project management domain. Further, it provided the ability to gain a more holistic understanding of the organizations and the organizational dynamics.

The Empirical Findings

Cycle 1: The Journey from literature to context

As this research was part of a larger research study focusing on understanding organizing practices, key organizational elements were identified. The project management domain was identified as one of the elements relevant to organizing effectively. This cycle began with a critical review of project management and programme management literature. The literature review identified two key themes, namely: 1) there has been many calls for a movement away from the mainstream approach within project management; and 2) That programme management has been created from the same Cartesian-Taylorist elements used to make project management.

What is the rationale for the adoption of project and programme management standards and structures within xYz?

I then immersed myself into the social context of xYz, and began gathering an initial understanding of the social dynamics through observation. This was done through an organization orientation which assisted in creating an initial understanding of the organizational structure and layout. Cycle 1 interviews were semi-structured and unstructured in nature. The interview questions (Appendix A) sought to unearth an understanding of the stakeholder's worldview and understanding of project management as a construct. In order to ensure this, the structure of the interview incorporated technical (interested in role-specific information, organizational (interested in organizational information, including an understanding of the organizational perceptions) and personal questions (interested in socio-political power and autonomy). The interview session included four researchers and after the interview the researcher followed up with discussions on the interviews in order to highlight and rearticulate the key issues raised, with the purpose of reducing the researcher subjectivity bias, gain consensus on the meeting outcomes and concretize overall understanding among researchers. Meeting outcomes were captured in the meeting notes and digitally recorded. The interview session was conducted with the Head of the Project Management Office and to conform to the agreed consent form, I shall call him John. The interview session began with a surprise as John had directly broke our social agreement by bringing along his senior programme manager and to conform to the agreed consent form, I shall call her Sally. We decided not to reschedule or excuse the Sally, instead we became intrigued as to why she was brought along to a meeting scheduled only for John. He explained:

"Well we're really busy and so two birds one stone 'kinder' thing"

We used the interview guide as a way to navigate the complexity of the situation, we would ask John a question, and we noticed that if he didn't feel comfortable he would redirect the question to Sally. When this situation first arose, I recognized that he was using Sally as a mechanism of defense, so as to present a united and intellectual front.

Researcher: "Tell me about the history of xYz and project management?"

John: "…We've been adopting internationally recognised standards and methodologies since the beginning. From project management methodologies to the current PMO [project management office]. Even before I got here they had PMBOK principles."

Researcher: "Why do you think [xYz] chose to adopt these standards?"

Sally: "Well [pause]…that's a bit of a silly question hey…Well internationally recognised standards enables us to reach project success and stay ahead of the curve…we're an innovation house. But also it helps us control the project."

It started becoming clear that within xYz they have been blindly adopted internationally renowned best practices and making drastic organisation-wide structural changes without really being able to explain how it provided control and coordination.

There was also a general distortion between the espoused practice and the as-lived practice. This was exposed accidently because Sally had placed an activity diagram of how they apparently proceed in tackling projects, however while Sally and John were talking about a past project, I frequently requested them to correlate what they were saying with their project process and at every instance they could not show me.

Researcher: "Could you tell me why xYz has chosen to adopt international methodologies in project management, programme management and the PMO?"

John: "What why? [...] Well to be honest, because I was trained in PMBoK right, secondly, [pause] well it helped us control our projects and programme management helps us create portfolios to control those projects and the project management office, enables me to control all the programmes. It is also about coordination of programmes…"

John's response started to provide some clarity to my initial question, his response illuminates that there has been a clear and constant desire or need for control within every iteration within the project domain. Control was the clear and constant variable that emerged with every development within the project domain. It could be said differently based on this emergence, the perceived loss

of control within project management led to the emergence of programme management, and when programme management failed to provide the much needed control, the PMO emerged.

Over time, a feedback session was held with John and Sally in order to communicate what was discovered. I decided to hold the feedback session in an unstructured manner because it felt as though the semi-structured interview setting did not enable me to gain the needed rapport. John was particularly more comfortable with this setting as he was able to smoke while we conversed, the smoking seemed to drop his defenses, and this was noticeable because for some reason he began conversing in colloquial Cape Town English.

Cycle 2: Journey to the unknown

After the feedback session these questions began to emerge:

1. *What is the conceptualization of project management?*
2. *What are the underlying assumptions associated to it?*

These questions initiated Cycle 2 of the research process. Upon validation from the stakeholder feedback sessions, I re-immersed myself into the context, thus commencing cycle 2 of the research project. This cycle was centered on trying to understand why these patterns were occurring. This involved gathering data through a second round of unstructured interviews with John and more importantly an interview session with John's superior the Chief Operating Officer (COO), from here on in we shall call him Victor.

The interview session with Victor was part of the wider research project and the three other researchers had been asking questions and gathering data with regards to their topics of interest, I had a limited window of engagement and sought to understand the image he had of project management.

Researcher: "What do you think of when you think of project management?"

Victor: "I see project management, much like the army, they are there to ensure control and order…Its serves to control…without it these people wouldn't know what to do"

Victor's idea of project management is deeply connected with its history, the link towards the army also implies that there is some desire towards control.

Researcher: "What is xYz lacking with project management?"

Victor: "…We lack control and experienced managers…We spoke to a few consultancies and they all told us the same thing, that we if we wanted to ensure our competitive edge we needed to train and implement…methodologies"

I was very clear that Victor needed control and his notions of competitive advantage were directly linked to it. There is a subtle statement being made about experienced managers and that is that they provide control and they ensure success. This notion of experience also implicitly says that the manager will be able to 'hit the ground running'.

John: "When I was brought into the position I was thrown into the deep end and told that projects was out of control, I provided the control…yes my role was already defined, I was brought in because [his predecessor] had left"

I noticed that John's understanding of the training institute's credibility was superficial as his justification was connected to the fact that they were certified by the PMI, in this instance the PMI presented a god-like image and questioning its relevance almost appeared absurd.

Researcher: "What makes the [project management training facility] credible?"

John: "What makes [project management training facility] credible is that they are certified by the PMI [Project Management Institute]…Well they provided me with my certification so they must good…Why do we send out those best practices [laughing]…well firstly I think the name says it all and these practices have been created by the PMI, they've helped many organisations"

John has also been disseminating PMI certified best practices, however his tone seemed unconvincing as to why they were relevant. The best practices seemed to be have some form of

god-ordained meaning in that they speak about the best practices but do not really understand if they are contextually relevant. This was all connected when I asked about the project success, in relation to the PMI standards.

> *Researcher: Honestly how often do you guys run over budget and out of scope?*
>
> *John: "Honestly all our projects are always over budget, overrun or out of scope…[Would that not mean that you guys are failing?]…Yeah well I guess that would be considered failure to international standards…[So why do you promote these best practices if you know they don't work for xYz?]…[laugh]…well I have to send out something right [laugh]"*

This was incredibly confusing for me, because John sends out these best practices while knowing very well that they are not 'best' practices. What is most interesting is that he never saw this as something to be concerned about, he never once sought to question the best practices, it was almost always known that the problem was lack of experience. I tried to convey this understanding to John, by simply rearticulating what he was saying to me, namely that they push practices that they themselves articulate are not relevant and yet still believe that there is relevance. There is this belief that project management is not something constructed by humans, but has always existed.

> *John: "…Well now that you put it that way I guess I don't see the value, but we can't have nothing…[pause] but Project management is a natural thing, it has always been around…"*

I could sense that John had started to become uncomfortable with what he was saying, in that what he was saying was making him realize that he has a different viewpoint to the one he was projecting earlier. When asked to deconstruct historically the decision to implement the PMO, these key points emerged:

> *John: "We had to implement the PMO…there was too much uncertainty and chaos in our programmes…"*
>
> *Researcher: "So where did you get the PMO idea from?"*

John: "Oh well I went to the [project management] conference and they spoke about it, how it was the future of project management"

Cycle 3: Asking the 'Why'

Following a workshop with the four other researchers these were the questions that needed to be explained

1. *Despite all the criticism presented, why is there still a belief in the existing practices?*
2. *Why would highly educated managers not change or question the existing practices?*

After further engagement with the relevant literature, an understanding of the underlying theoretical assumptions began to emerge. I began developing a theoretical model of the phenomenon and conducted feedback sessions with organizational stakeholders, the three other researchers and the principal investigator. The feedback sessions sought to test the validity and probability of the outlined explanation for the observed phenomena and paved the path to exploring the implications and the magnitude of the phenomenon.

Cycle 3 was mainly centered around understanding how deeply rooted the external consultancies were entrenched within xYz and whether there were explicit and/or implicit policies around the engagement with the external vendors. It was also important to understand the social relationship the vendors had constructed within xYz. One of most interesting events that showed how deeply entrenched these external vendors were within xYz was something they called a 'Vendor Roadshow'.

