Governmentality in a UK local authority

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Abstract

The UK public sector has been subject to a succession of economic and market reforms since the early 1980s through the introduction of public choice philosophies and with the adoption of strategic business practices. This study undertakes an ethnographic mode of inquiry to investigate a period of organisational transformation in a UK local authority following the UK coalition government's emergency budget and subsequent spending review in 2010. The focus is upon project management, an increasingly significant form of organisational knowledge and practice in the empirical context of this study and in regard to the economic management of the UK public sector more generally. Drawing from empirical material gathered over a two year period involving senior managers, freelance consultants and local government workers, the purpose is to examine project management as a technology of power in this context. The thesis draws on work building on Michel Foucault's later theoretical insights on 'government' and 'governmentality'. Within this theoretical framework project management and its associated rationalities are problematised as those which are intended to facilitate economic government 'at a distance'.

This thesis demonstrates that project management is playing a pivotal role in determining new configurations of 'freedom' and accountability in the context at hand. By subtly aligning personal projects with more centralised political ambitions, project management depoliticises strategic reforms by extending the effects of managerialism into new areas. Through exploring the discursive strategies of participants both in conversation and through the enactment of their work, the thesis argues that project management encourages modes of 'personalised government' and constitutes both freelance consultants and public servants as upholders of their own demarcated and individualised interests. Nevertheless, at the same time project management creates spaces of discretion from within which practices of resistance emerge. In these instances it provides the means by which local government workers seek to protect themselves and their departments from further budget and staff cuts by becoming 'empowered' with devolved managerial and budgetary responsibility. In this sense power is seen to produce, albeit at times ambivalently, new identities and positive experiences while simultaneously constraining other identities and 'freedoms' in this context.

This thesis advances a 'Foucauldian' perspective on project management and seeks to assess the costs involved in a particular technology of power in the context of the UK public sector. It contributes to 'Foucauldianism' in organisation and management studies by demonstrating the relevance of studies of governmentality to situated organisational analysis. The study also shows that the perspective of governmentality can provide a platform from which agency and resistance can be adequately theorised from a broadly 'Foucauldian' perspective. A contribution is also made to studies of governmentality by going beyond the 'programmer's perspective' in order to address 'real agents' of government amidst contested social relations.

To Aisling and Dad, with all my love.

Acknowledgements

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Glossary

APM	Association for Project Management
BoKs	Bodies of Knowledge
BV	Best Value
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CMS	Critical Management Studies
CPM	Critical Path Method
DoD	Department of Defence
EVM	Earned Value Management
IPMA	International Project Management Association
JIT	Just In Time
NPM	The New Public Management
OGC	Office of Government Commerce
OMS	Organisation and Management Studies
PERT	Program Evaluation and Review Technique
PM	Project Management
PMI	Project Management Institute
PO	Corporate Programme Office
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PRINCE2	PRojects IN Controlled Environments
TQM	Total Quality Management
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

Chapter 1: General Introduction

> To our public sector workers:. . .We want the jobs of the future in public services to be more fulfilling. Empowering you on the front line. Freeing you from top down micro-management and targetry. Liberating the hidden army of public service entrepreneurs, deeply seized with the public service ethos, but who itch to innovate and drive improvement *themselves* (Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, David Cameron. Speech on modern public service, January 2011: emphasis added)

Following the financial crisis of 2007-2009 the political and economic climate in Britain was uncertain. Queries were raised as to how the crisis would be problematised, and whether decades of 'neo-liberal' economic policy and its effects on social inequality would be exposed and put to question publicly (Hall, 2011). Nevertheless, following the rise to power of the Conservative Liberal Democrat coalition in 2010, the United Kingdom (UK) was subject to the most severe public spending cuts since the Second World War (Yeates *et al.*, 2010). The coalition's 'Big Society' programme, despite professing to 'liberate' communities and public service workers, emphasised a conservative communitarianism that sought to decentralise 'duty and responsibility' while dramatically reducing local government funding (HM Treasury, 2010b; Cameron, 2011). Some scholars addressed these policies as those which were designed to conceal the real causes of the financial crisis, as that of big finance, rather than of big government (Hall, 2011). Nevertheless, despite the calamity of the financial crisis and the demise of 'New Labour', the so-called 'neo-liberal' project was refashioned and reinvigorated. The domain of 'enterprise' would thus be extended once again through a new set of liberal conservative politics, those that would protect and 'liberate' public servants from the burden of the state (Barratt, 2013).

Michel Foucault argued that 'government' is not limited to state politics. Rather, he argued that 'government' is that which we depend upon for our social existence: the ways in which we establish a relationship to ourselves and others in organised human life (Foucault, 1982). If we are to assess today's decentralised political field, then enquiry must turn to the ways in which we are encouraged to think about and address ourselves, in relation to our capacities, abilities, and actions, and how this may be utilised for certain ends. Political and social strategies for 'empowerment' are not new,

but through new economic quandaries, ways of organising, managerial systems and development programmes, there is an immediate and 'practical' side to 'government' that is always shifting and changing. That is to say, in the seemingly superficial problems and possibilities of everyday organisational life, 'government' attempts to structure the possibilities for thought and action. This is not to imply a top-down dichotomy between coercion and freedom, control and creativity, but instead relates to the need to address the constitutive ways through which our interests, ambitions and identities are 'made up' for us. The thesis expands on the theme of 'government' and 'governmentality' in Chapter 3. However, first, and as a matter of general introduction, the section below contextualises and introduces this study. It begins by turning to what is commonly termed as the 'New Public Management', before going on to introduce the themes of UK local authorities and project management. Thereafter, this introductory chapter outlines the scope and structure of this thesis.

1.1 Introducing the 'New Public Management'

In the public management literature the 'New Public Management' (NPM) functions as an umbrella term that encompasses studies of governance, policy development, decision making, management processes, and the interface between public and private sectors (Kelly and Dodds, 2012). NPM is typically used to signify changes in public administration since the 1980s that seek to define public sector performance in increasingly financial and cost-effective terms. Hood (1991) initially described NPM as a public administration philosophy that had become institutionalised according to normative values of commercialism and value-for-money. Dunleavy et al. (2006) classify NPM as "a strongly developed and coherent theory of managerial change based on importing into the public sector central concepts from (relatively) modern business practices and public-choice influenced theory" (2006: 470). Diefenbach (2009) argues that NPM is a normative set of expectations and statements about how public sector organisations should be designed, organised and managed, so as to function in a quasi-business manner (2009: 893). Lapsley (2008) describes NPM as an administrative philosophy that may now be taken for granted, but still involves complications and tensions around its operation, particularly so in regards to "the multi-professional environment of many public services" (2008: 78).

The problematisations which originally encouraged NPM reforms were thought to include elements of both ideology and pragmatism (Ackroyd *et al.*, 2007). A worldwide fiscal crisis in the late 1970s meant that it was an objective of the 'New Right' political powers to restrain costs (Hood and Scott, 1996). What followed was a demand for financial control and performance management in public sectors. Worrall et al. (2010) note that the UK's 1979 Conservative government began to move away from 'high-trust' progressive-era public administration (PPA)[1] based on professional judgement, practitioner autonomy and limited managerial involvement, to a model based on "managers, markets and measurement" (2010: 120). Consistent with the language of the market, notions of 'customers' and 'clients' were deployed as "legitimising devices" (2010: 122) for new cost-effective measures. Public administration scholars argued that NPM involved different styles of 'low-trust' "accountingization" (Hood, 1995: 94), "quangotization" (Maesschalck, 2004: 465), as well as "performance cultures" and "measurement cultures" (Noordegraaf and Abma, 2003: 862). Public accountability was refashioned so that 'accountability' was said to be no longer applicable to 'public value'. Instead, 'accountability' referred to devolved budgets, contracts and economic efficiency measures, using language analogous to financial methodologies characteristic of the accountancy profession (Miller, 2001). On the one hand public choice theory had been employed to refashion the public bureaux as something which should be 'controlled' in the public interest, and on the other managerialists began problematising shortcomings in terms of a failure of public organisations to operate more like commercial enterprises (Du Gay, 2000).

Proponents of NPM reforms emphasised the benefits of cooperation between public and private sectors, resourceful business models to cope with scarcity, and the positive effects of more 'efficient' public organisations (Brereton and Temple, 1999; Kernaghan, 2000). These reforms were said to gain appeal insofar as 'old' public organisations were problematised as overly formalised, slow and compartmentalised 'red-tape-producing' bureaucracies (Du Gay, 2000; Diefenbach, 2009). Politicians were also attracted to novel ways of financing and operating the public sector that promised to improve public services without substantially raising taxes (Grimshaw and Hebson, 2005). Within this frame of reasoning the public sector must perform, it must find out

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[1] 'Progressive Public Administration' stressed that the public and private sectors should be sharply distinct with respect to ethos, organisational design, business ethics, rewards and career structure. See Hood (1995).

what 'customers' (citizens) want, and it must determine what it will 'produce' as precisely and as accurately as possible (Power, 1999; Dunleavy et al., 2006). As such contracting, planning and control logics became favourable. Performance indicators provided 'management-by-measurement' control over organisational processes designed to deliver set objectives. Organisational structures were transformed to define roles and responsibilities in clearer terms, characterised partly by autonomy and partly by control (Noordegraaf and Abma, 2003; Diefenbach, 2009). Economic terms such as 'products', 'effectiveness', 'efficiency', 'audit' and 'risk' denoted logics of planning and governance. 'Management-by-measurement' came to be perceived as 'the way out' because it became integrated into the performance-orientated frame of reasoning in which public servants and professionals found themselves (Noordegraaf and Abma, 2003).

Following the election of 'New Labour' in 1997 there was a shift in emphasis from previous Conservative nostrums of 'efficiently' and 'competition' to an emphasis on 'collaboration' and 'partnerships'. Despite connotations of mutual gain and openness, in practice these organisational principles fashioned an imbalance by favouring private sector management practices over the distinctive qualities of traditional public service provision (Grimshaw et al., 2002). Under 'New Labour' scholars argued that the political concern for cost reduction and value-for-money persisted, coupled with an intensification of inspection, examination and performance regimes (Dunleavy et al., 2001). Following the preceding Conservative government there was a continuation of centralised political power through monitoring, standards and information systems. Yet on the other hand administrative relationships with the state were further decentralised, where agents were to be 'empowered' and simultaneously constrained at a distance through the creation of devolved 'cost centres' and competitive league tables. There were requirements to be business-like and cultivate entrepreneurial attitudes despite the creation of new management layers and the intensification of inspection regimes (Cutler and Waine, 2000). Under 'New Labour' narrow conceptualisations of productivity and efficiency were thought to circumvent localised professional judgement. Scholars argued that insufficient performance indicators promoted ignorance, thus devaluing the 'intangible' and 'non-functional' traditional values that were not observable through them (Miller, 2001). Nevertheless, amidst these developments managers and business consultants emerged as the principle benefactors of the public sector's 'marketisation' (Diefenbach, 2009; Roper et al., 2010; Worrall et al., 2010), pointing to a more general

shift from an ethic of 'public' service to one of commercialism and 'private' management.

The 'New Labour' political project, it was argued, sought to transform social democracy into a particular variant of free-market 'neo-liberalism', where divisions between public and private sectors were considered restrictive, and where the superiority of 'free' market capitalism superseded the wisdom of state provision (Diefenbach, 2009; Roper *et al.*, 2010). Critics maintained that the consistencies of NPM were rooted in orthodox managerial functionalism and methodological 'measurement fever'. These arguments proposed that although NPM reforms may improve services in some areas, the effects of the public sector's 'marketisation' were disconcerting. Some highlighted, for example, the potential dissolution of important democratic values such as the bureaucratic principle of office (Du Gay, 2000). Policy drives towards 'entrepreneurialism' and the 'empowerment' of public servants could perhaps improve 'efficiency' and 'production'. Nevertheless, new managerial configurations, 'core competencies' and 'transparent' divisions of labour placed agencies in competition with each other. By resolving to transparency and audit at ever more 'decentralised' and 'personalised' levels of organisation, competitive motives would be encouraged over that of a common ethic of public service.

Part of the consistency of NPM reform has been observed through the redeployment and modification of reform recipes despite acknowledged problems and difficulties (Hood and Peters, 2004). An example here is the role of consultants in retaining and then re-launching reform ideas that don't work (Muzio et al., 2011a), or the 'hyper-modernist' idea that information computer technology (ICT) systems can reduce government operating costs despite repeated disappointments (Margetts, 2006). An over-emphasis upon planning, contract and control logics can result in inflexible management practices that are over-developed or unsuited to the provision of public services, yet they remain pervasive as 'best practice'. Public service becomes linked to the specification of production 'outputs' encapsulated in performance indicators, in projects and in contracts, where activities and results are readily available for observation and thus measurable (Power, 1999). 'Management-by-measurement' plays a significant role by proposing the means by which to evaluate and authorise amidst increased economic and performance pressures. It is put forward as a way in which to cope with scarcity and a

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way in which to 'respond' to the informed 'consumer' citizen: that which, it is argued, can no longer be reduced to pre-ordinate categories (Brereton and Temple, 1999).

As we will address in this study, 'NPM' can be understood not as an overarching administrative philosophy or set of principles, but instead as a stubborn yet loosely-coupled composition of re-fashioned political problematisations with particular consequences and effects (Lapsley, 2008; Barratt, 2013). It would therefore be crude to simplify 'NPM' reforms as the colonisation of the 'public' by the 'private', or the state by the market. Rather, and as we will see, NPM points to the variety of ways in which a decentred political and administrative field aims to produce particularly 'accountable' and 'enterprising' agents. Fundamental to the restructuring of public services has been a redefinition of the workforce, which as Du Gay (1996) has argued, makes NPM not only a matter of organisational change but also an 'identity project'. Given a further series of recent NPM 'decentralisations' and budget cuts at the behest of the UK's coalition government (HM Treasury, 2010b; HM Treasury, 2010a), the examination of these reforms and their effects 'on the ground' remains an important area of investigation. It is with this in mind that we will move on to the introduction of a particular kind of public sector organisation, that of the UK's local authorities.

1.2 Introducing Local Authorities

Following on from the introduction to the broad theme of 'NPM' this section introduces UK local authorities as sites of cultural and organisational struggle. Within the public management literature arguments suggest that there is lack of understanding of local authorities as "polyphonic" (Lapsley, 2008: 79) and culturally conflicted sites (Webb, 1999; Hebson *et al.*, 2003; Orr and Vince, 2009). An important contribution of these studies is that while binary categories (such as market vs hierarchy, bureaucracy vs entrepreneurship, contract vs authority) are perhaps useful empirical devices, they do not in themselves provide adequate means by which to explain the fragmented nature of social relations in local authority organisations. Unlike commercial business settings which have clear cut measures of success and failure based on profit and shareholder value, local authorities are subject to 'transparent' and 'accountable' controls, often located 'outside' and beyond the immediate jurisdiction of local authorities themselves (Miller, 2005).

A principle feature of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative party government coming to power in the UK in 1979 was to make local government more receptive to the requirements of central government (Forsyth, 1980). The Conservatives held the view that the public sector was wasteful, inefficient, excessively bureaucratic, and was acting in its own interests (Du Gay, 2000). The new government sought to progressively enhance political centralisation by removing the political autonomy of local authorities while significantly cutting funding. The introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) promoted contracting out among local authorities and was designed to reduce the power of trade unions that were operative in the provision of services. The aim in this sense was to make local authorities 'enablers' of private sector provision, rather than the providers themselves (Brooke, 1991). Local councils, however, especially those of an oppositional left-leaning orientation, initially resisted contracting out by winning cost-effective tenders and by engaging in practices of 'creative accounting' to evade financial constraints. The response from the Conservative government was a series of legislative reforms that transferred responsibilities to central government while further imposing financial regulation. Much to the distaste of many local councils, CCT regulation was intensified during John Major's Conservative leadership which imposed the contracting out of services regardless of whether in-house service provision was more cost-effective or not. Local government employment became characterised by decentralised contract and performance monitoring, deteriorated employment conditions, and work intensification (Patterson and Pinch, 1995).

Public management scholars argued that 'New Labour's' Best Value (BV) programme effectively extended market-led disciplines to many local authority functions that were not covered by the Conservative's CCT legislation (Geddes and Martin, 2000). Introduced in 1999 at a cost of £600 million a year, the BV programme required that local authorities deliver service quality in the most cost-effective manner in line with principles of 'economy', 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness', against which they would be assessed and 'benchmarked' against other local authorities on a five year cycle. The BV programme established a new monitoring regime of audit and inspection that intensified the 'indicator culture' that the preceding Conservative government had established (Power, 1999). Following the Local Government Act in 1999, the Audit

Commission[2] was conferred with the powers to undertake comprehensive performance assessments of local authorities (Audit Commission, 2012). The 'New Labour' era of public management placed a strong emphasis on cost cutting, performance standards and the sovereign consumer (or 'customer') as the definitive arbiter of public service. At the same time it differed from the Conservative's CCT programme by attempting to repair relations between central and local government, and by securing support from trade unions and voluntary and community sectors. Contracting out in many instances came to be viewed as a last resort in cases of underperformance and inefficiencies, rather than as a necessity in itself. The ambiguity of BV's principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, in following the Conservatives more dogmatic approach to CCT, was said to make the BV programme harder to resist among local councils (Geddes and Martin, 2000).

Following 'New Labour's' emphasis on collaboration and greater social inclusion, however, it was argued that public service was not often in the hands of the wider community, but instead that of management consultants, economists and lawyers who were increasingly appropriating the mantle of consumer authority (Miller, 2005). The argument here was that it was market-led evaluative regimes that were to determine priorities for local authorities, rather than whatever may be understood as 'best value' among service users and 'consumers' themselves (Davis and Martin, 2002). Much of the BV programme encouraged corporate re-engineering and cultural change in councils, and emphasised the importance of managerial leadership and effectiveness at lower levels of organisation. The BV programme, it was argued, entailed 'centralised decentralisation' for public service staff, a form of delimited autonomy that allowed for decision-making on the one hand, yet tied resource allocation to narrow dimensions of 'performativity' on the other (Geddes and Martin, 2000). Nevertheless, by emphasising social inclusion (Giddens, 1998) 'New Labour' aimed to 'remoralise' public services according to a rhetoric of responsibility and self-reliance. Broadly speaking, this embodied the aim to move away from the 'entitlements society' based on state intervention, to a 'responsible society' based on flexibility and partnerships between public and private sectors. Those councils who 'modernised' in line with centralised aims for flexibility and freedom would be subject to 'light touch' inspection, whereas

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[2] In 2011 the UK coalition government outsourced The Audit Commission, which was previously a government run agency to a private firm (Audit Commission, 2012).

those who resisted would be "named, shamed and subjected to ever-tighter regulation" (Geddes and Martin, 2000: 392).

Ackroyd et al. (2007) argue that although local authorities have been increasingly required to be financially driven, accountable and transparent, changes in ethos following NPM reforms are less deep-seated than many assume. This argument contends that reforms must be "weighed against the organization of key groups and the extent to which they have acted to mediate change" (2007: 23). Reforms are said to meet with trade unionism, entrenched localised values and work practices, posing further questions about how public servants may engage or work with economic and organisational change. Orr and Vince (2009) point out that modernisation, fragmentation and crisis have been 'traditional critiques' with regards to local authorities for well over one hundred years. Traditional critiques are often overlooked because local authority culture is often addressed as a single and often problematic 'culture', rather than a confusion of traditions, beliefs and assumptions. As we will see in this study, local authority 'culture' cannot be addressed as a unified and homogeneous area of enquiry, but rather a melange of voices, assumptions and interests, within which the constitutive stories of different organisational actors becomes of key analytical importance.

Scholars addressing cultural issues in local authorities have emphasised the ethics of the classic Weberian bureaucrat (Du Gay, 2000), investigating the salience of what has been identified as the 'public sector ethos'. The ideal-typical public sector ethos stresses integrity, objectivity and honesty. It is conceived of as that which overrides profit as a primary motivator, aligning interests not with the employing organisation, but instead with the wider community. Research has shown that there has been consensus in local authorities on the 'public sector ethos', among public servants and contractors alike, suggesting that these principles have worked to stabilise reforms (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996). Nevertheless, there are different interpretations of what a 'public sector ethos' comes to mean under more recent 'citizen centred' reforms. For example, Brereton and Temple (1999) took the view that the 'public sector ethos' was 'evolving' into a 'public service ethos' (also see: Flynn, 1990). A rise in public-private partnerships (PPPs) under 'New Labour' has resulted in the majority of local authority managers being recruited from outside the public sector. Thus, Brereton and Temple (1999) argued that "there has been the opportunity to see how different means of

decision-making perform; thus presenting alternatives to the traditional monolithic, hierarchical and departmentalized local authority model" (1999: 469). Market-led solutions, a 'customer service orientation' and the 'enabling' effects of 'procedural transparency' are thought to be positive outcomes in a drive towards 'quality' and 'pragmatism' in service delivery. This more optimistic 'public service' perspective thus emphasises a shift from a process/organisational view to an 'end product' view in which a 'public service ethic' is about 'consumers' of service, rather than the service providers themselves (Du Gay, 2000).

Examples of local authority public-private partnerships (PPP), also initiated through the BV programme, have illustrated that there has been a strong appeal to budgetary accountability among local authority senior managers because it aids the justification of difficult cost-cutting decisions (Hebson *et al.*, 2003). Nevertheless, PPPs have been problematic insofar as contractors have tended to be exclusively interested in achieving contracted performance targets. A 'good manager' in this sense comes to be defined "simply as someone who could make the contract work" (Hebson *et al.*, 2003: 491). Contractual approaches to managing service provision have been shown to promote ill-defined performance indicators, thus fostering distrust between partners. Moreover, following the influx of privatised management expertise, which increased under 'New Labour' by 17%, local authority staff interests have featured little in decision-making processes about whether contracting-out should occur or not (Roper *et al.*, 2005). As Hebson et al. (2003) argue, under 'New Labour' local government workers could not often deliver what they wanted to, irrespective of their desire to do so.

Contract-relations and budgetary accountability have increasingly substituted direct managerial authority as a primary organising principle in local authorities, and in the public sector more generally (Du Gay, 2000; Grimshaw *et al.*, 2002; Grimshaw and Hebson, 2005). Under these conditions definitions of risk, as we will address in this study, do not always incorporate risks to users, local government workers or 'the public', but instead are often determined in accordance with the performative concerns of each party in line with contractualised objectives. Studies of PPPs (Grimshaw *et al.*, 2002), for example, have shown that consultants were less concerned about their reputation given that their work spanned across various sectors. Public sector managers however, were thought to have more to lose and were suspicious that private sector managers would not deliver "100 per cent performance" (2002: 498). Contract-relations also

involve unequal rewards and pay for different parties, and so public-private interactions are thought to be challenging for local authority managers, workers and contractors alike.

The examples above help us to understand local authority organisations as fragmented and hybridised organisational sites. They are not autonomous 'professional' organisations, and are in a variety of different ways subordinated by state policy, legislation and financial restraint. In the case of UK local authorities, organisational arrangements mean that the production of 'quasi-markets', audit bodies, combined with competing cultural and professional logics, have all contributed to reciprocal and contested definitions of performance (Downe et al., 2010). Today, and following the introduction of the UK coalition government's Localism Bill in 2011, local authorities are said to gain a greater degree of autonomy, where public service is referenced against 'customers' (citizens) rather than centralised performance targets (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2011). Nevertheless, this is coupled with a dramatic cut in central government spending, and constitutes a further 'responsibilisation' of local government workers and citizens alike. These issues are addressed empirically and in regard to the present study in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. However, first, we will expand upon the issues discussed above by introducing the nature of organisational knowledge and practice in local authority organisations today.

1.3 Market-led knowledge and practice in local authorities

Through the 'marketisation' of the social state forms of organisational and management expertise have emerged in light of the contractual and budgetary principles that NPM reforms have given rise to. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s governments increasingly problematised traditional professional judgement and autonomy in public sectors as inefficient, costly, and relatively unaccountable to public scrutiny (Muzio and Ackroyd, 2005). The promotion of managerialism and entrepreneurship became encapsulated into forms of knowledge and practice that would readily align with economic planning and performance logics, those that would open up autonomous professional domains to benchmarking and financial vocabularies. New forms of 'commercialised professionalism' or 'organisational professionalism' emerged as part of NPM's drive to make local authority departments operate more like business units, while facilitating visibility and integration between departments (Hanlon, 1998; Laffin and Entwistle,

2000). Corporate organisational arrangements demanded multi-professional and multi-agency partnerships, collaborations, multi-disciplinary teams, effective coordination, planning and leadership. These changes were characterised through the introduction of administrative cultures which emphasised standardisation so as to facilitate contractual and budgetary relations between public and private partners. This corresponded with the assessment that public management was moving from an ideal of trusteeship to an ideal of financial accountability, one that increasingly depended on the production of predictive managerial knowledge as a means to problematise existing ways of managing (Miller and O'Leary, 1993).

These organisational changes corresponded with empirical accounts of working life in local authorities. For example, in Webb's (1999) analysis she argued that entrepreneurial practices were producing forms of 'professionalism' indebted to the art of impression management, where managers were "performing to target, even though this may run counter to the need to do the right job" (2004: 756). Such arguments suggested that market principles were creating divisions between entrepreneurial 'strategists' and welfare professionals. The knowledge and skills required for effective management and financial accountability were becoming key forms of cultural capital in the struggle for local authorities to remain competitive (Entwistle, 2005). More generally, this correlated with what was termed as the 'knowledge economy' by some, denoting a proliferation of expert labour and specialisation in information and computer technology (ICT), management consultancy and project management (Hodgson, 2007; Muzio *et al.*, 2011a). Local authorities were moving away from single professional departments towards larger interdisciplinary divisions such as 'technical services' and 'environment', meaning that local government workers were obliged to master new managerial competencies to cut across disciplines (Laffin and Entwistle, 2000). Scholars argued that this was leading to confusion as to what actually constituted appropriate professional 'knowledge' in local authorities (Entwistle, 2005). Nevertheless, at the same time local authority senior managers turned increasingly towards the remedial competency of management and business consultants, as those experienced in the 'art' of delivery (Laffin and Entwistle, 2000).

1.4 Introducing Project Management

Today the UK public sector accounts for 25% of the UK's management consultancy business (Muzio *et al.*, 2011b). What have been described as 'corporate professions' (Kipping *et al.*, 2006), such as that of management consultancy and project management (PM)(Muzio *et al.*, 2011a), have prioritised 'marketisation strategies' to advance professional knowledge bases that emphasise budgetary and client-orientated organisational techniques and procedures. 'Corporate professionalism' is thought to circumvent principles of public service by deploying commercially-orientated technical expertise that professes to 'add value' to clients (Muzio *et al.*, 2011a). In the public sector, project management has also emerged through a more general demand for 'responsive' organisational structures, financial accountability, fixed-term contracts and private-public partnerships, especially so in ICT service provision (Hodgson, 2007). Thus, PM represents not only a form of knowledge and practice by which managers and consultants are expanding their influence into the public sector (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005), but also an important form of market-led and state endorsed organisational knowledge and practice that neatly aligns with NPM reform measures. As we will see in this study, PM is a particularly significant 'technology of government' in this sense, one that has the potential to transform the nature of economic life for those working both inside and outside local authorities.

Although PM is thought to have a longer history (see Chapter 2), scholars argue (Hodgson, 2007; Muzio *et al.*, 2011a) that PM has emerged through a general diffusion of project work in developed economies, arising from structural economic changes and 'fast capitalism' initiated by NPM reform governments over the last three decades. Developments in ICT, coupled with the 'marketisation' of public sectors, has aligned PM with prevailing planning, contract, client and risk logics; those designed to deliver strategic objectives. PM's claim to knowledge is located in technical abilities and self-managing competencies, with the ultimate goal of delivering economic benefits to the client or the project manager. Its deployment in the public sector is closely related to the corporatisation and strategic management of public agencies and organisations. The role of ICT in these changes is significant, especially in regard to the restructuring of public organisations from 'slow' and burdensome bureaucracies, to customer facing enterprises that can 'respond' to competitive demands and the needs of 'customers'.

In 1989 the UK government Computer and Telecommunications Agency (now part of The Cabinet Office, formerly termed the Office of Government Commerce - OGC) developed the first in a family of PRojects IN Controlled Environments (PRINCE) methodologies as the preferred UK Government standard for ICT project management. In 1996 the updated and reformulated PRINCE2 methodology was developed as a generic cross sector project management methodology in consultation with users, project management specialists, and a review panel of 150 public and private sector organisations (Cabinet Office, 2012). PRINCE2 is now a registered trade mark of the Cabinet Office. The UK professional association, the Association of Project Management (APM), currently works in conjunction with the Cabinet Office to deliver training and certification in PRINCE2. As Morris (2011) notes, the conception of project management put forward by the UK government conceives PM knowledge and practice as 'execution management', emphasising the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to meet organisational objectives.

Clegg and Courpasson (2004) argue that PM characterises a Tocquevillian political paradox, a tension between resistance and submission, between political action and political obedience. They suggest that PM is appealing in organisations today because it offers a rule guiding context that is a resource in decision-making processes, and a protective system in cases of contestation. Nevertheless, in PM performance is always open to inspection. PM 'allows' for those involved in project work to account for their acts as well as assess them themselves. Those involved in project work are said to be leaders but their performance is managed and judged at the same time. PM can therefore be regarded as the 'clever' distribution and spread of control, rather than its negation. A 'good' project manager, as Clegg and Courpasson (2004) suggest, is fully aware that accounting and calculative systems are instruments of power. The image of the 'good' project manager thus appears as the quintessential contemporary pro-active 'accountable manager' (Du Gay, 2008), fitting neatly in line with the NPM reforms discussed earlier in this introductory chapter. 'Decentralisation' not only involves the restructuring of public organisations, but also concerns the professionals, managers, groups and individuals who work within them. The 'managerialisation' of public sector work demands that workers operate according to a particular politics of regulation. Through such regulative politics it is possible to uphold reputations, to become a professional, to accumulate ('human') capital, and to simply get by. There is thus ample scope to ask about the implications and effects of these processes.

1.5 Research Aims and Scope of this Thesis

Against the contemporary background of NPM reforms discussed above the thesis aims to investigate PM as a particular mechanism for work and organisation in a UK local authority following more recent reforms (HM Treasury, 2010b; HM Treasury, 2010a). By adopting the theoretical perspective of liberal governmentality (Miller and Rose, 1990; Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b) it seeks to address how rationalities and practices associated with PM correspond with the manner in which people act and conceive of themselves in this context. This thesis contributes new knowledge and theoretical insights to the academic fields of Organisation and Management Studies (OMS), Foucauldian Studies, NPM and PM. It also answers a call for a more in-depth engagement with studies of governmentality in the field of OMS at the level of organisational analysis (Barratt, 2008; McKinlay *et al.*, 2012; Munro, 2012). Through ethnographic enquiry the perspective of governmentality does not depend on formal texts and official programmes alone, but also heterogeneous social relations and governmentalities 'on the ground'. This thesis thus contributes to the 'Foucauldian' project in the field of OMS by analysing and theorising the constitutive, productive and circulatory nature of power in this context. By challenging perspectives that emphasise power as oppressive and controlling, insight is achieved in regard to the production of new identities, forms of governmental agency and practices of resistance amidst a complex of set of organisational circumstances. This thesis does not only provide a new perspective on PM, but also supplies a critique of liberal government and PM's significance in reproducing particular effects following NPM reforms. In particular, and as we will see, this relates to the ongoing 'liberalisation' of the public sector, and a necessary requirement to 'diagnose' its effects.

The remainder of this thesis is organised around eight chapters that jointly build a comprehensive literary and empirical understanding of its principle themes and contributions. First, Chapter 2 considers in-depth the diffusion and application of PM knowledge and practice in 'Western' economies since the end of the Second World War. It seeks to document the historical problematisations and predicaments that encouraged its emergence and eventual adaptation into a business driven discipline in today's political economy. This chapter reviews academic perspectives on PM with a practitioner orientation, as well as critical studies adopting perspectives located outside of this study's broadly 'Foucauldian' theoretical frame.

Chapter 3 undertakes a discussion of the thought and work of Michel Foucault and his genealogical insights in 'discipline', 'bio-power' and 'governmentality'. It also undertakes a critical review of 'Foucauldianism' in OMS, and outlines a need to move beyond 'discipline' in isolation in order to develop a more encompassing and historically sensitive perspective on modern power (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b; Barratt, 2008; Munro, 2012). PM is addressed within this frame as a 'technology of government' and the primary research questions of this study are framed.

Chapter 4 addresses the methodological implications of this study situated within the field of OMS. A critique of 'positivism' and 'critical realism' is undertaken, perspectives from which criticism of 'Foucauldianism' in OMS has emerged. This exercise provides a platform from which to begin a search for method in keeping with this study's broadly Foucauldian objectives. The manner in which studies of governmentality adopt various dimensions of genealogical critique are discussed. Concerns about the methodological limitations of the governmentality genre are addressed with respect to sympathetic scholars who argue for its expansion (O'Malley *et al.*, 1997; Barratt, 2008; McKinlay, 2010b; McKinlay *et al.*, 2012; Munro, 2012). Thereafter, ethnography is introduced as the primary method of this study and a means by which to complement the more historical variants of governmentality studies by employing 'governmentality on the ground'.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 encompass the empirical analysis in this thesis. Chapter 5 serves as a broad introduction to the empirical context of this study and addresses particular problematisations of 'the field' as they emerged chronologically through iterative ethnographic work. A context of budget cuts, staff reductions and corporate restructuring is outlined in relation to a new corporate strategy at the local authority in question. Thereafter Chapter 5 considers the production of an appeal to PM expertise by drawing on the perspectives of senior managers and by analysing formalised ethical obligations articulated through a learning and development programme.

Chapter 6 takes on a more in-depth form of analysis with respect to a group of freelance consultants and permanent project managers who were working in the authority's corporate programme office (PO). This group of participants are those with whom I spent the majority of my time with as a participant observer. Chapter 6 is dedicated to the analysis of discourse among these participants both in conversation and through the

enactment of their expertise. In particular, it examines how PM and its associated rationalities serve to 'produce' particular subject positions and identities for these participants as they constitute themselves as governmental agents. Through this analysis it is argued that PM's expert power is located among particular practices of truth production and modes of 'self-government' that serve to fragment and divide organisational reality in line with centralised aims.

