**The London Olympics:
A Case Study in Security Project
Management at the Extremes of
Organizational Complexity**

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Research Proposal:

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Introduction

The role of project management in the 21st century is one that increasingly impinges on every area of public life, and which has been at the centre of many of the significant failures that have hit world headlines over the last decade. Whether it is the collapse of the global financial systems; breakdowns in the management of public sector issues such as the National Health Service, management of prisons or ensuring the safety and well-being of children in care; the mismanagement of budget and project delivery issues in major IT systems (many of which were proudly announced as 'cutting edge' and 'revolutionary'); the ability to respond to disasters such as Hurricane Katrina or the Japan Fukushima earthquake/tsunami/nuclear crisis, or the ability to supply basic equipment to troops in Afghanistan, it is the issue of 'project management' that continuously takes centre stage.

The growing complexity of the world, which has seen an unavoidable coupling of increasingly complex organisations into networks of inter-operability and inter-dependence that transcend any traditional concepts of national boundaries or organisational jurisdictions, has reached beyond the stage where failures in the management and delivery of such projects can be considered as private commercial matters, to one were such failure 'pose a critical challenge to the legitimacy base of public and private organizations' (Boin, 2009:367).

Given the central role that project management plays in every aspect of social and commercial life, but especially when it comes to the delivery of large-scale policy decisions that cut across traditional barriers of departments, or even national governments (Hermann & Dayton, 2009), it is perhaps surprising that there is so little formal understanding of what project management consists of, or what are the underlying skills and competencies that would be expected of an effective project manager.

Whilst we would expect an architect or engineer to be able to explain in detail exactly how they propose to design and build a skyscraper, bridge or new car, and would presume that they have a history of progressive skill development that would give them credibility and professional standing amongst their peers concerning their ability to deliver their task in a professionally-recognised manner, there is little if any equivalent 'body of knowledge' in the project management arena that would allow someone to prove their competency beyond a description of previous projects that they have worked on.

The objective of this research project is to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the 2012 London Olympic Games to look at the issues surrounding the development of a strategic vision and management capability appropriate to a project the size and complexity of the Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games is almost unique in that it offers a self-contained petri dish for qualitative research into organisational capabilities and development unmatched in perhaps any other arena. It is from a social researcher's perspective, almost perfect on every scale. Firstly, it has a highly defined remit, both in terms of delivery and of time. The dates of the event are known, and un-movable, and every aspect of the event itself – where it will be taking place, who will be there, what will be happening, what possible problems there might be - are all pre-set. The Games themselves are self-contained – it is possible to set the parameters so that all significant inputs can be considered as 'inside the tent', and for which there are no unknown signifiers that need to be taken into account. However, another facet of the advantage that the London Olympics gives as a testing ground for the effectiveness or otherwise of large-scale project management skills is that it also has a set end-date. In many project management programme, the project management aspect of the operation is often only the initial stage of what may well be a much longer project (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996), so that the design of the Concorde, for example, was a single component of the Concorde programme as a whole, or the design of an airport is only the first stage in the whole-life project of the airport itself. However, the life of the 'Olympics Project' is completely self-contained, running from the day that the Olympics were assigned to London (6th July, 2005) until the closing ceremony of the Paralympics on 9th September, 2012.

Another advantage is that given that it was not expected that London would win the Games (despite what various public figures might have said prior to the decision being made known), there is a clear start date for the planning of the event, which means that normal issues with hangovers from previous decision cycles do not have to be taken into account. Thus every single person who is working for LOCOG, every contract that was signed, every protocol that was agreed and every strategic decision that was made, can be clearly marked as having taken place after the decision date. From a qualitative researcher's perspective, this makes for an extremely rare coincidence of conditions that is unlikely to be replicated in any other situation.

Although the study of 'managing knowledge in a project environment' is a relatively recent development (Bresnen et al, 2003:157), and one that has been progressed in a fairly random and ad hoc manner, there are distinct areas that have come under a greater intensity of enquiry, and through which there has been the development of an understanding of the dynamics of decision making and action in various aspects of project management. Leadership (eg Deverell, 2010), decision making (eg Veil, 2011, Comfort, 2007), setting of strategic objectives (eg Berry, 1994), integration of separate divisions (eg Smith and Dowell, 2000) are all areas that have seen the development of an academic framework that has as its objective both the study of underlying trends and the identification of ways in which such understanding can be utilised to improve the effectiveness of project management in a wide range of activities.

One of the more interesting areas of enquiry, and one that will be at the heart of this research project, is the on-going reassessment of project-based (and therefore multi-agency and trans-disciplinary) knowledge sharing, and specifically contrasting the traditional 'emphasis on explicit knowledge and its predilection for knowledge codification through technology', (which would conform to the positivistic understanding of knowledge as something separate from the individual or group, and susceptible to being broken down to individual and separate component parts in order to be mechanistically transmitted to other parties), and '[t]he community model [that] focuses instead upon the tacit dimension of knowledge and, in particular, its embeddedness or stickiness within particular social groupings'. (Bresnen et al, 2003:159).