A 'Vendor Roadshow' is a symposium-like event, whereby the existing vendors within xYz get to parade and demonstrate the new features of their latest technology and get a chance to pitch for further investments. John had invited us to attend and observe a 'Vendor Roadshow', during which I captured some key points about my observations.

Memo Notes:

This vendor roadshows are very weird, [xYz] uses their time and their resources [catering, venues, people, etc.,] to allow an outside organization to sell their services, but its not selling its more like expanding their existing relationship…What is really interesting is the fact that [xYz representative] was defending [external vendor's] features and relevance more than the vendor. That guy just sat back and allowed someone else to fight his battles, the best part about this fight is that its coming from inside [xYz]. And people seemed almost more trusting after he made those comments defending the relevance. The [external vendor] guy only seemed speak about how to use the service from a specific niche perspective, but it was [xYz] guy who was main seller, if I didn't already know that he was an [xYz] employee I would swear he was the salesman for [external vendor].

Following that 'Vendor Roadshow' I sought to investigate the portfolio's related to the 'Vendor Roadshow' and emerged was something really interesting. The internal employee's portfolio's and job title was directly linked to the external vendors name and service offering, symbolically this implied xYz's employee's were working for those external vendors. While analyzing a strategy roadmap presentation, I came across something very interesting, which was later validated by John and the CIO (who we will call Nathan). Nathan had created a presentation to the board whereby he had uncovered that there was an external firm that had a long-standing relationship with xYz and they had begun offering the similar service offering, which previously gave xYz an industry advantage. The documents that were analyzed implicitly pointed to the notion that there was some form corporate espionage. After speaking briefly to Nathan, it became clear that there was a belief that there was corporate espionage occurring.

My analysis of the situation was that this intellectual property leakage was somehow connected to the historical project management practices of xYz, that they somehow brought this on themselves. In order to illustrate how intellectual property leakage was occurring I utilized a systems thinking modelling technique called IDEF0, which I adapted to provide a more contextual understanding of what was occurring within xYz. IDEF0 is a technique that is usually used to map out the functions of a future system within cybernetics, within this case study, the technique was

originally used to map a human activity system. This technique of systems modeling was also utilized within the larger research. The diagram is essentially structured around showing five components, namely, contribution, trigger, Input, actors and outputs; as illustrated in Figure 6-1

Contribution: At the centre of the diagram is the contribution, activities exist within the contribution, but for the purposes of this diagram, not all of these activities are revealed. A diagram may also reveal a high- level contribution, to which there are contributions that exist within it.

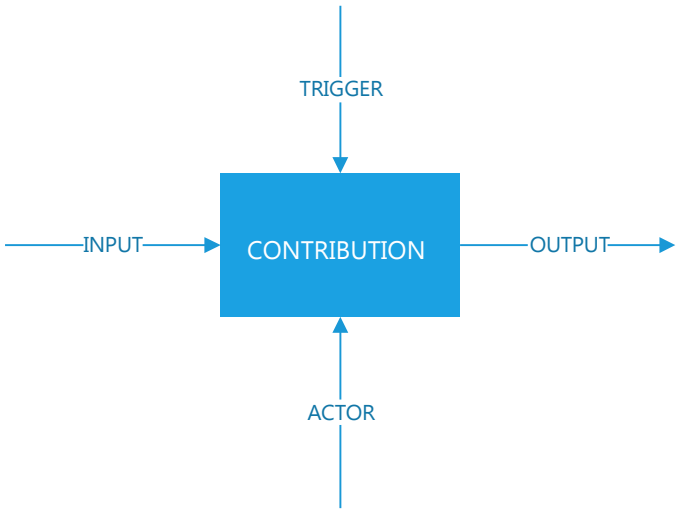
Triggers: These refer to events or phenomena that lead to the necessity for a contribution, or that trigger the performing of a contribution.

Inputs: The arrows on the left indicate the required inputs into a contribution. These may be tangible, or intangible, for the purposes of this diagram, only key inputs towards a contribution are shown. This list is not exhaustive, and may be subject to modification and enhancement.

Actors: The arrows below the contribution indicate the actors who partake in/perform the contribution.

Outputs: These are shown on the right of the contribution and indicate the service/artefacts that emanate from the contribution. Outputs can become inputs into another contribution.

Figure 6-1: Basic Structure of Contributions Modelling



In reference to the figure 6-2, 6-3, and 6-4, below it is clear that all xYz contributions are strongly influenced by vendor services, which simply means that all major contributions provided by the xYz were connected to external consulting agencies. This was identified as a great organisational concern as it had been restricting the autonomy of xYz in articulating its own strategy. The consulting firms had been able to, overtime, affecting key inputs within the organisation's project contributions and because they provided the key inputs to every project, the outputs were directly dependent on their contribution. In certain instances, the consulting firms even provided the triggers, which activated the xYz system, what this implies is that they have enough referential power to activate or start projects. This clearly illustrates that external consultancies influenced the strategic decision making of xYz.

Another interesting observation is that while the consulting firms directly influence the internal system of the organization, the internal system does not influence the external vendor system, except in the form of providing it with revenue. Our analysis revealed, as illustrated in figure 5, that the massive amounts of high level of intellectual property being passed on to the consulting firms were being provided by xYz, without xYz consciously being aware of it. This is of great

importance as it had direct implications on their competitive advantage and organizational risk; as one of the consulting firms now offers the exact same service that xYz is providing, and has slowly began to consume their market share. The most concerning point for xYz is that because external consulting firms has been so deeply entrenched within the xYz organisational system, it would be extremely difficult for them to remove certain consulting firms from their companies, without immobilizing the operational ability of xYz.