Chapter 7 addresses a different group of experienced local government workers; those who had become increasingly involved in PM knowledge and practice as part of a move to a PM (PRINCE2) organisational approach. The analysis in this chapter applies the theoretical themes identified in Chapter 6 to a different group of participants in order to expand and develop theory. The chapter examines the accounts of staff as they seek to distance themselves from professional subject positions and ethical responsibilities. It also examines the 'tactics of the weak' in this context (de Certeau, 1984); practices of resistance that were mediated in and through PM knowledge and practice itself. In so doing the analysis in Chapter 7 illuminates the complex nature of 'empowerment' for staff brought into a new governmental network.

Following the empirical analysis in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 Chapter 8 undertakes a discussion of the findings and theoretical insights of this thesis in reference to the preceding literature reviews. This chapter outlines the contributions that this study makes to the fields of NPM, PM, Foucauldian Studies and OMS.

Chapter 9 concludes and summarises the study before going on to discuss limitations and possibilities of further studies.

Chapter 2. What is Project Management?: A Critical Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers in-depth the diffusion and application of project management in 'Western' economies since the end of the Second World War. Having already introduced PM with respect to NPM in the UK, the purpose of this chapter is to critically examine PM knowledge and practice and its emergence. The chapter begins by investigating the conceptual thinking behind the emergence of PM technique in the US military-industrial complex. The 'systems approach' is discussed conceptually, and the application of 'procedural knowledge' is outlined in the use of scheduling and planning techniques. The chapter then considers the growing importance ascribed to PM both in industry and academia articulated through the writings of a modest yet diverse research community. The chapter then moves on to discuss PM in relation to its adaptation and promotion within today's business paradigm. Contemporary PM research and literature is discussed with a view to illustrating shifts from 'efficiently' to 'effectiveness', and from 'product creation' to 'value creation'. Thereafter developments in PM research are addressed with respect to a shift in emphasis form projects in isolation to an emphasis on the contexts in which they take place. Lastly, more 'critical' perspectives on PM are discussed as those which aim to problematise PM with respect to present day social, economic and political conditions. This directs us towards Chapter 3 in which we will address the theoretical approach of the present study.

2.2 History, core concepts and techniques

2.2.1 A practitioner's past

It is generally acknowledged that PM emerged as a set of standardised tools, practices and roles through the technical and organisational problems involved in coordinating and controlling large-scale military, engineering, and construction projects (Johnson, 1997; Morris, 2011; Söderlund, 2011b). Nevertheless, scholars researching PM often bemoan a lack of historical understanding with regards to its emergence (Engwall, 2003; Söderlund, 2011b; Söderlund and Lenfle, 2011; Garel, 2013). This gap in knowledge is based on the argument that PM theory is centred on "an articulated collection of best practices" (Garel, 2013: 3), drawn in the most part from North American engineering projects. Moreover, Engwall (2003) argues that a lack of historical contextualisation is

owing to PM knowledge having a chiefly practitioner orientation. The result is that historical accounts of PM are most often 'disembodied', emphasising management techniques and practices abstractly and without due consideration of organisational and social contexts. In such accounts projects are typically addressed as transhistorical features of our organisational and societal landscape (cf: Lock, 2007; Hamilton, 2008; Meredith and Mantel, 2010). Söderlund and Lenfle (2011) go as far as to suggest that with the notable exception of Peter Morris's (1997; 2011) contribution as a former practitioner, and Johnson's contribution (1997; 2002) as a historian of technology discussed below, "we actually do not know of any history of project management" (2011: 491). Nevertheless, what follows in this chapter is an attempt to understand the emergence of PM conceptually, gathered in the main from literature which can be described as having a primarily practitioner orientation. As Garel (2013) argues, the project activity had no explicit status in managerial terms until PM emerged as a management model in the 1950s and 1960s. It is at this point in history that our investigation of PM begins.

2.2.2 'Procedural Knowledge': The development of core techniques

Morris (1997; 2011) and Johnson (1997; 2002) argue that the core conceptual foundations of PM were fashioned in the US defence/aerospace sectors in the 1950s amidst a preoccupation with the Cold War. Garel (2013) notes that during this time projects were essentially conducted at the behest of public authorities. The problems of deciding, formulating and reaching goals at almost any cost were deemed more important than problems regarding efficiency. Morris (1997; 2011) and Johnson (1997; 2002) relate the conceptual emergence of PM to a new procurement process developed by the US Department of Defence (DoD), initiated shortly after the Second World War. The purpose of the new procurement process was to speed up coordination and control in the production of sophisticated war planes and long-range thermonuclear missiles. Morris (1997) describes the example of the air force's Air Research and Development Command and the Air Material Command working together in 'special project offices'. An officer in the project office would then be nominated as the 'project manager', and would assume full responsibility for the implementation of a project. Johnson (2002) notes that within the US defence/aerospace sectors the disciplines of operations research, systems engineering and PM were used to coordinate the activities of specialist teams using mathematical analysis, engineering coordination and managerial control. These disciplines borrowed from existing techniques and utilised methods such as probability

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statistics and matrix management models in order to predict, scrutinise and reorganise work processes. Johnson (1997) argues that the essence of these new disciplines lay in the creation and application of what he calls 'procedural knowledge', what became commonly labelled as 'systems management':

> Project managers imposed new organizational structures and process controls. Systems engineers created new engineering functions devoted to communication processes and documentation across disciplinary boundaries. Some operations researchers transformed their methods into systems analysis, a set of practices for comparing design and operations for future technologies. Together, these formed 'systems management' (Johnson, 1997: 893)

Technique	Application
Critical Path Method (CPM)	Identifies the longest elements of a project that cannot be delayed without affecting the completion time.
Work breakdown structures	The breaking down of large activities into comprehensible and distinct management units
Gantt charts	Illustrates the relationship between work activities and timescale
Earned value management	Brings together time and cost control by assessing performance in real time.
Project (or programme) evaluation and review technique (PERT)	Calculates expected deviations from the project schedule by estimating the duration of specific activities and tasks.
Risk and scope analysis	Continually identifies and mitigates against perceived project risks, deviations and uncertainties.

Figure 1 Core project management techniques

In the 1950s and 1960s PM became commonly understood according to a variety of planning and control techniques (see Figure 1), with one in particular, Henry Gantt's classical management tool the Gantt chart, often cited as PM's most formative practice (Wren, 1979; Burke, 2007). These techniques were encompassed within the broader framework of systems management. Systems management emphasised clearly specified performance requirements, detailed and careful planning to eradicate subsequent changes, and the maximisation of speed and efficiency (Morris, 2011). These conceptual foundations were important features of the 'systems approach', an intellectual development in the 1950s and 1960s with exponents in academia as well as in the military-industrial complex (cf: Cleland and King, 1968). Johnson (1997; 2002) argues that PM was used in order to strengthen the communication links necessary to build new and large production systems, where old communication lines across functional departments were deemed too time consuming for effective coordination. Organisational models which relied on relatively informal 'liaisons' between supervisors and subordinates were to be replaced with coordinated systematic processes that would facilitate the rapid formation of new teams. Reporting systems were to be installed so that "all work would be thoroughly organised and all assignments rigidly controlled" (H. F. Lanier, project engineer for Goodyear Aircraft's aerophysics department, quoted in Johnson, 1997: 906). Organisational structures were reformulated into 'two dimensional' matrix structures, where creative engineering groups would report to line managers and project managers simultaneously, both of which would have roles in managing the workgroup (see Figure 2). Johnson (1997) notes that in the aerospace industry these organisational structures became variously labelled as 'project', 'programme', 'matrix' and 'systems' management. As Larson and Gobeli note:

> Matrix is a 'mixed' organizational form in which the normal vertical hierarchy is 'overlaid' by some form of lateral authority, influence, or communication. In a matrix there are usually two chains of command, one along functional lines and the other along project lines. (Larson and Gobeli, 1987: 119)
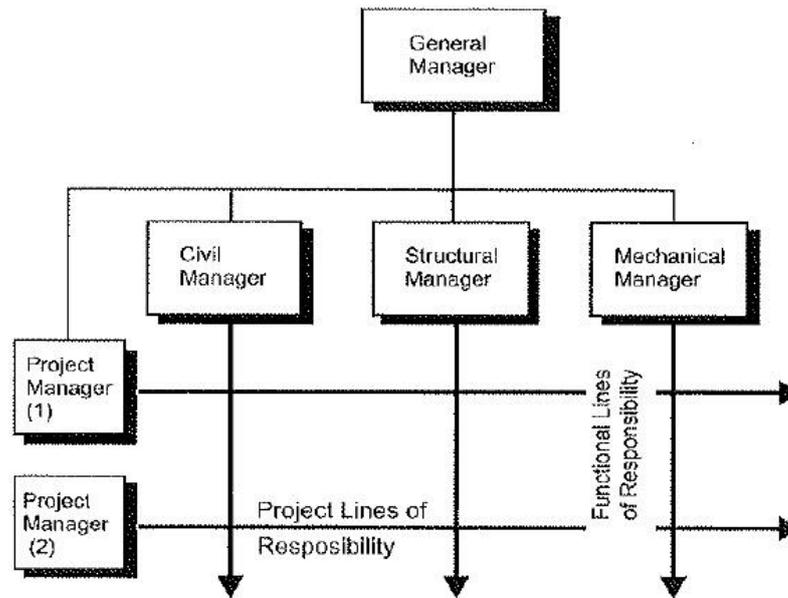
Figure 2 Matrix organisational structure (Burke, 2007)

2.2.3 Operational Research and Scheduling Tools

A characteristic of the systems approach was the utilisation of operational research in order to collect and analyse data on work tasks using scientific principles (Söderlund, 2011b). The aim in this sense was to optimise project implementation using mathematical analysis, planning, and systems analysis (Söderlund, 2011a). These principles produced project scheduling techniques, devised not only within the US defence/aerospace sectors, but also by large corporations such as the chemical manufacturer Du Pont (Maylor, 2010). Initially PM techniques were designed to predict and measure task durations at all levels of project activity, so that a schedule of events could be understood, planned and controlled objectivity. The US Navy developed the 'Programme Evaluation Review Technique' (PERT), a networked time measurement tool popularised by the US government, designed to statistically assess probabilities of activity durations (Lock, 2007). A second method was devised by Du Pont in the 'Critical Path Method' (CPM), another networked time measurement tool more suited to activity durations that could be calculated with a degree of reliability. The 'critical path' is the longest sequence of dependent activities to be completed for a project to reach completion. By identifying the 'critical path', the optimum duration (thus minimal total time) is identified. Activity 'float' (or 'slack') is a measure of flexibility and inherent surplus time for activities. 'Float' indicates how many working hours or days an activity can be delayed for before it begins to impinge on the 'critical path', thus effecting the optimal project completion time (Burke, 2007). Both PERT

and CPM create illustrated activity networks using 'arrows' to represent activities (see Figure 3). As Morris (1997) notes, in the 1960s these methods became widely synonymous with what was known as 'project management'.
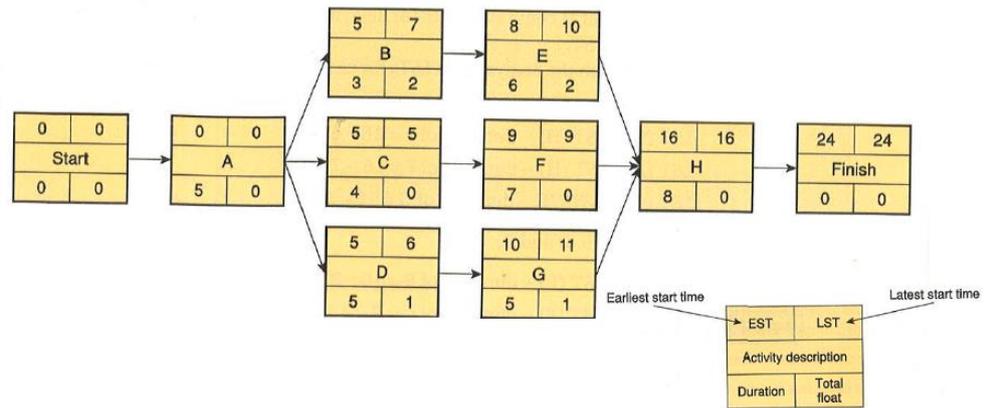
Figure 3 A network diagram example of critical path method (Maylor, 2010)

Garel (2013) notes that during the 1950s and 1960s PM scheduling techniques were mastered by engineers working on military projects, oil-rigs, dams, naval constructions, highways, university campuses and industrial sites. Nevertheless, during the 1960s and 1970s shortcomings with network scheduling techniques such as PERT and CPM were addressed with a view to tackling a growing number of problems associated with uncontrolled costs and project overruns (Morris, 1997; Söderlund, 2011b). The prestigious journal 'Management Science' published articles on topics exploring the optimisation and modification of scheduling tools such as PERT and CPM (cf: Klingel, 1966). Furthermore, studies began exploring mathematical models for analysing cost control, designed to run in parallel with existing time based engineering strategies. Abernathy and Rosenbloom (1969) for example, stated the following with regard to research and development projects:

> We encourage technical specialists to be braver in their use of the slippery data of the world of economics. Although such data may be subject to wide errors of estimate, it is far more dangerous to ignore variables than to work with erroneous values for them and better still to use an analytic framework that shows at which time they are improving (1969: 169)

Concerns with cost overruns prompted the US DoD and NASA to work together in developing techniques for cost control. Together they introduced the 'Earned Value System' (known as 'Earned Value Management' today - EVM), a form of financial analysis designed to measure actual progress according to the budgeted cost of work performed (Morris, 1997). Whereas scheduling techniques such as PERT and CPM provided cost information on what had been spent and what activities had been completed or were in progress, EVM continually quantified monetary value and allowed for future performance to be predicted based on real time schedule variances and trends (Burke, 2007). A further development in the control of cost was the introduction of the 'Work Breakdown Structure' (WBS), an iterative technique designed to identify and break up activities into successively lower levels of manageable units in relation to the overall 'scope' of a project (today this is often used in combination with a 'Product Breakdown Structure'). The lowest level of reportable activity became known as a 'work package'. As Johnson (2002) notes:

> Work package management extended project management to lower project levels and combined accounting and contracting procedures by creating a specific work package for each program task. The company assigned responsibility for each task to one person, a mini project manager for the task who accounted for performance, cost, and schedule in the same way and with the same tools as the overall project manager (2002: 120)

Söderlund (2011b; 2011a) notes that PM came to be seen throughout the 1960s and 1970s as epitomised by tools such as PERT, CPM, Work Breakdown Structures and Earned Value Management. Today updated and modified versions of these tools remain as important PM techniques (Lock, 2007; Maylor, 2010; APM, 2012a). After emerging in the US defence/aerospace sectors, and supported by journals such as 'Management Science' and 'IEEE[3] Transaction on Engineering Management', systems management continues as the leading metaphor in PM (Packendorff, 1995). Systems management is primarily concerned with the 'optimisation' of project implementation using mathematics and management science. Literature in this area adopts a prescriptive approach to PM, rather than a descriptive one (Cleland and King, 1968; Lock, 2007; Hamilton, 2008). Söderlund (2011b; 2011a) labels this school of thought as the 'optimisation school'. The 'optimisation school' defines PM as the application of

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[3] IEEE is an abbreviation for the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

techniques for approaching the scheduling, cost, and co-ordination problems involved in executing a project.

2.2.4 The emergence of professional associations

According to Morris (1997; 2011) during the 1960s the uptake of matrix and DoD PM techniques in public organisations such as NASA meant that many executives found themselves managing projects for the first time. Seminars and conferences began to take place on how to do so. Professional PM associations were founded and reflected the growing number of project professionals operating as middle-managers in public organisations and large corporations (Garel, 2013). The US based Project Management Institute (PMI) was founded in 1969 and the International Management Systems Association (now the International Project Management Association – IPMA) was founded in 1972. The UK Association for Project Management (APM) was also established in 1972 (APM, 2010). The two principal professional associations later established their own academic journals. The 'Project Management Journal' (PMJ) was founded in 1970 by the PMI, and the 'International Journal of Project Management' (IJPM) was founded in 1983 by the International Project Management Association. As Grabner (2002) notes, in the main these journals have concentrated on issues of technical optimisation and project organisation with a view to enhancing 'best practice'.

Morris (2011) argues that the focus of the PM 'profession' has been on project execution, centred on the challenges of accomplishing pre-defined project goals, and the necessary tools and techniques for doing so. Furthermore, as Turner (2011) argues, during the 1970s concerted pressure by the professional associations to establish knowledge bases of their own resulted in PM research having an almost exclusively practitioner orientation. As he states;

> Project management came to be seen in many academic institutions as something of a 'quasi-discipline', with little agreement as to its roots or heritage. . . Fundamentally, project management research was an outcropping of other fields and many of its early researchers made their academic 'homes' in allied but separate disciplines, including construction, engineering, and management science (2011: 66)

2.3 Early paradigms and divergence

In addition to the growing popularity of project management technique and systems management thinking within the 'optimisation school', interest was also emerging from other academic perspectives. The much cited article written by Gaddis (1959) in the Harvard Business Review described the 'project manager' as a new managerial phenomenon. Gaddis (1959) described the role of the project manager as pivotal, one whose business it is to execute a project on behalf of others in overseeing the development of a singular hi-tech 'product'. As scholars in the field of PM often note (cf: Grabher, 2002; Engwall, 2003) the contribution of Gaddis (1959) is considered to be a landmark development in PM research. For PM scholars it represents the first example of research in "the art and practice of managing projects" (Söderlund, 2004: 185). During the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, PM became a modestly familiar subject area in academic circles, and was viewed through different theoretical lenses. For the purpose of review, these early contributions can be grouped into two broad categorisations, termed here as 'success and failure studies' and 'projects as organisational forms and processes'.

2.3.1 Success and failure studies

An important theme running through PM research is that its diffusion into industry correlated with a growing number of reported project failures and problems with project implementation (Packendorff, 1995; Morris, 1997; Cicmil *et al.*, 2009). Morris (1997) argues that in many cases PM technique turned out to be inadequate for use outside of the US defence and aerospace sectors. Söderlund (2011b) notes that these problems stimulated academic work investigating 'success' and 'failure' in projects, with the general aim of identifying 'best practice'. In success and failure studies the general intention was to ask why projects were failing and what separates the low performers from the high performers. In an example of early writings in this vein, Avot (1969) identified 'poorly defined project scope' and the selection of 'the wrong man [sic] as project manager' as factors that contributed towards project failure. As he (1969) stated:

> There is no question that the project manager must be a leader and organizer. He [sic] must make important decisions on the basis of few data which have been analyzed in haste. There is a continuous trade-off conflict between costs, schedules, and technical performance. Because of the operating style required of him [sic], a man [sic] who has been highly successful in a traditional department may not last long in project management (Avots, 1969: 78)

The 'success' and 'failure' school developed studies focussed on identifying criteria necessary for 'project success', what became known as 'critical success factors'. Critical success factors were identified such as defining the project mission correctly, consulting clients appropriately, selecting appropriate personnel, and identifying 'external' environmental issues that may affect the 'internal' operations of a project team (Pinto and Slevin, 1987). The importance of identifying 'critical success factors' was justified through the belief that their identification would improve implementation and practice. Söderlund (2011b; 2011a) recently labelled this tradition as the 'factor school', noting that it served to encourage an increasingly detailed empirical focus on particular types of contexts, sectors and industries within which project work was taksing place. For example, Pinto and Covin (1989) investigated the perceived importance of 'critical success factors' at different stages of a 'project life cycle' (defined as 'Conceptualisation', 'Planning', 'Execution', and 'Termination' phases). By comparing construction projects with research and development projects, they argue that the perceived importance of 'critical success factors' varied across project types and at different stages of the project, stating that "both project type and stage in the organizational life cycle are important contingency variables in the perceived importance of various critical success factors" (1989: 59).

Söderlund (2011b; 2011a) reports that up until the late 1990s studies investigating 'critical success factors' had strict and narrow definitions of success based on efficiency with regards to time, cost, technical and quality criteria. More recent studies in this vein have extended their approach by employing multivariate statistical analysis to define 'project success' according to an array of simplified and functional 'critical factors', including 'value creation' and 'capability building' (Shenhar *et al.*, 2001). A significant change in this respect is a shift from a focus on the efficiency of project execution to a focus on longer term measures of effectiveness and 'learned' outcomes (Söderlund, 2011b). As we will go on to discuss, at the beginning of the 2000s, the PM community began to embrace the idea of 'business value' and 'learning from experience' as primary measures of 'success'.

2.3.2 Major project failures

In the 1980s and 1990s 'success' and 'failure' studies grew to incorporate wide-ranging investigations and analysis of major publicly funded projects (Winch, 1996). These investigations were financed by governments keen to explore poor success rates, with the UK's national audit office conducting a series of critical reviews (Morris, 1997). As Cicmil and Hodgson (2006) note, calamities such as the Scottish parliament building project, two and half years behind schedule and costing roughly ten times the original £40 million estimate, indicate as to why governments have been interested in developing their own PM methodologies. In Morris and Hough's (1987) study of major projects in the 1960s and 1970s, they identified a host of issues relating to project failures such as poor project definition, changing sponsor strategy, unclear success criteria, funding difficulties, poor control, inappropriate contracting strategies, lack of top management support, poor handling of stakeholder opposition and 'unsupportive political environments'. They argued that these issues fell outside the limits of PM knowledge, yet they also note that this did not deter professional associations from later standardising techniques that did not accommodate for these issues. More recently studies have examined success and failure in large engineering projects, with Miller and Lessard (2000) making the distinction between project 'efficiency' (on time, in budget, to scope) and project 'effectiveness' (achieving a sponsor's objectives). They argue that the 'efficiency' criteria is met far more often than the 'effectiveness' criteria, with project sponsors often remaining dissatisfied with project outcomes despite the project being 'successful' in terms of efficiency. As we will go on to discuss, towards the close of the twentieth century instrumental approaches to PM that were limited to time, budget and scope were challenged more so than in any previous period.

2.3.3 Projects as organisational forms and processes

In addition to success and failure studies, other theoretical approaches to project management emerged in the 1970s and 1980s that sought to understand projects as organisational forms and processes. In one thread of work scholars employed contingency-inspired approaches to organisational design stimulated by the work of theorists such as Galbraith (1973) and Lawrence and Lorsch (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967b). These approaches would draw on contingency theory to develop systematic approaches to organisations that emphasised the nature of 'the environment' to which a given organisation would relate.

Kolodny (1979), for example, examined the 'evolution' of an organisation from a functional form through to a matrix/product form. Kolodny (1979) cites 'environmental conditions' such as market relationships and technical uncertainty as a justification and motivation for the development of matrix organisational structures. For those employing contingency theory 'success' comes to be determined through an organisation's 'internal' levels of functional integration, and whether such integration can facilitate effective responses and adaptations to "the diversity of the environment" (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967a: 93). PM is addressed in terms of the appropriate level of implementation required, usually in comparison to traditional line management structures (cf: Hobday, 2000). In Kolodny's (1979) 'evolutionary' study of organisational change into a matrix structure, he argues that a contingency led approach can mitigate against 'uncertainty'. This is thought to require a proactive approach in reassessing roles, team-building, and developing skills, whilst offering a flexible reward system based on both line management and matrix management work streams. He argues that a 'learning' approach is a central part of the organisational design process, stating;

> Matrix members complain of the continuous process of meetings but through them learn the collaborative skills needed to function in an ever-interacting environment. They also learn to resolve conflicts because each team is multidisciplinary and differences in orientation must be managed (Kolodny, 1979: 548)

Contingency theory approaches to organisational analysis (see Chapter 4 for a methodological critique) articulate a managerial and 'functional' commitment to theorising the advantages and disadvantages of organising by projects and matrix structures in response to economic and market conditions (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967b). Organisations are considered with respect to their objective functionality as 'open systems' that must adapt appropriately by balancing 'internal' managerial structures with different 'environmental' circumstances (Morgan, 2006). Organisations are therefore addressed as tangible concrete phenomena that must function appropriately and with respect to managerial and production aims. PM is addressed within this frame as a way in which to optimise productivity by offering a decentralised, lateral and flexible approach to organisational design. Contingency approaches argue that the most effective organisations are those which succeed in achieving appropriate organisational integration and differentiation in line with 'external' economic conditions (Burrell and

Morgan, 1979). Thus, a general tenet of this approach is that managerial principles are contingent upon the nature of the conditions in which they are applied, which become reified as variable indicators of market and technological change (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967b).

In one strand of work the identification and comparison of different 'project environments' provides the necessary grounds by which to conceive alternative and tailored approaches to the implementation PM, control and planning (Nutt, 1983; Nutt, 1986). For example, Nutt (1983) identified a range of ideal typical 'project environments', arguing for the implementation of different organisational structures and alternative levels of formalised planning in each. As he stated when discussing 'suspicious environments':

> Decentralization is the preferred tact when complexity is high and the product or service demands quality with less emphasis on cost. When such environments are found to be centralized, they are called suspicious. . . Monitoring is carried out by cost progress toward completion dates, using techniques such as milestone charts and PERT. The control tactics can be sufficiently pervasive to stifle professionalism and individual initiative in an environment that calls for just these qualities (1983: 608)

More recent studies have adopted contingency theory to argue against a 'one size fits all' view of projects commonly found in prescriptive textbooks and professional association bodies of knowledge. The goal has been to "show how different types of projects are managed in different ways" (Shenhar, 2001b: 394) as well as developing design approaches and organisational models considered suitable for different types of projects. In this vein Shenhar (2001b; 2002) and colleagues have sought to develop a 'typology theory' of PM by applying contingency theory to address technological uncertainty and complexity in the design of PM and project organisations. They argue that their structural models address the problem of having to negotiate between "creativity, flexibility, communication and change" and "formality, rigid procedures, standards and bureaucracy" (Shenhar, 2001a: 263). They also bemoan a general lack of 'theory' and concepts in PM research, envisioning their own work as steps towards a unified 'theory of project management'. In the following section, we will move on to a particularly significant period of development in the diffusion of PM, before going on to discuss contemporary PM research focused on the improvement of practice.

2.4 The 1990s – A New Paradigm for Project Management

As numerous PM scholars note, the 1990s represents a watershed era (Morris, 2011; Söderlund, 2011b; Turner *et al.*, 2011). Grabher (2002) argues that the decade saw significant societal investment in the project form, which was increasingly inscribed into forms, formulae, manuals and textbooks. Concurrently Morris (2011) argues that Information and Computer Technology (ICT) encouraged the widespread diffusion of PM technique. This correlated with a rise in demand for project managers across industry sectors, especially in ICT and construction, and PM became increasingly viewed as a core competency, recognised as a career path in its own right. Grabher (2002) argues that project-based work became accepted as a powerful and universal response to the demands of managing in a more competitive world. Its proliferation corresponded with a significant increase in project organising as a defining feature of organisational restructuring in European, Japanese and US corporations throughout the 1990s (Whittington *et al.*, 1999). In the past two decades PM methodologies have been adapted into a host of sectors and organisations such as mental health care, international development, ICT, advertising, urban renewal, events management, higher education and crime prevention (Cicmil et al., 2009). PM methodologies are also promoted as competencies for 'knowledge-intensive' organisational environments, illustrating that its application has moved far beyond its traditional use in engineering, construction and military-industrial sectors (Morris, 1997; Hodgson, 2007). Reduced product lifespans and 'lean' organisational structures accentuated projects as tools in the pursuit of innovation and 'value creation'. Furthermore, growing demands for consumer products, expanding divisions in labour, outsourcing, and core managerial competencies have contributed to the increasing influence of projects upon organisational practice.

By the 1990s the two main professional associations (the PMI and APM) had developed their own professional 'bodies of knowledge' (BoKs) as certified knowledge bases for professional competency. The first PMI Body of Knowledge (BoK) was published in 1983, and the first edition of the UK's APM BoK followed roughly a decade later in 1991 (APM, 2010) (the APM now on its 6th edition). Furthermore, national vocational qualifications were introduced in Australia and the UK, and university degrees in PM were emerging (Morris, 2011). The APM was expanding quickly, becoming the UK's fastest growing professional institution in the 1990s and 2000s. In 2009, the APM

applied for 'chartered status', in seeking to represent PM alongside more established professions such as medicine and engineering (APM, 2012b).

PM as a 'corporate profession' is now an international phenomenon, with large professional associations such as the US-based Project Management Institute (PMI) and the UK based Association of Project Managers (APM) claiming to have 310,000 and 18,000 associate members respectively (Muzio et al., 2011a). National bodies fall under the umbrella body of the International Project Management Association (IPMA) who "represent 55 Member Associations across the continents of the World" (IPMA, 2012). The 'profession's' rapid growth is said to have been driven by the activities of large professional associations, through agreeing sponsorships with large firms, state bodies and academics, while also spending a significant proportion of their budgets on marketing (Cicmil *et al.*, 2009; Muzio *et al.*, 2011a). Across all PM professional associations, marketing delivers a relatively analogous message, signifying the "increasing uncertainty and the complexity of the modern world" (Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006: 810) as a justification for PM's existence and necessary application. Key to the establishment of PM knowledge and practice has been the creation of a variety of formalised bodies of knowledge (BOKs), with the UK government and professional associations promoting their own versions (OGC, 2009; APM, 2012a). Although not easily comparable, BOKs share basic techniques such as 'budgeting', 'project life cycle' and 'leadership', as well as a strong focus on documentation and reporting mechanisms. PM professional associations do not set closure conditions that preclude entry for practitioners without qualifications. Also, there are no mandatory prerequisite qualifications required before becoming an associate practitioner (Hodgson, 2004).

2.4.1 The role of Information and Computer Technology

During the 1990s ICT and specifically computer-based technology encouraged a resurgence of operational research in PM. Software systems (notably Microsoft's 'MS Project') were promoted as expert tools for project planning, control, and risk analysis (Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006). Wysocki (2009) notes that by the year 2000 there were more than 125 PM software applications on the commercial market. Morris (2011) argues that modelling power improved significantly through the use of technology such as computer aided design (CAD). Furthermore, software suppliers such as Hewlett Packard and Oracle began to add PM modules to existing planning software. Developments in ICT brought tools directly to users, and made PM techniques readily

available. New possibilities emerged in organisational design for decentralised team structures, the improvement work flow monitoring, managing data sharing, structuring reporting relationships, and developing matrix strength (Shih and Tseng, 1996; Whyte and Levitt, 2011). Research in PM was stimulated by government agencies and public sector clients in search of robust management models to minimise budget overruns and the dubious quality associated with project outcomes delivered by contractors (Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006).

2.4.2 'Projectification'

A key characteristic of the 1990s and early 2000s was the proliferation of academic literature on projects, not just with regards to PM *per se* but also with regards to careers and organisational culture (Dvir and Ben-David, 1999; Arthur *et al.*, 2001). This was coupled with the increasing popularity and diffusion of mainstream PM texts and guidebooks, prompting Morris (2011) to argue that during the 1990s PM had become "dangerously commodified" (2011: 27). Turner (2011) notes that the amount of publications on PM and project organisation rose dramatically in the 1990s. Grabher (2002) argues that projects as organisational forms had diffused generally into a broad spectrum of economic and societal spheres, fuelled by 'mimetic' processes of organisational imitation. These developments prompted some authors to put forward the notion of the 'projectification of society' (Lundin and Soderholm, 1998), intended to depict the spread of project ideologies and techniques across all spheres of work and economic life. The proliferation of the project form, often at the behest of mainstream PM literature, impelled some to argue that the project had become reified as an 'epistemic object' in its own right (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007). These phenomenological perspectives challenged orthodox organisational theories by illustrating that the universal concept of 'the project' was inherently dubious, serving in the main a self-sustaining community of practitioners and researchers whose interests aligned with its tangibility. From a sociological point of view, the phenomenon of 'the project' was captured perceptively in Boltanski and Chiapello's discourse analysis of management literature in the 1990s, in which they stated;

> Utterly different things can be assimilated to the term 'project': opening a new factory, closing one, carrying out a re-engineering project, putting on a play. Each of them is a project, and they all involve the same heroism. This is one of the ways in which the projective city can win over forces hostile to capitalism: by proposing a grammar that transcends it, which they in turn will use to

describe their own activity while remaining oblivious of the fact that capitalism, too, can slip into it (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005: 111)

Boltanski and Chiapello's (2005) analysis of management literature led them to formulate an image of 'the projective city', one which could be reasonably correlated with Lundin and Soderholm's (1998) notion of 'the projectification of society'. Within this city projects succeed and take over from one another, reconstructing work groups and teams in accordance with needs and priorities. Projects demand a certain kind of engagement, albeit temporal and fractional, and they presuppose the monitoring by other project members of the abilities and qualities brought to play. The image of the project functions to bring objects and subjects into existence, by stabilising certain networks, and by making them irrevocable. The project symbolises a temporary pocket of accumulation, and from within this space new values are constructed. Values are ascribed to 'qualities' and 'attitudes' that were not previously identified as distinctive. People depend on these values and attitudes to make judgements, and to discriminate between satisfactory behaviour and behaviour that constitutes exclusion. For Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), then, 'the projective city' is indicative of a 'new spirit of capitalism' characterised by new network-based organisational forms that emphasise employee autonomy and initiative. In the sections below we will explore these themes with respect to the development of PM research and practice.

2.4.3 From 'product creation' to 'value creation'

By the 1990s PM research began to encompass concepts from other related areas of research, such as new product development (cf: Wheelwright and Clark, 1992). The emphasis was placed on markets and customer needs, project success, and satisfying the project sponsor or client. For example, in more ambitious writings in this vein some authors went as far as to suggest that a customer approach required organisations to adopt 'total project management'. As Russell-Hodge (1995) states, "customers and their more sophisticated use of information technology will lead to total project management, whereby customers will become project managers. Suppliers will become facilitators" (1995:12). Coinciding developments with managerial approaches such as Total Quality Management (TQM) brought together intensified performance metrics with a strong customer orientation for the production of 'high-quality' services and products. The PM community duly embraced 'quality' thinking and quality assurance

standards (Anttila, 1992). PM was reshaped into a 'business-driven' discipline, with terms such as 'value creation' and 'effectiveness' replacing terms like 'execution' and 'efficiency' (Söderlund, 2004).