The nature of the Olympics project, given over as it is to an extremely high level of inter-connectedness and inter-dependency between an extremely large number of separate groups, each with their own culture, identity and tradition of work, offers itself up to a classic comparative-ethnographic enquiry, where each social group is not only describing the world as it appears to themselves, but is also trying to interpret the world as it must appear to others, building a network of significant relationships based on those perceptions and assumptions, even if they are not an accurate representation of the world as it is actually seen from the other group(s).

There is also the question as to what extent the strategists responsible for the design and delivery of the Olympics project, from the very moment of its inception, brought the tools of analytical reflexivity to the table as part of their understanding of their role and the needs of the task. Given that delivery of the Olympics project was undoubtedly going to be dependent on a high (and operationally critical) level of process innovation, the ability of the project managers to incorporate and embody self-learning loops within the overall project delivery system is of critical interest.

This is not merely an issue of academic pedanticism, but is fundamental to the ability of project managers to identify and assimilate lessons learned during the development of what is by its very nature a highly fluid and constantly self-evaluating process. ***"[T]he manager's effectiveness is significantly influenced by his insight into his own work"*** (Mintzberg, 1975, in Pugh, 2007:312, italics in the original). Whilst there are obvious reasons why it is happening, it is interesting that whilst the initial Olympic delivery project was quite specific about its' aims and objectives, and put them in the public domain in terms of specific legacy achievements, as the Games have got closer and it has become clear that those objectives are not going to be met, the language of the political leaders (including LOCOG leaders such as Lord Coe), have become more aspirational that practical. In this sense, there has been a redefining of the objectives of the Games away from absolute values that can be measured and assessed, to aspirational values that are no more than expressions of desire, and which avoid the possibility of post-event accountability. In this sense there has been little sense that there has been recognition of the realities of the Olympic project's ability to deliver the promised event in terms that were originally used, given the depleted resources that have been made available, as well as the lack of political commitment to focussing on the delivery of those aspects of the initial promised that have proven difficult to deliver. It seems clear that the aspirational aspects of the Games, both in initial promises of delivery and later promises of a national 'feel good factor', have ignored the fact that to have "an accurate picture of current reality is just as important as a compelling picture of a desired future" (Senge, 1990, quoted Pugh, 2007: 490)

Whilst the development and delivery of the Olympic Games as a whole can be seen as an integrated meta-programme in its own right, the focus of this research project will be on the security management aspects of the Games, though that definition will be given the widest possible remit. As such, there are three clear stages of project management and delivery, which will be approached both as case studies in their own right, and as integral components of an integrated whole. They are the development of the Olympic delivery programme from the announcement of the awarding of the Games to London on 6th July, 2005 to the day of the Opening Ceremony on 27th July, 2012; the management of the Games as part of a 'normal management' process from the start of the Games until the Closing Ceremony of the Paralympics on 9th September; and the ability of the Games managers to respond to the various crisis situations which will undoubtedly arise at some stage during the Games.

It will be ability of Games managers to respond to unexpected crisis situations which will undoubtedly pressure-test the whole management organisation of the Games up to and including Cabinet-level COBRA crisis management committees, that will be the ultimate test of the credibility of the Games' risk management programme. Whilst crises are, by their nature, extremely rare, and are defined as low-likelihood – high consequence events (Weick, 1998, quoted Pugh, 2007:399), given the high-level of complexity, inter-connectedness and operational criticality of so many of the Games subsidiary components the possibility that some crisis will occur during the Games is almost inevitable (Perrow, 1984, Weick (1988) in Pugh (2007)).

Within the Olympic security management framework, there is the need to integrate the priorities of venue security managers with event managers; to balance the needs of crowd control, smooth access to the venues and the imposition of airport-style security checks; the desires of the LOCOG managers to have a 'Friendly Games', at the same time that the government is talking about the need to position anti-aircraft missile units in public parks in London in order to protect against terrorist attacks; and the need to integrate the largest policing operation in the UK (ten thousand personnel) with twenty thousand stewards, seventy thousand volunteers (London Olympics, 2012), and, according to a last minute announcement, thirteen thousand five hundred soldiers who would have recently returned from tours of Iraq and Afghanistan.

For the people tasked with creating a framework that would allow all of that to happen, the following paragraph will undoubtedly have resonance:

> *"The importance of developing shared meaning and understanding, however, highlights the problems of inter-project knowledge diffusion and learning. In project settings, groups are temporally, spatially and culturally differentiated in ways that militate against the diffusion of knowledge via the development of well-established communities of practice. In such circumstances, the challenge may be not so much to make tacit knowledge explicit, but to work out how social practices are organised and to find ways of aligning them"* (Bresnen et al, 2003:159)

Given such understanding, it soon becomes clear (and is acknowledged as such in the academic literature in this area) that it is the role of management not so much as to 'manage' the individual work units, each of whom have developed a specific expertise that gives them the right to belong to such a project, but to create a 'learning organisation' that can develop an understanding of the needs of that specific project whilst it is in the process of delivering highly technical work under what are often extreme time, operational and budgetary pressures (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996; Atkinson, 1999; Pich et al, 2002; Bresnan et al, 2003).