Figure 6-2: xYz dependency on External Consulting Firms

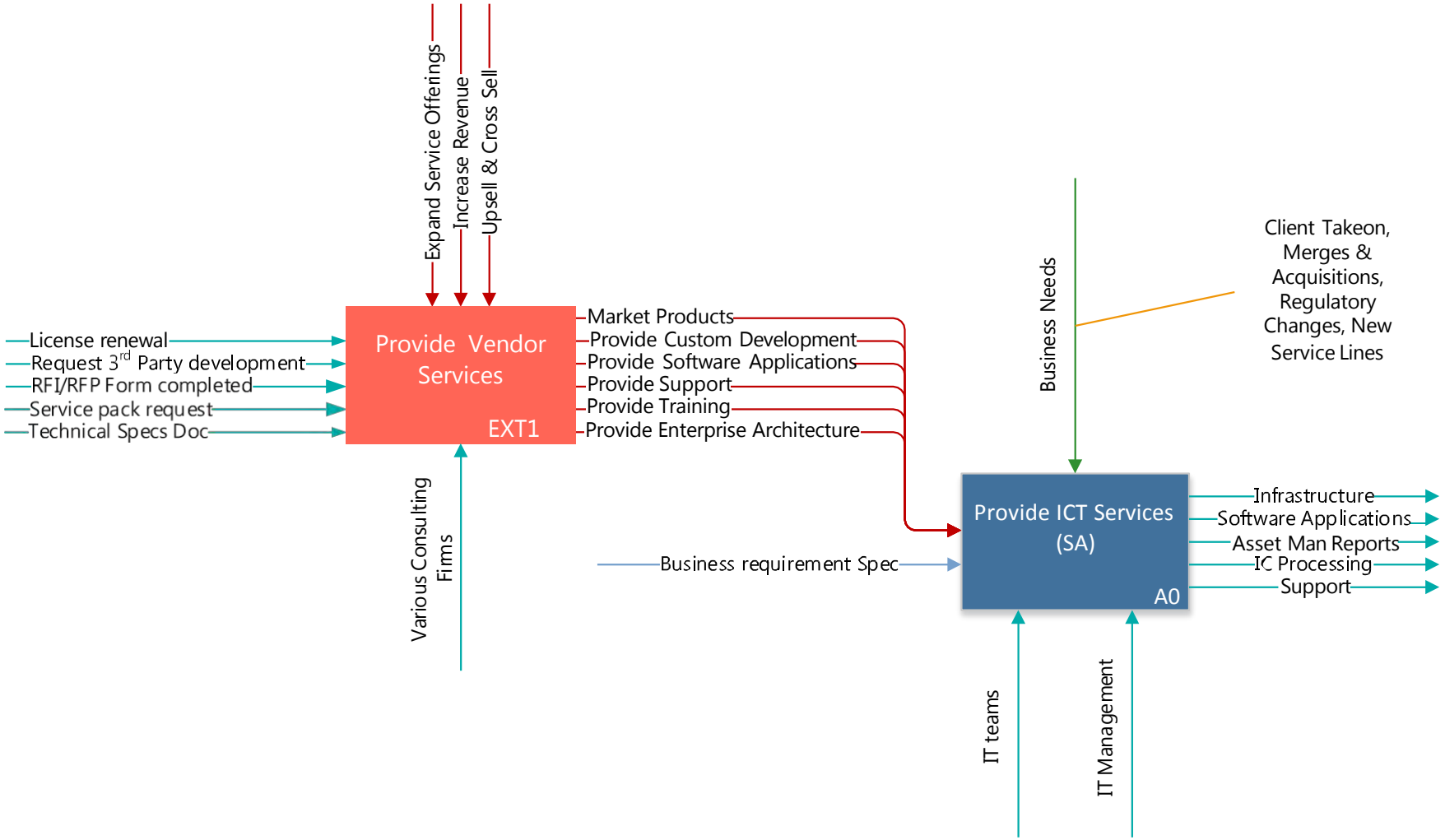


Figure 6-3: Decomposition of contributions provided by the IT department

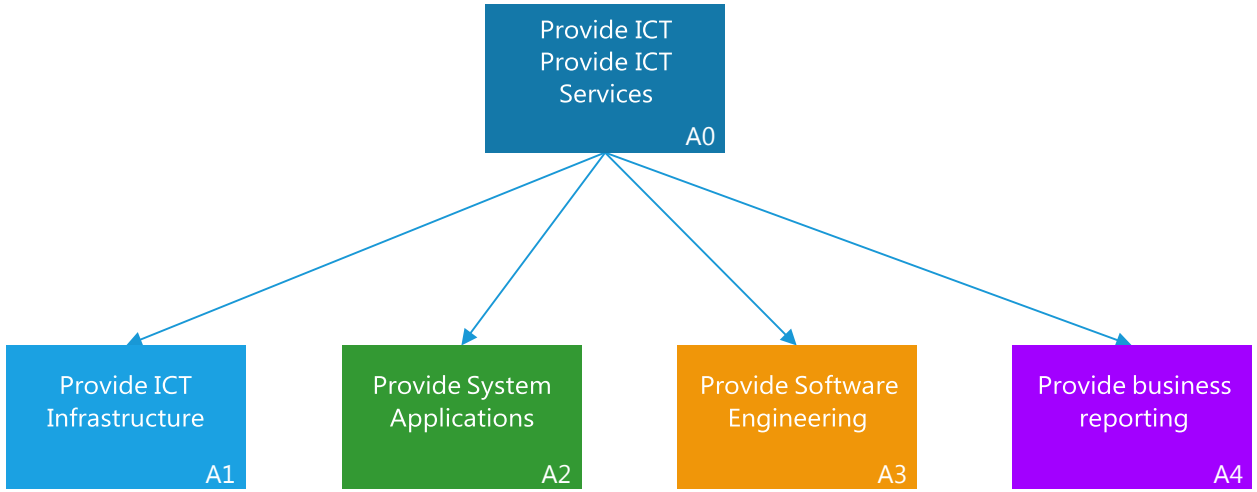
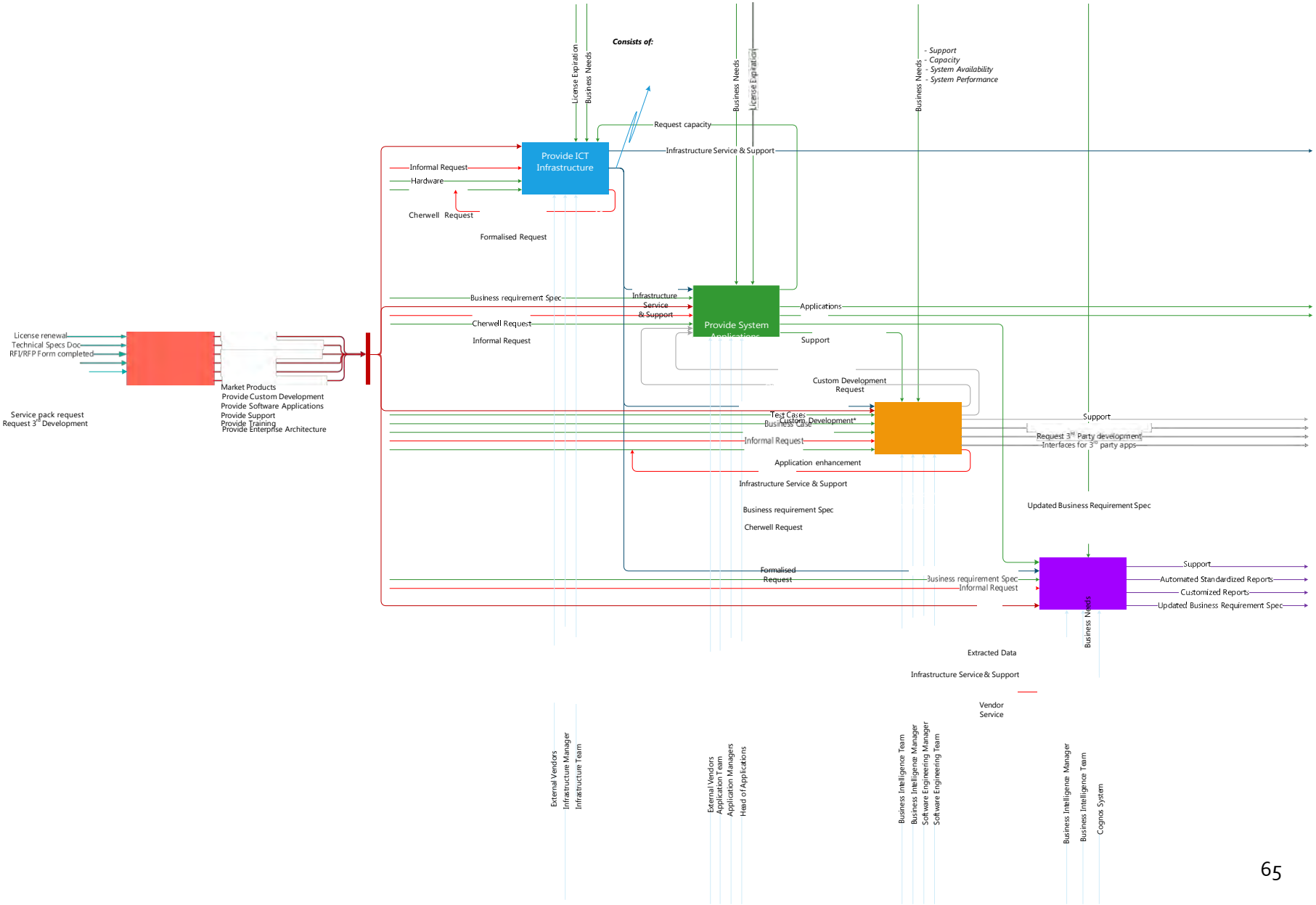


Figure 6-4: xYz dependency on External Consulting firms



Reflections

The empirical findings illustrated the cyclical journey I endeavored in within this research project and what was observed and unearthed from within xYz. Within every cycle a different phenomenon emerged and by utilizing an abductive approach, as indicated on Figure 5-2 I was able to hermeneutically connect the data. Specifically I uncovered: 1) that there is a superficial rationale for the adoption of project and programme management standards and structures, underpinned by a desire for control, reducing uncertainty and the need competitiveness; 2) I noticed that despite all criticism from the literature and the failure experienced within xYz, there was an unyielding belief in the mainstream standards and structures; and 3) it was uncovered that there was an external firm that had a long-standing relationship with xYz that strongly influenced their strategic decision making. The empirical findings illuminate that there are social forces at play, which influenced the adoption of project and programme management standards and structures. The following chapter provides theoretical explanations and propositions related to the observed phenomenon.

Chapter 7: A Theoretical Discussion of the Findings

If a factory is torn down but the rationality which produced it is left standing, then that rationality will simply produce another factory. If a revolution destroys a government, but the systematic patterns of thought that produced that government are left intact, then those patterns will repeat themselves…There's so much talk about the system and yet so little understanding.

—Robert Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

Previously I presented the empirical findings, within this chapter I will present the theoretical explanations for those findings, however before providing the theoretical explanations I will discuss my decision to use causal loop modeling as a tool for sense making, in order to provide a visual illustration of the inter-locking organizational dynamics.

Causal Loop Model: A journey to recollect the whole

From the 1930s onward, there were three different models of management that competed for precedence within organization theory: the traditional approach, human relations theory and systems thinking (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1981). The traditional approach held the view that organisations were similar to machines; however it had allegedly failed to take account of needs of humans and this critique spawned the birth of human relations theory. While it was a useful corrective to traditional theory it offset the neglect of other factors such as the market, technology, competition and organizational structure; gradually the weaknesses of the traditional and human relations led to the rise of systems approach in management and organizational theory (Rose, 1997; Senge, 1997; Checkland, 2000). Systems thinkers have argued that it was not adequate enough to merely focus on one or two aspects of an organization, and presented that organisations should rather be seen as a complex web of interrelated conditions that is pursuing its own goals (Checkland, 1984; 2000; Rose, 1997; Mingers, 1980; 1984; Senge, 1997). Within this highly complex and interconnected world, we find that seemingly trivial decisions made by individuals may lead to large effects in a wider context. In a complex web of interconnected conditions actions made within one organization could influence upon many different

organisations, governments, societies and on the natural environment (Checkland, 1984; 2000; Rose, 1997; Mingers, 1980; 1984; Senge, 1997).