Morris (2011) notes that with these developments came a growing interest in the 'up sides' of projects, in 'values', 'opportunities', and 'benefits'. Producing something to specification, cost and time, was no longer a primary focus of PM technique. Instead the picture had broadened to encompass the creation of 'value', not only in lone projects, but also through the management of programmes and portfolios of projects. In other words, the paradigm shifted to emphasise not simply 'doing the project right', but a more 'strategic' perspective in 'doing the right projects' (Winter *et al.*, 2006; Winter and Szczepanek, 2009). Achieving 'buy in' from stakeholders would become a primary focus, where aligning, marketing and selling project objectives to others would become critical to 'project success'. This seemingly more optimistic interpretation of project performance drew attention to business consultants and managers as active practitioners of organisational strategy, emphasising a 'practical turn' in the 'doing' of strategic management through project based work (Whittington, 2003). A shift in focus could be observed with respect to a change in the definition of 'risk' in project management procedure, which became defined according to criteria of 'uncertainty' and also 'opportunity', rather than as simply the potential for a negative event occurring (Simon *et al.*, 1997). Intensified customer and market orientations also encouraged the pursuit of 'pure' matrix organisation structures, described in more exemplary cases as project based organisations (PBOs). PBOs were said to be "ideally suited for managing increasing product complexity, fast changing markets, cross-functional business expertise, customer focused innovation, and technological uncertainty" (Hobday, 2000: 871).

These developments were incorporated into guidance manuals, with the UK Office of Government Commerce's (OGC) influential 'Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2' going through a number of revisions since its original publication in 1996 (OGC, 2009). The current publication (6th edition) emphasises a need for the continued justification of a 'business case' in order to continually align project outcomes with corporate strategies and project sponsors. It also contains procedures for quality control and management, 'learning' from experience, and procedures for 'benefit realisation'. 'Risk' is defined as follows:

> A risk is an uncertain event or set of events that, should it occur, will have an effect on the achievement of objectives. It consists of a combination of the probability of a perceived threat or opportunity occurring, and the magnitude of its impact on objectives (OGC, 2009: 77)

More recent developments have sought to further incorporate practitioner reflexivity with regard to the application PM technique. 'Agile' PM philosophies have been encouraged as a way in which to manage change by embracing 'learning' and discovery throughout the project life cycle (Wysocki, 2009). Agile is advocated for projects in which the goal is clearly defined, but the solution is not. Its application is seen to be more useful in industry sectors such as software design and creative media, where iterative methodologies such as 'Scrum' are considered as those that have 'emancipatory' and 'empowering' potential for 'self-managing' creative teams (cf: Hodgson and Briand, 2013). Customer collaboration is said to transcend contract negotiation, and creative freedom and flexibility are said to transcend planning. 'Agile' methodologies are thus advocated as those that can respond more flexibly to change both within teams and with respect to consumer demand. Wysocki (2009) for example, outlines various sequential and iterative models for adapting and remoulding PM application throughout the project life cycle. As he states;

> The major impact should be that project management approaches must align with the business of the enterprise. Project management needs to find its seat at the organization's strategy table. Project managers must first align to the needs of the organization rather than their own home department. That is today's critical success factor (2009: 16).

2.4.4 Project 'Learning', Temporary Organisations and 'Project Ecologies'

The 1990s also saw a growing interest in 'knowledge integration' and 'organisational learning' (cf: Dougherty, 1992). Educators and researchers, particularly in the field of business and management, began to engage with project organising as a distinctive economic and social process upon which an emergent 'knowledge economy' depended (cf: Drucker, 1993). If projects were to rely on divisions of labour, with those involved often representing specialist knowledge, then reaping the benefits of such specialisation would presuppose some kind of 'learning' (Davies and Brady, 2000; Sense, 2007). Projects were increasingly addressed as fertile locales within which creativity, innovation and learning could flourish. Projects became attractive vehicles for

producing new knowledge, yet at the same time given their temporary nature they were also problematic challenges for 'knowledge integration'. From these perspectives 'learning' and 'competency' would conflate, insofar as 'learning' would be referenced in regard to the 'continuous improvement' of competencies with respect to 'project success' (Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006). For example, Dougherty (1992) notes that belonging to dissimilar knowledge domains often means that project workers live in different 'thought worlds'. A common problem in this sense is that even when different occupational cultures share a common interest in performance, they may value different criteria for systems design and appropriate PM technique. A 'learning' approach thus denotes a relatively open approach to developing an 'awareness' of the methods of others so as to continually improve performance while meeting objectives. In this regard some authors put forward the notion of 'communities of practice' in emphasising projects as intimate processes of enculturation (Sense, 2007). Notions such as 'knowledge sharing' and 'knowledge transfer' outlined recipes which would enable collaboration, common ground, and shared beliefs (Bechky, 2003). These studies have encouraged some PM researchers to assert that although instrumental tools are useful, the real 'opportunity' for the improvement of practice lies in leveraging the tacit knowledge of learned practitioners (Huang and Newell, 2003). Conversely however, others argue for a contingency led approach, suggesting that unlike communities of practice, projects are time limited, focused on a specific task, and involve 'fast learning', relying on identities located outside the immediate 'project environment' (Lindkvist, 2011).

As perspectives became more empirically focused, organisational theorists highlighted an advantage in moving beyond the study of PM in isolation, proposing that projects should be theorised as temporary organisations in themselves (Packendorff, 1995). Although standardised PM methodologies described projects as 'temporary organisations' (OGC, 2009), sociological perspectives argued instead "that a diversity of theories and perspectives may enhance our understanding of projects as compared to the single viewpoint of rational management" (Packendorff, 1995: 329). PM research began to diverge and split, with new arguments and debates emerging. Whereas journals such as 'The International Journal of Project Management' and 'Project Management Journal' maintained a primary focus on optimisation, systems management, tools, and organisational design (cf: Malach-Pines *et al.*, 2009; Alajoutsijarvi *et al.*, 2012), other perspectives emphasised context, and envisioned

projects as complex social phenomena (Blomquist and Packendorff, 1998; Engwall, 1998; Grabher, 2002; Engwall, 2003). From these phenomenological perspectives projects would be viewed not as tangible or concrete entities, but instead as emergent processes resulting from the acts of humans individually and in interplay with one another. Literature began to question 'the project' as an isolated unit of analysis (Engwall, 1998), with Engwall (2003) arguing that the aims and scopes of a project should be interpreted against the background of its 'stakeholder' history. As he noted;

> The primary interest has been in the structures and dynamics of individual projects, typically discussed from the individual project manager's perspective… In this dominating ontology the project has been conceptualized as a lonely phenomenon, independent of history, contemporary context and future (Engwall, 1998: 790)

New frameworks were developed, with Grabher (2002; 2011) putting forward the notion of 'project ecologies', referring to the conditions in which projects are embedded. Projects are thus not viewed in isolation, but are understood as relational spaces that allow for the personal, organisational and institutional resources for projects to occur. Bresnen and Marshall (2011) adopt a similar institutional perspective and attempt to develop understanding about how more collaborative forms of interaction emerge, diffuse, and become institutionalised in seemingly fragmented institutional contexts such as the construction industry. For these scholars the locus of project-based 'learning' extends beyond the boundaries of the project team and the organisation, and phenomenological perspectives are adopted to consider how the pressures of human interaction give rise to particular forms of understanding. Project 'learning' in this sense is engaged at a level at which Grabher calls 'epistemic communities'. As he states;

> The epistemic community involves all project participants who contribute to the production of knowledge to accomplish the specific task, even if only temporarily and partially. Most importantly, they comprise clients and suppliers but increasingly also major corporate groups to which project ecologies become affiliated (2011: 177).

2.4.5 Social complexity and the 'actuality' of project work

Sociological perspectives have also been advanced to encourage new forms of PM practice and education better able to respond to social complexity (Cicmil *et al.*, 2006). A selection of work emerged out of a UK government-funded research network entitled 'Rethinking Project Management' (RPM), which ran from 2004 until 2006 (Winter *et al.*, 2006). The RPM network proposed co-production with practitioners with the general aim of improving the management of projects. These studies have contributed to the theorisation of projects and PM as social practice, as well as providing insight into the 'lived experiences' of project managers (Thomas and Buckle-Henning, 2007). A related aim in this respect has been to reassess project failures and complexity using alternative epistemological frameworks, thus illuminating a host of potential factors which are not addressed by standardised project management tools and techniques (Smith, 2006).

In one particular thread of this literature the goal has been to unveil the 'actuality' of project based work in order to enhance the self-reflexivity and understanding of practitioners and researchers alike (Cicmil, 2006; Koners and Goffin, 2007). This approach, as Cicmil *et al* (2006) argues, allows for a consideration of actor's morals, ethical motives and practical reasoning, in order to "contribute to our understanding of project environments, to improvements in practice, and to educational and developmental efforts" (2006: 684). The focus in this thread of work is upon inter-subjective interactions and real time developments in making sense of non-linearity, complexity and 'knowledge in action'. Collaborative research between practitioners and academics is encouraged in order to develop alternative epistemic theories about project work. Oppositions between instrumental and 'learning-intuition' approaches are expanded upon in order to embrace philosophical oppositions between theory and practice, mind and body, and structure and agency (Thomas, 2006).

Further studies in this vein highlight that practitioner narratives illustrate how dominant PM practice becomes an instrument for inclusion/exclusion and for the legitimatisation of social practice (Nocker, 2009). Nocker (2009) proposes further research into the ethics of belonging in project teams in order to move away from community spaces in which identities and values appeal to imposed PM standards. Correspondingly, Thomas and Buckle (2007) sought to assess the efficacy of the masculine logic and ethos

(controlling, impersonal, performance orientated) of prescriptive PM technique among successful project managers. Although instrumental tools were valued, feminine logics (sensitivity, education, improvisation, situational, non-linear) were thought to provide negotiation and sense making skills in context. Thomas and Buckle (2007) describe the negotiation between masculine and feminine logics as a delicate skill undertaken by 'virtuoso' project managers, in knowing how to "dance between the black lines and white spaces of project life" (2007: 557). Cicmil (2006) has focused on the practical action and conduct of project managers so that skills and 'personal learning' processes can be improved. The image of the expert is crafted as one who is able to blend a unique synthesis of Weberian instrumental rationality and tacit knowledge. A developmental journey is depicted from a 'novice' dependent on instrumental rationality, through to an 'expert or virtuoso' who is able to nurture a more refined approach by utilising tacit knowledge and intuitive judgement. Cicmil and Marshall (2005) have also developed theoretical approaches to interpret team interactions at the 'project level'. They argue that processes of 'self-organisation', in reflexive understanding and through an ability to live with anxiety, are important 'leadership qualities' when dealing with tension and complexity in project settings.

A primary assumption in these sociological studies is that the increasing complexity of 'projectified' life requires answers and solutions that are located outside of the dominant functionalist and instrumental paradigm of PM. For example, Pellegrinelli (2011) argues that a 'becoming' ontology and a social constructionist approach to programme management provides an alternative way in which to determine and undertake managerial change initiatives, thus offering practitioners greater flexibility and choice. As he states "A tolerance of ambiguity, indeterminacy and change, and a willingness to live with paradox and contradiction, appear to be personal prerequisites for the principal players enacting programmes" (2011: 237). Further examples call upon social psychology and theoretical concepts such as sense making (cf: Weick *et al.*, 2005) to develop understanding of the ongoing ambiguity and uncertainty of emergent and complex undertakings (Ivory *et al.*, 2006; Smith, 2006). In this sense the management of a project is intimately tied up with differential meanings ascribed to the project by various actors and 'stakeholders'. Ivory et al (2006) empirically analysed long-term engineering projects by interviewing practitioners and argue that sense making is analogous to a kind of creative understanding. This, they argue, enables practitioners to operate flexibly in viewing projects as new and emergent phenomena. They conclude

by suggesting that effective and 'successful' project managers will be required to focus on the 'management of meaning' in providing 'interpretive frameworks' that encourage consensus among competing discourses.

In summary, studies focussed on the improvement of practice and understanding in project work are primarily based on craft-based 'bottom-up' approaches that emphasis tacit knowledge, reflexivity and social complexity over instrumental project management controls built on cost, time and quality objectives. Their aim is to theorise about the management of projects as evolving social phenomena. The goal is to elucidate alternative perspectives on organising within project settings so as to improve theory and practice. This is set in opposition to the already established institutionalised methods and professional logics of PM, which are depicted as masculine, rationalistic, instrumental and controlling. Practitioner reflexivity is brought to the forefront of the argument, and the self-transformation and emancipation of the project manager is key (cf: Crawford *et al.*, 2006). The aim is to de-standardise that which is standardised by emphasising 'flexibility', 'choice' and adaptability. Those who are reflexive, context sensitive and value/ethically aware will manage, cope, and moreover lead the project to its ultimate conclusion.

2.4.6 Summarising practitioner-orientated sociological perspectives

These perspectives have contributed extensively to knowledge concerning 'what goes on' in projects by investigating and theorising how practitioners engage and relate in project settings. They are positioned primarily in relation to project practitioners, in seeking alternative ways in which to manage, cope and make sense of their work. In accordance with Boltanski and Chiapello's (2005a) imagery of the 'projective city', new values are theorised and constructed, such as reflexivity, the management of meaning, coping with anxiety and situational awareness. Such perspectives thus depend upon the image of the project as a temporary pocket of accumulation, and they seek to address how best to manage and cope within these spaces. When values and ethics are discussed, they are discussed primarily in relation to the management of projects, either within teams or in the temporal social world of the project's 'context' or 'environment'. Wider structural, social and institutional aspects are more often discussed only insofar as they may help us to understand how projects may be managed successfully and in sympathy with the perspectives of practitioners (Thomas and Buckle-Henning, 2007). As Boltanski and Chiapello state;

Experts also enjoy high status in the projective city because their competence, which is indispensable, is composed not of standardized knowledge but of personal, integrated knowledge. It is the fruit of past experience – that is to say, of multiple connections, particularly with others possessing specific knowledge, formed during earlier projects, of which they preserve in memory (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a: 116)

Through these perspectives, however, the core ontological foundations of PM technique discussed at the beginning of this chapter are put to question. We have seen that project management texts and theory have traditionally privileged static accounts of group (or matrix) structuring, and are largely dependent on a 'being' ontology (cf: Danilovic and Browning, 2007). Mainstream PM literature envisions and theorises about reified objective elements in programmes and projects, which pre-exist the activities and perspectives of individuals and groups involved. Thus, sociological studies of PM practice have developed a critique of this kind of thinking as that which unnecessarily conceptualises projects as things, analogous to organisms, with parts and structures that are interrelated objectively. These studies have thus successfully debunked the majority of textbooks, documentation, and professional bodies of knowledge, those which are implicated in the promotion and reification of 'the project' as a timeless and inherent feature of our societal landscape (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2006; Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007).

2.5 Critical perspectives on Project Management Knowledge and Practice

What has been termed as the 'critical project management' movement is a diverse and loosely-coupled selection of scholars and perspectives, that, while incorporating some of the practitioner-oriented perspectives above, holds in common a general aim to critique mainstream PM theory and literature (cf: Bresnen *et al.*, 2004; Hodgson, 2004; Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006; Green, 2006; Ivory *et al.*, 2006; Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006; Linehan and Kavanagh, 2006; Maylor *et al.*, 2006; Thomas, 2006; Cicmil *et al.*, 2009; Hodgson, 2010a; Muzio *et al.*, 2011a). The more critical variants of this broad range of work has drawn on social theories emphasising power relations and the particular interests that PM and project organising serve in regard to current social, political and economic conditions. Much of this work has drawn from the sociological traditions of radical Weberianism, Critical Theory and the Frankfurt school (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) to rally against 'best practice' as that which carries a message about the

progressive rationalisation of action. Studies articulate scepticism about a belief in the progressive and accumulative character of scientific management knowledge, arguing instead that PM theory and practice exemplifies tight rule-based approaches, value-neutral competence and processes of managerial colonisation (Thomas, 2006; Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007). A 2006 edited book collection by Damian Hodgson and Svetlana Cicmil entitled 'Making Projects Critical' brought together a selection of articles in this vein (cf: Bresnen, 2006; Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006; Green, 2006; Ivory *et al.*, 2006; Linehan and Kavanagh, 2006; Thomas, 2006), and this was followed in 2009 with a special issue in the journal Ephemera (Cicmil *et al.*, 2009; Nocker, 2009). The editors of the edited book collection, Cicmil and Hodgson (2006), argued the following;

> The possibility of critical project management will depend on the extent to which a social theory about the nature of projects provides concerned actors with authentic insights into their position in project environments, leading to their enlightenment, changed attitudes and emancipatory action (2006: 13)

Hodgson and Cicmil (2006; 2007) argue that the widespread adoption of project management language across a range of sectors indicates a loss of embodied and reflexive rationality in favour of abstract principles. Similarly, Linehan and Kavanagh (2006) argue that abstracted techniques in PM embody a Weberian 'instrumental rationality', advocating continual calculations and reformulation of means, with little or no thought being applied to ends. This, they suggest, "tends to evacuate values and ethical considerations out of the situation" (2006: 54). Hodgson and Cicmil describe PM as a technicist language through which "definitions, techniques and procedures become set in stone, removing ethical and political questions from the agenda" (2006: 46). Furthermore, Linehan and Kavanagh (2006) argue that adopting standardised representational technologies can result in little or no engagement with the ethical value of specific projects. They argue that while such representations may provide security, stability and control, which may seem necessary and helpful, their limitations and dangers must be recognised and illuminated.

Following the radical Weberian viewpoint the widespread diffusion of PM technique, as a rationalist and standardised management approach, is considered to be contributing towards a society in which managerialism and job fragmentation are becoming more pervasive (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2006; Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007; Cicmil *et al.*, 2009).

Hodgson (2004) argues that although PM is promoted as a 'post-bureaucratic' organisational tool, it ironically bears resemblance to 19th century planning techniques based on bureaucratic principles of "visibility, predictability and accountability, operationalized through the adherence to formalized procedures and reporting mechanisms" (2004: 88). This corresponds with the views of others (Clegg and Courpasson, 2004) who suggest that core texts in project management are built on classical management theories such as Fayol (1949). Studies have emphasised the role that PM plays in corporate strategies, where the promotion of 'self-management' and employee autonomy conceals the introduction of devolved and formalised control mechanisms (Hodgson, 2004; Gleadle *et al.*, 2012). The "empty hype" (Hodgson, 2004: 97) of 'post-bureaucracy', in stressing flexibly and creativity, is exposed, and processes of 're-bureaucratisation' are seen to take effect through the implementation of PM systems that supply methods for prediction and a return on investment (Hodgson, 2004; Hodgson and Briand, 2013). These perspectives scrutinise the role that PM plays as a mode of managerial control within the power structures of contemporary capitalism. They seek to address what interests are being served by the reproduction of particular organisational practices and professional ideals, and what the implications are for those to whom PM is prescribed.

A focus on managerial control also illustrates the influence, although at times implicit, of neo-Marxist labour process theory upon critical perspectives of PM. PM in this sense is understood as a means by which to enhance the control of labour resources through both "ideational and systems control" (Metcalfe, 1997: 315), with some arguing that PM is facilitating an era in which "labour process control is increasingly hegemonic in nature" (Metcalfe, 1997: 315). These perspectives consider PM as a form of social control that reflects the development of monopoly capitalism. Labour process theorists thus rightly bring attention to the capitalist nature of the labour process, emphasising on the one hand the seller of labour endeavouring to secure meaningful employment, and on the other owners and their managers who aim to sustain the private accrual of capital (Braverman, 1974). Perspectives that are sympathetic to labour process place and emphasis on socio-technical management systems and direct managerial control, where PM exudes characteristics of Fredrick Taylor's scientific management in the fragmentation of tasks (Hodgson, 2002). Labour process theory emphasises power, inequality and class struggle in the analysis of management and organisation. PM in this sense has been addressed as that which enhances the strategic control of the

production process by providing management with the tools and information to plan, monitor and control material and labour resources (Metcalfe, 1997).

Labour process theory has traditionally pointed to structures of control, as opposed to a person's view of, or enactment of these structures. The critical viewpoint is upon the exploitative organisation of the production process, which produces an appearance of market freedom, but in effect constitutes a struggle between capital and labour. Labour process perspectives have emphasised deskilling and dehumanisation through the use of scientific management procedures in the capitalist mode of production (Braverman, 1974). Nevertheless, in doing so they have tended to overlook the presence and significance of subjectivity in the historical reproduction of economic life (Knights and Vurdubaskis, 1994). In this sense workers have been represented as those who are 'free agents' who have control over the sale of their labour, rather than as those who may identify or not with particular conceptualisations of work and contemporary society. The question of how power and knowledge combine and interlink through history (Foucault, 1977), and of how these formations mobilise agents into discourse and practice, is deferred. Nevertheless, to understand and observe the world in a certain way is also to act in that world in a certain way, and to ratify and bring into being a particular 'reality'. It is with these thoughts in mind that this study now turns to theme of 'Foucauldianism' in Organisation and Management studies.

2.6 Summary and Conclusion

In framing this chapter as the history, adaptation and propagation of PM the aim has been to elucidate a picture of PM as an organisational practice conceptualised through a diversity of academic perspectives. By discussing much of the conceptual thinking behind the emergence of PM technique in the 'systems approach', and through the application of 'procedural knowledge', a clearer picture can be garnered on the conceptual roots of PM knowledge and practice. This chapter has related these conceptual roots to its modern adaptation, propagation and application as a business and market-led discipline. In doing so this chapter has observed inherent problems regarding PM's supposed universality and objectivity, and its professed 'post bureaucratic' potential. Contemporary PM research illustrates alternative ways in which to address projects and their management, which go beyond the boundaries of objectified organisational 'structures' in order to theorise the social and organisational

contexts in which projects take place. Furthermore, sociological perspectives for the improvement of PM practice illustrate that epistemological and ontological issues are at the root of current debates and issues regarding PM practice. Finally, we have succinctly discussed critical perspectives that draw on the social theories of radical Weberianism, Critical Theory and Labour Process Theory to illustrate the ways in which PM has been problematised within a broader social, economic and political frame. In the next chapter we will address Foucauldian perspectives on PM with respect to the theoretical approach advanced for the present study. PM, as we will see, is no stranger to Foucauldian theoretical perspectives. Nevertheless, in 'government' and 'governmentality' this study aims to invoke themes that have developed out of Foucault's 'later' work in order to address PM as a 'technology of government' within the frame of public management today.

Chapter Three: Foucauldianism in Organisation and Management Studies, 'Government' and 'Governmentality'

3.1 Introduction

The intention of the present study is to examine PM as a 'technology of government'. For this purpose it invokes Michel Foucault's notion of 'government' and his genealogical concept of 'governmentality'. These concepts imply that government is not limited to the state but can be exercised at all levels of society, namely as government of the self, government of the family, government of the organisation and government of the state. This perspective proposes that political power is exercised today through a plethora of diverse authorities that come together in projects that aim to govern economic life and individual conduct (Rose and Miller, 2010). In drawing from this broad theoretical premise this chapter argues that the ways in which the public sector is rendered governable today is best understood according to the calculative and evaluative forms of expertise and know-how that enable economic government 'at a distance' (Rose, 1999b). As we will go on to discuss in this thesis, the analytical themes and concepts discussed in this chapter are the ones that have served to animate the present study and the theoretical themes that it aims to develop.

The chapter begins by outlining key aspects of Foucault's analytical approach in archaeology and genealogy. Thereafter, the genealogies of disciplinary power and bio-power are discussed in light of their relevance to Foucault's 'middle' period of writing. 'Foucauldian' studies that reference Foucault's 'middle' period of writing in Organisation and Management Studies (OMS) are reviewed and critiqued. Thereafter, the chapter introduces two primary themes of the present study. First, 'government' is outlined as the 'conduct of conduct', the ways of acting and reflecting that aim to regulate, guide, manage and shape the conduct of self and other. Second, the concept of 'governmentality' is discussed as an alternative configuration of power and the state. The 'problem of government' is briefly discussed in the early modern state, classical liberalism, the welfare state and neo-liberalism before arriving at Nikolas Rose's diagram of government in 'advanced liberalism' (Rose, 1996; Rose, 1999b; Rose and Miller, 2010). Governmentality literature in OMS is then reviewed and discussed. Towards the end of the chapter PM is addressed as a technology of government and the

research questions that this thesis aims to address are outlined. This paves the way for Chapter 4 and a discussion of the methodological implications for the present study.

3.2 Introducing Foucault

Michel Foucault was Professor in the 'History of Systems of Thought' at the College de France in Paris from 1970 until his death in 1984 at the age of 57. Through the ontological break between the modern and the postmodern Foucault's work occupies a position of relative stability when compared to the work of other more controversial postmodern icons, such as Jacques Derrida and his theories of 'deconstruction' (cf: Cooper, 1989). Insofar as the core principles of 'postmodernism' destabilises structuralist notions of 'patterned relationships' (whether in Marxism or functionalism), Foucault's contribution offers both a radical epistemological decentring of truth and knowledge, whilst also offering a 'quasi-structuralist' account of the effects of discourse, knowledge and power on both societies and the subject (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). Though indebted to Saussure (1986) Foucault's work departs radically form structuralism by allocating historical specificity to truth and knowledge. Language, rather than being analysed as a pre-condition of meaningful communication, begins to play a key role in the organisation of the social world according to specific and historical 'regimes of truth'.

Foucault's critique of modernism is significant, yet it is open to a variety of interpretations. His project is characterised in periodic phases through which common themes run. Nevertheless, these themes are not designed to make available a "grand theoretical edifice" (Burrell 1988: 222) in the conventional sense. By way of elucidation a common characteristic of 'Foucauldian' literature is to separate his writings into three main chronological periodisations: (i) the 'early' archaeological period concerned with knowledge and discourse (ii) the 'middle' genealogical period concerned with knowledge and power, and (iii) the 'later' ethical period concerned with the human subject and the contemporary conditions of our freedom (Burrell, 1988; Moss, 1998). It is not possible to comprehensively review Foucault's oeuvre in full here. Rather, the purpose of this chapter is to review and discuss his work in relation to its reception and influence upon 'Foucauldian' studies in the field of OMS.

It is generally accepted that Foucault's so-called middle period of writing (Foucault, 1977; Foucault, 1978b) has been adopted most enthusiastically in the field of OMS.

Nevertheless, it is also argued that this constitutes a selective appropriation of his work in the field, and his early and later contributions have much more to offer (Knights, 2002; Barratt, 2008; Munro, 2012). The present study seeks to build on these arguments, particularly in regard to work building on the 'later' period of work and how the concept of 'government' and 'governmentality' can offer a unique and fresh perspective to Foucauldian studies in OMS (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b). However, first, and in order to outline foundational characteristics of 'Foucauldian' work, Foucault's 'archaeological' and 'genealogical' approaches are summarised below. Thereafter, two of his power/knowledge configurations most relevant to his adoption in OMS in disciplinary power and bio-power are summarised. In the next section we will go on to discuss how these concepts and methods have been adopted, received and debated in the field of OMS.

3.2.1 Archaeology and Discourse

In general Foucault's writings shifted over time from the 'archaeology' of knowledge and discourse to the 'genealogy' of knowledge and power. As Dreyfus and Rabinow note (1982: 104-108) there is no pre- and post-archaeology or genealogy in Foucault, yet there are clear shifts in emphasis. Despite Foucault's objection at being categorised as 'a structuralist', his early archaeological books in The Order of Things (1970), and The Archaeology of Knowledge (1972) constitute works of a 'type' of structuralism (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 52-55). Nevertheless, more so than the meanings of representations, Foucault was concerned with the representation of knowledge and the historical context in which such representations are given form. In archaeology, Foucault was concerned to understand radical and sudden transformations in scientific knowledge, which he had seen in the construction of madness and in the growth of psychiatry (1965; 1976). He examined 'rules of formation' and 'regimes of truth' through which scientific knowledge had advanced. He argued that the historical, social and philosophical consistencies that formed the human sciences had generally escaped the conscious mind of the scientist. This supposition outlined Foucault's principal focus at this point as the production of knowledge and truth through discourse. A methodological summation in The Archaeology of Knowledge (1972) sought to constitute and 'archive' discrete systems of discourse through which concepts such as 'sanity' and 'knowledge' were perceived, classified and disseminated. By unearthing and identifying commonalties among discontinuous historical discourses, Foucault's stress was on the transition to modernism. This transition, he argued, had served to

constitute human beings as objects of science, "when man [sic] constituted himself in Western culture as that by which must be conceived of and that which is to be known" (Foucault, 1972: 345).

In 'archaeology' the autonomy of discourse is prioritised to such a degree that the knowing subject disappears, and human beings are considered as mere objects. Truth is regarded as the production of statements and their regulation, located in detached systems of 'discourse' which are independent of the conscious speaker (Burrell, 1988). As in structuralism, it is not a question of who speaks, but of what is spoken. Discourse governs the way in which a subject matter can be talked about and reasoned about meaningfully. Nevertheless, since all social practices require meaning, and meanings shape how we conduct ourselves, all social practices have a discursive quality (Hall, 1997: 44-64). In this sense discourse is much more than a linguistic concept. It seeks to overcome the traditional distinction between what one says and what one does by connecting language and practice. Discourses produce their own 'truth effects' by enlarging a view of the world within which problems are not only defined but also within which they are solved. They are always rooted in social practices that serve to reproduce ways of seeing as 'truth effects' of that discourse (Clegg, 1989: 153-159). Since a given discourse outlines a state of knowledge at any one time (termed as 'episteme' in Foucault's archaeology), it will appear across a range of texts, as forms of conduct, and at institutional sites. When such discursive events point to the same object, such as a corporate or political strategy, then Foucault suggests that they belong to the same 'discursive formation' (Hall, 1997: 44-64). Foucault's earlier archaeological works, then, emphasise an overriding concern with discursive and literary forms as they relate to the human sciences.

3.2.2 Genealogy

As Burrell (1988) notes, Foucault gradually grew dissatisfied with his 'archaeological' method and turned increasingly towards the non-discursive realm. In particular, he grew more concerned with the issue of power from the perspective of 'genealogy'. In his 'middle' period of writing Foucault maintained key aspects of his earlier archaeological method: a commitment to refuting totalising images of history, to a vision of discontinuity in social change, and to decentring the subject through questioning the idea of human progress and enlightenment. In archaeology Foucault had already argued that the distribution of the effects of power in scientific statements

was important. Nevertheless, he had not yet wholly recognised 'discursive regimes' in terms of power relations, strategies, struggles and tactics (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 79-99). Foucault increasingly argued that the point of reference should not solely be the autonomous discourses which outline 'regimes of truth', but instead the hazardous realities and power relations which frame 'discursive regimes', what he called 'strategic developments, relations of force, and tactics' (Hall, 1997: 44-48). As he stated, "The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of language: relations of power, not relations of meaning" (Foucault, 1972-1977: 56).

In genealogy Foucault no longer claimed to speak from a location of phenomenological detachment and instead adopted a more general interpretive analytics of what may form, restrict and institutionalise discursive formations according to specific historical power/knowledge configurations. Pre-modern sovereign power was a discontinuous and forgetful form of power, exhibited in spectacular public displays of torture and execution (Foucault, 1977). It was a power uncoupled from knowledge, a power which did not require the construction of knowledge. Foucault moved beyond this notion of power derived from sovereignty that envisions particular individuals or groups to hold or 'possess' power. He argued that power in the modern era is unthinkable without the construction of knowledge, of populations, workers, the unhealthy or the deviants. He argued that modern power, in effect, serves to construct human beings as calculable subjects (Foucault, 1982). Power is not a commodity or a possession. Rather it is the spread and functioning of political technologies throughout the social body. It does not reside in things, but in a network of relationships which are systemically interrelated. It is always shifting, enabling and constraining, and expressed in networks and alliances embedded within the ontological foundations of modern institutions. In avoiding essentialising power, Foucault argued that power forms as a kind of consistency in social relations, making possible systems of shared 'intelligibility' (Burrell, 1988). As he stated;

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really think we would be brought up to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse (Foucault, 1972-1977: 61).

Foucault's genealogical perspective was heavily influenced by his readings of Nietzsche (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 108-112). For both Nietzsche and Foucault, objectivity masks subjective motivations. Ideals of truth and beauty, our bodies, and even our feelings, are considered only to be comforting illusions of identity, firmness and solidity. The genealogist must seek out what we tend to feel is without history. History is not the progress of universal reason, but the play of rituals of power. Accidents and lies are considered to be the markers of historical transformations, which are hidden behind the high sounding stories of the enlightenment and progression (Burrell, 1988). As we will expand upon in Chapter 4, genealogy charts a history which is quite different to teleological history, insofar as it considers the present to be the accidental production of a contingent past (Brown, 1998). Rather than origins, hidden meanings and explicit intentionality, genealogy reveals the present as a 'consequence' of an entangled, accidental and complex history, fraught with haphazard conflicts and unrelated events. As Foucault noted, "[genealogy] disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself." (Foucault, 1971: 95). Genealogy does not seek to excavate underlying 'regimes of truth' as in archaeology, but instead seeks to map out what is most superficial. Interpretation does not reveal hidden meanings or any essential nature of being, because interpretations have been fashioned and imposed by other people (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 112-125). In genealogy, then, reality does not cover up underlying essences, reality is as it appears. As Foucault stated;

> Whereas the interpreter is obliged to go to the depth of things, like an excavator, the moment of interpretation [genealogy] is like an overview, from higher and higher up, which allows the depths to be laid out in front of him in a more and more profound visibility; depth is resituated as an absolutely superficial secret (Foucault, quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 106-107)

Genealogy is most concerned with locating traces of the present in the past, and not with the reconstruction of the past as an object in itself (Burrell, 1988). This perspective insists that philosophy must recognise humans as historical beings in order to work towards a 'history of the present'. It asks: Who are we? What is the nature of our time? And what kind of subjects has this time made of us? (Brown, 1998). In contrast to archaeology the genealogist is not a detached observer, but instead speaks from 'inside' the ontological constructions of that which is to be analysed. As Brown notes;

> The point is to grasp ourselves as 'ill' in some way that exceeds the symptom without pretending to an objective standpoint or even one external to the discourse in which the illness transpires, and without subscribing to notions of root or foundational causes (Brown, 1998: 39)

Genealogy assumes that epochs come to recognise themselves in notions such as moral goodness, sexual liberation and freedom. The genealogist asks not only whether such stories are 'actually true', but more importantly what 'technologies' of power each 'truth' serves, what it conceals, and perhaps most importantly, what it produces (Brown, 1998).

We now turn our attention to two of Foucault's 'middle' period genealogies in discipline and bio-power. These two works, most of all 'Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison' (Foucault, 1977), have been adopted most enthusiastically in OMS. Thus, in the next section we will consider their adoption and influence in the field of OMS.