Whilst there has always been anecdotal acknowledgement amongst project managers as to the importance of the personal relationships between personnel from different divisions or agencies, there is not only little explicit research into how this can be achieved, but it is often acknowledged openly that such professional insight is by its very nature unspoken, intuitive and even indescribable. One is almost reminded of the opening lines of the Tao Te Ching 'That Tao which can be described in words is not The Tao'.

> "*In case of process innovation…what is learned is often tacit, intangible and context-dependent….Such learning is not only difficult to measure and evaluate, it is also difficult to capture in explicit forms, in ways that can be understood and applied in new contexts…. How is the organisation able to capture learning and deploy it over the long term, when it is so embedded in the individual and manifested in their particular expertise and range of contacts….The individual embodiment of engineering knowledge and expertise militated against the transfer of such knowledge…*" (Bresnen et al, 2003:163, 164). "*The sociological analysis of qualitative data often resides in a private world of penetrating but ineffable understandings*" (Merton 1968:71-72, quoted King et al:8)

It may seem paradoxical to ask how that which cannot be talked of can be shared, and that which cannot be described can be taught, but just as with any paradox, the answer lies not in confronting mutually self-negating contradictions, but in rephrasing the question. As such, the responsibility of project managers is not so much to directly facilitate the transfer of explicit knowledge from one 'knowledge holder' to another 'knowledge receiver', but to create a working environment that replicates the social interactions that facilitates the development of a truly interactive community where such knowledge is seen to be held and shared at the group level.

Whilst is can be acknowledged that there is a significant scarcity of academic or theoretical resources available to the strategic policy-setter that would be of guidance is developing a framework within which the large-scale project manager can operate, ("The qualitative study of policy tools is an area that is yet to be even modestly explored within the research community". (Rist, 1994:6), it is questionable as to whether the questions laid out in this paper have been faced up to by LOCOG administrators, or even to what extent they were identified as being of value or criticality.
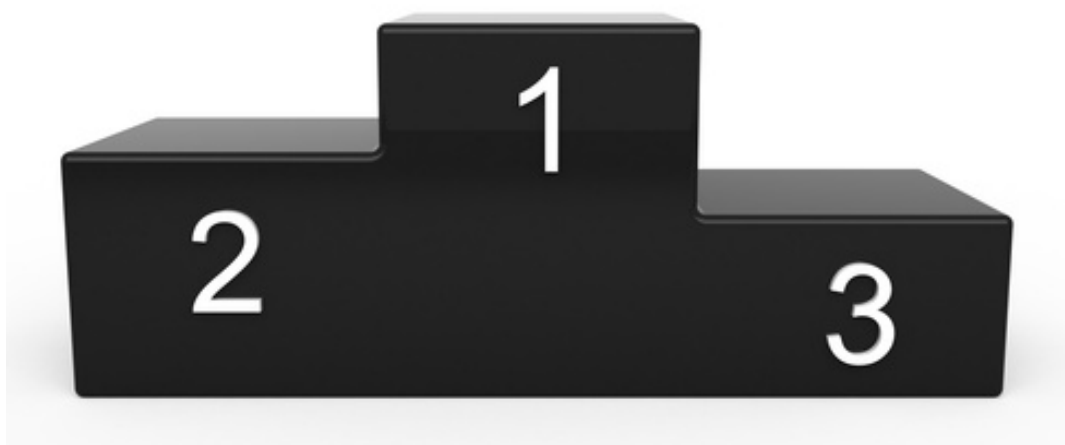
Discussion Paper

Academic Approaches to Security Management

The question as to whether security management can be considered as a true 'profession', is one that is central both to the arguments concerning security management's own self-image (in that security managers themselves often claim the mantle of professionalism due to the added cachet that that labels bestows, though they often have little idea of how that professionalism can be either defined or supported), as well as to the responsibilities that it is prepared to accept. While it is clear that security management does not fit in the list of 'true professions', which are the traditional areas of law, medicine and accountancy (Schon, 1991), it is questionable whether it even fits into the framework of the second-tier professions such as nursing, policing, or the social care sectors such as social work, prison welfare, and associated legal and medical support services. Schon gives the definition of a profession as one where there is a well-established body of knowledge that is accepted as creating the foundations and frameworks of that profession, as well as supplying a measurement of the minimum professional knowledge that is expected from its practitioners (Schon, 1991). As such, whether for policemen, nurses or social workers, there is a well-recognised body of knowledge that has to be attained, its acquisition measured by a progressive system of exams and qualifications, which are often set as pre-requisites for professional advancement. In such ways, knowledge and proven capability is intimately tied in with seniority and increased responsibility. It is the lack of such a well-established framework of professional knowledge that is one of the main objections to the classification of 'security manager' as a true profession.