Senge (1997) noticed that while it is possible to comprehend that this world more like complex interconnected circles, we are often only able see and express that complexity in straight lines. One of the core reasons for this fragmentation in our thinking is rooted within our language; many believe that because language shapes our perception, what we will 'see' will depend on what we are prepared to see. For example, western languages in particular have a subject-verb-object structure and inherently biased toward a linear way of perceiving the world. There is a large body of research that argues that if you want to see a complex web of interrelated conditions, you need a language grounded in interrelationships, a language made up of circles (Mingers, 1980; 1984; Checkland, 1984; 2000; Ulrich & Lake, 1991; Lyles & Schwenk, 1992; Weick, 1993; Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1994; Rose, 1997; Senge, 1997; Hyvari, 2006). "Without such a language, our habitual ways of seeing the world produce fragmented views and counterproductive actions... Such a language is important in facing dynamically complex issues and strategic choices, especially when individuals, teams, and organizations need to see beyond events and into the forces that shape change" (Senge, 1997:59).

Causal loop models (CLM) offers a language for articulating our dynamic and interrelated situations, revealing the interconnections, both obvious and hidden; more importantly how the changes in one part of the system might eventually propagate to other parts of the system and return. CLM's allows us to elicit hypotheses and visualize variables and their dynamic interrelationships over time; but more importantly by connecting numerous CLM's, one is able to construct a coherent story about a particular situation or issue. "They permit us not only to analyze current states and relational patterns but also to make assumptions about the dynamic behavior. They allow us to look beyond individual events and to reach a higher—one might say more systemic—level of understanding, by mapping the structure that is responsible for producing

recurring patterns of events over time" (Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2010: 32). Moorecraft (2010) argued that CLM's play a vital role in shifting the mind towards understanding the dynamic interrelationships of situations. There is a large body of research that maintains that an organisations future path is particularly pre-determined by its existing structure, the balancing feedback loops and the reinforcing feedback loops which direct its performance through time (Brunsson, 1982; Kanter, 1989; Ulrich & Lake, 1991; Lyles & Schwenk, 1992; Weick, 1993; Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1994; Nelson, 2005; Hyvari, 2006; Moorecraft, 2010). CLM's embody this crucial philosophical perspective, as it is geared towards unearthing and revealing the critical feedback loops which are responsible for the observed phenomena (Moorecraft, 2010). It is for this reason that I have used CLM as it is an appropriate tool for making sense of the empirical findings.

How to read this Causal Loop Model

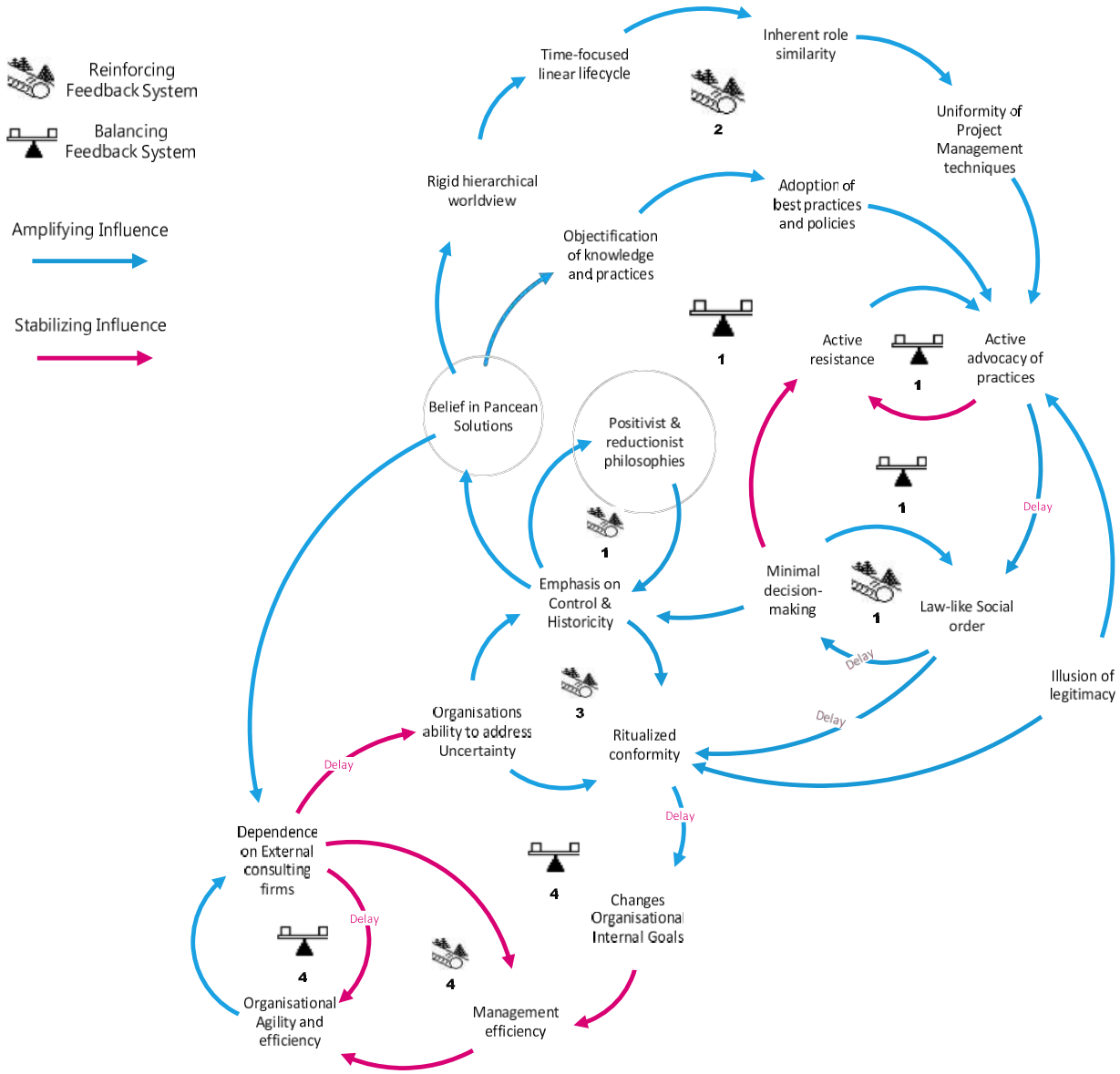
Within causal loops modelling there are two distinctive types of feedback systems, namely reinforcing and balancing. The reinforcing feedback systems can best be understood as engines of growth or amplifying processes, so whenever there is a situation whereby you things are growing, you are witnessing a reinforcing feedback system (Senge, 1997; Moorecraft, 2010; Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2010). An example of a reinforcing system is the Pygmalion effect, whereby small changes build on itself. I have decided to use Senge's (1997) representation of a 'snowball', because it symbolizes that whatever movement occurs is amplified, thereby producing more movement on the same course (Senge, 1997).

Balancing feedback processes, on the other hand, can be seen whenever there is behavior that is goal-oriented and is sometimes known as stabilizing processes (Senge, 1997; Moorecraft, 2010; Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2010). These systems seek stability, they have implicit self-correcting defense mechanisms that ensure stability through time (Senge, 1997; Moorecraft, 2010; Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2010). "Complex organisms such as the human body contain thousands of balancing feedback processes that maintain temperature and balance, heal our wounds, adjust

our eyesight to the amount of light, and alert us to threat. A biologist would say that all of these processes are the mechanisms by which our body achieves homeostasis, its ability to maintain conditions for survival in changing environment…organizations and societies resemble complex organisms because they too have myriad balancing feedback processes" (Senge, 1997: 69-70). Within management, these balancing processes are often difficult to unearth because the goals are often implicit, whereby no one really recognizes that they even exist (Moorecraft, 2010; Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2010). To system thinkers finding the balancing feedback processes, both explicit and implicit, is critical because it will illuminate how the system really works (Senge 1997; Moorecraft, 2010; Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2010). I have decided to use Senge's (1997) representation of a 'balancing scale', as it symbolizes that movement is only creating more stability, thereby ensuring its existence through time and space.

In addition, all feedback processes have some form of interruption between the action and its consequence we call this *'delays',* and they are intermissions in the flow of influence, which cause the consequences to occur gradually over time. In Figure 8, I numbered the reinforcing and balancing feedback symbols in the CLM, as they relate to my theoretical explanations. This format was utilized to illustrate that despite the research being carried out over three cyclic episodes, they were truly interrelated. Following Figure 8, a narrative of the theoretical explanations is provided (as illustrated by loops), which include theoretical propositions.