3.3 The Genealogy of Discipline

The relationship between power and knowledge is analysed in Foucault's seminal book 'Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Modern Prison' (1977). In this analysis power achieves its tactical effects through its disciplinary character. Foucault argues that disciplinary power is a type of power which dispersed during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, serving to organise bodies in space. In contrast to sovereign power, disciplinary power diffused through instrumentation, techniques, procedures, levels of application and targets, operating to tactically obtain the exercise of power over others as docile bodies. Through the veridical discourses of the human sciences this power/knowledge configuration outlines 'technologies' which supply comprehensive knowledge on conduct, thus enabling "the disciplinary question of the normal and the abnormal" (Foucault, 1977: 216). In disciplinary regimes power becomes more anonymous and functional than sovereign power. Disciplines serve to 'normalise' subjects by referencing a 'norm' from which deviations are calculated. Individualisation becomes widespread when techniques of measurement and calculation serve to formulate an anatomy of the body. As Foucault noted;

> Its [disciplinary power] aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits (1977: 143).

In Discipline and Punish Foucault viewed this power and knowledge configuration as having the effect of enhancing the 'calculability' of individuals in disciplinary regimes (Foucault, 1977: 184-194). Due to the possibility of an 'economy of power' in extending technologies of disciplinary power, the disciplines diffused into institutional sites outside of the prison, thus replacing "levying violence" with "overall methods known as timetables, collective training, exercises" (Foucault, 1977: 220). A disciplinary society for Foucault is one which is born out of broad historical processes of economic, jurisdictional, political and scientific change that constitute its proliferation.

As an 'ideal-typical' disciplinary technology Foucault highlights Bentham's architectural design of the Panopticon prison. He sees methods of surveillance, assessment and monitoring as effective tools for the control and correction of conduct among prisoners. The Panopticon design consists of a centrally elevated watchtower. From this centralised point of inspection circular cells are arranged, individually separated and thus "radiating like spokes from the hub of a wheel to its rim" (Clegg, 1989: 173). The design allows one observer, all-seeing but unseen in the tower, to survey "perfectly individualized and constantly visible" (Foucault, 1977: 200) inmates. By reversing the principle of the dungeon in which prisoners are hidden and deprived of light, full visibility and lighting provides an effective trap. The key effect is that visibility ensures the automatic functioning of power, permanent in its effects but not necessarily so in action. As Foucault noted, "the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary" (1977: 201). The design suggests that it is possible to create and maintain a power relation independent of the person who exercises it. No prisoner can be certain whether they are being observed or not. The knowledge of surveillance in itself is constant in its power effects. Inmates are thus "caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers" (Foucault, 1977: 201). The historical failure of the prison design as an excessively expensive proposition is not of importance to the argument. Rather, the Panopticon is a metaphor for the role that disciplinary power plays in modern societies. The example suggests

that subjection is realised through a fictitious relation where force is unnecessary and disciplinary power becomes automatic. Indeed, surveillance of this kind means that subjects are encouraged to survey themselves. As Clegg (1989) notes, "power, rather than occasionally imposing itself on the subjectivity of its subjects, now in its actual exercise must be ever constitutive of the subjectivity of the agents of power relations" (Clegg, 1989: 174). 'Discipline' therefore, is a form of surveillance that serves to normalise and individualise subjects by transforming and observing within an economy of means.

3.4 The Geneology of Bio-Power

> It is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility (Foucault, 1978b: 142)

The relationship between power and knowledge takes a different form in Foucault's analysis of 'bio-power', first appearing in The History of Sexuality: Volume One (1978b). Foucault identified technologies of bio-power as emergent in the conditions produced by the social sciences during the middle period of the seventeenth century, later paving the way for the dominance of bio-power in Western countries in the nineteenth century. Empirical knowledge gained through statistical, demographic and epidemiological means outlined new understandings of populations, which served to constitute knowledge in the context of administration (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 133-142). The development of bio-power correlates with a period in history when death was no longer tormenting life so directly. Thus, its development correlates with a time through which knowledge about human survival provided a level of control over life itself (Foucault, 1978b: 140-145). It follows that in bio-power the notion of population is not simply about a collection of human beings, but instead a living entity and a particular objective reality through which subjects can gain knowledge of themselves (Dean, 1999: 106-108). One can know about the historical development of the population, such as marriage customs, the price of labour, and the happiness of the working population, which are not constituted by political institutions (Dean, 1999: 106-112). Consequently, bio-power also forms as a political rationality through which the growth and care of populations becomes a central concern of the state. Bio-power means that life itself, in activities, work, joys and miseries, can become politically useful. Welfare and survival no longer function as virtues of the individual or the group,

but instead are formulated as potential strengths of the state. Power is no longer constrained by the bounds of nature and theology, and the modern individual emerges as a new object of political and scientific concern. The growth of bio-power denotes that human needs are no longer considered as ends in themselves, but are instead conceptualised in empirical and instrumental terms as a means to increase state power (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 138-142). Consequently, bio-power is technology of 'normalisation' through which life itself becomes the focus (Foucault, 1978b).

In The History of Sexuality: Volume One (1978b) Foucault argues that sexuality became an instrument in the spread of bio-power in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The empirical exploration of prostitution, population statistics and the spread of disease meant that sex became something that was to be managed and administered. Throughout this period there was a dramatic rise in dialogue, writing and thinking about sex. Under bio-power sex became an issue between the state and the individual, and administrators began to introduce procedures for intervention in the sexual life of the population. A dramatic discursive shift recast sex in medical terms, and 'sexuality' became an integral matter of personal identity. Within the discourse of sexuality individuals were considered to be susceptible to pathological processes, hidden private pleasures, secret fantasies and sexual practices that were confessed to doctors and psychiatrists in order to understand the secrets of one's own body and mind. As Dreyfus and Rabinow note, "once a diagnosis of perversion was scientifically established, corrective technologies, for the good of the individual and society, could and must be applied" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 178). The truth effect of the discourse of sexuality suggested that a failure to observe and monitor one's sexuality could lead to a decline in health for the family or the social body. Thus the machinery of bio-power gave sexuality an analytical, visible and permanent reality through which classification and normalisation was measured.

A primary method by which the discourse of sexuality regulated subjects was through technologies of confession, implicit in medical examinations. As Foucault argued;

> The nineteenth century altered the scope of the confession; it tended no longer to be concerned solely with what the subject wished to hide, but with what was hidden from himself, being incapable of coming to light except gradually and through the labour of a confession in which the questioner and the questioned each had a part to play (1978b: 66).

This mode of confession meant that intervention began to take a therapeutic form. Between the one who spoke unknowingly, and the one who through a hermeneutic function deciphered and verified the account, normalisation was achieved through a process of interpretation (Foucault, 1978b: 66-70). The growth of scientific methods meant that the individual became an object of knowledge, an object who also learns how to effect changes on him or herself (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 174-177). An important difference from technologies of 'discipline', in which authority effects changes upon docile bodies, is that the interpretive sciences required that subjects must talk. Subjectifying techniques are required to interpret and make sense of confessions, rather than the objectifying set of procedures described in Discipline and Punish. As Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) argue, interpretation and the modern subject thus imply each other.

Part of the power of the interpretative sciences is the claim to disclose the truth about psyches, culture and society, which can only be understood in full by experts. Implicit in the functioning of this technology is the conviction that, with the help of experts, one can tell the truth about oneself. Self-examination thus becomes an important factor in a strategy of power. It is naturalised and compelling, and connects technologies of power with technologies of the self. As Foucault notes, "From this interplay there has evolved over several centuries, a knowledge of the subject; a knowledge not so much of his form, but of what divides him, determines him perhaps, but above all causes him to be ignorant of himself" (Foucault, 1978b: 77). Whilst bio-power afforded a more generalised and global view of power, Foucault sought to expand his vision of power further through his genealogical analysis of the problem of 'government' discussed later in this chapter. However, first, we now turn our attention to the reception of Foucault's 'middle' period in OMS.

3.5 Foucault's 'middle' period and its adoption in OMS

In the field of OMS 'Foucauldianism' has been most readily associated with the theoretical contributions from Foucault's 'middle' genealogical period, drawing from the work of Discipline and Punish and the History of Sexuality: Volume One (Foucault, 1977; Foucault, 1978b). As Knights (2002) argues, it is not surprising that organisation theorists highlight this period, since Foucault focused on power and discipline within organisations such as prisons, schools, and factories (Foucault, 1977). Nevertheless,

this has served to legitimise common sense notions of concrete organisations with distinct and clear-cut boundaries (Knights, 2002). Furthermore, the power/knowledge configuration of discipline has tended to obscure alternative perspectives on power and the subject. Following this, there is reason to argue that 'Foucauldianism' in OMS has been highly selective of Foucault's work, which, perhaps unintentionally, has created a misrepresentation of his contribution (McKinlay and Taylor, 1998; Barratt, 2008). In order to address this issue, the following section aims to review the adoption of Foucault's 'middle' period of writing in OMS. First, it outlines Foucauldian work that draws inspiration principally from the panopticon metaphor. Second, the eminent work of Knights and Willmott is discussed as a more encompassing approach which attempts to incorporate subjectivity and resistance in a broad 'Foucauldian' vision. In this section we also discuss important Foucauldian studies of Project Management, before moving on to the next section on Foucault's 'later' writings on 'government' and 'governmentality'.

3.5.1 Panopticism and Control

With the introduction of new forms of information technology, changing market conditions and changing employer-employee relations, the issue of control in modern workplaces has been a concern for Foucauldian scholars (cf: Barker, 1993; Sewell, 1998; Hodgson, 2002; Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006). In general this work has sought to respond to a new politics of production that goes beyond direct control and the corporate welfarism of Fordism to conceive of workers as active participants in workplace regimes, often complicit in their own subjugation (cf: Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992b). The language of corporate unitarism rejects managerial bureaucracy, and instead extols teamworking, flexibility, quality and organisational innovation (Deetz, 1998). Whilst Taylorism sought to impose an unchanging pattern of physical movement from above, flexible and team-based managerial regimes aim to reform employee attitudes through monitoring, decentralisation and 'responsible' autonomy (Barker, 1993). Through utilising the localised self-managing skills of workers, organisational design fixes its gaze upon individuals to instil production and performance norms. The rhetoric of the 'post-bureaucratic' organisation thus suggests a transformation from the organisation of human beings to the organisation of information technology. Nevertheless, the ideal of a utopian form of organisation through 'total connectivity' is paradoxical, since the individual employee becomes more important yet also more isolated than ever before. The 'post-bureaucratic' organisational form

illustrates contemporary capitalism's tendency to utilise technology in order to mechanise organisational objectives 'behind the scenes'. The result is that economic organisation becomes naturalised and individualised through the orchestration of sophisticated forms of knowledge and information (Nohria and Berkley, 1994).

In one thread of Foucauldian work managerial control effected through new-fangled managerial technologies such as 'Just-In-Time' (JIT) and 'Total Quality Management' (TQM) has been portrayed rather deterministically (Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992b; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992a; Barker, 1993; Sewell, 1998). These managerial practices are designed to boost efficiency and isolate idle human resources through surveillance and monitoring. TQM operates by utilising sophisticated forms of information technology for the electronic surveillance of individual performance. It also promotes teamworking arrangements in which peers are expected to review each other's performance. Studies have depicted new forms of 'virtual organisation' as mechanisms for control which function by making subjects more visible, accountable and individualised in time and space. In the work of Sewell and Wilkinson (1992b; 1992a; 1998), the theoretical premise of the panopticon metaphor has been adopted in order to theorise the impact of JIT and TQM. The electronic monitoring of self-contained individual activities amounts to a surveillance system that delegates responsibility to teams (1992b). Sewell and Wilkinson (1992b) argue that such a 'superstructure' mirrors Foucault's panopticon in an electronic form, representing a disciplinary matrix as an "electronic panopticon" (1992b: 283). Through this electronic matrix, TQM is said to overcome the constraints of architecture and space, bringing the disciplinary 'gaze' to bear at the heart of the labour process. This, it is argued, means that the solitary confinement of Frederick Taylor's scientific management is replaced with the benefits of the open prison, among teams, where discipline is supposedly 'ensured'. Nevertheless, this conclusion suggests an almost totalitarian regime of control, focussing on matters of organisational design, with little consideration of thinking actors or workplace cultures among those in receipt of the TQM system.

In another study Sewell (1998) argues that peer review regimes extend the effects of the 'electronic panopticon'. Whilst the electronic panopticon serves as a form of 'vertical' surveillance, peer review provides an additional form of control as 'horizontal' surveillance. Peer review is assumed to assert its primary controlling effect by identifying good workers and normalising a team's activities according to the

performance levels of its most productive member. Sewell (1998) argues that this form of control complements the 'vertical' control of electronic surveillance, and when combined together, an all-encompassing disciplinary matrix of 'chimera control' is formed. Sewell (1998) argues that panopticism in this case represents only the 'desire' to capture all knowledge of a subject by subsuming individuals under a "totalising instrumental rationalism" (1998: 424). Thus, the conception of disciplinary power that Sewell presents does not account for the possibility of contestation or subversion among subjects, and the ways in which they may respond, relate to, or distance themselves from the implementation of the new organisational regime.

Barker (1993) investigated the effects of a transition from a traditional manufacturing structure to self-managing teams in a US manufacturing company. Over time self-managing teams began to create their own powerful sets of rational rules, which Barker (1993) suggests led team member's to invest their dignity in a submission to authority. In developing their own disciplines, teams aimed to work effectively, and formed a naturalised locus of authority among themselves. According to Barker (1993) 'concertive control' is a powerful combination of rational rules and peer pressure applied in team locales. Within these locales team members are ostensibly forced into identifying with team values. Barker (1993) argues that concertive control constitutes a new, subtle, and more powerful form of organisational control, suggesting that "the powerful combination of peer pressure and rational rules in the concertive system creates a new iron cage whose bars are almost invisible to the workers it incarcerates" (Barker, 1993: 435). He draws from a universal Weberian conception of rationality as that which is making organizational life "increasingly rationalized and controlled" (1993: 435). The capacities of subjects to act within these relations of power and meaning are downplayed. Furthermore, rationality is understood in direct relation to action, rather than in regard to a diversity of 'rationalities' that outline the discursive and practical conditions of action (see 'governmentality' section below).

As McKinlay and Taylor (1998) argue, by adopting Foucault's concept of panopticism to assess organisational control there is a danger in depicting organisational life as an authoritarian dystopia. By portraying omniscient surveillance in the workplace the contested dynamics of power, knowledge and authority are downplayed. Indeed, the argument put forward by Sewell and Wilkinson (1992b, 1998) is deterministic to the extent that the expansion of disciplinary power effectively rules out any active and

thinking subject. In part, this approach extends from Foucault's own work in Discipline and Punish (1977) and the techniques of bodily inspection. Nevertheless, in doing so these authors pay little attention to the subjective aspects of new organisational techniques. By drawing primarily from one part of Foucault's oeuvre, Sewell, Wilkinson and Barker produce a deterministic analysis of emerging workplace regimes.

3.5.2 Resisting Discipline?

As Deetz (1998) argues, Foucault's own analysis focused on key historical transformations, and despite his concern for micro-empirical events, his empirical discussions tended to be illustrative rather than demonstrative. This explains why adapting his 'method' to organisational case studies has been fraught with problems, of which only some are detailed above. Foucault's approach to power and resistance is considered to be fuzzy and amorphous with respect to organisational analysis. In particular, there has been a difficulty in relating Foucauldianism to neo-Marxist labour process theory, which has emphasised (historically) the potential for autonomous human subjects to resist oppressive objective structures (Knights and Vurdubaskis, 1994). It is important to remember that Foucault did not advocate one distinct conception or theory of power. Rather, his objective was more modest than this. He sought to chart a series of histories of particular power/knowledge couplings, of which disciplinary power was only one, albeit a very important one (Foucault, 1977).

McKinlay and Taylor (1998) critique deterministic Foucauldian approaches in their study of an American multinational consumer electronics manufacturer. They argue that concepts such as 'concertive control' and 'self-subordination' seriously overstate the scope of corporate teamwork ideologies. Secondly, they suggest that Foucault's approach to power is best understood as a tautology rather than a theory, implying that the dynamic of power/knowledge and resistance are matters for empirical investigation. They examined the implementation of a radical form of teamworking and peer review in a new 'factory of the future', constructed with a view to wrestling back market share from Japanese competitors. Peer review was administered not by supervisors, but by line workers, who would rate each other on a variety of technical, task and behavioural scales. The system required that colleagues exercise a normalising gaze upon each other and themselves, in which management played no visible role. McKinlay and Taylor (1998) illustrate that the technique serves not only to expose workers to

disciplinary power/knowledge, but that it also contributed to its construction. As they note;

> The very act of interrogating the performance of three individuals relative to the rest of the team and factory norms was in itself a form a discipline, a public reminder of laudable and unacceptable behaviours (1998: 182).

Given the absence of traditional supervisors the team itself was transformed into a critical disciplinary device. This, they suggest, served to effect peer review as a collective disciplinary process that increased each individual's regulation of the self. As they note;

> Peer review incorporated testimony, testing, observation and confession – the elements Foucault analyses as constituting modern Western techniques for producing truth (1998: 183).

Nevertheless, despite embracing this form of control positively initially, over time the workforce grew hostile towards peer review and confronted it as a disciplinary device. Paradoxically, an important factor in collective resistance was the visibility and public nature of the peer scoring system. The disciplinary intent of peer review was inverted by isolating not deviants, but the corporate culture's strongest enthusiasts. Furthermore, workers collectively engaged in passive resistance by tacitly scoring each other close to the mean. This served to deprive the system of any way in which to identify deviant workers.

McKinlay and Taylor's (1998) study illustrates that even in the most favourable settings for corporate colonisation, managerial attempts to 'control' workers are inherently political and resistance emerges in novel ways. The power/knowledge configuration that they portray is 'discipline'. Nevertheless, by analysing the interpretative process of peer review they go beyond conceptualisations of docile bodies and invoke the concept of confessional technologies of the self as discussed in Foucault's The History of Sexuality: Volume One (1978b). The concept of bio-power is not invoked, however, and given the extent to which the interpretative technology of peer review was undermined through resistance, the implicit suggestion is that peer review (as a

technology of the self) did not have a normalising effect on subjects. In other words, the peer review system was not regarded as legitimate 'self' knowledge by workers.

McKinlay and Taylor (1998) only touch upon the concept of technologies of the self by aligning it with the 'discipline' power/knowledge configuration. In The History of Sexuality: Volume One (1978b) Foucault invokes bio-power as a power/knowledge configuration that has significant potential for subjectification and normalisation through specific knowledges, discussed in the discourse of sexuality. Nevertheless, the interpretive power of the peer review system did not advance a sufficient power/knowledge configuration so as to render workers ignorant of themselves. As McKinlay and Taylor (1998) argue, technologies of the self are most effective when they are intimately tied to forms of power which are less explicit, and expressed in more superficial understandings. Indeed, this is in part the appeal of Foucault's later work on technologies of the self in that, "moral codes should not be understood merely as an expression of discipline geared to constraint" (1998: 235). As we will go on to discuss, in 'government' a more expansive and 'productive' view on power can expand understanding of practices beyond that of discipline and constraint. First, however, the chapter turns to the work of OMS scholars who have addressed issues of power, identity and insecurity by adopting a broad Foucauldian approach to work organisation.

3.5.3 Subjectivity, Identity and Ethnography

In the field of OMS it is impossible to ignore the work of David Knights and Hugh Willmott and their colleagues, who have made a significant and pre-eminent contribution to the field (Knights and Willmott, 1989; Willmott, 1997; Knights and Willmott, 1999). Their work typically draws on a Foucauldian triad of power, knowledge and subjectivity, deployed to explore the dynamics of power and resistance through ethnographic enquiry (Knights and McCabe, 1997; Knights and McCabe, 2000a). In particular, their work provides empirical evidence of how an analysis of subjectivity can enhance our understanding of process, contradiction and resistance in work organisation. Drawing on Foucault they argue that modern technologies of power subjugate by forcing individuals back on themselves, meaning that subjects become tied to their own 'self-knowledge'. They consider such self-knowledge as having the effect of confirming malleable 'identities' through organisational processes (Knights and Willmott, 1989). Subjugation occurs when the 'freedom' of a subject is directed

narrowly towards participation in practices which provide the individual with a sense of security and belonging.

Newton (1998) queries this conception of subjectivity, arguing that it relies on an underlying assumption of insecurity. He argues that this conceptualisation is dependent upon modern discourse (cf: Giddens, 1991) in making an implicit assumption about the fragility of the self. Nevertheless, for Knights and Willmott (1989) this assumption is based upon the understanding that technologies of power in contemporary capitalism serve to individualise subjects. Consequently, subjects at work find themselves in competition which each other. Knights and Willmott deploy the notion of insecurity as a temporary heuristic device to illuminate the space in which identities are contested. Their approach entails that power, identity and insecurity are dialectically interconnected. Their goal has not been to carry out a genealogical analysis of the subject, but rather to adopt Foucault amongst other approaches (such as Marxist labour process theory) to expose inequality, power and identity in work organisation. Their aim has been to illustrate complex power relations and modes of contestation while demystifying more deterministic accounts of workplace control. As they note;

> The unintended consequence of surveillance and normalising practices is to individualise subjects in a way which renders them more dependent on, yet increasingly insecure about, meeting the standard of institutionalised judgements. . .individualised subjects find themselves in competition with each other for the scarce rewards of social recognitions meted out by mechanisms of evaluation and judgement (1989: 551).

The work undertaken by Knights and McCabe (2000b; 2003) investigates the effects of teamworking regimes in the workplace. However, they depart from the studies of Sewell (1998) and Barker (1993) in placing a greater emphasis on the subjectivity of employees and the complexity of power relations. Through their investigation of the implementation of TQM in a major UK retail bank (1999) management's claim to empower employees and flatten hierarchies did not relate to TQM's effect in practice. The existing hierarchal organisational framework was not challenged by the TQM technology, but rather was enhanced through it. TQM was normalised to the degree that any failure of outcomes was defined not as a problem of design or principle, but as one of implementation. As a neutral depoliticised language of science, Knights and

McCabe (1999) argue that TQM framed existing organisational problems within its own logic.

In their ethnographic study of teamworking in an automobile company Knights and McCabe (2000b) contrast their findings to Barker's (1993) 'concertive control'. Factors such as redundancy, outsourcing, and trade unionism, contribute towards team members abstaining from practicing disciplinary peer evaluations upon one another. Employees disliked explicit attempts by management to impose corporate goals through teamworking. Nevertheless, they also recognised that within limits, flexibility was necessary. As Knights and McCabe state:

> Although an outright rejection of teamworking was rare, the transformation of subjectivity through its auspices opened up spaces for resistance just as it does for demonstrating commitment…teamworking may be far from the workplace panacea that is often claimed for it by consultants and management gurus; it may actually be a stimulant to the mobilization of intensified resistance (2000b: 1512)

By undertaking ethnographic enquiry Knights, Willmott and McCabe illustrate that the historical constitution of subjectivity can illuminate a more complex perspective on power relations at work. Managerial technologies are exposed as having quite different effects in practice to what they may have been designed for in theory. The space that lies between positive technical/scientific representations and the subjectivity which makes them possible is exposed (Knights, 2002). They contend that organisation theorists have focussed too heavily on the most popular of Foucault's output in Discipline and Punish (Knights and Willmott, 1989; Knights, 2002; Knights and McCabe, 2003). Nevertheless, Knights and Willmott illustrate that power in organisations is sustained through an ongoing practical accomplishment through which individuals and groups act, often in contestation, to create organisational reality. In privileging the subjective moment, Knights and Willmott remind us that organisations do not have dynamics or laws which operate independently to the reflexive practices of subjects.

3.5.4 'Middle period' Foucauldian Approaches to Project Management

In a similar fashion to the analysis of teamwork, TQM and JIT, Foucault's 'middle' period of writing has played a significant role in studies of Project Management (PM). As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, PM is envisioned within the rhetoric of 'post-

bureaucracy', considered as an important technical architecture in the transformation to 'network organisation' and 'flexibility' (Hodgson, 2004). In practice, PM serves as an administrative methodology and a set of techniques for managing employees and contractors involved with irregular assignments, with an objective to apply structure to complex and discontinuous tasks. Scholars have critiqued PM primarily as a disciplinary technology, adopting Foucault's insight as a means to invoke visions of management control, constraint and individualisation, both in regard to its technical rationalities and through the discursive promotion of PM as a 'pseudo-profession'.

The work of Hodgson (2002), Raisanen and Linde (2004) Lingren and Packendorff (2006) and Thomas (2006) are a few examples of literature that problematises project management (PM) as having significant disciplinary effects on the individuals, groups and organisations who adopt it. In these studies PM is envisioned as a managerial technology which attempts to rationalise and normalise that which is not normal by increasing the calculability and visibility of both work tasks and individuals (Thomas, 2006). 'Discipline' is adopted to invoke images of rigidity and control, whilst also describing productive aspects of disciplinary power that direct project managers away from insecurity and uncertainty towards comfort amidst complexity (Hodgson, 2002; Raisanen and Linde, 2004). PM is depicted for the most part as a constraining technical rationalisation of work tasks which acts to reduce, rather than manage, the ambiguity of organisational work (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006). Prescriptive variants of PM knowledge and practice are considered to detract from the 'true' nature of project work as a potentially adaptive and liberating form of organisation (Thomas, 2006). Therefore, in a simliar fashion to TQM as noted above, it is argued that PM frames its own failures and problems within its own logic. This means that instead of a failure being attributed to the project itself, failure is attributed to the incorrect implementation of PM methodologies (Cicmil *et al.*, 2009).

In the so-called 'Critical Management Studies' (CMS) school Hodgson (2002; 2004; 2005; 2007) has made the most significant contribution towards investigating PM. He adopts a Foucauldian approach to argue that disciplinary power in project settings has a dual character. First, project work entails explicit practices and techniques of direct surveillance and control. Second, PM as a profession provides an abstract form of knowledge and language that delineates modes of conduct which become etched into the subjectivity of project managers. This, Hodgson (2002) argues, is a form of 'self-

discipline' that is not entirely internalised, but is instead reproduced and enforced through judgements of appropriate conduct and through collective rituals. His insight illuminates PM as an instrumental and technical form of modernist rationality (Hodgson, 2002; 2004; 2005). Furthermore, in adopting a Foucauldian approach he seeks to link professional knowledge and professional identity to the maintenance of appropriate conduct. Like the studies noted above, it is the disciplinary power/knowledge configuration that is invoked. Hodgson (2002) borrows the concept of technologies of the self from The History of Sexuality: Volume One (1978b) and applies it to the disciplinary power/knowledge configuration in the seemingly 'less' subjectifying concept of 'self-discipline'. As he states;

> A Foucauldian understanding of power/knowledge has been adapted here in an attempt to overcome dualistic understandings of how professional knowledge and professional power interrelate through the disciplining of the professional self. Attempts to construct Project Management as a profession are dependent upon its development as a discipline, not only in the sense of a field of objective scientific study but also as a form of training and control (2002: 818)

Hodgson's Foucauldian perspective sheds light upon appropriate forms of knowledge, norms, and conduct in PM. He envisions the PM practice and its discourses of professionalism operating as a disciplinary gaze over subjects who are otherwise undertaking seemingly autonomous professional labour. In this sense he argues that PM affords senior management the space to dispense with a reliance on direct forms of control (Hodgson, 2002). Drawing from the work of Fournier (1999) the disciplinary appeal of PM's professional discourse is emphasised as that which delineates appropriate professional identities and conduct (2002; 2005). His work has also addressed issues of ambivalence, resistance and parody in project work and in regard to the dubious professionalisation of PM in the workplace (2005). He seeks to illuminate the subjective space among those exposed to project management professionalisation in a UK bank and adopts Judith Butler's concept of performativity as a complementary addition to a Foucauldian perspective, in order to "flesh out Foucault's post-humanist mode of subjection and resistance" (2005: 65). In this sense Butler's concept of performativity offers a more refined understanding of agency and the complexity of power relations. As he states;

> [Butler's performativity] helps to counter the interpretations of Foucauldian work that, intentionally or unintentionally, obscure or even erase the possibility of effective resistance from the intellectual landscape (2005: 65)

Hodgson adopts Butler's theory of performativity to develop a more sophisticated and processual understanding of agency, arguing that it offers a view of subjection which is temporal, focused on process, and contextually dependent. Hodgson is thus addressing the problem of agency commonly discussed in 'Foucauldian' OMS studies (Newton, 1998) by adopting an alternative theory in Butler that "breaks down realist distinctions between discourse and action through a palpable sense of the constitutive power of discourse" (2005: 65). The present study shares Hodgson's concerns. However, rather than seeking to build on interpretations of 'Foucauldianism' in the field of OMS, it is argued here that work building on Foucault's 'later' period of writing can elucidate a more sophisticated and constitutive take on discourse, and the problems of agency, resistance and subjectivity in contemporary work organisation. With this in mind the chapter now turns to Foucault's concept of 'government' and the related concept of 'governmentality'.

3.6 Government and Governmentality

> It is absolutely true that criminals stubbornly resisted the new disciplinary mechanism in the prison; it is absolutely correct that the actual functioning of the prison, in the inherited buildings where they were established and with the governors and guards who administered them, was a witches' brew compared to the beautiful Benthamite machine (Foucault, 1991a: 81)

In 'government' Foucault developed a further vision of modern power established through his genealogical work on 'governmentality' (discussed below). In seeking to create a history through which human beings are made subjects, Foucault following Kant, argued that the role of philosophy was to prevent reason from going beyond the limits of what is given in experience (Foucault, 1982). In this sense, his concern in 'government' was with the relationship between rationalisation and the excesses of political power. His argument was to suggest that power relations have been progressively elaborated and rationalised under the patronage of state institutions. 'Rationality', according to analytics of government, denotes any form of thinking and intelligibility which endeavours to be systematic, clear and explicit about how things are,

or how they ought to be. Secondly, rationality recognises that in order for something to be governed, it must first of all be known (Burchell, 1996).

Recalling sixteenth century connotations, the term 'government' in Foucauldian work refers to a much broader definition than the meaning attributed to it today. It does not refer only to political structures or to the management of states, but also designates the manner in which the conduct of individuals or groups might be directed (Foucault, 1982). Foucault (1982) argued that modern power had adapted not to act directly on others, but instead upon their actions: an action upon an action. The phrase 'the conduct of conduct' can be useful in making sense of this concept. Conduct in 'government' has two meanings. First, to 'conduct' is to lead others (coercively, and in stricter ways), and second, conduct is a way of behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities. As Foucault noted;

> When one defines the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others, when one characterizes these actions by the government of men by other men − in the broadest sense of the term − one includes an important element: freedom (Foucault, 1982: 221)

What separates an analytics of government from that of disciplinary power is the identification of the moral, epistemological and linguistic regularities that make it possible to say and think that certain things are truthful. Concurrently, practices of 'government' are considered as intentional attempts to form conduct in specific ways in relation to certain objectives. To govern is to act upon the action of the governed, suggesting that in order to govern the freedom of the governed is presupposed. Freedom for Foucault is not considered to be in direct confrontation with power. Rather, freedom and power have a much more complicated interplay. Indeed, as we will see in this study, 'freedom' can take shape as the very condition for the exercise of power (Rose, 1999).

Freedom for Foucault is not escape, but rather emerges from an ability to participate purposefully in power relations. Individual freedom is therefore a technical condition of governmental rationality rather than the value of a Utopian dream. Government in this sense is a manner of doing things, or even an art, which acts on the action of individuals, received singularly or collectively, thus shaping, guiding, or correcting the ways in which individuals or groups conduct and address themselves (Burchell, 1996).

'Government' is concerned with delineating the spaces of personhood, character, attitudes and capacities among the governed. Technologies of government attempt to shape and mobilise the choices, desires, needs and wants of individuals and groups by effecting self-governing technologies of the self. This perspective thus allows for a connection between questions of politics, government and administration and questions concerning bodies, lives and selves.

Government as 'the conduct of conduct' encompasses issues of morality and ethics in the idea of 'self-government' (Dean, 1999). Self-government implies that the 'governor' and the 'governed' are two aspects of the same actor, whether that be a human individual or a collective such as a family or an organisation. These forms of reflection are made 'governmental' (rather than philosophical, theoretical or moral) through their ambition to make themselves practical, to connect with practices that aim to give them effect. 'Government' thus assumes a close link between power relations and processes of subjectification. It is a 'contact point' between techniques of domination and techniques of the self, and implies forms of agency, self-direction and self-regulation as being implicit to specific technologies of government (Foucault, 1988b: 19). As Dean (1999) notes,

> The government of the economy and of the unemployed, as much as the government of our own bodies, personalities and inclinations, entails an attempt to affect and shape in some way who and what we are and should be (1999: 12).

Self-government extends to the ways in which an individual may 'problematise' their own conduct as a form of action 'self on self'. As Foucault noted, 'government' in this sense;

> . . .addresses the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself, rapport a soi, which I call ethics, and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions (Foucault, 1983: 352)

3.6.1 Governmentality

In order to arrive at 'government' as a complex form of modern power Foucault analysed the 'problematics of rule' in 'Western' societies over the last three centuries (Gordon, 1991). 'Governmentality' refers to Foucault's genealogical analysis of these problems, and specifically the emergence of a new form of thinking (mentality) about

power and the exercising of power in specific societies (Dean, 1999). Governmentality also refers to the techniques of power through which subjects have become amenable to regulation and intervention. The concept suggests that governing not only involves the ordering of activities and processes, but that governing operates in and through subjects in managing their own existence (Miller and Rose, 1990). 'Rationality' becomes dispersed into a multiplicity of forms, different knowledge formations, and ways of thinking systematically and calculably. Governmentality is a form of 'representation' within a discursive field in which exercising power becomes a process of 'rationalisation' in itself (Lemke, 2001). It refers to the ways in which technologies of government intervene through agencies, legal forms, procedures, and institutions to develop a 'practical consciousness' for their subjects.

As Rose (1996) points out, as 'political rationalities' governmentalities take on moral forms as they concern matters about the appropriate allocation of tasks and the principles to which government ought to be addressed. Secondly, political rationalities constitute specific epistemological qualities, outlining particular conceptions of the objects and subjects to be governed by referencing distinctive idioms and languages. Part of what constitutes a rationality of government is its constant undertaking in giving itself a form of truth to establish an ethical basis for its actions. A political rationality thus serves as a kind of intellectual apparatus for making reality thinkable in such a way that it is agreeable to political programming (Rose, 1996).