However, if the world of qualitative research is befuddled by increasingly arcane jargonism and the minutiae of theoretical micro-subsets, then the world of policy development and project management suffers from much the same problem, though perhaps in less highly articulated academic language. Management at the strategic level is as much about policy-development as programme implementation, and it is at this level, where clear thinking can shine a light on future political and other decision-paths, that a well-developed framework of knowledge concerning management and leadership is clearly missing. Rist (1994:545) quotes James Coleman well-known statement that 'There is no body of methods; no comprehensive methodology for the study of impact of public policy as an aid to future policy', going on to add that the addition of extra methodologies, variations on methodologies and more conceptual frameworks have achieved little more than create array and confusion, and have done little to add to the enhancement of policy makers and their ability to make correct decisions (Rist, 1994:545). Whilst there are many studies, both popular and academic, of what makes the difference between successful and non-successful organisations (though in the main, such studies have tended to be focused commercial businesses, perhaps because it is so much easier to differentiate between successful and unsuccessful businesses), they tend to fall into two classes – those that identify successful organisations, and then try to describe what it is about that particular operation which gave them the evolutionary edge over their competitors (an example is Jim Collins' 'Good to Great', which sold over a million copies), and those that start from theoretical models of management and leadership, and then work deductively from that to search for examples in real-world organisations.

However, what there seems to be a lack of is a well-developed handbook of management methodology that would be analogous to the professional expertise that would allow an architect to design a skyscraper or an engineer to build a bridge. And it is this example that perhaps highlights the particular problems that surround the issue of project management, in that rather than being a single project, clearly defined and with a well-identified range of variables, all of which are accounted for in the original master plan, Project Management is in fact about the management of a wide range of sub-projects, each of which have their own pressures, problems and timetables, and each of which must fit seamlessly with all of the others in order to allow the free-flowing progress of the overall project of which they are a part. As such, the appropriate image is perhaps of a free jazz get-together, where every player is very much contributing to the overall effect by making their own individual contribution, but still staying in what may be very loosely defined musical boundaries, as opposed to the classical orchestra where the role of each player is to play exactly what has been written on the score, and it is their ability to do so that defines how capable they are. It is due to the high level of inter-dependence between many separate components, each one of which will be involved in their own complex delivery-cycle, that gives each project its unique characteristic, and it is fact this uniqueness that is often identified as being one of the defining characteristics of 'a project' (Munns and Bjeirmi, 1996, Atkinson 1999). As such, project management can be seen as a meta-management skill, focussed on the management of the integration of separate sub-strata, rather than the specific management of those individual cells within the organisational chart.

Project management is often divided between those projects that are based on an *instructionist* approach, which is highly-managed and contingent on a high-level of information and control, and those projects that are delivered in an environment defined by inadequate information, and which therefore require a high-degree of in-process *learning* and *selectionism*, ie the development of effective problem-solving strategies whilst the on-going project delivery process is already in action (Pich et al, 2002:1009). This division of approaches is even more clearly defined in security management, where there is a clear distinction between pro-active *risk management,* based on identifying and then managing risks (usually by introducing policies and procedures that will minimise the likelihood of an unwanted event occurring, or minimising the expected impact of any unwanted event that does occur), and *crisis management* which is the reactive process whereby highly fluid responses have to be developed and delivered in response to fast-escalating, highly unstable and potentially catastrophic situations. The world of security / crisis management has traditionally suffered from fundamental divisions highlighted by its internal confrontations between the academic theorists and actual practitioners, each party seeing the other as either unstructured managers that have little interest in or understanding of the conceptual frameworks within which they operate however unwittingly, or as ivory-towered academics who have no understanding of the realities of developing capabilities and delivering solutions in the face of real crisis conditions, and whose theories have little if any practical value to the crisis manager operating in the real world (Gibson & Deadrick, 2010).

It is in the nature of project management that the projects themselves are constantly evolving, changing both in response to outside influences or to discovered gaps in their internal management systems. Even in the most micro-managed of projects, such us in the development of advanced military fighter planes or nuclear power stations, the engineers responsible with managing each division are really tasked with two separate and distinct responsibilities – firstly to implement the programme as per designs, and to ensure that all members of their team work in an appropriate and accepted professional manner in order to

implement those plans, but at the same time they will be managing the on-going problems that are likely to arise at any moment and which will require the development of ad hoc and problem-specific solutions through the coordination (often on an informal and one-to-one basis) with fellow members of various management teams (Pich et al, 2002).

It is this understanding of projects as intrinsically fluid and self-evolving that creates the need to develop a new management paradigm that goes beyond the classical hierarchical 'instructionist' management structures that would be appropriate to a steady-state project management framework.

"Organismic systems are adapted to unstable conditions where new and unfamiliar problems and requirements continually arise which cannot be broken down and distributed amongst specialist roles within a hierarchy…. Responsibilities and functions, and even methods and powers have to be constantly redefined through interactions with others participating in common tasks or in the solution of common problems" (Burns, 1963, quoted Pugh, 2007:107).

As such, rather than being seen as fixed objects, as would be the case when seen from an engineering perspective, complex projects should be seen as organic entities, with a life and development cycle that is individual to them (Bresnan et al 2003, Pich et al 2002, Al Harbi 2000, Rist 1994).