Figure 7-1: Causal Loop Model of Theoretical Explanations



Loop 1: The Systemic Effects of Institutionalization on Project Management

The empirical analysis illustrated that despite all criticism from the literature and the project failure (as per the 'iron-triangle') experienced within xYz, there was almost a dogmatic belief in the mainstream standards and structures of project management and programme management. An analysis of the interviews highlighted that there was a desire or need for control and historicity within the xYz project management department and this served as a key driver of these standards and structures. There was almost a religious like belief in the Project Management Institute (PMI) and the standards and structures that they disseminate. It appeared that new project managers were assigned into positions where there was a pre-existing social order, which seemed to implicitly and explicitly govern the behavior of the new project managers entering xYz. Given the empirical observations, it appeared that the project managers could not understand a world outside the domain of the existing mainstream standards and structures. These empirical observations are in support of the following theoretical proposition:

P1: The adoption of project and programme management practices and structures is most likely to lead to a perpetuating cycle of institutionalization; because it implicitly and explicitly encourages the need for control and historicity within a project-centered organization.

P1.1: Overtime the institutionalized project-centered organization's social expectation will turn into a social order, which will come to take on law-like status that will pre-determine and govern the appropriate organizational forms and behaviors.

P1.2: This social order is kept in place through some form of active advocacy and the absence of active resistance within the project-centered organization.

P1.3: The law-like social order subconsciously evokes actors to have minimal decision-making when confronted with uncertainty, which reinforces the emphasis of control and historicity.

P1.3.1: Moreover innovations, practices or services will subconsciously be adopted because it perpetuates the pre-existing form of control and historicity.

P1.3.2: Innovations, practices and services that present an opposing form of control and historicity will most likely result in a failed adoption or consummate rejection.

The theoretical proposition presented which was derived from my empirical analysis has been corroborated in the extant literature on social constructionism. For example, the theory of the social construction of reality asserts, "…our reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which this occurs" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 13).

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966) institutionalization is the illustration or models of habitualized behaviours, which have a reciprocal relationship between the institutional typifications, actors as well as the actors within the institutions. Any institution exists within some form of model and the actors involved share the habitualized actions that construct the model of the institution. Tolbert and Zucker (1999) went on to expand and define institutionalization as "the process through which components of formal structure become widely accepted, as both appropriate and necessary, and serve to legitimate organizations" (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983, p. 25). Institutionalization is a core process in the formation and perpetuation of prevailing social structures, because what we come to notice is that the social expectation of appropriate organizational forms and behaviors evolve to law-like position in the social thought and action (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Tolbert & Zucker, 1999; Chng, 2006).

Tolbert and Zucker (1999) respectively described the process of institutionalization in three progressive stages: [1] Habitualisation, [2] Objectification, and [3] Sedimentation. Berger and Luckmann (1966) indicated that institutionalization begins with the process of Habitualisation,

which occurs when new structural arrangements are established in response to particular problems that confront a set of organizations. Habitualization is simply the process that leads to "the development of patterned problem-solving behaviors and the association of such behaviors with particular stimuli" (Tolbert & Zucker, 1999, p. 181). Objectification is the next stage within the institutionalization process. Tolbert and Zucker (1999, p. 182) described that it "involves the development of some degree of social consensus among organizational decision-makers concerning the value of a structure, and the increasing adoption by organizations on the basis of that consensus" and it is at this stage that new social structures are established or removed. The final is stage of the institutionalization process is that of sedimentation, which is "characterized both by the virtually complete spread of practices across the group of actors theorized as appropriate adopters, and by the perpetuation of structures over a lengthy period of time" (Tolbert & Zucker, 1999, p. 184). It has been indicated that the absence of active resistance and active advocacy of the long-term social practices are important contributing factors to the perpetuation of the social order (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Tolbert & Zucker, 1999; Chng, 2006). Chang (2006) argued that evidence of positive outcomes associated with the practice would always be publicized, despite the causal linkage between the structure and it effect often being obscure and difficult to replicate. Moreover, Berger and Luckmann (1966) indicated that in this stage, the facts and routines become externalized, and the externalization process enables those facts and routines to be transmitted effortlessly across time and space; more importantly actions that become habitualized are "evoked with minimal decision-making effort by actors in response to particular stimuli" because of the "development of shared definitions or meanings that are linked to these habitualized behaviors" (Tolbert & Zucker, 1999, p. 180). Foucault (1972) observed this very phenomenon as he believed that we human beings are strange creatures, because we create objects of study and then, over time, we forget it was our creation and treat the object as though it is an objective, external facet of reality.

Institutions are implicitly built from control and historicity and thus aim to perpetuate that control and historicity (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Tolbert & Zucker, 1999; Chng, 2006). The reciprocal models of actions are created in the path of a shared history, it is impossible for them to develop

instantaneously. All institutions lives within the history that preceded it. Berger and Luckmann (1966) suggest that institutions, by mere virtue of its existence, govern human conduct as they design predetermined patterns of human conduct, which are then channeled into one particular direction.

Institutions manifest themselves as collectives of people; these collectives of people are responsible for constructing the project domain world. Since they (collectives of people) shaped this project domain world on the path of a shared biography, which they can remember, the shaped world appears completely transparent to them. Within the process of transmission of these models of human conduct, the institutional reality stiffens and solidifies itself, not only to the laymen but also the practitioners. As Berger and Luckmann (1966) describe it, the 'there we go again' eventually becomes the 'this is how these things are done'. The reality solidifies itself within consciousness of human being, the socially constructed model becomes perceived as a model of actual reality. Berger and Luckmann (1966) postulated that because the responders (or the imparted laymen) are not involved within the shaping of this model, the reality is never fully transparent to them, it imposes itself as a given reality which is opaque in certain places. Therefore institutionalization is the process by which social processes and obligations take a law-like status in thought and action. Simply put they become social forces affecting action.

Thrownness and Social order

Berger and Luckmann (1966) suggested that there is always a particular social order that predates any individual organismic development, while this appears intrinsic to the human a social order is always pre-existing. Berger and Luckmann (1966) vehemently held that in the course of man's continuing externalization social orders are in a constant cycle of being created and recreated, it is being produced and reproduced by the humans that exist within it. It cannot be derived from the 'laws of nature', because it only exists as a product of human activity (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). A particular social order or 'way of doing things' results from past human activity and it is only perpetuated because that human activity continues to reproduce it (Berger & Luckmann,

1966). Meyer and Rowan (1977: 344) believe that this social order leads to the emergence of "occupations controlled, not only by direct inspection of work outcomes but also by social rules of licensing, certifying, and schooling. The occupations are rationalized, being understood to control impersonal techniques rather than moral mysteries. Further, they are highly institutionalized: the delegation of activities to the appropriate occupations is socially expected and often legally obligatory over and above any calculations of its efficiency."

Heidegger (1962) perceives the human being to be an entity that is in a constant state of trying to make sense of things in its reality, or makes things intelligible. At the very least this could imply that we exist inside, a disclosure, an intelligible world and that we are in constant state of making sense of the entities that we encounter and the entities that we are. According to Heidegger, sense making is a two-part structure, which is inherently intertwined: thrown projection (Heidegger 1962: 148, 199, 223, 285). To Heidegger 'Thrownness' and 'Projection' are interwoven entities, in that one's projection is always thrown, and one's thrownness is continually projective. Heidegger's concept of thrownness and projection are analogous to the two dimensions of human existence, namely: our finitude and freedom. The reality that is to be human is both one of freedom, spontaneity, and transcendence; at the same time it is one of limitation, restriction and finitude.

Heidegger's assertion that human existence is that of thrownness does not imply the constitutional understanding of being knocked off balance by an unexpected event; rather Heidegger's claim, at the least, is that we are thrown into something from which a starting point already exists and has been determined. According to Heidegger human life can never be neutral or undetermined, as there is always content which already exists. According to Withy (2011) if the structure of making sense of things is that of thrown projection, then we make sense of particular things, and not others, in particular ways, and not others.

For Heidegger (1962), (at the least) making sense of things is continuously about allowing those things to make sense to us. We are thus constrained by and beholden to what an entity is, thus we are unable to make sense of an entity in any which way but by that which the entity already exists. Dreyfus and Rubin (1991: 299) [as cited in Withy, 2011] are in agreement with this perspective: 'Thrownness means that Dasein [the entity that understands being] always finds itself already having some given content and concerns'. Considering the syntax of the term 'being thrown' or 'thrownness', one may see that in the term 'thrownness' there is both an into-which we are thrown and a from-which we are thrown, and at every trajectory point we are already thrown. As Withy (2011: 3) noted that "…as entities who make sense of things, we are delivered over to the things that we make sense of and to specific ways of making sense of them. We are thrown into particular situations, and this means that we are given over to particular things to make sense of (and not others), and particular ways of doing so (and not others). We are always in some situation that provides the content or material for our sense-making and in doing so limits or constrains it." Simply put, we as human beings live within a particular social order that has forces at play affecting our behavior.