As Miller and Rose (1990) suggest, understanding modern 'rule' requires that we investigate not grand political schema, but instead mundane mechanisms which appear to make it possible to govern, in techniques of calculation, computation, professional specialisms and vocabularies. Knowing an object in such a way that it can be governed requires the invention of procedures, specific ways of writing, presenting and calculating, which makes them amenable to intervention and regulation. In this sense studies of governmentality reject the identification of government with the state as a central locus of rule. Instead, the concern is with how power is present in and through 'technologies of government', in the "institutions, procedures, analysis and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power" (Foucault, 1978a: 102). Technologies of government are not matters of state domination, but are instead relations and practices that are aimed at particular objectives through a common governmental rationality. As Rose aptly sums up, an

analytics of government implies that "the 'power of the state' is a resultant, not a cause" (1996: 43).

Studies of governmentality are distinct from studies of policy and governance (cf: Rhodes, 2007), which are concerned with the evaluation of political and administrative agencies, their interests and failures. Rather, the notion of 'government' in the Foucauldian sense draws attention to the diversity and diffusion of 'government' power into a multitude of agencies and techniques, many of which are only loosely associated with formal bodies of the state. In governmentality 'evaluation' is itself internal to the phenomena under investigation. That is to say, how has such a widespread imperative for evaluation come into existence? Governmentality is "programmatic in that it is characterized by an eternal optimism that a domain or a society could be administered better or more effectively, that reality is, in some way or another, programmable" (Miller and Rose, 1990: 4). In order to illustrate how this programmable form of government characterises our present and the themes that the present study aims to address, the following section turns to Foucault's genealogical analysis of the 'problem of government' and the ways in which present day 'governmentalities' were thought into being.

3.6.2 The Early Modern State, Reason of State and Polizewissenschaft

From the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century Foucault argued that 'the problem of government' had surfaced around a set of diverse questions (Foucault, 1978a). The government of oneself, of souls and lives, of pedagogy, and of state, characterised problems posed in an explosion of writing on what he termed as 'the art of government'. These questions were directed towards new questions for 'the common good' of all the population. Foucault argued that sovereignty, rather than ending, had become a greater predicament than ever before (Foucault, 1978a). The notion of economy, previously built around the idea of the family, was identified and aligned with the problem of population. Foucault suggested that the modern state had come to resemble a form of pastoral power, administered for its own sake, for each and all, through a complex array of interventions concerning 'things and men' (Moss, 1998). Under this new form of pastoral power early modern political culture emphasised a profound connection between principles of political action and those of personal conduct. Personal identity was no longer anchored in hereditary status or networks of dependences, but instead aligned with 'reason of state' (Gordon, 1991). In the late

seventeenth century another form of governmentality emerged in the German 'science of police', 'Polizewissenschaft' (Dean, 1999: 89-96). The notion of 'police' at this time was not a police force of uniformed officers whose duty it was to prevent crime. Rather, the term 'police' had more in common with our current understanding of 'policy'. Police power was to gaze upon everything, from the vigilance of the sovereign state to the regulation and supervision of individual conduct (Gordon, 1991). As Gordon notes, "it is possible that never before or since has the activity of government been perceived as so essentially interdependent with the government of the self, on the part of the ruler and ruled alike" (1991: 12).

3.6.3 Liberalism and governing less

There was of course another "great intervening mutation" (Gordon, 1991: 14) that was the subject of Foucault's genealogy of modern governmentalities, that of liberalism. Liberalism can be characterised as a critique of state reason, and suggests that the governed reality is not as transparent or as easily manipulated as 'reason of state' or Polizewissenschaft may assume. A Foucauldian understanding of liberalism is not of an ideology, a theory, or a philosophy of individual freedom. Rather, liberalism constitutes a reflexive and 'rational' way of doing things which functions as a principle form of rationalisation in today's governmental practices (Burchell, 1996). Liberalism abandons the idea of a totally administered society as a megalomaniacal idea (Rose, 1996: 42-48). Subjects are equipped with rights, desires, interests and needs and should not be dictated to by governments (Dean, 1999: 49). Liberalism thus limits the state's capacity to know by respecting sovereign spheres of knowledge that should remain autonomous to political authority. As such these spheres are seen to have influence, knowledge and relations of their own that are intrinsic and dynamic and should be respected (Gordon, 1991). 'Government' thus confronts itself with realities that have their own inherent means of self-regulation. It follows that these 'non-political' and quasi-natural spheres are considered as dependencies for which the well-being of the population depends (Dean, 1999: 50-55). Due to the dynamic nature of dependencies as autonomous processes (in particular, the economy) there is a need to encompass them within "mechanisms of security" (Gordon, 1991: 20). Laissez-Faire denotes a limitation in the exercise of political sovereignty, as well as a positive justification for market freedom. The grounds for this positive justification are rooted in the belief that the state will become richer and more powerful by governing less (Burchell, 1996).

Given the autonomous 'problem space' that liberalism creates, it inherently involves a dichotomy between a need to govern in the interests of order and morality, and a need to restrict government in the interests of liberty and economy. In seeking to govern less liberal mentalities of rule invest hope in subjects to become active in their own government. In the nineteenth century investment in subjects became dependent upon devices such as the family, schooling, asylums and reformatory prisons to produce individuals who can govern, master and care for themselves. In producing these demands, a division between the civilised member of society and those lacking the capacities to exercise citizenship responsibly was fashioned. It is under these conditions that the disciplines began to play a more embedded role in society, by specifying subjects according to 'norms' of civilisation (Burchell, 1996). A 'good' subject under liberalism therefore assumes obligations and makes the most of their existence by conducting their life 'responsibly'. Liberal government thus seeks to carve out a space in order to "establish a set of linkages between a government of subjects active in their own rule and a knowledge of processes necessary to the security of the state" (Dean, 1999: 52).

3.6.4 The 'Governmentalisation' of the State

In the mid to late nineteenth century it was argued that difficulties in maintaining order among the labouring classes designated liberalism as a failed political rationality (Gordon, 1991). This correlated with a new conceptualisation of the 'social' emerging from an accumulation of positive knowledges about populations, in growing cities and towns, including the poor and the unhealthy. Social politics demanded that the problem of government should be posed from a 'social' point of view. The state itself was required by forces outside its direct control to govern its own practices, and assume responsibility in the name of collective security (Rose, 1996). Forms of expert 'government' became tied to the political field in a new way, with an emphasis on the functioning of administrative agencies. Through these agencies the state sought to reduce the risk to individuals and families subjected to irrational economics cycles and ill-fortune (Rose, 1999). The new liberalism of the 'social' inferred that the state had a moral purpose to watch over the value of human life in the face of industrialisation.

By the mid-twentieth century the 'social citizen' was invented, an individual who finds satisfaction among the social relations of the group (Rose, 1996). In order to govern under these new conditions, images of the individual were elaborated within specific

micro-locales (factories, schools, hospitals, prisons) and in relation to specific problematisations of conduct (delinquency, expertise, labour problems). Workplaces were considered in democratic terms as 'social domains' in which industrial problems were cast in terms of group relations, where meanings, happiness, beliefs and attitudes were a concern. In social government expertise provided solutions for rulers who were faced with a sphere of practices that they could not govern through sovereign will, because of a lack of knowledge and capacitates to do so (Rose, 1999).

3.7 Neo-Liberal Governmentality

In the aftermath of the atrocities of The Second War and the National Socialist regime in Germany 'neo-liberal' thought emerged as a radical challenge to the welfare state system. A group of jurists and economists known as the Ordoliberalens (from their involvement in the journal Ordo) sought to construct a post-war liberalism in the new West Germany by inventing a new governmental notion of a market. For the Ordo-liberals the market was not a natural economic reality with intrinsic laws, but instead something that had to be maintained and kept alive through political intervention (Gordon, 1991). Unlike the governmental rationality of classical liberalism, 'neo-liberal' government proposed that the state should not monitor market freedom, but instead the market itself should become the underlying organising principle of the state (Rose, 1999). For the Ordo-liberals the main problem with liberal social politics is not the anti-social effects of the economic market, but instead the anti-competitive effects of society. The Ordo-Liberals foresaw extensive jurisdictional intervention in order to advance the game of enterprise as a pervasive form of conduct. Labour had been transformed into a commodity, and through the welfare state work had been distorted into a meaningless curse. Within a new Vitalpolitik a new culture would defend 'freedom' itself, by enhancing the power of self-actualisation (Gordon, 1991).

A more radical version of 'neo-liberal' thought emerged among a post-war American school of economists centred at the Chicago School (Lemke, 2001). The Chicago School proposed a more radical version of neo-liberalism which would involve a complete reworking of the social as a form of the economic. A key element of the Chicago School's approach was the consistent expansion of the economic form applied to the social field, serving to discount any distinction between them (Lemke, 2001). For

this form of government to operate, an epistemological shift would be necessary in order to considerably expand the objects addressed by the economy. As Gordon notes;

> Economics thus becomes an 'approach' capable in principle of addressing the totality of human behaviour, and, consequently, of envisioning a coherent, purely economic method of programming the totality of governmental action (1991: 43).

What makes the American 'neo-liberal' homo economicus distinct from Adam Smith's homo economicus is that individuals are thought to be manipulable and receptive to their surroundings. Through this departure from classical liberalism the American liberals made a connection between economic government and behaviourism. These thinkers sought to provide an account of labour by adopting the subjective vantage point of the persons doing the work (Burchell, 1996). In theories of human capital, for example, wage labourers not conceived of as employees reliant on an organisation, but are instead envisioned as autonomous entrepreneurs made responsible for their own investments (Weiskopf and Munro, 2012). This encourages the governed to adopt certain entrepreneurial and practical relationships to themselves. As Weiskopf and Munro (2012) illustrate, the concept of 'human capital' "plays a distinctive role as a vehicle for extending the economic grid deeper into the fabric of social relations and for exercising a specific form of power which does not operate through the imposition of social conformity" (2011: 690). Rather it depends, and as we will see in this study, upon the propagation of particular mechanisms that extend economic government into new areas, creating new identities, new responsibilities and new configurations of 'freedom'.

3.7.1 Enterprising selves and the privatisation of risk

As Du Gay (1996) argues 'enterprise' operates as an effective governmental rationality because it does not depend on power as being repressive. Rather, it is precisely the positive, enabling, 'empowering' and seductive aspects of power/knowledge relations that make it effective. An individual's citizenship is manifested through the free exercise of choice among an assortment of options. Programmes of government are evaluated in terms of how they may enhance that choice, and how they may widen a subject's accumulative and individualised potential. Through notions such as learning and development, competency, employability and career, personal choices are

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delineated according to a logic of self-fulfilment and personal gain. Individuals or collectives are then 'offered' to partake in action to resolve issues previously considered to be the responsibility of governmental agencies. This can be understood as a kind of 'responsibilisation', corresponding with new ways in which "the governed are encouraged, freely and rationally, to conduct themselves" (Burchell, 1996: 29).

Government in the neo-liberal sense impinges upon individuals by making governmental rationality the very condition of their active 'freedom'. A related development in this sense concerns the management and privatisation of risk throughout the social body, as individuals are increasingly responsibilised for their own 'rational' economic decisions (Miller and Rose, 2008). In neo-liberalism freedom posits an artificial, constructed freedom which is reliant on the competitive behaviour of economic-rational individuals (Lemke, 2001). Thus, within this frame the social and economic are seen to be antagonistic, and economic government is to be de-socialised in the name of maximising the entrepreneurial capacities of individuals operating in a more competitive labour market. These modes of liberal government, as we will see, are characteristic of the discourses and technologies through which productive subjects are increasingly required to address themselves as individualised economic agents. They are the processes through which professionals are to be transformed into calculating individuals, and through which public servants are to be transformed into enterprising selves.

3.8 'Advanced liberalism' and government at a distance

An inherent paradox in neo-liberalism is that despite posing as a critique of 'too much government', it retains a programmatic approach, in that "the objects of government are rendered thinkable in such a way that their difficulties appear amenable to diagnosis, prescription and cure" (Rose: 1996: 53). Whilst Thatcherism for Rose (1996, 1999) signifies the enactment of neo-liberalism as a political science in the UK (1999: 139), he argues that there has been a more subtle and pervasive change in governmental rationality in the closing two decades of the twentieth century. He terms this diagram as 'advanced liberalism', stating that its strategies "can be observed in national contexts from Finland to Australia, advocated by political regimes from left and right, and in relation to problem domains from crime to health" (1996: 53). For Rose techniques of advanced liberal government create a distance between formal political institutions and

other social actors by conceiving of them as subjects of responsibility. Through the marketisation of the social state a distance has been created between political and expert domains, not by arbitrating between rival claims of different expert groups, but by turning welfare agencies and organisations into consumers of their own expertise.

A significant shift in this respect is that the power once bestowed to positive knowledges of human conduct have shifted to expert calculative regimes of accounting and financial management (Power, 1999). New forms of financial accountability, notably so in the "reconfiguration of state apparatus" (Rose, 1999: 151), have extended into areas previously governed according to bureaucratic and professional norms. By translating 'public' goals of value-for-money, transparency and efficiency into 'private' norms of calculation and aspiration, a new accounting governmental rationality emerges as a powerful technology for governing at a distance. Through technologies of performance such as benchmarking and the devolution of budgetary responsibility, neo-liberal government encourages the flow of capital, and notably 'human capital', into new areas. It is through the production and division of competing organisations and individuals that economic government is maintained 'at a distance' from the political centre. Thus, the analysis of liberal rationalities of government requires that we go beyond conceptions of a centralised disciplinary power in order to assess the circulation, agential deployment and reproduction of liberal rationalities and their effects. Following this premise, we now turn our attention once again to the theme of the 'new public management', but on this occasion from the perspective of governmentality.

3.9 Reframing the New Public Management

What Rose calls "grey sciences" (Rose, 1996: 54) are technologies of accountability that govern by creating calculable spaces in which inhabitants are required to calculate for themselves;

> . . .to translate their activities into financial terms, to seek to maximise productivity for a given income, to cut out waste, to restructure activities that were not cost effective. . .to become more or less like a financial manager of their own professional activities (Rose, 1999: 153).

Through the marketisation of social government 'budgetary discipline' is mechanised by making people write things down, which "is itself a kind of government of individual

conduct, making it thinkable according to particular norms" (Rose, 1996: 55).
Calculative technologies serve to create visibility of both near and distant activities to assess the degree to which individuals deviate from a norm of performance. Rose (1996) suggests that these processes have rendered experts governable, by transforming the subjective into the objective, and the esoteric into "factual masks" (Rose, 1999: 153).

'Grey sciences' of accountability make claims to truth that are different from the claims of the social sciences. As know-hows of enumeration, calculation, monitoring and evaluation, they make seemingly modest claims, but are nonetheless "omniscient, limited yet apparently limitless in their application to problems as diverse as the appropriateness of a medical procedure and the viability of a university department" (1996: 55). By making things amenable to visibility and evaluation, accountability thus becomes an effective technology for governing at a distance, while outlining norms such as transparency and standardisation as markers for organisational health. While these new technologies and strategies of government have become pervasive, they generate distrust of professional competence by applying narrow accounting measurements that fail to immunise against suspicion (Alvesson, 2001; Muzio *et al.*, 2011a). Paradoxically, this feeds the demand for more radical and pervasive forms of accountability, explaining why failures are often causally attributed to the incorrect implementation of techniques (Hodgson, 2002).

Nevertheless, values of self-realisation and self-management have become seductive and economically desirable in advanced liberalism (Rose and Miller, 2010). Managerial expertise has come to play the role of relay between the aspirations of authorities and the ambitions of individuals. Forms of 'translation' have emerged in codified knowledge and practice, serving to assemble mobile and loosely affiliated networks by constructing shared interests and common modes of perception. Through these networks particular local issues are tied to larger issues of economic government. Flexible links are made between those who are separated spatially and temporally. When each is able to 'translate' the values of others into their own terms and judgements, ambitions and conduct, then the creation of networks enables rule 'at a distance'. Through codified practices of translation the representation of that which is to be governed is an active and 'technical' process (Rose and Miller, 2010). Information is not the outcome of a neutral recording function. Rather, through forms of inscription the domain in question becomes susceptible to evaluation, calculation and

intervention (Townley, 1994a). The gathering of inscriptions in specific locales bestows agents in receipt of them with the capacity to engage in calculations, and to lay claim to the legitimacy for their strategies by being 'in the know' about that which they seek to govern (Miller and Rose, 1990).

Such mechanisms have assumed importance in contemporary economic life without encroaching on the 'freedom' or 'autonomy' of individuals and organisations. This is illustrated in the way that formal representatives, such as the Association for Project Management in the UK (APM), enters into a double alliance with political authorities and individuals. First, they ally themselves with political authorities by problematising political concerns and 'translating' them into codified solutions for economic productivity, innovation, efficiency and cost effective public management. Second, they form alliances with individual 'consumers' by translating their daily concerns into appropriate educational investments, career aspirations, and by laying claim to the power of their truth. Managerial expertise is offered as an educational 'solution' through which one can learn to manage better, earn more, and lead a more satisfying and productive life (Clegg and Courpasson, 2004; Muzio et al., 2011). Professional expertise thus serves in the role of relay between political ambitions and the ambitions of enterprising subjects. The subjective 'freedom' of subjects of liberal government can thus become an important ally to orderly economic government, rather than a threat (Miller and Rose, 1990). With these thoughts in mind we turn our attention to how the theme of 'governmentality', and in particular how its 'neo-liberal' adaptation, has been adopted and received by OMS scholars.

3.10 Governmentality and OMS

Despite a large number of studies of governmentality in the fields of sociology, political science and geography, to date there has been little uptake of this perspective in the field of OMS (Barratt, 2008; Munro, 2012). The 'London School' of governmentality studies (Miller and O'Leary, 1993; Miller, 2001) has made a significant impact on critical accounting (McKinlay and Pezet, 2010), nonetheless there remains only a handful of governmentality studies outside of this school that have applied governmentality to the politics of the workplace (Grey, 1994; Du Gay, 1996; Du Gay, 2000; Clegg et al., 2002; Knights and McCabe, 2003). In part, and as we will discuss in Chapter 4, this also relates to a methodological concern with respect to the form that

genealogical studies of governmentality have taken, often depending on the 'programmer's perspective' and the analysis of 'serious statements' as a textual approach to historical writing (McKinlay, 2010a; McKinlay *et al.*, 2010). Nonetheless, studies of governmentality in OMS contrast with those drawing from the discipline power/knowledge couple by placing a greater emphasis on the continuous, mundane, open and 'liberating' aspects of modern power. In this sense key technologies of economic government have been addressed in teamworking (Knights and McCabe, 2003), contractualisation (Du Gay, 1996), career (Grey, 1994) and project management (Clegg et al., 2002). A common concern running through all of these studies is that through particular liberal rationalities and technologies subjects are rendered increasingly calculable according to economic criteria, both in the eyes of others as well as in relation to the self. In moving beyond images of docile bodies they pay particular attention to the production of truth through specific forms of knowledge and practice, typically those designed to 'empower' individuals as responsibilised and self-regulating entrepreneurial subjects. Below we will briefly review these studies before moving on to discuss project management as a technology of government and the research questions that the present study poses.

OMS studies have drawn upon the concept of governmentality to illustrate the ways in which personal projects and ambitions can become enmeshed with economic rationalities and dominant organisations (Grey, 1994; Knights and McCabe, 2003; Clegg and Courpasson, 2004). These studies are political insofar as they aim to understand how liberal governmentalities are written into organisational strategies and economic life through particularly 'enabling' technologies. Their interest is in the dynamics of liberal power/knowledge configurations through which people are 'free' but intricately linked to objectives in networks of responsibilisation and economic organisation. For example, Grey (1994) argues that the concept of 'career' can be addressed as an important technology of the self in regard to the accounting labour process. 'Career' in this sense offers a vehicle for the self to 'become' by outlining a series of seemingly sequential 'moves in the game', as actions to be organised through an entrepreneurial 'project of the self'. Grey (1994) illustrates that 'enterprise' is not an incalculable spirit or ethos, but that it is inscribed into mechanisms of self-evaluation and confessional technologies such as appraisals and performance management regimes. Career in this sense is as a means by which to 'govern' one's own productive potential, offering up an abstract mechanism by which to address the self as an evolving and

learning productive subject. The career thus appears as that which must be managed and 'governed' through active processes of self-management in order to realise one's full potential and its associated 'freedoms'.

Other perspectives have adopted the concept of 'neo-liberal' governmentality to address matters of organisational strategy, where 'governing' is predicated upon the construction of contractualised performance targets that serve to reward and punish, thus creating a mutual governmental rationality 'at a distance' (Clegg et al, 2002). Clegg et al (2002) address neo-liberal governmentality as a mode of political power in the management of a complex public-private construction project for the Sydney 2000 Olympics (Clegg et al., 2002). Rather than addressing particular problematisations of government and the 'production' of particular subjects of government through history (Rose, 1999), their focus is upon whether governmentality 'works' or not in the strategic management of an inter-organisational project. 'Governmentality' is addressed as an organisational strategy that poses as an alternative to direct policing and litigation, especially where multiple interests and conflicting rationalities are concerned. Clegg et al (2002) address neo-liberal governmentality in the production of a particular 'alliance culture' that creates an entrepreneurial framework and a common 'practical consciousness' between partners who "might otherwise have been contractually committed to being at loggerheads with each other" (2002: 331). Despite creating a governmental rationality in which nothing mattered except the project, the strategy faltered by failing to account for formal constituencies located outside of the governmental network.

Other studies have sought to adopt the theme of neo-liberal governmentality in order to analyse subjectivity among those involved in new liberal workplace regimes. Following Miller and Rose (1990) Knights and McCabe (2003) consider how individuals were rationally administered 'at a distance' in a UK call centre. They equate political objectives with attempts to secure employee support for reduced supervision and extended responsibility. Government through teamworking is not thought to be coercive, but instead reflects the administration of conduct through tactics of education and incitement. They note that staff were willing to question the subjective demands of a 'team discourse' deployed to formulate new conditions of freedom and encourage practices of staff-management. Some staff, however, embraced their 'bounded autonomy' in order to alleviate further managerial demands on performance.

Knights and McCabe's (2003) case study illustrates that work can become simultaneously more rewarding and demanding under liberal work regimes. Performance targets relieved staff of a sense of uncertainty concerning managerial expectations that lacked finitude, yet 'team discourse' also accentuated tension between staff on different pay scales. Staff began to distance themselves from team discourse when it was considered artificial, and when teambuilding events began to impinge on their home and family lives. As Knights and McCabe state;

> In Foucauldian language, working women (and some men) draw on what is often the subjugated knowledge of their non-work lives to display scepticism and some resistance to the ever encroaching demands of modern production and associated attempts to manage through identity, as well as economic incentives (Knights and McCabe, 2003: 1616)

Studies of governmentality have also sought to highlight the potential effects of technologies of 'contractualisation' in contemporary organisation (Du Gay, 1996); technologies that reconfigure social relations by assigning the performance of an activity to a distinct unit of management. Contractualisation operates to minimise the need for direct political intervention by harnessing powers of self-management and self-regulation (Miller and Rose, 1990). Distinct units of management (and in the case of the present study, 'projects') are regarded as being collectively or individually accountable for the efficient performance of the activity. Townley (1994) argues that distinct management units serve to create boundaries around organisational actors, groups and departments as calculable units of 'responsibilisation' and evaluation. Within these spaces subjects of economic government are increasingly required to act according to a 'litigious mentality' in order to justify their valued and existence within an economic network (Rose, 1999). Through prevailing liberal rationalities professional practice becomes structured around 'defensability' which is mechanised through the governmental obligation to document and inscribe decisions and actions in "the maintenance of information systems, registers, notes of all meetings, written judgements to be defensible in an imagined future court case" (Rose, 1999: 156).

3.11 Governmentality, truth, and project management

Through the prevailing governmental rationalities discussed above the production of truth through accountable forms of knowledge and practice becomes a matter of personal security as well as a matter of professional 'freedom'. In Lambert and Pezet's (2011) study of management accountants, for example, they examined practices for acting on the self as producers of truthful knowledge. Accountants are armed with their own power/knowledge which enables them to deploy governmental discourses. Thus, Lambert and Pezet (2011) argue that subjectification takes place in performance review meetings with senior managers, those that constitute "trails of truth" (2001: 11). Management accountants must monitor, work upon, improve and test themselves in rituals of preparation. This, suggest Lambert and Pezet (2011), pushes them into processes of subjectivation whereby they act on their own ways of being in the organisation. In this case accounting is envisioned as the active production of truth through calculable knowledge. Following Foucault, their argument suggests that it is in the name of truth that management experts hold influence. Accountable regimes of truth are not simply composed by formal rules, they also serve to produce expert subjectivities through activating technologies of the self that delineate the ways in which a sense of well-being can be attained. Management accountants are thus 'made up' as auditors who also subject themselves to "trials of truth". Lambert and Pezet (2011) illustrate that a Foucauldian analysis of truth production and contestability can enable a better understanding of the effects of liberal governmental rationalities that give rise to the 'performance of performance'.

As we will address in this study, project management is also a 'problematising' activity (Clegg and Courpasson, 2004). It has the effect of proposing objects of thought and derived objectives for action. In this sense project management is a lot more than a prescriptive knowledge with rules to enforce. Indeed, under regimes such as contractualisation, ever more present in the UK public sector (Grimshaw and Hebson, 2005), self-regulation becomes imperative as well as 'enabling' in maintaining individual and departmental accountability. This is just one aspect of advanced liberal governmentality, which has the effect on its subjects of what Rose (1999) calls a 'litigious mentality'.

PM constitutes a Foucauldian 'governmental technology'; a highly reproducible practice that engages subjects of government in writing, planning, budgeting and accounting. Protagonists may argue that it has great potential to invoke helpful organisational images and problematisations. Nevertheless, its modern adaptation is embedded in the constitutive governmental rationalities of enterprise and accountability, those designed to encourage self-management and self-realisation in order to responsibilise subjects of economic government. When PM's 'procedural knowledge' is deployed to successfully write the truths of organisational reality, then debates begin to flow within the parameters that it serves to inscribe. Through the delineation of units of performance it has the potential to 'make up' the subjectivity of governmental agents, as those responsibilised to rationalise the field in line with demarcated objectives. Among the prevailing liberal rationalities to which it is associated, PM has the potential to 'empower' subjects in particular ways, as those who may choose to invest in its potential for economic 'freedom' and security amidst a competitive labour market. As certified 'best management practice' it is targeted at subjects as a worthy organisational practice that promises to enhance learning and development, career prospects and managerial proficiencies. Simultaneously it aligns ambitions with the 'cost-effective' economic rationalities of public management. Through instrumentalising the self-governing capacities of workers it aims to get the most out of employees by harnessing the psychological ambitions and aspirations of subjects as 'entrepreneurs of themselves' (Du Gay, 1996).

The thesis aims to address PM as a 'technology of government' in UK local authority in order to ask what kind of subjectivities and 'identities' are being produced through it and its associated rationalities. This study asks; what lies in the space between PM's rationalities and representations and the subjectivities which makes them possible? How are participants 'made up' through it, and how may they distance themselves from its truths? What kind of enabling, productive and constraining effects does it have in shaping particular spaces of responsibilisation in this context? How do participants deploy and consume PM in the context of organisational transformation, and how does it serve to produce particular conditions of 'freedom' among different groups and individuals working in this context?

> That is to say, power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted 'above' society as a supplementary structure whose radical effacement one could perhaps only dream of (Foucault, 1982: 217)

Chapter 4: Debating Method

4.1 Introduction

After discussing the theoretical frame of 'government' and 'governmentality' in chapter three this chapter aims to discuss the methodological implications for the present study situated within the field of Organisation and Management Studies (OMS). For this purpose it is split in two parts. Part one undertakes an analysis and critique of influential alternatives in positivism and critical realism, perspectives from which critiques of 'Foucauldianism' in OMS have been articulated. By analysing and critiquing these perspectives a platform from which to begin the search for method in line with this study's broadly 'Foucauldian' objectives is justified. In part two the chapter begin a search for method by addressing studies of governmentality and their empirical applications (Miller and Rose, 1990; Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b). The chapter discusses the ways in which studies of governmentality embrace different dimensions of genealogical critique in the writing of 'histories of the present'. It then considers some concerns about the methodological limitations of the genre from sympathetic scholars who argue for its expansion (O'Malley *et al.*, 1997; Barratt, 2008; McKinlay, 2010b; McKinlay *et al.*, 2012; Munro, 2012). Following this, ethnography is introduced as a method by which to complement the more historical variants of governmentality studies as 'governmentality on the ground'. The methodological approaches of Foucauldian ethnographies are briefly discussed, before moving into a discussion of the conventions, protocols and methodological commitments of ethnography. Ethnography is discussed as the writing of 'culture', addressing the ways in which this method may serve to complement genealogical perspectives. The final section of the chapter critiques 'Foucauldian' ethnography in OMS with a view to developing an ethico-political approach to ethnographic work. Within this discussion the methodological approach for the present study is particularised. The chapter concludes by discussing the ethics of this study.

4.2 Part 1 - Influential Alternatives in OMS - An Appraisal and Critique

4.2.1 Ontology and Epistemology

In the social sciences methodology attempts to outline protocols used by those wishing to acquire some form of valid knowledge. The claims of methodology in proposing such procedures are typically justified through philosophical arguments.

Methodological propositions are typically derived from *ontology*; a conception of what exists, or from *epistemology*; a conception of the possible forms of knowledge and the conditions in which knowledge can be obtained (Hindess, 1977).

It is argued that conventional management and organisational research is built upon the foundations of modernist science. An emphasis on the legacy of Enlightenment discourse asserts that autonomous subjects can be liberated by knowledge gained through scientific methods (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). Enlightenment reason stresses a transparent language, positivity, and optimism in the acquisition of cumulative understanding (Locke, 1995). These principles have outlined a prevailing conception of scientific investigation in OMS, built on a correspondence theory of truth, and a more general ontological commitment to realism. Characteristically a division is assumed between a realm of real objects (conceived of as organisations, 'real' experiences and practices) and a realm of scientific representational practices that allow for such a world to be known and understood (Chia and Holt, 2008). Research in this frame presupposes a 'knowledge' of the conditions in which knowledge takes place, derived from epistemological negotiations between ontological divisions such as structure/action, subject/object or individual/society (Deetz, 1996). In making presuppositions about the conditions of knowledge, epistemology amounts to an impossible theory of knowledge insofar as it cannot be realised in any substantive enquiry (Hindess, 1977).

In seeking to justify the present study's broadly 'Foucauldian' approach, the section below undertakes an analysis and critique of prevailing conceptions of scientific investigation in OMS, often set in opposition to so-called 'Foucauldianism'. First, the section below discusses the way in which positivism has promoted a particular tradition of scientific enquiry.

4.2.2 Positivism in social science and OMS

In a variety of forms positivism has had a considerable influence on the epistemology of the contemporary social sciences (Comte, 1855; Durkheim, 1982). Positivistic philosophy underwrites an assumption that we can only know reality on the basis of experience, and that the object of knowledge can only be what we gain from experience. The appeal to unobservable and immaterial features of the social world is thought to be speculative at best. 'Truth' is constituted as an accurate knowledge of an independent reality. Appropriate methodologies are considered in terms of their ability to measure

and report on such a reality (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Procedures employed in the context of justification are held to keep science apart from myth, belief, tradition, and conjecture. Methodologies imply appropriate application of rigorous scientific procedures, with a high premium placed upon the reliability of findings (Hammersley, 1995). The distinctions of theory/fact and common sense/fact highlight an aspiration to objectivity demonstrated in attempts to eliminate the effects of the observer by designing and standardising procedures that can be replicated and validated by others. In survey research, for example, each respondent is met with equivalent questions or stimuli so that responses are measurable according to predefined criteria. For example, if standardised procedures are not followed, responses cannot be assessed adequately since there is no framework for assessing what they are in response to (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992). Positivism, then, at its most dogmatic, implies that what is not logically observable or derivable is meaningless (Hindess, 1977: 150-164).

Experimental and survey research has become widespread through the use of quantitative forms of analysis (Hammersley, 1995). The broad doctrine of variable analysis employs the principle that social life can be observed and described as a collection of variables (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992). Once collected, variables can be quantified so that their relationships are measurable and observable quantitatively. The control and rigorous measurement of variables, whether physically or statistically, produces a body of knowledge which is thought to be valid and decisive (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). This approach begins with putative social concepts about a given reality, with no imperative to know what the semantics of categories such as 'class' or 'culture' are. Concepts become amenable to scientific examination only insofar as they are measurable by using clear-cut numerical values and indicators. Under a strict empiricist strategy of theory construction and testing, concepts are represented deductively as poor indicators are replaced with more determinable indicators. The relationship between an indicator and the property of its object thus always remains a matter of probability (Hindess, 1977).

Positivistically informed research in OMS depends upon the use of abstract modes of scientific explanation as a means for interpretation (Chia and Holt, 2008). In putative propositional statements, models, matrices and statistical analysis, the actions and outcomes of social life are parsed into abbreviated representational objects of analysis. In the studies of the Aston Research Programme (Pugh, 1988; Pugh, 1997) and in

contingency theories (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967b; Burns and Stalker, 1994), activities and organisations are conceived as discrete phenomena whose relations can be prudently recorded and causally projected, thus amenable to generalisation. Theories are about quantification and correlation, bound within the abstractions of mathematical axioms. In Konovsky and Pugh's (1994) study of human behaviour in a hospital, for example, factors such as 'trust in supervision' and 'distributive justice' were measured quantitatively. The semantics of 'trust' and 'justice' are 'black boxed' as isolatable phenomena, and the formal 'value free' language of positivism and mathematical syntax constitutes a theoretical platform. Individuals are thus represented as quantifiable quasi-rational agents who may respond to various inputs (or incentives) in systematic ways.

The legacy of positivism in organisation theory (cf: Donaldson, 1996) follows a tradition of Durkheimian sociology, reflecting a predilection for social order, consensus and cohesion. Its foundations are based on the tradition of 'functionalist' sociology in seeing parts of society (or organisations) as operating in ways which will contribute to the maintenance of a whole. Owing to the natural sciences, biological and mechanical analogies produce a perspective of holism, in 'structures', functions and needs (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The interrelationship between parts produces the requirement to go beyond the function of concepts in isolation so as to determine causality between them. In this frame organisations appear as parts in a 'social system' governed by observable and functional relations (or 'laws'). An organisation's survival is seen to depend on its (managerial) ability to control the 'environment' so as to maintain its economy, the primary feature of its functionality (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967b). 'Structure' is understood according to variable indicators (e.g. flexibility, formalisation) which are causally related to other variable indicators (e.g. technology and firm size). Propositional statements such as *'if flexibility is low then firm size is large'* are predicated on the assumption that organisational phenomena are patterned and thus objectively amenable to abbreviated formula. The utility of abbreviated representations is determined by their transferability, manipulability and generalisability across time and space.