The debate over how complex projects can be best managed and delivered is one that finds its roots in the beginning of the industrial revolution, when work and its associated methods of productions were almost entirely based on individual efforts, with cooperative labour being worked out on an individual and as-and-when basis. It was the industrial revolution, with the introduction of the clear division between 'managers' who designed and oversaw the production of goods, and the 'labourers' whose function was to fulfil the needs of the management programme by focussing on their own specific task, which in turn became increasingly compartmentalized, de-skilled, and separated from any association with the final product, that saw 'management' as associated almost exclusively with the production of 'products', whether they were mass produced cars or refrigerators, or one-off bridges or ocean liners (Burns, 1963 quoted Pugh, 2007:99). Whilst it is understandable that such production-line management processes saw the increasing separation between the management / design classes (who were skilled and respected) and the 'production classes' (who were considered unskilled and who were given little respect for their labour, either within the production process or within the wider society), it is questionable as what extent such management processes are exportable to something like project management, or to what extent project management is strictly analogous to production management.

It is in the nature of industrial production that individual tasks are divided into the smallest meaningful components, so that each separate action that goes into the production of the final artefact can not only be monitored and controlled, but can be measured. In a very real sense, one of the fundamental objectives of the industrialisation of production was to take uncertainty out of the production process (Pich et al, 2002), an aim that would seem to be inimical to the ambiguity and complexity that is inbuilt into project management. It was perhaps only a matter of time until the growth of management consultancy led to the idea of bringing management and control methods designed for deskilled production line processes into

the living world of social interaction. It was Goldman Sachs that stated that what can be done can be measured, and what can be measured can be improved. This culture of 'targets', based on the idea that all activity can be quantified, and therefore manipulated, has resulted in the all-pervading culture of Key Performance Indicators and production targets in areas such as education, health care and prison reform that would not normally have been considered as 'production' environments, and which would have claimed for themselves that they were in the business of creating and delivering something over and above that which could merely be counted and improved. Whilst there is undoubtedly a back-lash against such quantification of intangible services, it is also true that it is a brave manager that would try and to justify and qualify what they do based on an intangible gut-feeling rather than an auditable breakdown of quality management indices.

Given the brief outline offered above, it is perhaps not surprising that the currently accepted basis of project management is, in its essence, an attempt to reconcile two mutually contradicting assumptions: firstly, that projects by their very nature, are "unique and unfamiliar undertakings" (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996:81), full of "unks-unks" (unknown-unknowns, as so memorably quoted by Donald Rumsfeld when describing operations in Afghanistan) (Pich et al, 2002:1013), and secondly, that it is possible to 'tame' such chaos through the use of project management techniques based around planning, monitoring and control of the various stages of a project's life (British Standard BS6079, UK Association of Project Management).

A typical definition of the role of the project manager clearly places it within a framework that is fundamentally unchanged from the earliest factories and weaving mills of the nineteenth century: "Project management is orientated towards planning and control. It is concerned with on-time delivery, within-budget expenditures and appropriate performance standards". (Munns and Bjeirmi, 1996:82).

The UK Association of Project Management's 'Body of Knowledge UK' publication reflects the limitations of such 'instructionist' approach, in that it reinforces the belief that a 'Project Manager' is a functionary who is receiving clear and precise instructions from above, and is working within a well-understood and tightly controlled project environment:

Project Management [is] the planning, organisation, monitoring and control of all aspects of a project and the motivation of all involved to achieve the project objectives safely and within agreed time, cost and performance criteria. The project manager is the single point of responsibility for achieving this'. (UK Association of Project Management, quoted Atkinson, 1999:338).

However, with the growth of the understanding in such concepts as 'fuzzy thinking' in the 1970's, it became clear that there were other decision-making options available other than the mechanistic control of increasingly small components of activity, which had been the prevailing paradigm since the introduction of industrialisation two hundred and fifty years previously.

The concept of *iterative decision making* sees the decision-making process as one that is in a constant state of flux rather than in a 'steady state' (Bresnan et al, 2003:157), constantly monitoring itself, assessing changing situations and then creating new decision-paths, which in turn are monitored, assessed and adapted, in a never-ending process of re-invention (Pich et al, 2002). This acknowledgment of the unknowability of the future state of the project even as it is being initiated changes the whole project management process from one of mechanistic control of a tightly-managed production procedure at the end of which there will appear the finished article ('The Project'),

to one where the project itself is seen as inherently innovative, experimental and ambiguous. It is within such a working space that project management strategies are more likely to be focused on a 'probe and learn' methodology, where the project itself is seen as a learning, reflective process, progressing through a series of 'failures and improvement' (Pich et al, 2003: 1010), and where managers can do no more than 'grope along' in their move towards organizational goals (Rist, 1994:554).

Security as Project Management: Towards a Middle Path

If then, the Project Manager is neither a product of the 'professional development' frameworks of the doctor, lawyer or accountant, but is not yet the de-skilled producer of impersonal artifices in a faceless factory, then what are they to be classified as? Although it might be tempting to classify project management as an art, that would be allow the pendulum to swing too far in the other direction, in that art has no basis whatsoever for deciding what is 'good', or what is 'better', and concept of 'quality' or 'value' being based purely (and proudly) on personal perceptions. This 'whatever works' perspective (Bryman, 2006:97) can often sound as though qualitative researchers mistrust the very concept of methodological frameworks. "Many [qualitative analysts] proceed as if they had no method – sometimes as if the use of explicit methods would diminish their creativity" (King et al, 1996:8).