Loop 2: Unearthing the underlying assumptions within the project domain

The empirical analysis within xYz revealed that both project and programme management as a practice, was centered on control. While analyzing the literature it became clear that programme management could be seen as an abstraction of project management; organizational process-flow documents validated this by revealing that while certain concepts were changed, there was was a very similar flow of events within project and programme management. The empirical analysis also indicated a very rigid hierarchy of power and that all paths of the project manager will lead individual to become a programme manager, this was validated through the analysis of the organizational organogram. Organisational institutional theorists (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) reveal that the social order embedded within a highly institutionalized organization will eventually lead to the objectification of knowledge and practices. These empirical observations are in support of the following theoretical proposition:

P2: The social order within the institutionalized project-centered organisation has created a belief that a single form of project management exists, which is universally relevant in all contexts.

P2.1: This has led to the belief that programme management is a scaled-up version of project management.

P2.1: A rigid hierarchical worldview, time-focused linear lifecycle, uniformity infiltrating the programme management techniques, and the inherent reinforcement of role similarity are all indicators that this belief is in perpetual motion.

The theoretical proposition presented was derived from my empirical analysis has been corroborated in the extant literature. For example, the mainstream approaches have implicitly adopted the view that if the methodology is highly structured and rigid then the approach can be applied equally and successfully in all contexts (Sewchurran, 2008; Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006; Söderlund, 2004). This is reminiscent of the Taylorist perspective within the project management domain, which suggests that the principles within project management are generic and universal (see Sharad [as cited by Söderlund, 2004]). Alternatively, there is a school of thought that holds the belief that the relevance of the project management principles will depend on the contextual characteristics of the environment that the organisation is operating within, the contextual environment within the organization, and then the characteristics of the project (Hoverfält, 2012; Pellegrinelli et al, 2007; Partington, 1996).

The mainstream approaches have become recognised for the number of different types of programme (e.g. business cycle, strategic, R&D and infrastructure), yet there is very little direction presented on the different approach required to adapt to the different programmes or how these mainstream approaches could be altered with an disjointed project scenario. It is somewhat of a

paradox as there appears to be so much literature on how these mainstream approaches have evolved and become adaptable for a wide variety of contexts with their wide variety of programme types, yet *"…there has also been a convergence on a purportedly generic programme management approach that fails to account for such differences."* (Lycett et al, 2004: 295)

There appears to be a perpetuating worldview, that regardless of the project size, type, urgency or kind of resources used, all projects within the programme should be managed by a standard approach (Payne & Rodney Turner, 1999; Söderlund, 2004; Williams, 2005; Pellegrinelli et al, 2007). There is a belief that applying a standard management approach will enable resources to move freely between projects without having to make to any real adjustments, since they do not need to learn a different approach. There is also a perception that the projects within the programme are fundamentally homogeneous and because of this perception all projects require the identical amount of engagement in all cases. It has been suggested that organisations should move away from this misconception and instead would be better off tailoring their procedures to the context in which the programme and project exists (Payne & Rodney Turner, 1999; Söderlund, 2004; Williams, 2005; Pellegrinelli et al, 2007).

Research has suggested that because project managers still see the world in terms of 'programmes of work', they implicitly tend to perceive a program as an elongated form of a project (Pellegrinelli & Bowman, 1994; Pellegrinelli, 1997; Söderlund, 2004; Pellegrinelli et al, 2007). Gray (1997: 7) made the assumption of comparison between project and programme management explicit, when he claimed that "…a programme, project, sub-project and work package are simply different levels in a hierarchy of project-type work activities". The following concepts have compounded the existing social order, namely a:

Rigid hierarchical worldview: Organisations that have adopted the mainstream approaches to programme management are rigidly hierarchical, equipped with traditional reporting mechanisms

between the project and programme manager (Gray, 1997). Ironically, this often tends to lead to a negative gyration of control and bureaucracy (Pellegrinelli & Bowman, 1994; Pellegrinelli, 1997; Söderlund, 2004; Williams, 2005).

Time-focused linear lifecycle: The mainstream approaches strongly postulate that because the programme is created on the defined organisational strategy all that is required from the programme manager is slight adjustments to ensure that it advances towards its desired state (Gray, 1997). This implicitly implies that that there is a noticeably complete and fixed input process, which will by default justifies the creation of a detailed programme plan, thereby granularly plotting the progression of the programme to completion. Ironically, the linearity in the planning process leads to an inability to adapt to the changing business strategy (Pellegrinelli & Bowman, 1994; Pellegrinelli, 1997).

The inherent reinforcement of role similarity: It has become widely accepted that the project management career path leads to that of a programme manager. Pellegrinelli (1997) has illustrated how the many talented project managers struggle to adapt in the world of programme management, because the tacit instincts of the project manager can often be counterproductive within the programme context. For example, Lycett et al, (2004:295) highlights this clearly as "…the project management mind-set that project scope is guarded defensively. This is likely to be highly restrictive in a programme context."

Uniformity infiltrating the programme management techniques: The assumption that programme management is merely a scaled-up version of project management, manifests itself in the proposed programme management techniques. Example, the programme approach to planning is fundamentally identical to the project level approach. Ironically, Lycett et al, (2004:295) identifies the systemic effects of this perspective, which are: "1) a potential tendency towards complexity, bureaucracy and control; 2) limitations on the ability to evolve the scope in response

to changing business drivers, goals and strategies and 3) a mechanical perspective that does not offer insight into how to manage the softer issues that very often arise at the programme level." This explanation uncovers the underlying assumptions affecting the development of programme management within a particular social order. Simply put mainstream programme management develops within the social order of mainstream project management.

Loop 3: Connecting Mimetic Isomorphism with Project Management

My empirical observations revealed that external consulting firms spearheaded the adoption of project and programme management standards, structures and policies within xYz. The rationale for adoption appeared to be based mainly around the trends that larger firms were following, reducing uncertainty within the environment and the need to remain relevant and 'stay ahead of the curve'. It almost appeared to be ingrained within the culture of the organization to adopt and implement innovations, practices, and policies without clearly articulating the value propositions for xYz. The project management office has a mandate to promote agility and innovation throughout the organization, yet all the practices and policies are inherently promoting rigidity and control. My observation indicated that despite the majority of their projects being over budget, out of scope, and outside their projected timelines, there is a dogmatic belief that those practices work and are relevant for xYz. It appeared that the management team has to maintain the perception that the practices work, in order to justify their enormous personnel training investments. These empirical observations are in support of the following theoretical proposition:

> *P3: Consulting firms are most likely to use uncertainty, legitimacy and competitive advantage, as social forces to pressure an institutionalized project-centered organisation into adopting mainstream practices.*
>
> > *P3.1: These social forces urge the institutionalized project-centered organisation to adopt programs, policies, practices and/or innovations ceremoniously, despite it being in conflict with the organizational goals.*

P3.2: These behaviors of adoption are more likely to be ritualized when the institutionalized project-centered organization has a wider customer base, a need for rigid control, historicity and are embedded within an uncertain environment.

P3.2.1: Overtime these ritualized behaviors of adoption will alter the internal structure and characteristics of the organization, and actually limit the agility of management.

The theoretical proposition presented was derived from my empirical observations has been corroborated in the extant literature. For instance, building on from institutional theories, one finds that organisations compete for two reasons; institutional legitimacy and economic benefits (Andrews, Boyne, and Walker, 2006; Haunschild & Miner, 1997). It has generally been accepted that the social context significantly influences the management of the organization (Chen & Liao, 2014; Ansari, Fiss & Zajac, 2010; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Organisational literature indicates that the emergence of imitative behaviour in organisational structures and practices has resulted in two distinct perspectives, namely a rational perspective and a institutional perspective. From the rational perspective there is a belief that there is a rational decision maker, which takes costs and benefits of the available alternative practices and structures into consideration before coming to a rational decision (Ansari, et al., 2010; Haunschild & Miner, 1997). From the institutional perspective, the imitative behaviour emerges as a beneficial method of coping with the social pressures within the environment and is a key predictor for adoption and isomorphism within organisations (Chen & Liao, 2014; Ansari, et al., 2010; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

In the seminal work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983) on institutional isomorphism [which sought to break away from the then prominent work of Freeman (1977)] revolutionized the organizational theory. DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 149) believed that isomorphism, "…a constraining process that forces one unit of a population to resemble another unit…", was an inherent characteristic of institutionalization. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), institutional isomorphic change has

three forms, namely: [1] Coercive: whereby the change is influenced by political powers and seeks to address legitimacy; [2] Normative: whereby the change is associated with professionalization; and [3] Mimetic: whereby the change is a standard response to address uncertainty. Based on my empirical observations, mimetic isomorphism is the form that most resembles the existing case study.