4.2.3 The critique of positivism

As Hindess (1977: 113-141) argues, positivism constitutes a form of subjective idealism insofar as the objective world cannot be seen to exist independently of an observer's cognitive activity. The real world in this sense exists 'out there', insofar as social and

material objects and attributes are thought to exist prior to any attempt to represent them linguistically. Reasoning about the object of study comprises of the manipulation of representational symbols detached from interpretative understanding. The 'truth' of an utterance is not a matter for theory, and so the supposed parallel between 'truth' and 'validity' begins to break down (Hindess, 1977: 134-142). Whether in claims of 'law-like' regularities, or in hypothesis testing and falsification (Popper, 2002), positivism pre-supposes a 'knowledge' based on experience and observation. It confronts a fundamental problem within its own logic insofar as it depends on an epistemology which cannot itself be verified from experience and observation. In advocating a universal approach to 'truth', positivism follows the principle that there is no foundation in the distinction between the sciences of nature and those of culture and history (Hindess, 1977).

Although positivism has historically governed the field of OMS, it has of course been met with contestation. The influential work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) in *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* was widely held to be a significant step in this regard (Willmott, 1993a; Deetz, 1996). Following the formative work of Kuhn (1970), this work delineated different judgements of validity relative to a given 'paradigm's' presuppositions about the nature of knowledge. 'Paradigms' were described in a mutually exclusive four grid matrix as *functionalism, interpretativism, radical humanism,* and *radical structuralism.* Methodologies were defined according to contrasting dimensions of 'structure'/'action', 'order'/'conflict', and 'subjectivist' and 'objectivist' camps. Each paradigm implied a different perspective upon the organisational world, how this was to be understood, and what 'counted' as knowledge. Assumptions in different variations of social theory (such as Systems Theory, German Idealism and Marxism) correlated with appropriate paradigms. Methodologies outlined ways in which to gather each particular form of knowledge. Methodology was thus not simply about scientific instrumentality as in positivism, but understood in terms of particular assumptions about the nature of organisational reality in advance of substantive enquiry. What was to 'count' as valid knowledge was addressed instead as a matter of methodological contestation.

4.2.4 The critique of 'Paradigms'

Within OMS the publication of 'Paradigms' provided broadly 'critical' organisational researchers with a capacity for legitimacy. Nevertheless, it also invited the closure of

research positions by advocating incommensurability (Willmott, 1993b; Willmott, 1993a). Scholars sympathetic to so-called 'postmodern' and 'Foucauldian' perspectives argued that 'Paradigms' constrained theory development within a polarised sets of assumptions (Willmott, 1993a; Deetz, 1996). Organisations were viewed either as a hard external objective reality or through understanding the subjective experiences of individuals in creating the world. Social theories were directed towards a concern for 'regulation', or towards a concern for 'radical change'. 'Paradigms' endorsed a familiar 'action'/'structure' dualism; a perspective through which organisations and individuals were represented as discrete entities to be examined using distinct and/or forms of analysis. Implicitly or explicitly, reified binary oppositions such as agency/structure, conflict/order, and subject/object inevitably elevated one side at the expense or suppression of the other. The dualism of these ontological divisions meant that the conditions in which knowledge was to take place and the objects of a researcher's gaze would inevitably be presupposed (Deetz, 1996).

The critique of 'Paradigms' reflected the growing influence of a variety of so-called 'postmodern' contributions in OMS, as well as 'Foucauldian' work discussed in the previous chapter (e.g. Cooper and Burrell, 1988; Knights and Willmott, 1989). Generally, these contributions articulated an ethical and political critique of modernist social science, emphasising the role of language as constitutive and constructive, rather than as representative. The objective of determining 'facts' and factual relationships through empirical methods was problematised, and methodological unity became the subject of criticism through its tendency to simplify categorisations in advance of substantive enquiry (Parker, 1992). Claims to knowledge over and above research participants inevitably constituted privileged knowledge hierarchies, thus positivistic epistemology was not only limited, it was also politically questionable. These arguments maintained that the analysis of organisational worlds through discourse would bring to light the constitutive powers involved in the representation of particular 'facts' or objective truths. They also articulated a necessity to investigate the conceptual worlds of research participants themselves, in ethnography and localism, so as to ask how participant's own social worlds were being (re)produced and maintained (Knights and Willmott, 1989). We now turn our attention to another influential alternative to 'Foucauldian' work in the field of OMS, that of critical realism.

4.2.5 Critical Realism

According to Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2000) the upsurge of 'postmodern' and 'Foucauldian' analysis in OMS involved a methodological tendency to take the rejection of positivism as a starting point, in order to articulate "an opposite set of assumptions about the world" (2000: 3). Indeed, 'critical' scholars have also bemoaned this tendency, insofar as 'postmodernism' in OMS has defined itself in opposition to "uncritical positivism", thus limiting the scope of the so-called 'postmodern' methodological debate (Alvesson, 2003: 3). For Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2000), however, this tendency has served to create a polarisation between positivistic and 'postmodern' positions. They suggest that this polarisation supposes that the world is either objectively observable through empirical techniques, or through 'subjective idealism' insofar as "what is known is merely [sic] the product of discourse" (2000: 8). Their concern is that problems associated with positivism are assumed to be synonymous with realism. For Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2000; 2005) and others (Reed, 2000; Fairclough, 2005) critical realism emerges as a stimulating alternative form of realism, and they invite those unconvinced by 'postmodern' and 'Foucauldian' analysis to engage with it. Reed (2000), for example, claims that critical realism offers an encompassing explanatory framework and logic, providing access to a 'deeper' understanding of organisational reality not directly available through observation and description.

Following the work of Bhaskar (1989) critical realism defends 'a logic of reference' through which knowledge has two ontological dimensions. The *'transitive'* artificial and abstract dimension is constituted by the concepts that we use as references to the world, whereas the *'intransitive'* dimension is constituted by the world as referent. Consequently, addressing statements of being as statements about the knowledge of being amounts to what critical realists call "epistemic fallacy" (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000: 15); the 'error' of collapsing ontology into epistemology. Critical realists thus argue that the nature of reality is not to be confused with our knowledge of it. Social reality consists of enduring 'generative mechanisms' which exhibit 'real' causal powers existing independently (intransitive) to the ways in which they can be discursively constructed or interpreted. The 'causal powers' of organisations and agents are therefore conditional on pre-structured properties of social life, of which knowledge can only be obtained through abstraction. Generative mechanisms are found within a three level stratified 'depth ontology'; (i) the *empirical*, which are experiences/perceptions,

(ii) the *actual*, which are events and experiences of them, and (iii) the *real*, which are mechanisms in addition to experiences and events such as temperature or time (Fleetwood, 2005).

In critical realism the differentiation of the dimensions of ontology and epistemology is required to facilitate rational choices between 'incommensurable' theories about the *same world*. Conflict between these theories is seen to allow for the advancement of causal explanations about social reality (Reed, 2001). Thus, a critical realist conception of discourse envisions language and semiotics as analytically isolatable facets of social practices and events, which can be causally related to process/agency and pre-structured objects. Social practices are not 'reducible' to discourse, and a stratified ontological framework provides the means to assess different yet often asymmetrical 'elements' of social reality (Fairclough, 2005). Analytical abstraction is necessary in order to theorise the relationships between ontological dimensions (e.g. between discourse and 'non-discoursal' elements) and to explain relatively stable and durable networks of social practices. The aim is to rationally theorise and make judgements about causal effects within the bounds of a stratified ontological scheme, ultimately resting on a realist structure/agency configuration. It is thought that this makes possible the discovery of 'restrictions' upon human agency that would otherwise go undetected, making thinkable strategic calculations that may remove them (Porter, 2000).

In setting these principles in opposition to 'Foucauldian' analysis in OMS Reed (2000) argues that Foucault's work has been appropriated to legitimise 'deconstruction' "through an endless, and ultimately meaningless, series of power games bereft of any enduring institutional rationale or structural embodiment" (2000: 51). In reiterating some of Newton's (1998) arguments discussed in the previous chapter, Reed (2000) claims that the power/knowledge/subjectivity triad in organisational analysis has rendered agency obsolete through "micro-contextual reductionism", where control technologies are, "beyond the influence, much less the power of social actors" (2000: 53). This point illustrates that critical realists view power as sovereign power, that which is 'possessed' by autonomous subjects. Reed (2000) contends that Foucauldian analysis is 'merely' interested in the talk (of agents), thus ignores the 'structural' context that conditions action. Analysis that fails to recognise the concept of structure is assumed to be ontologically unsound because explanatory relevance cannot go beyond the 'discursive moment'. Foucauldian analysis is said to reduce ontological

reality to that of idealism or voluntarism, where actors become effectively 'unconstrained' by structural forces. Reed makes this argument elsewhere (Newton *et al.*, 2011) in reference to a Foucauldian analytics of government, suggesting that by constructing subjects in accordance with socio-historical regulated freedoms, "the overriding analytical importance of 'governance' as a creative, rather than constraining organizational phenomenon" is erroneously emphasised (Newton *et al*., 2011: 14). For critical realists agency possesses its own causal powers, revealing the 'mediated interplay' between structure and agency. The implication of this perspective is that structural constraints operate only through the intentions, motives, and actions of agents, and their capacity to "make a difference" (Reed, 2000: 55).

4.2.6 A critique of Critical Realism

Notwithstanding critical realism's commitment to representationalism, some of its central claims of distinction can be put to question, particularly in regard to its adoption in OMS. As Al-Amoudi and Willmott (2011) argue, critical realism's leading proponents espouse a commitment to epistemological relativism. Lawson (2003: 162), for example, considers the relativity of knowledge insofar as it can only be represented or produced within specific socio-cultural conditions. Furthermore, Bhaskar (1989) accepts the historical and culturally contextual dependence of knowledge production. This does not constitute fallibilism, but rather that critical realism should obtain meaningfulness relative to the time, place and predefined position of a given knower. The analysis of 'generative mechanisms' is thus understood to be dependent on historical and cultural modes of interrogation. This view is reflected in the field of OMS by Fleetwood (2004; 2005), who notes that there is no theoretically neutral unmediated access to the world in critical realism; that examination and judgement are always culturally and historically mediated, not simply methodologically defective. Nevertheless, as Al-Amoudi and Willmott argue, although epistemological relativism is acknowledged in critical realist writing in OMS, there is little sensitivity towards concept dependency other than simple acknowledgements of fallibility.

Critical realism insists that it is possible to identify predefined 'positions' occupied by individuals (i.e. 'doctors', 'nurses') formed through 'generative mechanisms' and 'structures' independent to any knowledge of them (Fleetwood, 2005). This perspective contradicts a claim to epistemological relativism, insofar as it ignores the constitutive role of particular ways of seeing, perspectives which themselves (re)produce 'positions'

through history and intersubjectivity. For example, in Reed's critique of a 'Foucauldian' analytics of government noted above, social agency can only be located in the present, isolatable only within a human subject's capacities and/or attributes. Reed does not acknowledge forms of power as constitutive, but instead prioritises creativity as an innate ability of autonomous subjects in the present. Reed thus ignores the historical and ontological constitution of the 'free subject'. This, of course, is not an individual existing in an essential space of freedom, but one whose subjection is consistent with particular historical circumstances and specific power/knowledge configurations.

In the field of OMS critical realism begins to resemble positivism insofar as the categories used to codify observations are defined a priori; relevant to all substantive enquiries (Al-Amoudi and Willmott, 2011). This encourages the polarisation between realism and constructionism (or 'postmodernism') bemoaned above by Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2000). On this occasion, however, it is not a realist ontological framework that is missing, but a 'Foucauldian' imperative to examine how concepts acquire their meaningfulness from the discourses (and power/knowledge configurations) through which they are articulated. Far from neutral, discourses inevitably articulate relations of power which serve to sustain particular discursive regimes (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). To adhere to the principle of epistemological relativism critical realism is required to offer some form of explanation as to how we are historically, culturally, and discursively located, yet seemingly also able to produce foundational truth claims. Nevertheless, this is impossible to reconcile insofar as critical realism insists on the division between the transitive and intransitive dimensions, in which predefined 'positions' and/or structures exist independently to any knowledge of them.

4.3 Part Two - Studies of Governmentality - In Search of Method

Having discussed influential alternatives and critiques of 'Foucauldianism' in the field of OMS, our attention now turns to the ways in which the present study may proceed methodologically. The discussion in the following section addresses the ways in which contemporary 'governmentalists' do research. The purpose is not to particularise a methodological approach for the present study based on the genealogical methods deployed by these authors, but is instead to outline the ways in which the present study may 'complement' the governmentality genre by adopting organisational ethnography

as 'governmentality on the ground'. Following this section we will go on to discuss ethnography as the principle method for the present study.

4.3.1 Studies of governmentality and their empirical application

As we have discussed theoretically in Chapter 3, the genre of studies of governmentality has produced a range of historically informed analyses that are pertinent to the field of OMS (Miller and Rose, 1990; Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b; Miller and Rose, 2008). Conceptually these studies have been concerned with the exercise of power in its more calculative forms, highlighting de-centred processes of government and an assortment of powers that aim to regulate the subject's space of 'freedom'. By addressing the discursive composition of 'rule', studies of governmentality focus on the language used by experts and authorities that indicate as to what kind of subjects of government are being imagined, assumed, inferred, or invented. Moreover, analysis also identifies the 'technical' means of influence and inscription by which 'government' depends for its realisation and effect. 'Government' is at the same time a discursive and 'technical' activity that is always dependent on a particular mode of reasoning. Problems of 'government' do not exist in themselves, but are instead observed in the evaluative concepts and methods through which 'rule' comes to be enacted (Dean and Hindess, 1998).

Studies of governmentality have been less inclined to engage directly with Foucault's genealogical findings (see Chapter 3) and have instead endeavoured to engage resourcefully with his methods of working. Following Foucault (1971), a concern with the discursive nature of 'rule' evokes historically informed analysis that discloses the contingencies through which our present was formed, illustrating that what or who we are is not given, nor is it inevitable (Walters, 2012). Studies of governmentality are characterised by a form of analysis that employs variants of genealogical critique as a textual approach to history (Dean, 1991; 1994; Rose, 1996; Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b; Miller and Rose, 2008). In general they are committed to the task of denaturalising the identities, practices, objects and subjects that otherwise appear given to us, and seek to develop a historical sensibility that enhances the possibility for contestation in the present moment. Genealogies of government consider history as that which is discontinuous and contingent, and reject teleological narratives that appeal to overarching principles and essences. The concept of 'contingency' contrasts sharply with realist notions of causation in this sense. Change is seen not to depend on a

developmental historicism but instead occurs contingently as people reinterpret and revise traditions in response to novel circumstances and quandaries. Genealogies of government aim to reconstruct the problematisations to which programmes and strategies demonstrate themselves as a solution. Such problematisations are thus analysed on their own terms, and with respect to the objects and subjects which they themselves construct. Problematisations are identified in specific places and times, appearing in definite professional, institutional and social locales (Dean and Hindess, 1998).

Following a Foucauldian understanding of power as ambiguous and productive genealogies of government choose not to focus on particular institutions for too long, opting instead to trace the making of specific technologies of power. In particular, an emphasis is placed on tracing the discursive pathways by which something important and valued has come to take the form that it has (Dean, 1991; Dean, 1999; Miller and Rose, 2008). Genealogical critique in this vein traces the complex "lines of descent" (Walters, 2012: 117) that combine and clash to create what otherwise appears as integral. Detailed histories disclose when, where and under what conditions certain things come into being, and how they appear as 'rational' and coherent (Dean, 1991; Miller and Rose, 2008). Such endeavours do not begin with a general hypothesis, but instead employ a style of empirical analysis that is at once "gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary" (Foucault, 1971: 76). The study of historical problematisations points to the constitution of new objects of knowledge, and in turn the conferring of identities and agencies on social actors. Thus, while 'poverty' may be understood as a descriptive ahistorical category in sociological writing, Dean's (1991) genealogical study of *The Constitution of Poverty* charts its emergence as a new category of government, distinct from prior conceptions of 'pauperism'.

Genealogies of government have also taken the form of more generalised and epochal 'histories of the present' (Rose, 1999). This 'style' of genealogical critique elects to forego some of the minor details of tracing lines of descent in favour of historical 're-serialisation' (Walters, 2012: 124). Genealogy is deployed in this sense to uproot settled discursive objects so as to place them in a new historical sequence. Thus, Rose (1999) has sought to 'rewrite' our understanding of the ways in which the social sciences have organised our collective memory, and the ways in which we think about and 'manage' ourselves, our institutions and communities. Discursive objects of

analysis, such as 'freedom', 'community', and 'empowerment', are always and necessarily available for substitution into particular historical power/knowledge regimes. Beliefs and truth-claims are encompassed by particular traditions for which their plausibility depends. Thus, for Rose 'freedom' is addressed not as a concrete entity, but a relational and circumstantial practice that is set in opposition to whatever is locally conceived as 'unfreedom'. The concept of power is deployed less so to point out one particular group's interests dominating that of another, but instead to emphasise the presence of multiplicity and struggle. In doing so genealogies of government sometimes also retrieve subjugated knowledges and forgotten struggles (Walter, 2012: 132), by paying attention not only to the contingency of seemingly durable historical developments, but also relations of force involved in their fraught emergence (*'Entstehung'*) (Foucault, 1971). Thus, Rose's (1996) genealogical analysis of the 'Welfare State' (see Chapter 3) is not concerned with the analysis of state institutions, but the fraught problems of government in relation to new 'positive' statistical knowledges and the emergence of a distinctive conceptualisation of the welfare of populations.

4.3.2 Studies of governmentality – The genre's limitations

Despite significant advancements in the governmentality genre there has emerged a number of criticisms from sympathetic scholars in light of limitations (O'Malley *et al.*, 1997; Barratt, 2008; McKinlay, 2010a; McKinlay *et al.*, 2010; Walters, 2012). A disproportionate level of analysis has been directed at formal texts, programmes and strategies (O'Malley *et al.*, 1997). Abstract and generalised rationalities of government, such as 'enterprise' (cf: Du Gay, 1996) and 'neo-liberalism', have been portrayed deterministically, often without reference to individual or collective agents (Fournier and Grey, 1999; Walters, 2012). Analysis tends to remain at the programmatic level, obscuring 'real' actors, the struggles and contingent processes through which rationalities come to form. There is often, it is argued, an implicit assumption that rendering individuals visible and calculable through rationalities of government always actually occurs in practice. This detracts from the analysis of contingencies, ambiguities, and the ways in which rationalities circulate in relation to local frameworks of reasoning (McKinlay *et al.*, 2010). A claim of excess generalisation (O'Malley *et al.*, 1997) is based on the genre's tendency to prioritise the programmer's perspective as 'mentalities of rule' (McKinlay and Pezet, 2010). Such partiality works against a critical understanding of the effects of 'rule', and the deployment of resources,

strategies and tactics by actors in contested social relations. Remaining at the level of political rationalities and technologies, it is argued, impedes problematising their effects, and thus eliminates any meaningful diagnosis of costs (Walters, 2012).

Responding to these issues scholars argue for the reattachment of genealogy and critique, and for the reinstatement of a 'diagnostic' element in charting the historicity *and* costs of contemporary concepts, classifications and procedures (O'Malley *et al.*, 1997; Bevir, 2010). Calls have been made to re-focus the concept of governmentality to denote the ways in which governing is conceptualised, as opposed to 'governing' as the practices of rule (McKinlay *et al.*, 2012). Genealogy should emphasise nominalism, contingency and situated agency in order to reignite a historicist perspective (Bevir, 2010). An emphasis on nominalism, as Jacques' (1996) history of the category of 'employee' shows, can bring to light the contingency of our past and alert us to our present day thinking. Genealogical critique can chart the ways in which particular conceptualisations become basic 'natural' properties of human beings. The scrutiny of problematisations and ruptures in historical analysis demonstrates that how we see and organise one and the other is always dependent upon specific historical contexts, and the deployment of particular forms of knowing (Dean, 1999). A historicist perspective is thus mindful that reasoning is always contingent upon a specific subjective or intersubjective background. The autonomous individual, as one who forms their own beliefs and acts on pure reason and experience alone, is necessarily rejected. Nevertheless, to negate abstract autonomy is not to reject agency. People are influenced by their particular historical context, but they can still be agents who adopt beliefs and act for reasons of their own in a fashion that may transform the historical context that influences and defines them (Bevir, 2010). 'Governmentalists', then, address agency as it is represented in specific rationalities of government, those designed to animate 'versions' of autonomy in line with governmental objectives (Dean and Hindess, 1998).

4.3.3 Encountering the 'Witches' Brew' of Governmentality

Governmental rationalities are by no means progressive, ubiquitous or cohesive. Analysis does not have to remain at the level of architects and schemes, but can also address how such rationalities are translated into the 'witches' brew' of practices at the organisational level (McKinlay *et al.*, 2012). The present study aims to contribute to this project by adopting ethnography to 'complement' the more historical variants of governmentality studies (Miller and Rose, 1990; Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b).

Ethnography necessitates that we refrain from idealising programmes of government as 'perfect knowledges' (McKinlay *et al.*, 2012). It can extend perspectives on governmentality by addressing the micro-locales in which the formulas and concepts of so-called 'neo-liberal' government are deployed. Ethnography addresses the need to involve economic and organisational actors as sources, with a sensitivity afforded to their existence as both elaborators, negotiators and antagonists of prevailing rationalities (Rose *et al.*, 2006). With these thoughts in mind the following section discusses ethnography as the principle method for this study.

4.4 Ethnography

4.4.1 'Foucauldian' Ethnography in OMS

As we have discussed in Chapter 3, ethnographic approaches have been favoured among writers in OMS seeking to introduce 'Foucauldian' frameworks to complement and critique the Marxist labour process tradition. In a group of these studies that can be loosely categorised as 'the Manchester School' (cf: Wray-Bliss, 2002) authors have tended to approach methodological issues by describing, often impartially, formal qualitative techniques involved in case-study approaches. Research techniques such as participant observation, interviews, and documentary analysis are outlined in relation to the problematisation of the politics of the particular case (cf: Knights and McCabe, 2000a). 'Manchester School' ethnographies place an emphasis on context, process and data triangulation, in seeking to build detailed and informed analysis over time. They stress multiplicity and power in context, sometimes through the deployment of traditional ethnographic approaches such as 'naturalism' (cf: Knights and McCabe, 1999: see critique of 'naturalism' below). Ethnographies inspired by the concept of 'governmentality' adopt similar methodological styles. Following Foucault, methodological statements emphasise a scepticism of causal-mechanical views, and an attention to ongoing power struggles over identities and meaning (Knights and McCabe, 2003). More expansive methodological discussions address the coding of data as insight develops, as new concepts are applied, and as similarities and differences in the data are identified (Clegg *et al.*, 2002). Work inspired by 'governmentality' has typically 'borrowed' the theoretical concepts derived from genealogies of 'liberal' governmentality (Foucault, 1988a; Miller and Rose, 1990; Rose and Miller, 1992) and has applied them to organisational case studies so as to problematise entrepreneurial management technologies such as teamworking and project management (Clegg *et al.*,

2002; Knights and McCabe, 2003). 'Governmentality' is thus conceived of singularly, as a managerial and political technique by which to constitute self-interested organisational actors, rather than as a more open approach to the analysis of 'governmentalities' that may or may not be characteristic of prevailing 'liberal' rationalities.

In seeking to 'complement' historicist perspectives this study takes a slightly different approach to ethnography than in the cases above. Firstly, however, we must discuss key features and conventions in ethnographic practice, as well as discussing how ethnography has been 'done'. In the final section of this chapter, we will move on to appraise 'Foucauldian' ethnography in the field of OMS before outlining the particular methodological and ethical approach that the present study will take.

4.4.2 What is Ethnography? Conventions and Methodological Commitments

Ethnography is described by its practitioners not as a research method per se, but as an approach to writing about and analysing social life that involves a range of methods, disciplines and perspectives (Linstead, 1993a; Van Maanen, 2011; Watson, 2011a). The term 'ethnography' literally means the study, writing, or description of people, and their cultures or societies. In its most representative form ethnography involves close involvement and participation, whether overtly or covertly, in the lives of people in their everyday social contexts. Typically participation lasts for an extended period of time, so as to immerse oneself in the 'life-world' of others, in listening, watching, asking questions, collecting documentation and images, sharing experiences, and in the gathering of any form of data that may shed light upon the research focus. Ethnography in this sense owes much to the traditions of early twentieth century social anthropology, undertaken on the basis that not only do we not know why people are doing things, we also do not know what they are doing (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Early twentieth century social anthropologists would spend long periods of time 'in the field', working and living amongst what would be seen as novel, exotic and strange 'cultures'. Dutifully bound to inscribe all the rules, regularities, and constitutions of endangered tribal cultures, locating explicit formulations or codifications of cultural systems proved elusive (Burgess, 1994). For Malinowski (1932: 25), this problem was addressed by attempting to grasp "the native's [sic] point of view", the 'native's' [sic] own vision of the world, in culturally specific aspirations, codes of law and morality

that reward or punish, and in the particular forms of happiness that localised meanings brought to bear. A principal methodological commitment in ethnography, then, is that a researcher must attempt to grasp and perhaps 'experience' shared understandings amongst a specific group of people. Human action is seen to be grounded in people's interpretations of the social situations in which they are located, and so an ethnographer attempts to gain access to the on-going construction of meaning and understanding as situations emerge (Rosen, 1991). Once access to a target 'culture' has been achieved, both physically and interpersonally, protocol prescribes that one must not 'go native' and become socialised into the beliefs and values of the studied. This constitutes forsaking academic duties in favour of participation. On the other hand, there is the risk of 'ethnocentrism', when an ethnographer unduly imposes their own point of view upon others, thus failing to see from within a participant's own frame of reference (Burgess, 1994). The tension between these two poles brings us to the classic 'oxymoron' (Van Maanen, 2011) in ethnography; that of 'participant-observation'. An ethnographer is a *participant* insofar as one can only ascertain the subjective logic of the group's own vision of the world by participating in it. Yet an ethnographer is also an *observer* insofar as a researcher's own purpose is thought to be ultimately distinct and objectifying (Rock, 2001: 32-33).

The Chicago School of Sociology developed a new ethnographic approach in the first half of the twentieth century, the focus of which was the urban life of the surrounding city. Unlike sparsely populated parts of the world, the city was viewed as the coming together of human diversity (Burgess, 1994). The scientific model of observation, data collection and interpretation was seen to be fundamental to the human project. Chicago School researchers applied methods of unstructured interviewing and journalistic writing, and combined them with documentary evidence in order to build descriptive ethnographies of the lives of alcoholics, street gangs and drug users (Deegan, 2001). The Chicago School influenced early classic workplace ethnographies, such as Dalton's study of 'unofficial' and 'official' ways of organising among business executives in *Men who Manage* (1964), and Gouldner's analysis of an 'unofficial' industrial conflict in *Wildcat Strike* (1954). These ethnographies were written as a kind of descriptive 'pre-science', the goal being to remove pre-conceptions and bias whilst undertaking neutral observational fieldwork. They followed a method Hammersley (1990) terms as the 'reproduction model', the goal being to describe a particular social event 'as it really

was' whilst remaining sensitive to meaning, time, and the place of the phenomena under investigation.

Chicago School sociology also produced the Pragmatist social behaviourism of Mead (1934) and Blumer's later elucidation in 'Symbolic Interactionism' (1969). This work addressed the social nature of the self, thought, and community as the formation of human interaction and 'meaning systems'. Mead and Blumer both argued that humans learned to understand themselves from the standpoint of others. In order to 'get close' to the empirical character of a group's existence, a researcher was to 'take the role of the other', thus appreciate and record how people make sense of themselves and others in situ. This school of thought advocated a commitment to 'naturalism'. The 'real' and 'natural' world would be privileged over predetermined positivistic principles. Artificial settings or experiments could only supply simplistic forms of codified and derived knowledge (Denzin, 1971). For the naturalist, 'theory' would be assessed against the emergent social scheme and with respect to the knowledge of those studied (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The ethnographer was to minimise their effect upon the 'natural' scene so as not to contaminate it, enabling the clean 'capture' of the other's experiential world while maintaining 'ecological validity'. Variously, this was achieved by either writing oneself out of the account entirely, or by reflexively monitoring one's 'impact' upon the natural world. 'Naturalism' in this sense, "is the philosophical view that remains true to the nature of the phenomenon under study" (Matza 1969, quoted in Hammersley, 2007: 7).

Chicago School sociology emphasised the human experiences of self-interacting subjects in situ. Studies sought to achieve a nuanced understanding of 'everyday life', what was seen as the active and practical creation of the social world (Rock, 2001). By illuminating 'life experiences', ethnographic work embodied a capacity to illustrate elements of the social world that had not been seen before. In Goffman's (1961) classic *Asylums,* for example, he undertakes 'naturalistic' observation to investigate the subjective worlds of mental patients and hospital inmates. He notes that his aim was to "learn about the social world of the hospital inmate, as this world is subjectively *experienced* by him [sic]" (Goffman, 1961: 7 emphasis added). Goffman does not explicitly focus on the psychiatric knowledge deployed in order to categorise and label inmates. Rather, he is interested in interpreting the 'experience' of patients so as to make sense of the rationality behind the behaviours that were branded by the others as

abnormal, insane or psychotic. By 'passing the day' in the company of patients, Goffman illustrates that patients developed these behaviours in order to preserve their individuality, otherwise governed through their incarceration within a 'total institution'. By focussing on the experience of subjects in situ, Goffman's ethnographic work enables us to see things differently. He is able to unveil that which may have otherwise been understood as something else entirely. Most importantly, Goffman reveals ways in which people attempt to stand apart and 'free' themselves from the spaces that are accorded to them.

4.4.3 How is ethnography done?

After outlining conventions we will now look in more detail at how contemporary ethnography is 'done', with a particular focus on the broad category of 'organisational ethnography'. We are already aware that ethnography constitutes first hand experience of a particular setting through 'participant-observation'. The aim is not to position oneself outside the group as an external observer, but instead one must attempt to understand what the group members think is happening as an 'insider' (Geertz, 1983). Research is understood as an explorative and practical activity in which the ethnographer accumulates data by working among those who are the 'data' (Rosen, 1991). Throughout this process, an ethnographer comes to learn more about themselves and others. This constitutes an open and contingent process, the results of which are often determined by accidents and unexpected events (Van Maanen, 1988).

4.4.4 Access and 'gatekeepers'

'Access' has a stratified meaning in ethnographic language (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). At its most superficial, access implies gaining access to the physical setting (Van der Waal, 2009). Notwithstanding initial access problems, once an ethnographer is 'in the field', access becomes a matter of ongoing negotiation and learning (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2009). Those commonly termed as 'gatekeepers' not only have authority to permit or deny a researcher's initial entry, they may also police 'formal' and 'private' spheres, potentially offering only partial access to a setting or a subject matter. As a matter of seeing from the 'native's' [sic] point of view', gaining access implies learning about and from others, in order to both 'fit in' as well as to develop anthropological insight. In this sense access issues can become a matter of substantive enquiry in themselves. For example, in her ethnographic study of a Japanese

workplace, Kondo (1990) documents issues of access that concern her own subjectivity and identity in 'being a conceptual anomaly';

> …here was someone [Kondo] who looked like a real human being, but who simply failed to perform according to expectation . . .my first nine months of fieldwork were characterised by an attempt to reduce the distance between expectation and inadequate reality, as my informants and I conspired to rewrite my identity (Kondo, 1990: 11)

Part of 'performing according to expectation', then, involves becoming familiar with the particular language and practices occurring in a particular setting. Organisational ethnographers must scrutinise language and discourse as a matter of substantive enquiry, but they must also become familiar with "argot and jargon" (1997: 87) so as to fulfil the imperative of 'fitting in'. This allows for common ground, aiding a researcher in achieving credibility and access. As Rosen (1991) notes however, the degree to which an ethnographer develops a working knowledge of a particular profession or industry will also influence what an ethnographer 'sees' and subsequently writes about. Gaining a working knowledge may provide access to the experiences and emotions that are derived from 'doing' a particular kind of work. However, this may prevent an ethnographer from being able to see that which is familiar as 'anthropologically strange' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). These issues are discussed in more depth below.

4.4.5 Contextualising 'the field'

As a principally inductive practice ethnography requires that researchers actively drift and reformulate ideas as the research develops. Conceptions are applied against data collected. New unforeseen avenues open up through on-going iterations between data and the ethnographer's theoretical insight (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009). Design is thus tied up with data analysis, coding and writing. Data analysis is about formulating and reformulating research problems in ways that make them amenable to exploration (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Nevertheless, there are different ways to approach 'the field'. Some favour more open-ended approaches and others seek to build on socio-theoretical themes. More practical approaches to 'the field' have been advanced in order to cope with the accumulation of large amounts of data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate 'grounded theory', however, this approach involves entering the field from an atheoretical and ahistorical position so as to systemically reflect on and test

questions as insight develops. A full embrace of grounded theory implies that a researcher cannot know which questions are relevant in advance of substantive enquiry. Thus, as much as remaining 'open' to the field is a valuable aspect of ethnographic work, entering the field constitutes a more complex process than the systematic inductive approach of 'grounded theory' affords (Van der Waal, 2009).

In codifying data, then, contextualisation involves a dialogic conversation between field data and social theory. Letting the data 'speak for itself' carries a danger in reifying distinct subjects and objects of analysis primarily, and restrictively, in accordance with the practical knowledge of participants. Ybema and Kamsteeg (2009) suggest ethnography necessarily involves maintaining a balance between 'closeness' and 'distance', to resist becoming socially and linguistically tied up in the 'life-world' of others. This is perhaps a more difficult problem for organisational ethnographers than anthropologists, insofar as the field is likely to be 'closer', socially and culturally, to the taken for granted understandings of the researcher's own 'life-world'. Whereas the anthropologist enters the 'strange' world of unknown cultures, the organisational ethnographer must attempt to 'exit' that which is already constituted as taken for granted knowledge.