The answer, surprisingly enough, comes not from the world of organisational management, but from the academic debate over the validity of qualitative research, (which I discuss below), which shares the challenge of creating a language of quality that would fit the craft-nature of social research and project management, but which is not conducive to the mathematical reductionism that is at the heart of quantitative judgements that have been at the heart of traditional 'scientific' methods. (Seale, 1999).

One of the major issues at the heart of any qualitative research is the issue of validity and truthfulness. Since the beginning of the 'Scientific Age' in the western world, which is generally accepted to have seen its initial development in the Age of Enlightenment around the 16th Century, the underlying foundation of belief in the western body of knowledge has been the scientific method, which in Cartesian dynamics sees the world as being something independent and separate from the observer, the 'world as is', which can be studied from an objective and impersonal view. In the eyes of the 'scientific researcher', the outcomes of any experiments should be both independent of the researcher themselves, and replicable by any other researcher working anywhere else in the world, as long as they conduct the experiment under similar situations. This position, where a positivistic understanding of the validity of ontological, epistemological and methodological enquiry has been accepted as the only 'valid' means of enquiry, has been the received view for four hundred years (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:108). For the qualitative researcher however, the world is not reducible to impersonal figures and equations, and the existence of the researcher is in itself a significant factor on any interaction between the researcher and the studied phenomena. This divide sees a schism between the quantitative researchers who believe that the validity of their work and findings is based on, and authenticated by, the formal logic on which is based, and the qualitative researchers who, in the eyes of the quantitatists, can neither explain what they do, nor let someone else do what they have done in the same way. The use of the word schism is not coincidental, given the almost fundamental religiosity in which the adherents of both sides have belief in their own way as the 'one true faith', and the ardour and passion in which they attack and try to discredit the other side.

The vehemence of this discussion can be appreciated through the language used to describe it. Whilst one authority claims that the two traditions 'sometimes seem to be at war' (King et al, 1996:3) another puts it on an even higher plane - 'Whilst this debate is not in any sense about religion, its dynamics are best understood as though it were about religion'. (Schrodt, quoted Mahoney & Goertz, 2006:227). Just as there is a mutual suspicion between academics and practitioners (Gibson & Dearick, 2010),

so within academic circles there is an equal mistrust of the other, both sides veering towards an 'absolutist' belief in the righteousness of their own practices over the heathen practices of the other.

The depth and absolute nature of this divide can be seen by the reluctance to acknowledge the validity of a mixed-theory approach, as though by contaminating the purity of one style of research with the undisciplined habits of the other will call their entire validity into question (Firestone, 1987:16). Just as in religion, both sides hold equally un-provable truths to be absolute, based on irrational beliefs, part of which is the exclusion of all others.

It has always been the case that qualitative research has been characterised as 'soft research', as opposed to 'hard' research that is (self-identifyingly) defined as being rooted in the scientific method. A 2011 paper looking at issues of innovation in qualitative research, found that the majority of papers that qualified under their selection criteria were from sociology, education, psychology, social work or anthropology (Wiles et al, 2011:591). Although the use of the word soft is not (necessarily) pejorative, it does imply imprecision and lack of dependability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105).

Although it would seem reasonable that there would be aspects of both approaches, the quantitative and qualitative, that would have value for each other, and would add value to any collaborative work that they did together, it should be remembered that when the idea of qualitative research as a scientifically valid methodology emerged in the 1950's, "qualitative research was a marginalized and low-status field of research" (Travers, 2009:164). As recently as 2011, a review of innovation in qualitative research could state that 'Mixed methods research has a longer history, and is arguably less of a fad' (Wiles, 2011:592), though there is also evidence that "as far as research practice is concerned, combining quantitative and qualitative research has become unexceptional and unremarkable in recent years" (Bryman, 2006:97). Alternatively, (and in a perspective that this paper will reflect), there is also a clear school of thought that the differences in the two approaches are often one of interpretation rather than of significant underlying differences, and that 'the differences between the quantitative and qualitative traditions are only stylistic and are methodologically and substantively unimportant' (King et al, 1996:4). What is true is that actual examples of mixed methodology are still rare, and often are working within an environment characterized by a lack of theoretical grounding (Bryman, 2006; Thomas & Harden, 2008; Travers, 2009).

Although the argument may take many forms (and often become simultaneously so specific and so abstract that it reminds one of ecclesiastical arguments over how many angels could dance on the head of a pin), at the centre of those arguments are two key concerns: firstly, the validity of research methods, and secondly the validity of any conclusions that are drawn from that research.

Whilst the ferocity of the argument may seem irrational to the outsider, a closer examination reveals that there are actually fundamental questions being asked about the validity of qualitative research that, rather than being ignored or derided, should be accepted in order to offer the opportunity to create some space for reflective criticism that will allow qualitative research methodologies to both test themselves and improve themselves through such combat.

Much as a conceptual modern artist who tries to argue that an installation of swinging light bulbs and found material from the street has the same artistic value as a Rembrandt or Velasquez, the qualitative researcher is often constrained by the need to justify the value and validity of their research through traditional, 'scientific' values, with the control of the meanings of those terms being held firmly in the hands of the classical rationalists.