Mimetic isomorphism can be seen as social forces, which place pressure on organisations to imitate other organisations' structures, activities, and/or systems. Adoption of innovations or frameworks is deemed to enhance legitimacy of the organization and is therefore perceived as desirable, in situations of uncertainty the change is viewed as a natural form of coping. However, such copying is often taken without any clear evidence of performance enhancements or improvements. "Mimetic forces explain the widespread adoption of, for example, management practices for which there is little empirical evidence of performance benefits, that is the following of fads and fashions" (Ashworth, Boyne, & Delbridge, 2009: 167).

Based on this lens, organizations tend to alter their internal characteristics in order to conform to the expectancies of the key stakeholders in their environment. Over time, we find that rule and norms emerge, which actually limits the management's agility. The organizations in the same field eventually become imprisoned by these mimetic social forces, which homogenizes their characteristics (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Ashworth, et al., 2009). Mimetic isophormism or "modeling, as we use the term, is a response to uncertainty. The modeled organization may be unaware of the modeling or may have no desire to be copied; it merely serves as a convenient source of practices that the borrowing organization may use. DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 151) noted "models may be diffused unintentionally, indirectly through employee transfer or turnover, or explicitly by organizations such as consulting firms or industry trade associations."

Organisations that get caught into the cycle of mimetic isomorphism, tend to change ritualistically as the environment changes as they create the illusion of legitimacy, that they are at least trying improve the circumstances of the organization (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Zucker, 1987). The problem with this is that often that the ritualistic mimetic isomorphism conflicts with the organisation's internal goals; Meyer and Rowan (1977: 340-341) described this eloquently at length:

> "Institutionalized products, services, techniques, policies, and programs function as powerful myths, and many organizations adopt them ceremonially. But conformity to institutionalized rules often conflicts sharply with efficiency criteria and, conversely, to coordinate and control activity in order to promote efficiency undermines an organization's ceremonial conformity and sacrifices its support and legitimacy. To maintain ceremonial conformity, organizations that reflect institutional rules tend to buffer their formal structures from the uncertainties of technical activities by becoming loosely coupled, building gaps between their formal structures and actual work activities."

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) noted that when an organization, has a wider base of customers served by the organization, the pressure to mimetically isomorph ceremonially is much greater, in order preserve the illusion of legitimacy. However as a result, these illusions become more than general values, rather they serve to act as powerful mechanisms with causal importance to the process of bureaucratization. They are deeply ingrained into the very texture of how they understand and interpret reality. The policies, positions, procedures and programs are all manifestations of an organization that mimetically isomorphs ritualistically, and they now operate as abnormally justified illusions which bind them to external institutions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) believes that these larger, 'more successful' firms create the illusion of control and rational functionalism leading to constant mimetic isomorphism by the smaller, 'less successful' firms. Simply put this research revealed that; the desire for control, reducing uncertainty, and the need to enhance competitiveness serve as social forces that affect organisational decision-making towards mimicking 'more successful' firms, a

consequence of which is the adoption mainstream project and programme management standards and structures.

Loop 4: The Emergence of Organisational Ventriloquism: A long term effect of ritual mimetic isomorphism

My empirical analysis of xYz has illuminated that there has been a tremendous dependency on consulting firms to aid them on the journey to mimetically isomorph, even to the point where they were unintentionally leaking intellectual property to a competitor/supplier. My empirical observations indicated that this was because of the blurred boundaries between the consulting firms and xYz, thus the consulting firms have the financial rewards of external consulting firms and the organisational freedom of an internal function/unit. The observations indicated that there have been various paradoxes playing out within xYz. Firstly, xYz have created a culture of allowing consulting firms to manage their major projects and address their uncertainty, this has unintentionally led to their managers struggling to build their tacit experience and the cognitive ability of the organisation. Secondly, xYz have seemingly been caught into a paradox of control, as their perceived need to rigidly control project outcomes by placing the responsibility on external consulting firms has indirectly led to their dependence on these consulting firms to the point where many of these consulting firms cannot be removed without damaging the very fabric of the organization.

Lieberman and Asaba (2006) have noted that in highly uncertain environments, mimetic isomorphism can become dysfunctional in some cases even pathological. March (1981) noted that once social actors in a particular context mimics a certain behaviour, over time this behaviour gets taken for granted or even institutionalized, thereafter other social actors mimic behaviour without thinking. Lieberman and Asaba (2006) have indicated that this type of behaviour can result in huge wastage of resources from duplicative investments. Ashworth, et al., (2009) have indicated that there has been less attention paid to explaining long term effects that these isomorphic social

forces have on the organisational system, particularly how it changes the structures and processes of the organization. Given this, the empirical observations are in support of the following theoretical proposition:

P4: Ritualised mimetic isomorphism inherently encourages a dependency on institutionalized consulting firms, as they enable the organization towards a successful legitimated isomorphism.

P4.1: The dependency encourages organisations to shift the burden conformity to institutionalized consulting firms, which alternatively leads to a paradox of control.

P4.2: Prolonged and unchanging resource dependency will lead to a form of 'Organisational Ventriloquism', whereby the institutionalized consulting firms controls the inputs the organization requires.

P4.2.1: The Organisational Ventriloquism leads to a perilous form of dependency, as any form of separation will lead to critical organisational harm.

The theoretical proposition presented was derived from my empirical observations, further, this has been corroborated in the extant literature. For instance, there are publicized examples of consulting firms that become insiders in large scale organizational and information technology projects, which have resulted in enormous consulting expenditures because of the client dependence that was created (Boyd, 2001; O'Shea & Madigan, 1997;). According to Kitay and Wright (2008), the phenomenon of clients becoming grossly dependent on the expertise and services of external consulting firms is becoming an increasingly common experience within organisations. For example, "in one instance, a manager noted how his firm had become reliant upon the 'Big Five' consultancy it had engaged to assist in the implementation of an enterprise-wide information system. As the implementation grew in complexity and deadlines and budgets were exceeded, client members of the project team became dependent upon the increasing

numbers of consulting staff sent to fix what was seen as a 'problem project'. In this case the consultants as 'insiders' came to dominate the project and the clients became trapped in a cycle of dependency which ultimately resulted in significant recrimination." (Kitay & Wright, 2008: 13).

Jeff Pfeffer (1987) was a theoretician who himself found inspiration from the work of Rowan & Meyer (1977) and DiMaggio & Powell (1983) and developed a theory of resource dependence which offers a theoretical explanation that corroborates with the empirical observations. Resource Dependence Theory attempts to explain the organisational and inter-organisational behavior in terms of the critical resources an organization requires to function and survive (Pfeffer, 1987; Johnson, 1995; Casciaro, & Piskorski, 2005; Nienhüser, 2008; Hillman, Withers & Collins, 2009; Davis & Cobb, 2010; Drees & Heugens, 2013).

Rooted in social constructionism and open-systems theory, it presents an argument that suggests that organisations will respond to and develop a dependency on organisations in its environment, which control resources that are critical and that it has inadequate control over (Pfeffer, 1987; Johnson, 1995; Nienhüser, 2008). As an open-systems theory, the resource dependence argument suggests that a given organization will respond to and become dependent on those organizations or entities in its environment that control resources which are both critical to its operations and over which it has limited control (Pfeffer, 1987; Johnson, 1995; Casciaro, & Piskorski, 2005; Nienhüser, 2008). Johnson (1995:1) elaborates by noting that "such dependence makes the external constraint and control of organizational behavior possible as asymmetric change and power relations are created between organizations." Once an organisation has created a dependence, it will use that power to their advantage and try to extend that power over and above their initial contribution to resource control. This power snowballs in that once it is reinforced it cannot be reduced easily by the changes in resource demands of the organisations (Nienhüser, 2008). There have been numerous studies (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Nienhüser, 2008) that has demonstrated that the more powerful entities have a longer period of service than the less powerful entities. It appears almost blatant that consulting firms would be

needed for longer periods of time, simply on the basis of the functionality of the resources which they control. Researchers have reiterated that this power is gained as an effect of the environmental uncertainty (Pfeffer, 1987; Johnson, 1995; Nienhüser, 2008).

Pfeffer (1987: 26-27) has presented a basic argument of the relationship between resource dependency and the interorganisational behaviour as:

> "1) the fundamental units for understanding intercorporate relations and society are organizations; 2) these organizations are not autonomous, but rather are constrained by a network of interdependencies with other organizations; 3) interdependence, when coupled with uncertainty about what the actions will be of those with which the organization is interdependent,, leads to a situation in which survival and continued success are uncertain; therefore 4) organizations take actions to manage external interdependencies, although such actions are inevitably never completely successful and produce new patterns of dependence and interdependence; and 5) these patterns of dependence produce interorganizational as well as intraorganizational power, where such power has some effect on organizational behavior. Organizations tend to comply with the demands of those interests in their environment which have relatively more power."

For the purpose of this theoretical explanation I will only elaborate on the following concepts; a) Organisational resources; b) The emergence of organizational dependence; and c) the presence of external organizational constraints.