Alvesson (2009) describes 'distancing' as the practice of liberating one's own perspective from familiar socially shared frameworks, what he calls 'frozen positions'. The ethnographer must actively turn the self-evident into the exotic and explicit, to disrupt 'common sense' whilst purposely struggling with closure. Disrupting common sense means that the ethnographer is alert to what is left over when more articulated meanings and symbols are exhausted. Attention must be afforded to that which is less sensational, matters that go unsaid, or particular understandings that seem unsayable, implicit or unpresentable. 'What goes without saying' is a matter for substantive enquiry. This kind of research involves developing a particular eye for the ways in which problems are framed and through which practices they become visible (Linstead, 1997). Furthermore, this requires paying particular attention to silence, ambiguity, 'culture' in flux. An advantage of ethnography in this sense is that a certain level of analysis becomes available, access to a kind of intimate knowledge. Taking Goffman's (1959) analogy of social life as a drama, this means remaining alert to when people "move from front-stage impression management, where people tell you what they do, to back-stage, where you can see what they actually do." (Moeran, 2009: 153).

Ethnographic engagement involves important questions on trust and friendship. Beech et al (2009) discuss temporal phases in friendships, from initially balancing expectations of self and the other (as in Kondo above), to shared values and emotional commitments, with the eventual possibility of separation. Ethnographers must document relations of trust and friendship, question particular political allegiances, what remains covert and overt, and the subject positions of both parties in the frame of the research account. In organisational ethnography, relationship issues are also necessarily determined by more 'formal' issues. For example, if an ethnographer occupies an official position in an organisation, they are by allocation entering into the first-order 'front stage' politics of that organisation, and they may not be trusted by those operating within the same arena. On the other hand, if a role is assumed as an observer, or as an 'outsider', it may be easier to obtain access to the 'backstage' perspectives of subjects (Goffman, 1959) in assuming the role of "the priest as confessor" (Rosen, 1991: 17). Personal involvement 'backstage', however, does not mean that 'real' selves and 'real' meaning systems are necessarily exposed. Rather, ethnography in 'Foucauldian' work is always and necessarily situated 'between' what is addressed as powerful historical formations of (self-)knowledge and power. This is a point that we will return to towards the end of this chapter.

4.4.6 Ethnography as writing

Another way in which to approach ethnography is as active construction; or as writing. Ethnography here is not necessarily about entering new social domains as a matter of 'experience', per se. Rather, it is to view 'culture' as something that does not become discernible until it is constructed in written representation (Van Maanen, 1988). Fieldwork implicitly involves the author's pre-text assumptions and commitments. The production of particular cultural representations in diary making, field notes and descriptive work can only bring a 'version' of the studied world to others. Writers such as Van Maanen (1988), Geertz (1988) and Clifford (1986) argue that what ethnographers do is create an authoritative personae for themselves, derived from the nature of the text and the style of presentation. Ethnography comes to be positioned in relation to its object of study in a variety of different ways. As something akin to literary criticism, Van Maanen (1988) describes the writing of realist, confessional, and impressionist 'tales', as rhetorical strategies and story-telling forms. Van Maanen's work expresses an ethical unease about the conventional morality of texts, the depiction of 'ordinary people', 'natives' and so on. The political and historical aspects of

ethnographic representation are brought forward in seeking to displace the monological authorial function, and to promote the poly-vocality of ethnographic writing (Clifford, 1986).

Conventionally, ethnographers have distanced themselves from their own representational work in order to maintain objectivity. Failing to do so brings about the danger of 'vanity ethnography' (Van Maanen, 1988); the supposedly ugly autobiographical descent in to the subterranean world of the ethnographer's subjectivity. Nevertheless, removing the author's voice denies the presence and specificity of the ethnographic experience, and presents the author as an authoritative, unchallengeable subjectivity. Viewing ethnography as the ways in which the other is 're-presented' problematises the practices of the researched as well as the researcher (Linstead, 1993b). In this sense the limits of traditional ethnographic methods are exposed, given that the power of one group to represent another is always part of writing (Clifford, 1986). Style in this sense is every bit a part of 'scientific' writing as it is a part of more elaborate 'artistic' forms. By acknowledging ethnography as writing, recognition is afforded to its production as a selective process in which a cultural portrait is constructed in particular ways. With these thoughts in mind we now return to the broadly 'Foucauldian' themes of this study.

4.4.7 How can Foucauldian 'Governmentalism' be combined with Ethnography?

A reading of 'Foucauldian' work puts to question many of the modernist and humanist conventions of the classic ethnographic form; the separation of the ethnographer from the 'field'; the danger of 'going native' [sic]; and the strange and mystifying anthropological world 'out there' to be interpreted as the other's 'culture'. Convention prescribes a belief that the ethnographer is capable of producing the truth from the experience of actually being 'there', and that the reader is receptive to the text (cf: Watson, 2011b). 'Realist' ethnographic tales depend upon non-contradictory subjects and the stability and rationality of its writers and readers (Van Maanen, 1988). They portray humanistic versions of agency and posit the subject as the originator. Yet, in a 'Foucauldian' vision, agency and voice are the effects of history and social relations. In contrast with the 'grey' network of power in genealogy, ethnography seduces in its promise of being a theorist of the 'real' world, of telling stories that have not been told before (Britzman, 1995). Genealogy is a history without constants, whereas

ethnography is a form of engagement that has traditionally sought to develop divergent accounts of the 'real' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Nevertheless, despite ethnography's traditional form, it can be approached not as a research method, but a form of research engagement and a form of writing (Van Maanen, 2011). When viewed as such, affinities between genealogy and ethnography become apparent. Both methods can transgress closed theoretical systems, and both can point to the limits of power/knowledge regimes (Tamboukou and Ball, 2003). Ethnography in this sense is not a unitary position, practice or method, but a perspective and an attitude towards research which is responsive and accommodative. Genealogy asks the question as to which kinds of practices, linked to which circumstances and conditions, govern the different knowledges in which we ourselves figure. 'Culture' is addressed as a historically situated system of power and knowledge in which subjects appear through the order of discourse (Foucault, 1971). In the spirit of genealogy, ethnography can work against the closure of meaning by assessing instead the power relations that such closure serves. Our attention now turns to an appraisal of 'Foucauldian' ethnography in the field of OMS, with a view to outlining the particular methodological approach of the present study.

4.5 Foucauldian Ethnography in OMS – A Critical Appraisal

Our attention now turns to a discussion of the particular 'style' of writing that 'Foucauldian' ethnographic work has produced in the field of OMS. Wray-Bliss (2002; 2003) has critiqued the 'Manchester School' (e.g. Knights and Collinson, 1987; Collinson, 1988) and suggests that the possibility of the reflexive 'embodiment' of Foucauldian ethics as part of the research engagement has not been fully explored. Ethics following Foucault, is the activity of self-constitution (Hoy, 1998). Interest becomes centred on how individuals, and researchers, are led to practise on themselves. While Foucauldian ethnographies have challenged a neglect of 'personal' issues in theorising subjectivity, Wray-Bliss (2002) argues that this neglect has been reproduced by the authors themselves. A writing style that assumes an expert status for the researcher produces a sense of disengagement between the knower and the known. The 'Manchester School' ethnographies, Wray Bliss argues, amount to authoritative and depersonalised 'realist' (Van Maanen, 1988) representations of the workplace; accounts in which the subjectivity of the author remains sovereign and unchallenged. Wray-Bliss

(2002) takes this work to task for failing to embody ethics as a matter of permanent (self-)problematisation. By scrutinising our own practices as those located within particular power/knowledge configurations, there is potential to encourage more reflexivity in relation to value positions. In being open about one's own orientation and interests towards a particular community or idea, the ethical practice of research can be put to question.

4.5.1 Ethnography as the governmental problematisation of self/other

The present study attempts to adopt an open approach to 'the field', as it were. The example of Kondo's (1990) 'Foucauldian' and feminist (cf: Butler, 1998) ethnographic work provides inspiration in this regard, by framing, when appropriate, the subjectivity of the researcher within the research process. The opportunity in following such work lies in the potential to addresses 'culture' as that which emerges from particular power/knowledge configurations, and particular governmental problematisations. Such problematisations are not only discernible through the discourses and statements of 'mentalities of rule', but can also be located in discourses of (self/other) linguistic practices 'on the ground' (McKinlay *et al.*, 2012). By applying a 'governmentalist' perspective as a form of discourse analysis, subjects are not so much crafting selves from within as they are in possession of particular (and historical) theories of self (Grey, 1994). By paying attention to discursive rules, as 'what counts as what', the ethnographer must remain sensitive to linguistic practices and discourses in localised contexts. Selves in this sense are located in discourse, and what becomes pertinent is not so much the interpretation but instead the discursive rule as to which it serves (Potter and Wetherall, 1987).

The possibility for linking changes in workplace subjectification to broader trends in liberal government is feasible in this sense. It is possible to address historical variants of studies of governmentality on the one hand, and on the other to examine how changes affect different individuals and groups encountering prevailing rationalities and 'liberal' discourses as part of their daily existence. As we have seen in Foucault's own genealogical work (see Chapter 3), knowledge and truth exist, but only insofar as they apply to particular circumstances and contexts (Foucault, 1991a). Ethnography enables a context-bound approach to knowledge formation, and offers an opportunity to investigate the micro-processes of power in its natural environment of the case study (Tamboukou and Ball, 2003). Following the spirit of genealogy, scrupulous attention to

detail requires a distancing, an ability to 'let go' of the hold of rigorous application, in order to appreciate that which is most superficial. As Tamboukou and Ball note;

> The problem here is not that she [the ethnographer] will have to try hard to excavate precious hidden meanings and then 'write them up'. It is, rather, the opposite: how will she navigate the multiplicity of meanings surrounding her research and arrive at something that stand as 'findings' or conclusions or at least perspective – while avoiding closure? (2003: 16)

4.6 The ethics of this study

Scholars in the field of OMS argue that 'Foucauldian' scholarship requires re-thinking in order to develop a more creative and practical application in light of ethico-political ambitions (Wray-Bliss, 2002; Barratt, 2008). To be ethical in this sense is not to be 'moral' or 'right' but is instead to engage in a practise of self-delimitation, to define a location that is relative to the principle of a certain mode of being. Foucauldian ethics can be addressed as a kind of 'arts of existence', the imposition of a certain style, or taste (Barratt, 2008). This points to the possibilities for taking heed of the resources that may allow us to work on ourselves; an opportunity to develop a critical 'attitude' to the self (Foucault, 1991b). As a mode of critique, this implies a relation to the primacy of the present, and a requirement to question the political and ethical issues raised through our own insertion in it (Dean, 1994: 43-57). As Foucault himself argued;

> The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, and ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them (Foucault, 1991b: 50)

Those in the field of OMS who have attempted to open up an ethical space for scholarship have taken inspiration for Foucault's own Greco-Roman genealogies. The practice of Parrhesia, for example, an ancient form of frank and public truth-telling among pupils, points to ethical possibilities of openly sharing weaknesses and faults (Barratt, 2008). Townley (1994) has also reflected on the art of writing in friendship, offering a challenge to the 'paradigm of the expert', suggesting that the distant narrative of the 'expert' researcher is sustained though the omission of the writer's own values

and passions. Writing, as we have discussed, is always already an ethical practice. It involves the active and ethico-political rendering of reality rather than the passive reporting of it. The message from these scholars (Townley, 1994b; 2002; Wray-Bliss, 2003; Barratt, 2008) is one of practical, reflexive, and ethical reengagement, of unfulfilled potential in 'Foucauldianism', and of a necessary requirement to place critique back amongst the power relations from which it has been constituted. Research ethics in this sense can be employed as a matter of self-criticism, and as a matter of political engagement. Rather than positioning oneself 'outside' a political, social or historical context, this represents a concern to remain watchful over the disproportionate powers of political rationality (Foucault, 1982). Research in this sense means that one must remain attentive to specific conditions, practices and discourses in the historical moment (Brown, 1998). The organisational researcher, as will be discussed in the next chapter, cannot be exempt from this methodological implication. It is to this task that we now turn.

Chapter 5: Governing Project Managers - An introduction to the field

5.1 Introduction

Following on from the discussion on research methods and methodology this chapter aims to introduce 'the field' and the government of project managers. In this sense it serves to introduce the empirical context from which the theoretical themes of this study have been developed. As a matter of introduction the chapter begins by summarising the data collected and the participants who contributed. Thereafter we begin to discuss problematisations of 'the field' as they emerged chronologically through iterative ethnographic work and through a conversation between theory and data. In doing so the chapter explains periods of reflection and analysis and a secondary phase of data collection. The chapter then turns to the context of this study and discusses a business transformation agenda at the local authority within the broader frame of economic government in the UK. A context of budget cuts, organisational restructuring and staff reductions is outlined and discussed. In the second half of the chapter a more theoretical perspective is developed in order to address the 'government' of those working at the authority. The chapter considers the construction of a particular appeal to project management (PM) professional expertise and the introduction of competencies as technologies of the self in a new learning and development programme. From here, the chapter addresses the "will to govern" (Rose, 1999: 5) as articulated through the perspectives of the authority's senior management. The chapter concludes by summarising these findings with a view to moving towards a more in-depth analysis of PM professional expertise as a technology of power in Chapter 6.

5.2 Data Summary

The present study derives from my ethnographic engagement with those working in a local authority in the UK. A principal phase of empirical research was carried out between the months of January and August 2011. During this period I worked part-time at the authority as a participant observer for just over two months and on the basis of a two day week from 26/1/11 to 29/3/11. In the months of March, April, May and August 2011 I carried out twelve explorative semi-structured interviews, ten of which took place at the authority, and one of which was off site with a participant that had left. I also observed a further meeting at the authority (one of eight observed) in May 2011. Following this phase there was a period of reflection and data analysis that allowed me

to crystallise my theoretical focus and develop a strategy for returning to the authority to carry out a second phase of data collection involving a larger pool of participants. This materialised in a return to the authority in late 2012 and early 2013 in order to carry out focus groups and a further set of semi-structured interviews. An additional focus group was carried out in early 2013 with participants who were present during the participant observation phase, but had since left the authority. The rationale for the longitudinal element of this design, as we will see, relates to the manner in which the theoretical focus of this study has developed.

In sum the textual data that I have collected consists of nineteen interviews, three focus groups, eight organisational meetings, as well as my own day-to-day interactions and observations in field notes, 'official' documentation, and 'unofficial' documentation such as email correspondence (See Table 1 below for a summary of participants and data types). Entry to the authority as a researcher was dependent upon a non-disclosure agreement being signed which stipulated that I would refrain from publishing confidential material related to the authority's 'technical' and 'commercial' interests. Furthermore, I was also subject to a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check before being granted permission to access all areas of the building and the internal computer network and email system. All the participants involved in this study were aware of my position as a researcher and were assured of confidentiality before agreeing to have their contributions recorded. All participant names have been changed to protect their identity.

Much of my note-taking in 'the field' was in diary form, and reflected not only my observations but my thoughts on research problems as they developed. I have used QSR NVivo software to collate, code and analyse large amounts of text. I found this software useful because of the way in which it enabled non-destructive coding, insofar as the original documents remain intact and repeated interpretations and cross-categorisations could be made easily. In this sense the process of analysis was never unified or fixed and was always available for review (see Appendix I). Having used the software earlier on in my doctoral degree, and returning to it again later, it has allowed me to reflect upon past attempts at coding and analysis and has illuminated my naivety, particularly with regards to the different ways in which 'the field' was problematised. Much of this naivety has also been reflected upon with the aid of my diary notes. Most importantly, however, in keeping with the 'design' of ethnography as a primarily

explorative and inductive research practice I have kept abreast of the ways in which my problematisations have emerged. In order to justify my research choices and practices, the first half of this chapter aims to discuss my pre-understanding of the emerging scene, modes of entry, my presence, participation, and the contributions of others, which, in combination with my reading, informed the eventual 'writing' of this study (Van Maanen, 1988).

Pseudonym	Title/Role in Organisation	Primary spatial location during participant observation phase	Types of Data *Ethnographic data denotes field notes, acquaintances and email correspondence.
Julia	Deputy Chief Executive	Personal Office	Semi-Structured Interview
Frank	ICT Head of Service	Personal Office	Two Semi-Structured Interviews, Meetings
Stephen	ICT Head of Service	Personal Office	Two Semi-Structured Interviews, Meetings
Marcus	Learning and Organisational Development Manager	Personal Office	Semi-Structured Interview
Paula	ICT Investment Programme Manager (freelance consultant)	Corporate Programme Office (PO)	Ethnographic, Focus Group, Meetings
Giles	Portfolio Manager	Corporate Programme Office (PO)	Ethnographic, Two Semi-Structured Interviews, Focus Group, Meetings
Eric	Portfolio Manager	'downstairs'	Semi-Structured Interview, Focus Group, Meetings
Darren	Project Manager (freelance consultant)	Corporate Programme Office (PO)	Ethnographic, Semi-Structured Interview
James	Project Manager	Corporate Programme Office (PO)	Ethnographic, Semi-Structured Interview, Focus Group, Meetings
Philip	Project Manager	Corporate Programme Office (PO)	Ethnographic, Semi-Structured Interview, Meetings
Tina	Project Manager	'downstairs'	Ethnographic, Semi-Structured Interview, Focus Group, Meetings
John	Project Manager (freelance consultant)	Corporate Programme Office (PO)	Ethnographic, Focus Group, Meetings
Theo	Project Manager (consultant)	Corporate Programme Office (PO)	Ethnographic, Semi-Structured Interview
Jennifer	Project Manager	'downstairs'	Ethnographic, Semi-Structured Interview, Meetings
Brad	Project Manager / Business Partner	'downstairs'	Semi-Structured Interview, Meetings
Laura	Project Manager	'downstairs'	Focus Group
Liam	ICT Staff	'downstairs'	Focus Group
Robert	ICT Staff	'downstairs'	Focus Group
Simon	ICT Staff	'downstairs'	Focus Group
Harry	ICT Staff	'downstairs'	Focus Group

Table 1 Summary of participants and data types

5.3 From 'Identity' to Government

I arrived at the authority aiming to study 'identity' in relation to the contemporary field of project management (PM). Thinking about identity as something akin to a concept of the self, characteristic of a particular group or profession, I began with the question of how those working in PM crafted their identities amidst the experiences that PM produced. I imagined that I would 'discover' my research object, analysable in the ways in which project managers would reflexively 'accomplish' a coherent narrative (cf: Giddens, 1991). Nevertheless, in presupposing my object of enquiry I was to meet with a number of problems that led me to re-think my research approach. Among shifting fields of power and meaning my view turned increasingly towards discourse and relations of power. I began to view 'identities' not as coherent narratives, but as strategic assertions drawn from discursive resources (Du Gay, 1996). 'Identities' would signify unity, but would inevitably suppress contradiction within, varying from person to person, and from group to group (Rose, 1998). More importantly, influenced by an organisational context of efficiency savings, budget cuts and staff reductions, I came to see PM not as a 'profession' or a distinct group of 'professionals', but as a particular mode of thought and practice for economic 'government at a distance' (Miller and Rose, 1990; Rose, 1999b). In the section below, we will contextualise the development of these perspectives.

5.4 Gaining Access

I gained access to the authority through a personal contact who knew of someone who was carrying out consultancy work as an Information and Computer Technology (ICT) 'programme manager' (hereafter termed as 'Paula'). Paula, a freelance consultant, was contracted to manage an ICT investment programme as part of the authority's business transformation agenda (discussed below). She agreed to facilitate my access on the condition that I would work voluntarily as a 'communications officer' for the ICT corporate programme office (PO). This role would mean that I would be working as an associate of the PO. However, I would also have access to other parts of the organisation in being responsible for disseminating to others information about PO activities. The role would also mean that I would gain access to weekly departmental

project meetings[4], PO 'team hugs'[5], and would have office and lunchtime conversations with those involved in the ICT programme.

The PO had been set up as a physically isolated office space through which ICT programme activities would be managed (See Figure 1 below). As 'programme manager', Paula was overseeing 'project managers', both freelance consultants and permanent staff members, who were authorising project work to be carried out by others elsewhere in the organisation. Additionally, Paula was overseeing a 'portfolio manager', responsible for making visible and reportable work activity in the ICT unit within a PRINCE2[6] framework. This, as we will see, corresponded with a broader aim to encourage PM knowledge and practice throughout the authority.

First Floor: Senior Manager's Office (ICT Head of Service)	First Floor: Senior Manager's Office (ICT Head of Service)		First Floor (*'upstairs'*): Corporate Programme Office (PO) – Consultants and Permanent Staff working as Programme, Project and Portfolio managers
Ground Floor (*'downstairs'*): A further group of Project Managers as well as ICT Development and Technical Support staff.			

Figure 1: Side Elevation of the ICT Department

5.5 Entering 'the field'

I began my research by expressing an interest in the 'personal' lives of project managers working in the PO. I was attempting to 'understand from the inside' (Geertz, 1983) by performing according to expectation and by working primarily in accordance with the reasoning of others (Rosen, 1991). Participants seemed best able to understand my

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[4] Project meetings took place weekly between PO participants, senior managers and other project managers. They were designed to communicate progress on ICT projects and the ICT investment programme.

[5] 'Team hugs' were weekly meetings that took place in the PO when participants would discuss progress on their projects.

[6] See Chapters 1 and 2. **PR**ojects **I**n **C**ontrolled **E**nvironments is UK government sponsored 'best management practice' for the management of projects

interest in them by placing me in role of an aspiring project manager, as someone who wanted to learn 'how to do' project management. On one day, for example, a copy of 'Project Magazine'[7] was left on my desk followed by an accommodative smile from the participant who had left it there. This was especially the case with freelance consultants in the PO who had come to position me in relation to Paula as my 'gatekeeper' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Through these interactions I would develop personal relationships with participants working in the PO. These relationships, as we will see, provided me with a level of 'access' to a kind of intimate knowledge (Rosen, 1991). With the benefit of reflection I consider the openness of these participants as a consequence of my status as an 'outsider', as someone who was detached from the 'front stage' politics of the organisation (Goffman, 1959). Nevertheless, their openness was also due to my apparent enthusiasm for a particular 'managerial' practice, their knowledge of which was considered by those working in the PO as a form of expertise (Rose and Miller, 2010).

Through becoming accustomed to my ascribed position as something of an apprentice I would consider my value in the eyes of others, sometimes subordinating my own subjectivity in the process. For example, I would be invited to engage in educational one to one discussions with PO participants. In these exchanges my conformity would rest upon my engagement with certain frameworks of reasoning through which to problematise the public sector and the organisational matters at hand. These problematisations sometimes took the form of a kind of 'othering' (Said, 1978), insofar as participants would describe the characteristics of others (the public sector, other departments in the organisation) whilst downplaying these characteristics within themselves. As the example below illustrates;

> We are doing this job [as project managers in the PO] because we understand that the computers are just tools to get the job done, and the job is done for the end user…This is our business focus, a customer focus, we can see that, and most people in the ICT department cannot (Permanent Project Manager, Field Notes, 08/02/2011)

Participants in the PO regularly constructed professional ideals through a discourse that would emphasise the 'business' and the sovereign 'customer' (Du Gay and Salaman,

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[7] 'Project Magazine' is a publication by the UK Association for Project Management (APM). See Chapter Two

1992). These linguistic devices would serve as key representations in describing what was considered to be appropriate professional conduct. Nevertheless, as the example above illustrates, problematising conduct would more often be in reference to a perceived lack of understanding in others. In contemplating these accounts the identity of participants would seem to rely less on the construction of a coherent narrative (cf: Giddens, 1991), and more in relation to that which it was not (Du Gay, 1996; Willmott and Alvesson, 2002). Through my struggle to locate 'identity' as some kind of homogeneous object of enquiry that 'belonged' to a given individual or group I would increasingly be drawn to the constitutive organisational (and social) discourses that seemed to provide a given 'identity' with its effect. Encouraged by discursive approaches to organisational research, the contingent nature of identity would become clearer as I would begin to gain a perspective on power (Foucault, 1982). Being exposed to how participants would problematise the field in different ways would refocus my attention on the organisational context at hand. Nevertheless, it would also have the effect of changing my view on my object of enquiry as I would begin to contemplate the discourses through which values and justifications about one's work were to hold true. As in the example above, the coherency of any established identity would seem to rely entirely upon that which it denied. I would begin to consider the problem of identity as something which cannot be fully constituted or 'accomplished', given that it is always and necessarily dependent on something already 'outside' of itself for its very existence (Du Gay, 1996). The plausibility of any given 'identity', then, would always imply power as constitutive through contingent and historical discourses. This perspective would mean that I would begin to view participants not as autonomous and 'rational' actors crafting their identities from their 'experiences', but instead as actors reasoning against a particular subjective and intersubjective web of beliefs about their actions (Bevir, 2010).

5.6 Academic 'Research as Government'

As I began to develop a more 'critical' perspective I reflected not only on the expectations of participants, but also my own expectations as a researcher. Although participants had 'written' me as a kind of apprentice I had also been partaking in a similar activity by attempting to force participants into comprehensible categories. For example, I had arrived with the category of 'project managers' in mind, yet this was destabilised by participants who sought to assert 'other' identities when I would attempt

to force the category upon them. As John stated when I addressed him with the project manager title;

> Project management is just project management, it's not the job it's the method to get the job done. I'm a security consultant, not a project manager (John, Freelance Project Manager, Field Notes, 17/02/2011)

These exchanges illustrated ambivalence towards the 'project manager' professional role (Hodgson, 2005; Hodgson, 2010b). Nevertheless, they also demonstrated that my research objective was embedded in practices of power. I had assumed that my categorisation of 'project managers' would be justified elsewhere, beyond the locale at hand. Yet having been amongst 'project managers' who rebuffed the professional label, I would begin to reflect upon the 'games of truth' (Foucault, 1988a) in which I was seemingly participating, potentially serving to promote contemporary PM as a bounded and privileged professional body of expertise. Influenced by my reading of critical work on the constructed and political nature of the PM profession (Hodgson, 2002; Hodgson, 2005; Muzio *et al.*, 2011a) as well as the role of expert knowledge as a relay for economic 'government at a distance' (Miller and Rose, 1990), I came to see my own subject area as part of a broader concern. With the awareness that my research practice may have the effect of delimiting the ways in which participants would be understood or would even conceive of themselves, I questioned my role in producing the particular subjects of our studies and the truths through which they would be understood. Questioning my own subject area would bring me closer to the perspective of governmentality as I began to place both my participants and I within a wider social and economic frame. In contemplating the effects of my own research practice, I would also begin to see that PM expertise was intervening to effect the ways in which subjects and objects would be 'written' and understood, as well as how subjects would conceive and address themselves as professionals.

5.7 A conversation between theory and data

As these themes became clearer I would question the professed neutrality of PM knowledge and practice. Instead of working purely in accordance with the reasoning of others I attempted to create a 'distance' from what had been established as socially shared frameworks of understanding (Alvesson, 2009). I came to see my research as being related to the more immediate character of my surroundings, in organisational

restructuring, budget cuts, staff reductions, and through the responsibilisation of contractors and staff. In seeing the public sector, the authority and participants as those governed 'at a distance' (Miller and Rose, 1990), my focus became centred on the role of PM as a key technology of power in this process, something that I would then consider to be 'everyone's business' (Fox, 2003).

As my work progressed I began to investigate the ways in which participants in the PO problematised 'the field', as well as their own professional selves. Through this mode of investigation I had begun to identify constitutive discourses that rendered both the authority and my participants (self-)governable in particular ways (Rose, 1999b). A focus in this sense was on how PM, as a technology of performance, related to and also appeared to 'enable' particular ideals of performance and professionalism for these participants. PM knowledge and practice did not only present itself as a 'standardised' managerial practice, but also an active mode of truth production that served to delimit particular configurations of success and failure. I was not only struck by the abstract and professed neutral character of PM knowledge and practice, but also its productive character in fashioning particular connections between professional practice and 'identity'.

In the second half of my period of work as a participant observer relations between freelance consultants in the PO and senior management had begun to break down. This led to the departure of my 'gatekeeper' in Paula, as well as other freelance consultants Darren and John for whom Paula had been responsible for recruiting. This group of freelance consultants had hoped that their contracts would be renewed for a second phase of the ICT investment programme (discussed in the next section). As we will see in Chapter 6, the field data that I collected at this stage emphasised this struggle, and served to illuminate the know-hows and 'games of truth' (Foucault, 1988a) through which it was contested. As Stephen, an ICT senior manager, later reflected;

> I think what happened there was, we brought the resource in [freelance consultants in the PO], didn't really integrate it very well and it became an 'us' and 'them' scenario. The people here, obviously they had the threat of redundancy hanging over them. . . They were very suspicious with these people coming in from outside and I think there was a lot of friction. . . I think because of the fact that they weren't integrated very well, that we didn't actually bring them and sit them with parts of the team, that they had this project office created. It did create this scenario (Stephen, ICT Head of Service, Interview, 17/08/2011)

After the departure of my principal 'gatekeeper' I remained at the authority for another three weeks and liaised instead with Giles who had taken over the management of the PO. At this stage my position as an ethnographer was less secure. Nevertheless, this change also seemed to confirm to others working at the authority of my independence. Up until this stage my analysis had not extended sufficiently into other areas by engaging with other groups working in the ICT unit. This was in part due to my position as an affiliate of freelance consultants and my primary interest in PM professionals. Furthermore, my placement took place during a period of considerable organisational change and uncertainty. Nevertheless, the relationship that I developed with Giles over this time (and subsequently senior managers) would allow for me to return to the authority at a later date to conduct focus groups with local government workers involved in a new project management organisational approach (discussed below).

Towards the end and shortly after my participant observation phase of research I planned and carried out eleven exploratory semi-structured interviews with project managers involved in the ICT investment programme, ICT senior managers, and the deputy chief executive. The interviews with project managers explored who they were as professionals and aimed to develop themes emerging with respect to their involvement in the ICT investment programme. These interviews also sought to confirm and reflect on data themes that had developed so as to shed more light on interpretations of events and situations that had taken place (Silverman, 2012). Interviews with senior managers and the chief executive explored how these participants aimed to manage (or govern) work at the authority, their thoughts on contracting out, restructuring, staff cuts, and their views on the ICT development programme. These interviews also explored the particular interpretative frameworks that were promoted, those through which employees (and freelance consultants) would be encouraged to understand the meaning and enactment of their work.

5.8 Reflecting upon the ethnographic phase and developing the study

After completing the initial participant observation and interview phase I reflected on the data I had gathered. I contextualised and historicised my data against a broader discursive background of responsibilisation and accountability concerning the 'new public management' (Hood, 2010) and 'advanced liberalism' (Du Gay, 1996; Du Gay, 2004; Rose and Miller, 2010). Furthermore, I sought to relate the discourses I had identified among participants 'on the ground' to the broader theme of liberal government and authority's strategic aims. I examined authority texts and documentation on corporate strategy, learning and development, training and partnerships (discussed below). This allowed for the analysis of the more or less intentional and strategic manner in which the authority and its workforce were being represented and problematised through liberal governmental discourses. This analysis also further illuminated PM and its associated rationalities as a form of government 'at a distance', and the manner in which particular 'project managing' subjectivities would be encouraged.

For the purpose of developing the research project but also in maintaining friendships, I remained in contact with participants from the PO that had left the authority in Paula, John and Giles. I also maintained contact with senior managers at the authority through email correspondence. In 2012 and in consultation with my advisors I planned a supplementary stage of data collection in order to expand the theoretical development of the study. A principle aim was to define variations with respect to different groups of participants involved in project management working at the authority and to progressively widen and test theoretical insights (Silverman, 2012). The first part of this data collection was carried out by conducting two focus groups at the authority with two different groups of local government workers, taking place in December 2012 and January 2013. The first focus group took place with a group of six permanent staff working in project management roles (project managers and business analysts[8]), and one took place with a different group of four permanent ICT staff members. At this stage both of these groups were working in a new 'flatter' and 'leaner' project management organisational structure based on a PRINCE2 design.

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[8] Whereas 'project managers' are principally concerned with the initiation, planning and delivery of a project, 'business analysts' ensure that a project meets the business demands of stakeholders. Often, however, these roles combine or are intertwined. Training in PRINCE2 is typically required for both roles.

The data collected in the initial participant observation and interview phase provided the theoretical direction with respect to the themes that were relevant for discussion, centring on how PRINCE2 and project working constrained and enabled work, and their experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns in regard to project managing and project working in the context of the authority (see Appendix III). The focus groups also enabled an exploration of how accounts were expressed, amended, opposed and altered through the intersubjective dynamics of the group (Barbour, 1999). For example, in the focus group with permanent project managers and business analysts, the presence of a management figure appeared to 'moderate' responses, insofar as this participant would emphasise the benefits of PRINCE2's interpretive schema at all levels when project managers made statements about it being 'overkill' and bureaucratic for smaller projects. In the second focus group with ICT staff, however, it would appear to be my own presence as a researcher that, in part, inadvertently 'moderated' responses. For example, when the subject of work intensification through projects came up, a participant stated that "people just aren't used to being harassed like that, and there is a lot of harassment, as it were". When I asked for an example, the participant responded by commenting "Oh I don't do it, I'm a model employee!" (Focus Group, 8/1/13). Clearly these were humorous responses, but they also illustrated limitations to my 'access', limitations that were likely related to an insecure organisational context and also my own position as a researcher: as one who had been liaising with 'management'. Nevertheless, despite these issues the focus groups undertaken at the authority served to extend the theoretical depth of the study by providing social situations and organisational perspectives that were different from those characteristic of the participant observation phase (Silverman, 2012).

A second aim of the supplementary phase of data collection was to conduct a focus group with participants who had left the authority, but who were closely involved in the ICT investment programme during the initial participant observation phase (two freelance consultants and one former permanent portfolio manager). The theoretical themes that had been developed in the participant observation phase once again provided the impetus for discussion, covering the role of PM in their work and the exploration of particular connections between professional practice and 'identity'. Conducting a focus group with these participants also enabled the amplification of research themes by confirming and refining interpretations of events that had taken place. Furthermore, it allowed for the examination of constitutive discourses of

professionalism over time and with respect to the theme of liberal governmentality. This exercise enabled theoretical saturation (Silverman, 2012) and further confirmed what was natural and important for these participants in enacting particular forms of professionalism as exemplary project managers.