The need to develop an epistemological framework that could underpin the 'scientific' validity of qualitative research has led to two separate tendencies. The first is to create a language of qualitative methodology that uses a qualitative-based terminology to describe quantitative concepts. Under such systems, qualitative methodologists acknowledge (whether explicitly or otherwise), that the underlying justification for methodological rigour is still based in the rational, scientific world, and that qualitative research needs to base itself on those concepts in order to justify wider validity (Seal, 1999: King et al, 1996; Guba & Lincoln 1994).

The second approach is to bypass the issue of 'scientific validity' altogether, and to develop a completely fresh paradigm that would allow the recognition of both the reality of social research and its validity. To be a recognised as a new paradigm, rather than a variation on an existing theme, it would need to start from a 'new world order', one based on fundamental principles that are separate and distinct from those that underlie traditional positivistic/postpositivistic thinking (Gubba & Lincoln, 1994).

The problem of creating a methodology that allows a recognised framework for interaction within social research contexts is faced straight on by Seale (1999), who claims that social research should have enough confidence in its own foundations, to set its own criteria, which is that rather than being a 'profession' with a fixed set of skills and capabilities, and a body of professional knowledge that is encapsulated and encoded in such a way that it creates the possibilities of passing that knowledge impersonally from generation to generation, it should consider itself as a craft, where the skills that are developed in the individual, through the stages of apprentice, artisan, artist and then master craftsman, are used in a much more intuitive way, each problem or situation seen as an individual case to which the craftsman will bring their skills and experience in order to create a unique solution.

This alternate model allows qualitative research methodologists to set the framework within which their enquiries are made based on the realities and requirements of their own research environments. This avoids the need to adapt a positivistic, mechanistic view of the world which acts as the foundation to quantitative analysis, one which by its very nature sees social research as a 'sub-standard' branch of scientific investigation and enquiry. Whilst this doesn't free the qualitative researcher from the requirements of developing a robust methodological framework within which research methodologies and inductive reasoning adhere to accepted 'norms', it does allow practicing qualitative researchers to 'reclaim their craft from the "theoretical capitalists"' (Searle 1999:466). By allowing for the possibility of the development of a new methodological language that both bypasses and transcends the limitations of classical rationalist methodological orthodoxies, it simultaneously strengthens the claims of qualitative research to be able to develop validly accepted information, theories and models, as well as to prepare the ground for a possible explosion of creativity as qualitative researchers explore the new world that such intellectual freedom brings.

However, once the acknowledgement is made that there is a valid case for a separate methodological framework to be developed based on the requirements of qualitative research, the question that is then asked is to what extent is there a truly new paradigm being developed, one which can truly claim to be separate from and independent of previous rationalistic models of scientific validity, and to what extent the 'new paradigms' of qualitative research methodologies are old clothes with new labels.

Although there is a valid case to be made for situations where innovation develops out of practical research praxis, reacting and responding to the need for improved or adapted methodologies in order to create more effective tools for dealing with the problems that the real world throws up, this is different from the pressures placed on researchers to develop an individual identity based on the most marginal of changes, especially if they are competing for either research funding, tenured positions or space for their articles in professional publications. Whilst this is need to differentiate is not unique to the social sciences, the desire to identify (and be associated with) new developments within the qualitative research arena has often led to claims of innovation and transformation which are out of kilt with the underlying reality of the claims (Wiles et al, 2011). Not only has this led to an ever-growing and increasingly technically indistinguishable plethora of scientific sounding labels, it has also meant that it is often more beneficial in the short term to identify a new trend rather than to engage in the on-going dialectic investigation that would be needed for any of these 'Alternative Enquiry Paradigms' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:108) to develop the depth of theoretical grounding with the depth of empirical testing that would allow them to move beyond the level of 'fad' (Travers, 2009).

The issue of innovation, theoretical validity and social acceptance (amongst peer groups across the research community, both quantitative and qualitative), is more than just a linguistic exercise. As a range of authorities have pointed out, the exaggerated claims for 'innovative methodologies' is not a neutral assertion, but has negative impact on the validity of the whole of qualitative research methodologies. if it can be shown that those 'innovative methodologies' are nothing more than minor adjustments of previous theoretical sub-sets (many of which are in themselves newly developed models, lacking what would normally be accepted as a deep-rooted theoretical grounding), it would provide ammunition for those who claim that attempts by qualitative researchers to develop an epistemologically sound theoretical framework for non-quantitative analysis is a false crusade, being based as it is on fallacious primary assumptions. (The claim of the use of post-it notes in focus groups as an example of claimed methodological innovation is merely the most eye-catching of a range of similar claims that are highlighted and debunked in Wiley et al's paper).

Given that the qualitative research arena has, whether through force or choice, made a case for itself as building an epistemologically valid and robust framework that would allow it to carry out research and publish findings in a valid and acceptable manner, even if outside the 'received view' paradigm of classical positivism, the question remains as to how it can create a methodological matrix that will allow its researchers to claim more for their work rather than just 'Well, this is what I did'. Whilst qualitative methodologists are gaining increasing confidence in claiming their theoretical models as equally valid to quantitative theories of knowledge (and more valid within the non-specific, non-quantifiable phenomena of social research), this is not to say that they reject the underlying concepts of quantitative methodology such as validity and reliability. Their issue is how those under-pinning values can be given meaningful roles in a structure that is not built upon mathematical precision.