Organisational resources - According to Johnson (1995) and Casciaro & Piskorski (2005) resources within an organisation have a variation of forms, to name a few: capital, information, raw materials, social support, technology, technological innovations, all services and production operations that are not completed by the focal organisation. Johnson (1995: 6) understood "…this

broadly, resources may be considered as inputs or outputs. The flow of such resources between organizations appear to be both variable and at times unpredictable."

The emergence of organizational dependence - indicates that in the instance an organisation develops a need to acquire resources, an exchange relationship between organisations emerges. Further, inter-dependent relationships are set in motion because of the unequal distribution of the required resources. Numerous researchers (Pfeffer, 1987; Johnson, 1995; Casciaro, & Piskorski, 2005; Nienhüser, 2008; Davis & Cobb, 2010; Drees & Heugens, 2013) hold the opinion that the instance a need for resource acquisition has been formulated there are dependencies that emerge between the organisation and the other organisations in its environment. There appears to be several factors that exacerbate the nature of the dependence, namely; 1) the importance of the resource(s) to the focal organisation, 2) the comparable scarcity of resources, and 3) the extent to which that resource(s) is concentrated within the environment (Pfeffer, 1987; Johnson, 1995; Hillman, et al., 2009). Johnson (1995: 6) elaborated further by noting that "given that inter-organizational power differentials grow out of asymmetric economic exchanges between organizations, resource dependencies give rise to political problems which often result in political solutions. Such power can be used by resource-rich organizations to control the behavior of resource-dependent organizations."

The presence of external organizational constraints - overtime these external dependencies create external organisational constraints, whereby the choices and actions of the managers, within the focul organisation, become constrained as the managers work towards addressing the demands of the external entities that provide resources vital to the organisations success and even its survival. Johnson (1995) elaborated the conceptualisation of the effects of external contraints in a similar fashion by extending it to individuals. For instance, just as employees in an organisation are subject to various social pressures from the heirarchical superiors they interact with, so we find that organisations are subject to various pressures from the organisations with whom they are inter-dependent. Given this, we begin to discover that what is of the utmost importance in

resource dependence theory is understanding the environmental context in which the organisation is embedded (Pfeffer, 1987; Johnson, 1995; Casciaro, & Piskorski, 2005; Nienhüser, 2008; Davis & Cobb, 2010; Drees & Heugens, 2013). As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978:39) noted, "the underlying premise of the external perspective on organizations is that organizational activities and outcomes are accounted for by the context in which the organization is embedded.

Simply put; organizations exist within a social order, often interdependent with other organizations. Within this social order, the social forces exist serve to promotes the patterns of dependence and interdependence, often with asymetrical power dynamics. As Pfeffer (1987:27) eloquently states, “Organizations tend to comply with the demands of those interests in their environment which have relatively more power.”

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This research sought to present an alternative outlook on the project domain by moving 'outside' the current focus of mainstream project research and explore other theoretical explanations and perspectives that could provide new insights, concerns and agendas for the project domain. Its goal was to find synergies with different schools of thought by building a bridge between the project domain and organisational theory. This chapter has been divided in three sections, namely: the implications of the research to wider research community; the limitations of the research; and my reflections on the research and suggestions for future research.

Implications of the Research

This study has important implications for stakeholders within project-based organisations and the scientific community at large. This research presented an interpretive case study utilizing critical hermeneutics, soft systems thinking and abductive inquiry. The contribution of this research has presented a different outlook on the project domain, as opposed to the mainstream research. It has essentially built a bridge from the project domain and the organisational theory, because project domain has always existed within organisations and so its relevance is persisting.

This research first highlights the evolution of project management and how it has affected the development of programme management, placing particular focus on the 'historical-consciousness' and the ideological foundations of the project management and how these have been transferred into programme management. This is followed by a critique of mainstream programme management assumptions, problematizing the rigid and linear programme management pedagogy and makes calls for an infusion of alternative perspectives on the domain.

The research utilizes the theory of institutionalization, the concept mimetic isomorphism and the theory of resource dependency to provide a theoretical explanation for the empirical findings. The theoretical explanations reveal why the 'control-centered' perspective of programme management emerged; highlight the influence that external stakeholders (consulting firms) have

on adopting best practices; and reveal the superficial understanding of why the case organisation adopted best practices. Furthermore this research has highlighted the organisational effects that institutionalisation has had on the project domain and the organisations which adopt it.

The research uncovers that we as human beings (as well as organisations) exist within a particular social order that has forces at play affecting our behavior. Further, mainstream programme management develops within the social order of mainstream project management; and the desire for control, reducing uncertainty, and the need to enhance competitiveness serve as social forces that affect organisational decision-making towards mimicking 'more successful' firms, a consequence of which is the adoption mainstream project and programme management standards and structures. Finally, the research reveals that organizations are often interdependent with other organizations and that social forces exist and serve to promote the patterns of dependence and interdependence, often with asymetrical power dynamics. This often leads to the organisations with less power interests to comply with the demands with those of more power interests.

Limitations of Research

This research was limited on three levels, namely: time, budget constraints and resource availability. I was limited in the amount of resources that were assigned to the project management unit, thus limiting my exposure to the project management experts. As I was working off a limited pool of project management experts, time availability and budget constraints became a key issue that restricted my ability to conduct longer unstructured interviews. This research was also limited due the restricted access to certain strategic documents. It was difficult to ascertain the historical motivation for the introduction of project management best practices, due to the lack of access to the individuals who initiated best practices adoption within xYz.

Reflections and Implications for Future Research

In my opinion future research, within the project management discipline, should move away from trying to identify or justify the need for universal, 'silver-bullet' best-practice, because with every new project emerges inherent new complexities and uncertainties. Perhaps what is needed in this unpredictable social, economic and environmental climate, is a new style, a style which promotes change rather than stability, which encourages practitioners to adopt a self-reflexive, context-driven and ethically mindful practices, which aims to move away from the managing of projects to the orchestrating of project and programs.

Future research within the project management discipline should attempt to unearth an organising style with a set of heuristics that would contextually address the complexity within projects. I believe that further insight could be gained on the dynamics between ritualized mimetic isomorphism and 'Organisational Ventriloquism'. Furthermore I recommend that more cases with similar profiles should be analyzed in order to identify the different coping mechanisms; and more diverse coping strategies for organizational ventriloquism could be researched. This emergent style should not attempt to abolish the traditional roots, as it there is value in comparison, choice and flexibility. In the absence of lucidity and certainty, this emergent organizing style should not perceive itself as an impediment to action, rather a call for it.

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Appendix: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Unit Purpose: What we are trying to understand is the reason why the function exists

1. Why was the unit/ function started? Or, Why did they want it to exist?
2. What are the objectives that need to be achieved through this?

Roles: We are trying to understand the composition of the team regarding the various roles that are there to do produce the required outputs

3. What different roles do you have in your team

Outputs: We are trying to understand the effort required to produce the necessary outputs

4. What are the things that you deliver (as a function/ unit)? Or, What are your required deliverables, key outputs? Or, What outputs are you responsible for delivering
    a. The amount of time it usually takes you to deliver this (Throughput)
    b. In what quantity or volume is this usually delivered? Or, How many times does it have to be delivered/do you have to deliver this a month? (volume)
    c. How thorough does this have to be? Or, What is the acceptable/expected level of quality on this/these deliverables? (quality)
    d. Price: this will not be asked as a question, but will be determined through acquiring the answers for the above questions

Conditions for output delivery:

5. How do you deliver these outputs, what activities are necessary?
6. What inputs do you need to deliver the outputs?
7. What inhibits/ prevents you from doing what you need to do?
8. Is there any mainstream or certified methodology that you use or have adopted within your practice, or in the production of these outputs.

Stakeholders: We are trying to understand who the clients, actors and owners are of the system

9. Who are the stakeholders of this output delivery process? Contributors, Clients/beneficiaries

Process/Output owner

10. Who is the process owner for this function/team? Or, who is/are the owners for the (particular) outputs?
11. What is the teams reporting structure?

Role in IT: What we are trying to understand is the linkages a unit has to other units in the IT value chain, and what impact it has on these?

12. What role do you think your unit/ function play within the IT value chain?
13. Who (which functions/units) are you dependent on to fulfill your mandate?
14. Who (which units/ functions) are dependent on you to fulfill their mandate?
15. What value does your unit/function have on the IT value chain, or on IT delivering to the business?

Role in Business: We are trying to understand the perception on the strategic contribution of the unit, and business- IT perspectives.

16. How important do you think your role is from the perspective of business to deliver on what they need to? and, in the provision of new (value- adding) opportunities for them
17. What do you think the perspective of business is regarding IT?
18. What is your perspective of IT in relation to the business?

Worldviews: Wanting to understand the world-views of the work system

19. From your perspective, what do you think is wrong with IT and where should IT improve?
20. What value do you think your unit