It is certainly a feature of the new generation of post-positivistic alternative paradigms (as opposed to postpositivism, which is increasingly recognised as a method of enquiry both practically robust and theoretically sound), that despite the multi-faceted options available to the qualitative researcher, there is a distinct lack of deep theoretical grounding – or, in many cases, any theoretical grounding at all (Dixon-Woods et al, 2005).

Whilst this argument is developed through many voices and many perspectives, the underlying value about which it circles (though often unspoken), is quality. Whilst there is now an agreed understanding of the concept of quality in classical positivism (based in to a large extent on validity of methodology, and reliability of results), and an agreed set of criteria for judging whether a piece of research satisfies those qualities – it is not so simple when dealing with social research.

As mentioned previously, one of the significant moves in qualitative research in order to justify the validity of a new, non-positivitic paradigm, has been the claim that social research is not a 'science' in the sense that it has traditionally been understood in the western canon, and is more attuned to a traditional craftsman or even alchemist.

The nature of the hard sciences have been to reduce all aspects of existence to increasingly smaller units of enquiry, so that in the Cartesian sense of complete separation of enquirer from object of enquiry, the universe and all of its manifestations should be able to be deconstructed, in much the same way that a piece of machinery can be deconstructed and broken down to its tiniest component parts. In this cosmology, 'Scientific maturity is commonly believed to emerge as the degree of quantification found within a given field increases' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 106).

It is clear that there are going to be inbuilt tensions in place when one tries to judge a methodology that not only rejects the relevance of quantification within its own working context, but positively embraces the unique, personal and non-quantifiable aspects of its own practices, and one that not only sees quantification as the only reliable form of information that one can gather, but defines validity through that quality.

The framework for the developing of the new paradigm is set out by Seale:

'[T]he need for a new conceptualization of the relationship between qualitative social research, theory and indeed philosophy is as pressing now as it was in the 1960's…I think that it is time for social researchers to break free from the obligation to fulfil philosophical schemes through research practice, while remaining aware of the value of philosophical and political reflexivity for their craft. A confident view of social research as a craft skill could then emerge, relatively autonomous from social theory or philosophy, yet drawing on those arenas of discourse as a resource. The search for overriding criteria for judging quality under this vision is thereby held at a distance, and the elusive nature of quality (we somehow recognize it when we see it, but we cannot prespecify it with methodological rules) is preserved' (Seale 1999:466).

One of the fundamental differences between the 'hard' sciences, which use as their tools quantification and replicability, and social research, which use more personal concepts and are often involved in non-replicable research contexts, is the objectives they set themselves, which in turn are reflective of the mental views they have of their activities and their aims and objectives (Firestone, 1987:16). Positivistic 'science' has as its' ultimate aim the discovery of 'truth', believing that with the appropriate experiments it will be able to discover an answer which is 'correct'. The correctness of that answer is not only independent of time, place or context, but it is its ability to transcend the specific and to be applicable universally that defines its 'truthful' aspect. An experiment that worked in Paris but not Mexico City, or that worked on Mondays but not Thursdays, would not be considered as 'true' in the positivistic sense. The conceptualisation of the 'Wicked Problems' as a whole class of problems that lay outside of the remit of classical scientific rationality, has created an awareness that there is also a role for the unstructured, non-linear solution, outside the traditional yes/no, correct/false polarity.

In much the same way as the academic methodologists are striving to create a language and framework that would allow the self-confidence and universal validity of the positivists to be married to the openness and flexibility of the 'craft masters', so the challenge for 21st century crisis managers is to find a way to marry the formal frameworks of a 'body of professional knowledge' with the requirements to create a flexible, self-learning and self-evolving response capability appropriate to the as-yet unknown, and perhaps unknowable, threats and dangers that they will be called upon to manage and control.

Conclusion

Just as there is a well-developed academic understanding that project management is something that is deeply connected to innovative process development and knowledge building, and that as such there is a clearly defined need to create flexible, adaptable frameworks that can integrate new information that itself develops from the learning process integral to any particular project, so it should be clear that the ambition to create a methodologically robust and academically valid framework within which qualitative research can take place is subject to similar constraints. The ambition to create a qualitative research methodology that is no less rigorous or 'scientifically valid' than classical positivistic scientific methods, is an effort that will take place over time, that will lead down multiple paths, and that will have to be open to the fact that there is as much to be learned from the false paths as from what may turn out to be more correct ones. It is the belief in the value of the attempt to create an integrated methodological framework that is the significant factor, not the belief that there is one true answer which will be revealed if only we stare at the problem for long enough (which is in itself a positivistic belief-system, and as such inimical to the whole process of qualitative enquiry).

It is hoped that this paper will make a contribution to the theoretical and academic understanding of project management at the extreme scale of size, complexity and uncertainty, as well as creating a framework that will be of real value to those people working to create security and crisis management capability within their own organisations across the world.

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