A third aim of the supplementary phase, taking place in advance of the focus groups, was to investigate in more depth the manner in which PRINCE2 and project working was being encouraged at a more general managerial level at the authority. For this purpose secondary interviews were carried out with two ICT senior managers, the learning and organisational development manager for the whole authority and the ICT unit's portfolio manager (see Appendix II). Again this process served to broaden the scope of the study by undertaking a form of theoretical sampling that would develop generative themes into a more encompassing theoretical framework (Silverman, 2012). These interviews, in combination with the analysis of my field data and formal texts, would serve to reaffirm a complex governmental context and a vocabulary of autonomy and responsibility that we will begin to discuss towards the end of this chapter. Nonetheless, first, we must discuss the context of the ICT investment programme in relation to the authority's overall strategic aims, and with reference to a context of budget cuts, staff reductions and organisational restructuring.

5.9 The Authority in Context – The Business Transformation Agenda

The ICT investment programme that Paula had been contracted to manage had been set up following a performance review of the authority's ICT unit in the summer of 2010. Sanctioned and compiled by senior management the review had evaluated ICT infrastructure, systems, service provision, technical skills and project delivery capability. It included independent assessments from a multinational professional service firm and a multinational computer technology corporation. It also took stock of benchmarking assessments[9] against other local authorities in which the ICT unit's customer satisfaction levels had faired poorly. Senior management problematised the unit as lacking in the necessary 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' to meet business demands under pressure from central government reductions. The investment programme would thus install the technical infrastructure and encourage the project

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[9] Benchmarking assessments were carried out by The Society of Information Technology Management (SOCTIM), a professional association for ICT senior managers working in the UK public sector

approach necessary in moving towards a more 'proactive' and 'responsive' organisational model. This model would prioritise sharing information and sharing services and would encourage collaborative working across the organisation. It would also allow for the 'efficient' and 'effective' commissioning and delivery of services, thus making the authority more 'responsive' to its 'customers' whilst facilitating substantial efficiency savings (ICT Investment Programme Report, July 2010).

The investment programme would meet with the authority's business transformation aims outlined in June 2010 to promote "transformational change to the operating culture of the Council" (Transformation Service Plan, June 2010). This would involve a developmental focus in four areas: 'Human Resources', 'Learning and Organisational Development', 'Policy and Research' and 'Programmes and Projects'. The aim in this sense was to create a 'lean' organisation designed to empower 'customers' and 'communities' to "lead their own service delivery", at a level designed to "optimise efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness" (Corporate Plan, December 2010). In emphasising the active role of citizens, the authority was addressing its population not in terms of dependency or obligation, but instead through the responsibilisation of its 'customers' (Rose, 1999b). The business transformation agenda would encourage 'innovation' and 'enterprise' among citizens by 'empowering' civic responsibility in communities. In turn, this would reduce the dependency on public sector employment throughout the jurisdiction. As the Corporate Plan stated;

> We want economic growth for [the jurisdiction] and to rebalance the economy, in particular by reducing the reliance on the public sector. . .The Council will work in partnership with individuals and communities who are best placed to take responsibility for directly leading their own destinies. . .Ultimately, the aim is to give local communities the social intelligence they need to help identify what works for them and for them to have the power and wherewithal to address local issues themselves (Corporate Plan, December 2010)

For those working at the authority this would require that they become 'responsive' to the needs of their clients (Gleadle et al., 2008) by displaying ownership of policies, programmes and projects. They would also be required to engage in the authority's organisational development strategy designed to promote 'high quality' learning and development in order "to ensure that employee capability and conduct meets standards and the needs of service users" (Transformation Service Plan, June 2010). In this sense

the business transformation agenda would look to its staff to engage in its threefold vision under the headings of 'People', 'Systems' and 'Efficiency' (Corporate Plan, December 2010).

5.10 Budget cuts, restructuring and staff reductions

The need for organisational transformation had intensified following the news of impending budget cuts after the UK coalition government's 'emergency' budget in June 2010 (HM Treasury, 2010a) and the subsequent spending review by the treasury in October 2010 (HM Treasury, 2010b). During the period 2011/12, the authority's budget would be cut by a minimum of £45 million. Following this senior management had begun to invest hope in the new ICT infrastructure, given that it would reduce the number of staff required to maintain and support the old systems and would make staff available for redeployment or redundancy. In addition a staff restructuring programme was in process in early 2011 designed to streamline 'middle management' posts. As a communication to ICT staff stated;

> There are more than 70% of staff resources currently taken up with processes and maintenance which leaves less than 30% of staff devoted to the business transformation programme. With the recently announced capital injection the plan is to begin to stabilise the ICT infrastructure, improve processes and to transform the I.S. service from one that is reactive to one that is much more proactive. . .We need to implement a more proactive and flexible structure. We will be aiming over time to grow skills within the team and for us to focus much more on supporting the business to transform itself. . . Central Government cuts in overall public spending are having a profound effect on the Council's budgets. The above structure and investments will help us minimise the impact of these reductions on the service, but inevitably there is a need to resolve this financial issue that means we are facing the most significant challenges to the service in the short to medium term (Communication to ICT staff entitled 'Update on Potential Staffing Reductions', November 2010)

Despite expected efficiency savings staff reductions were inevitable across all services. In early 2011 a severance scheme was in place and voluntary redundancy was offered to those who qualified for it. Identifying potential candidates for redundancy would take place in combination with a restructuring programme through which all permanent members of staff in the ICT unit were required to re-apply and re-interview for their positions. Throughout the year from January to December 2011 the ICT unit reduced its workforce from 112 to 92. Following staff reductions senior management were

investing hope in restructuring so as to move away from a hierarchal organisational structure towards one of individual responsibilisation and 'empowerment'. The aim in this sense was to increase the level of managerial skills and competency at all organisational levels. As the Corporate Plan stated;

> We need to move away from a hierarchical, departmental structure that is driven by the needs of the organisation to one that is non-hierarchical where responsibility is devolved to individuals who are empowered to be proactive and work in an integrated fashion to deliver value to our customers. . .Our new approach recognises that it is not only directors and managers that can lead but that people at all levels can drive and support change. . .We need to ensure that all people in the workforce possess the competencies, management skills, knowledge and understanding of the key issues facing [the authority] (Corporate Plan, December 2010)

5.11 The Government of Project Managers

The authority's governmental programme was targeted towards mobilising the 'freedom' of staff in order to align self-governing capacities with organisational aims (Miller and Rose, 1990). All staff, it was said, could be 'proactive' and lead the management of change. In keeping with this strategy a key governmental technology for the business transformation agenda would be PM knowledge and practice in the particular variant of PRINCE2. Historically speaking the ICT unit had adopted PRINCE2 in order to become more accountable and visible with respect to centralised performance assessments under 'New Labour'. In this respect PRINCE2 was beneficial for the ICT unit in being 'seen' as implementing 'best management practice' in benchmarking assessments, as well as visualising work objectives and tasks for assessment through the Best Value programme (BV)[10]. As Eric, a permanent portfolio manager, commented:

> When we first came across it [PRINCE2] we'd been inspected in the ICT department by Best Value. . . and I think we got 'poor and unlikely to improve'. . . but then the guy stood up in front of invited people and explained why we got that. And his explanation was 'I know that's not really a reflection of your section but you can't prove it, you've got nothing to show me that tells me

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[10] See Chapter 1. 'Best Value' was part of New Labour's 'modernisation' agenda. It encapsulated a requirement for local authorities to deliver service quality in the most cost-effective way by sticking to the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Authorities were reviewed on whether this was achieved or not on a five year cycle.

anything different about it' And so we started to look at how we could demonstrate that to people (Eric, Portfolio Manager, Focus Group, 12/12/12)

PM knowledge and practice was thus initially addressed as a way to 'demonstrate' the ICT unit's performance in line with a specific governmental programme under 'New Labour'. Yet as Eric comments, it was not forced upon the department, but instead would gain appeal and relevance under particular circumstances, where Eric and his colleagues would be 'responsibilised' to actively engage with PRINCE2 as a means to manage their own, and the department's performance objectives.

Historically the authority as a whole had written and established its own PM methodology based on a PRINCE2 framework in collaboration with a local university business school as part of a local strategic partnership. The goal had been to "standardise the basic process for project management which will achieve consistency of approach and best practice across all services", and to assist "anyone who is asked to control and manage projects within [the authority] irrespective of their level of experience of project management and their service function" (Authority Methodology Document). However, as part of the business transformation agenda, and through being responsibilised for purchasing their own management expertise (Rose, 1996), the authority had begun to complement this methodology by outsourcing PRINCE2 training to a private training firm accredited through the UK's professional associated (APM). As Marcus stated;

> It's [PRINCE2] far more generic, far more appealing for the business. But why we use it is because it does give us a clear and consistent methodology which, you know, allows us to be very clear on the language and the approach that we're taking (Marcus, Learning and Organisational Development Manager, Interview, 17/10/2012)

Historically the ICT unit had been training staff involved in projects both in the authority's own methodology as well as in accredited PRINCE2 training when required. Nevertheless, throughout the 2011-2012 period the ICT unit significantly increased the amount of PRINCE2 training in preparation for a move to a more comprehensive project management approach. Stephen, an ICT senior manager, reported in October 2012 that thirty staff had been trained at 'practitioner' level, with the majority of the

remainder of ICT staff having been trained at 'foundation' level[11]. Nevertheless, as we will see, during the time of the ICT investment programme at the beginning of 2011, the level of 'awareness' of PRINCE2 knowledge and practice in the ICT unit would come under scrutiny from project management professionals working in the PO, and particularly freelance consultants (see Chapter 6).

With respect to the ICT investment programme it would be anticipated by those in the PO that PM knowledge and practice would provide much of the impetus for extending responsibility to lower levels of the organisation. The 'government' of those increasingly involved project work would not be coercive, however, but would instead involve attempts to persuade, motivate and encourage a more standardised and proactive workforce. Following the introduction of a new competency programme staff would be expected to adopt a 'proactive' approach to their work within a 'community of practice'. In part, the PO had been responsible for inculcating PRINCE2 as part of a general approach to project working, making the problem of government an active and technical form of rationalisation (Rose and Miller, 2010). As Marcus commented;

> So part of their role [those in the PO] was actually to help develop a project management methodology for [the authority] at a very low level which then moves into PRINCE2 and really co-ordinates that activity across the piece [the organisation], identify what we've called a community of practice. So, those who we've trained in project management or who are involved in projects, they can come together and share and develop themselves (Marcus, Learning and Organisational Development Manager, Interview, 07/10/2012)

Establishing a community of practice would serve to render ICT staff and their work more visible through an active engagement with PM knowledge and practice. Nevertheless, in the process those experienced with PRINCE2 would be encouraged to 'champion' the technology as 'proactive' educators in their own right. As Marcus continued;

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[11] 'Foundation' level PRINCE2 training consists of a short hour long exam to achieve an understanding of principles and interpretive schema. 'Practitioner' level is a longer two hour exam in which a candidate's ability to apply the method in a project scenario is assessed. 'Professional' (introduced in 2012) involves a two and a half day in situ assessment. APMG (2012) *PRINCE2 Certification*. Available at: http://www.apmg-international.com/prince2 (Accessed: 16/04/2014).

Part of this [bringing in a project management approach] is establishing the community of practice [and] we want all qualified PRINCE2 practitioners to be, if you like, the champions of that. And part of establishing the community of practice is that we recognise that, yeah, they may all have gone through the same [training] programme, but they all have varying levels in regards to their experience and exposure to small-scale complex project managements. So they become a mutual peer learning group, that they not only share their experience and support and develop each other, but they actually start the organisation to start to develop other tools that might be missing from that [project management] toolkit (Marcus, Learning and Organisational Development Manager, Interview, 17/10/2012)

Within the authority, then, economic government would be dependent on the aspirations of the authority's workforce to engage in PM knowledge and practice, and to meet with the moral obligations of organisational aims. These themes are expanded upon in Chapters 6 and 7. However, before doing so the final section in this chapter aims to explore the discursive strategies through which senior management sought govern ICT staff at authority (Miller and Rose, 1990). The aim in this sense is to investigate strategies of persuasion, incitement and motivation by which the "will to govern" (Rose, 1999: 5) took shape. Chapter 6 and 7 deals in more depth with PM knowledge and practice itself as a technology of governmental power.

5.12 Constructing the productive project worker

What they've got to realise is that if they [ICT staff] want there to be a strategic element to the organisation then they have to deliver more business benefit. . .The other thing is that people [ICT staff] get a totally insular view here. They get a total obsession with these people [contractors] who are walking in to take these jobs, and what I've said to them is...you bring contractors in and one of the objectives is so that when they walk away we are self-sufficient, in that we've learnt from them. . . the more skills and the more engagement with these people who have got the skills your skill set goes up, it makes you more employable when you go outside (Frank, ICT Head of Service, Interview, 17/08/2011)

As Frank speaks of self-sufficiency, learning, and employability he emphasises the possibility of self-realisation through gaining skills and knowledge from contractors. He attaches the productive capacities of the workforce to the 'private' aims of the individual (Du Gay, 1996). In requesting of his staff that they engage more with contractors, a willingness to improve one competencies relates directly to the possibility of economic freedom ('makes you more employable when you go outside'). In this

ethical framework, the conditions of freedom are outlined according to a logic of the 'private' individual (Miller and Rose, 1990). This relies upon a discourse of autonomy and independence to construct an image through which a staff member's advancement is realised through the knowledge and expertise of others. Articulated as a matter of government, Frank would expect that others 'embody' these ethics. As he commented;

> If they [ICT staff] could do it [the ICT investment programme] the contractors wouldn't have been here in the first place. And the view that 'they are getting more money', well yeah. And if you've got any sense, go and get the same job as them so that you are getting the money! Honestly Ewan, I've had this in a briefing. If I find anybody in my area talking negatively about the people I'm bringing in, because it's me that's bringing them in, I'll not be happy. They are here because we don't have the skills, and we need the resource [human resource] because we don't have the resource to deliver the business benefit. And people are getting a chance to up their skill sets. If they are thinking that is one way, they are sadly mistaken and they need corrective action (Frank, ICT Head of Service, Interview, 17/08/2011)

In this account Frank is again referring to an ethical principle through which the productive employee is obliged to take control of their own learning and education by engaging with contractors. 'Corrective action' does not refer to disciplining the individual directly but instead concerns an ethical obligation to exercise their employment responsibly. In turn, Frank is investing hope in the liberal premise that governing less will improve organisational performance (Burchell, 1996). As he went on to comment;

> What I tend to do and want to do is manage by exception, rather than micro-managing. I don't micro-manage anybody. I don't see the point in having people put in positions, and then not letting them get on with it. I'm a firm believer in team ethic, we are all in it together (Frank, ICT Head of Service, Interview, 17/08/2011)

Nevertheless, in making the statement 'we are all in it together' Frank is seemingly inverting his earlier statement about the possibilities of economic freedom in the notion of 'employability'. In this instance he is calling instead upon a discourse of corporation, one that emphasises the goal of the collective (the organisation) rather than the goal of the individual (the staff member). In this sense he is articulating what Rose calls 'political subjectivity', in that he is constructing different images of the productive subject within a 'plural field' (Rose, 1999: 178-179).

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Corporate themes alluding to the responsibilisation of staff were discussed in more subtle terms by the deputy chief executive, who emphasised that staff should not simply take 'responsibility' but that they should also become proactive and 'responsive' to the needs of their clients. As she stated;

> It's [governing staff] about talking about the culture that we want, about openness, and about respect, but about people taking responsibility for things. About not being risk averse, about, you know, wanting to encourage people to take initiative, and to, you know, suggest things and to go out and do stuff, and not just do the things because that's the way we always did them. Flexible, responsive, customer focused, absolutely key (Julia, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Interview, 20/04/2011)

'Respect' and 'openness' in this sense would point to the ethical obligation to understand the 'the customer' and become flexible and open towards the customer's needs. Yet in being 'responsive' there is also the notion of 'not being risk adverse' which implies ownership of one's own (pro)activities ('suggests things and goes out and does stuff'). This relates to what Du Gay (2008) identifies as the 'just do it' ethics of enthusiasm in public sector management, which he argues replaces bureaucratic forms of conduct in the name of innovation, risk taking and personal liberation.

For other ICT senior managers, however, constructing the productive employee would relate more directly to specific competencies that would index forms of personal conduct. For Stephen, part of a move to a more transparent project management approach[12] involved a particular form of self-recognition for ICT staff in relation to organisational aims. As he stated;

> But he [ICT staff member] now understands about, you know, his role in these projects is, you know, it's really key and he can't, he's got to plan his diary better. . . They [ICT staff] can actually see what their commitments are [through making visible project work]. Whereas again, before, it was quite, you know, we [had] a formal approach within the project teams, but in the resource teams that were underpinning the projects, they [ICT staff] were doing lots of other things. They'd just be making commitments in project management meetings, walking away from it and then the project manager would come and say, "Where's this bit of work you're supposed to be doing?". . . and that's [making work more transparent] been driven down. . . because they [ICT staff] now

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[12] The ICT unit had also invested in a shared computer system that made visible all project work electronically, thus enabling senior management to survey the status and progress of projects.

understand a little bit more about, you know, the PRINCE thing isn't, it isn't there just an overegg on them (Stephen, ICT Head of Service, Interview, 05/10/2012)

In Stephen's comment becoming more aware of commitments to projects would imply that ICT staff assume a greater level of responsibility in managing their own work ('he's got to plan his diary better'). Stephen emphasises the empowering nature this process insofar as making project commitments more visible provides a level of self-recognition in a network of responsibility and accountability ('They can actually see what their commitments are'). A key competency in this sense would be an ethical obligation to manage oneself, by engaging in processes of self-checking and self-referencing. Key behaviours for 'managing self' were formally outlined in the authority's competency framework authored by the learning and organisational development department. During interviews ICT staff would be required to provide evidence of proficiency in these competencies by providing examples. These competencies would also be used by senior managers and line managers in 'employee management processes' in which staff would be appraised on a yearly basis (Transformation Service Plan, June 2010). The two principle 'positive behaviour indicators' for 'managing self' were outlined as follows;

1. Demonstrates and models positive behaviour; empathy, adaptability, resilience and customer focus

2. Demonstrates a high level of self-awareness and commitment to reflection and personal development (Competency Framework, 2011)

These 'positive behaviour indicators' served to link corporate aims, 'the customer' and the personal development of staff together into one mode of ethical conduct. This would require of staff to become 'self-aware' according to specific organisational criteria. The learning and organisational development manager, Marcus, described how the particular competency of 'managing self' would be important for those involved in PM;

So if I'm the project manager, I understand about what the competencies for designing the business case. What about, you know, about data, what's going on and all that. But actually, there are some key behaviours that I need to demonstrate to myself. So actually, do I honour my commitments? If I say I'm

going to have a business plan by that day, do I get it done on time?. . .So, you know, those core competencies run throughout a project lifecycle and they are generic competencies for an individual. And just if that was a social worker going out to assess a child who would have social work competencies, they're no different from a project manager. . .am I demonstrating competence in my behaviour? Am I being consistent?. . . 'I've [the hypothetical project manager] just had a meeting, did I really turn out well?, did I really contribute well?, did I really give?', you know? So, it becomes the norm that we constantly reflect on all our actions and activities and become more self-aware (Marcus, Learning and Organisational Development Manager, Interview, 17/10/2012)

In this account Marcus links the 'key' competency of becoming more 'self-aware' to the practice of PM. 'Self awareness' thus involves a 'commitment to reflection' with regards to the personal development of staff. In this sense becoming more self-aware does not only orientate conduct in relation to the 'customer' or the 'community', but also in reference to the self. In this sense these competencies outline an appropriate mode of conduct for one's job as opposed to a particular method for performing one's job. This point was expanded upon by Marcus;

So, working with [departmental] managers to identify what the behaviours are that they're [project staff] not demonstrating that would make them deliver projects better. Are they able to establish effective relationships? Are they able to deal with authority outside of their immediate area of responsibility? Are they able to get people to work collaboratively?. . .We can give you the technical framework but, actually, there's some real behavioural things that you need to be a good project manager. . . And part of it [becoming a better project manager] is rather than just having kind of, you know, moving away from management by objectives and just setting tasks, having what we call 'competency conversations', explaining to staff how you want them to go about achieving that, not just what you want them to achieve (Marcus, Learning and Organisational Development Manager, Interview, 17/10/2012)

The authority's competency programme, then, can be considered as part of a governmental programme through which those involved in project work would be asked to contemplate themselves as moral subjects of their own actions (Foucault, 1983). In this sense Marcus outlines an expectation through which key technologies of the self outline appropriate conduct for self-managing project staff, designed to produce consistency in reporting in relation to organisation objectives Secondly, in maintaining a 'commitment to reflection' project workers are required to consider their own ongoing personal development as a project of the self (Grey, 1994). This outline of government,

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then, requires of those involved in PM to become more 'aware' of their own conduct within an more individualised network of accountability and responsibility. Throughout the rest of this thesis, we will expand on these themes. In the next chapter, however, we will address the case of PO participants as PM experts, and the particular governmental rationalities and practices of the self related to PM knowledge and practice for this group.

5.13 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has served as a broad empirical introduction to 'the field'. By placing the researcher's subjectivity among that of participants the chapter has attempted to describe the ways in which the present study emerged from ethnographic experiences and through a conversation between theory and data. This has allowed for the contextualisation of the development of the analysis and has served to develop a broad picture of the setting in which it took place. By contextualising a shifting organisational 'field' the chapter has attempted to depict a complex picture of both uncertainty and 'hope' in the government of the authority. By outlining the "will to govern" (Rose, 1999: 5) in official corporate texts and among senior management this chapter has sought to illustrate the particular governmental rationalities deployed to govern the conduct of those involved in project management rationalities. PM knowledge and practice gains appeal through a requirement for the demonstration of performance, and through discourses of independence, autonomy and ownership in an organisational context of employment insecurity and efficiency savings. Furthermore, PM knowledge and practice serves as an individualising technology of the self through which staff members are asked to affirm their commitment to organisational aims and 'the customer' by actively partaking in self-refection and self-checking. In Chapter 6 we will look more closely at the PM technology as an 'embodied' form of professional expertise. In this sense we will examine PM as a technology of power through which governmental agents affirm a sense of professionalism in the name of its truths. It is to this task that we now turn.

Chapter 6: Governing through 'awareness' and producing the truth of project management expertise

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the discursive strategies of PM professionals both in conversation and through the enactment of their expertise. For this purpose we will focus on participants that I have loosely categorised as 'PO participants': a group of freelance consultants and permanent project managers who were working in the corporate programme office (PO). Although freelance consultants and permanent staff members were subject to different employment and contractual arrangements, there were consistencies in the discursive strategies of these participants. As we will see, these participants described their professional histories in the private sector as management consultants, project managers and ICT managers as constitutive of their professional practice and self-understanding. They had significant experience in project management (PM) and PRINCE2 through delivering ICT transformational change projects and from management consultancy work in both private and public sectors. Some members of this group were also associated with the UK (APM) and US professional associations (PMI). This is also the group with whom I spent the majority of my time as a participant observer. The analysis that follows is thus the result of an effort to make sense of organisational and professional fields of power and meaning. Nevertheless, these themes cannot be addressed without reference to larger movements of what we might call 'politics' and 'economy': the nexus of governmental power that animates this research and through which both my participants and I are constituted as subjects (Miller and Rose, 1990; Du Gay, 1996; Rose, 1999b; Wray-Bliss, 2002).

In Chapter 5 a developmental discourse of responsibilised autonomy was identified among corporate materials and in the discursive strategies of senior managers. These discourses emphasised 'competence', 'proactivity' and 'responsiveness' in seeking to govern the conduct of productive subjects at the authority. These discourses were also accentuated amid an organisational context of significant budget reductions, organisational restructuring and employment insecurity. Against this background PO participants are addressed here as those closer to 'the centre' of this governmental regime: as those responsibilised for the development of the authority within a wider

frame of liberal economic government (Miller and Rose, 1990; Miller and Rose, 1995; Rose, 1999b; Rose and Miller, 2010).

The data analysed here derives from my fieldwork, subsequent interviews, and a focus group carried out with PO participants a year after the initial phase of participant observation (one of three focus groups undertaken). As we have discussed in Chapter 5, the purpose of this longitudinal analysis was to examine constitutive discourses of professionalism and self-understanding over time with respect to the emerging theoretical perspective of liberal governmentality. As experienced PM practitioners, however, there would seem to be little deviation in the subjectivities of these participants at different points in the data collection with respect to their 'professionalism'. Nonetheless, the longitudinal aspect of the analysis has allowed for the amplification of empirical themes relating to how professional knowledge and practice serves to 'produce' particular liberal subjectivities. In this sense what one is expected to be able to do, and what one is capable of doing, also frames 'who one is' (Willmott and Alvesson, 2002). These themes pertaining to a particular connection between professional practice and 'identity' will become more apparent as the chapter develops.

This chapter is organised into three sections. First, we begin by discussing PO participants as they sought to govern through their professionalism. A discourse of 'awareness' outlines an ethical obligation to recognise oneself within the frame of PM knowledge and practice and the obligation to recognise the self as producer and consumer of PM knowledge and practice. Second, we will go on to address the self-knowledge and subjectivity of PO participants in more depth as both 'the governor' and 'the governed' (Foucault, 1982). Discursive images of the self are constructed through discourses of professional independence, self-reliance and self-actualisation. Third, we address PO participants through the enactment of their PM professional expertise. In this final section we will analyse PM as a governmental technology that produces a form of expert knowledge deployed 'at a distance' to actively fragment and divide the organisational field in line with centralised strategic aims. Expert power, as we will see, is exercised through particular modes of truth production that technology gives effect to. The chapter concludes by summarising these findings.

6.2 Governing through 'Awareness'

For participants in the PO the "will to govern" (Rose, 1999b: 5) was referenced more explicitly to PM knowledge and practice itself. Nevertheless, consistent with the discursive strategies of senior management discussed in Chapter 5, problematising the productive subject was not articulated as a matter of hierarchical control. Rather, and as we will see, PO participants would articulate an expectation that others should govern and care for themselves as responsible and autonomous subjects (Burchell, 1996). Within this frame of reasoning an emphasis would be placed on the technology of PM as a means to evaluate and judge work tasks in relation to programme and project objectives. In turn, the authority's 'public' goals to drive efficiencies and encourage a 'proactive' and 'responsive' attitude towards 'customers' would translate into 'private' norms of calculation (Rose, 1999). PO participants stressed an importance that others should be 'aware' of the self-regulative principles implied in PM knowledge and practice. This requirement was characterised as the exercising of a kind of pastoral power (Moss, 1998). In this sense participants described their expertise in PM as a form of care, insofar as it would 'empower' others to envision themselves positively within a network of accountability. As John described;

> I'm teaching guys how to be work package managers. They're actually, really, the delivery staff, if you like. But, I'm teaching them how to become work package managers, and handle risk, and actually co-ordinate tasks, so that they're empowered and they've got control of them. . .they have a much better ability to see what is coming over the horizon. . . What we're doing is introducing a little bit more structure in there (John, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)[13]

In John's account PM knowledge and practice is seen to empower the productive potential of staff as they begin to make their own decisions, judgments and choices. This mode of governmental reasoning requires that staff become more accountable and responsible for their work through PM knowledge and practice. Discursive strategies for the autonomisation of conduct were reinforced through John's own self-narrative as he constituted himself as a competent and experienced project manager, and a "team player, not a manager or a bully" (Field Notes, 3/3/2011). During my time in the PO

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[13] John was referencing work he was undertaking in another authority, but relating this to questions and a discussion about the authority in question and his work during my time spent with him in the PO

John remarked that he "had the balls to jump from employment into contracting" (Field Notes, 22/2/2011) after becoming disillusioned with employment as a consultant for a professional services firm. John noted that he had become progressively frustrated in his previous employment due to "people undermining decisions, and changing direction after the project planning had been put in place" (Field Notes, 22/2/2011). A move to freelance project management was thus posed through a discourse of self-actualisation, a process by which John was seen to recognise his individual potential made effective through an investment in his professional expertise. Having invested in, and thereafter seemingly benefiting from these career choices, John identified with the self-empowering potential of managing projects and emphasised the liberating characteristics of his work. Among PO participants this rationality seemed to function as a kind of pastoral power insofar as principles of awareness would be referenced to the general wellbeing of all, whilst also emphasising the benefits of self-reliance (Foucault, 1982). Nevertheless, for PO participants a satisfactory level of 'awareness' of PM's interpretative schema had been lacking in the ICT unit. This was a point of frustration for PO participants with respect to the delivery of the ICT programme and project objectives. Thus, a discourse of empowerment for the 'wellbeing' of others would at times become confused with the 'successful responsibilisation' of others in line with strategic objectives. In this sense governing would stop short of a requirement for 'high level' proficiency in PM knowledge and practice, and instead a requirement would be made for a low level of 'awareness' of PM's underlying principles. Paula, for example, described the ethical obligation by which others should be 'aware' of PM's interpretative schema;

> As long as you have a certain level of awareness, to know what's expected and to know how to interpret the information that you get from it, you don't need to have an organisation of experts. You need to have an organisation of awareness... of people with awareness (Paula, Freelance Programme Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

A discourse of 'awareness' would illustrate that the accountability that PO participants expected from others was of a particular character, insofar as they were seeking to align judgements and ambitions through a common mode of representation (Miller and Rose, 1990; Rose and Miller, 2010). The deployment of this system of shared 'intelligibility' (Burrell, 1988) would mean that the organisational world would become visible and 'knowable' in such a way that it would become subject to expert evaluation and

intervention. PO participants would depend on PM knowledge and practice as a means by which to inscribe and translate their ambitions. Nevertheless, they would also expect that others recognise the status and formality of inscriptions by having 'awareness' of their significance and truth. This meant that success would come to be defined according to the degree to which this network of rule was aligned accurately, and through which pre-defined objectives would be rendered future proof. Paula, for example, reiterated the PM cannon of 'completed as defined' when I asked her to define what she meant by 'success';

> Completed as originally defined. . .and that's probably one of the fundamentals. You need to define what it is you're trying to deliver. Most people who are running projects, unless they understand something about project management academic practice; they don't define what they're trying to deliver at the outset of the project. So, you can never measure your success if you don't know what it was you were trying to deliver (Paula, Freelance Programme Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

'Awareness', then, does not explicitly refer to an awareness of the changing status of a project, but points instead to a recognition of the truths inscribed in predefined objectives that are codified in PM knowledge. 'Success' is the satisfactory technical codification of expert knowledge in alignment with the expectations of others. For this mode of government to become effective, it would thus depend upon the degree to which PM knowledge and practice would 'empower' others to share interests and to 'see' the organisational world as rationalised through it. This is what John alludes to above through the notion of teaching others to 'see what is coming over the horizon'. Staff are thought to gain a sense of security by affirming their place in the organisational network, responsible for the security and delivery of their own decentralised units of management (Townley, 1994a). By emphasising extended responsibility, PO participants aimed to tie the local interests of staff to the 'distant' ('over the horizon') interests of economic government to which their own accountability lay in closer proximity (Rose, 1996). 'Awareness' in this sense points to a set of discursive conditions by which alignment is to be achieved, conditions in which codified values and interests can be successfully 'translated' into the self-managing judgements and aspirations of others.

In the wider context of the authority governing through an 'awareness' had not been straight forward. Speaking as a permanent portfolio manager, Giles bemoaned cultural barriers understood to have been preventing staff from taking on responsibility within a PM framework. Giles had returned to the public sector after five years working for a professional services firm, explaining that this move was down a requirement for a stable location and secure employment (although he also spoke of the 'risks' to his local authority employment). He constituted himself as a public servant responsible for the improvement of organisational performance and the successful deployment of PM knowledge and practice. Through a discourse that referenced the 'sovereign customer' (Du Gay, 1996) Giles commented that "some people would say that the council tax payer isn't a customer, it's government, but I think it's the council tax payer that is actually the customer" and further that, "the best value for that customer is most important, and how do you do that? Well, you make the decisions, get things done right first time, reduce expenditure. A lot of that has been enforced, obviously, significant savings" (Interview, 5/5/2011). Through this mode of reasoning Giles expected that others should develop enterprising relations to the self so as to maximise their self-worth as responsible and customer focused public servants. In relation to his work at the authority he described attempts to inspire ICT staff to recognise this kind of responsibility through making work activities visible and measurable within a PM framework. As he commented;

> . . .they [ICT project staff] couldn't grasp the concept, and then we had great battles about taking responsibility. . .and actually showing them that they have responsibility. . . There was a particular individual…got very irate because the insistence was that they weren't required to be responsible for the documentation because it was produced by someone else. Now, why it's produced by someone else is not relevant, because they were responsible. In PRINCE2, they were responsible for the documentation, so therefore, if someone else has produced it, they're still responsible, but they couldn't get that, there was great resistance (Giles, Permanent Portfolio Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

Giles interprets this situation in reference to his knowledge of PM and its governmental principles of responsibilised autonomy. When these principles are disputed, he does not seek to discipline staff. Rather, as a matter of liberal government he problematises the 'rational' capabilities of staff members ('they couldn't get that… they couldn't grasp the concept'). In Giles' depiction becoming aware of one's responsibilities within a PM frame is synonymous with becoming more knowledgeable about one's potential to

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manage oneself responsibly ('showing them that they have responsibility'). By problematising conduct according to PM knowledge and practice, the issue of control is depoliticised and reframed to resemble a pastoral power in which organisational activities are administered for their own sake ('why it's produced by someone else is not relevant'). Giles' knowledge of PM and his problematisation of ethical conduct are thus implicated in each other. Knowledge and power interconnect as these processes of subjectification outline recognisable and recurrent organisational roles (Clegg and Courpasson, 2004). As one comes to know oneself as 'responsible for the documentation', one also becomes more knowledgeable and responsible with respect to collaborative working through PM knowledge and practice. The interplay between power and knowledge constructs a 'proper place' within which staff are encouraged to make it their own (Du Gay, 1996). 'Free subjects' become appropriately aware when they 'invest' in a set of power relations by which the truths they are held accountable to are determined by other more knowledgeable actors.

Governing through an ethics of 'awareness' would relate to the more encompassing liberal discursive strategies articulated by senior management discussed in Chapter 5. Corporate discourses sought to reframe employment insecurity as 'employability' and emphasised the ethical obligation that one should be responsible for one's own personal development and managerial education. When viewed as a liberal rationality, such discursive strategies serve to conceal the unstable relationship between employment and economy (the threat of staff reductions) by superimposing the logics of consumption and production so that they are implicated in each other. The blurring of these spheres poses an image of the productive subject as an autonomous individual who is made responsible for the marketisation of their employment (Miller and Rose, 1990; Du Gay, 1996). 'Awareness', then, is not simply a matter of becoming aware of PM's interpretive schema, but also points to an awareness of particular organisational conditions as an individual consumer and producer of managerial competency. Governmental power in this sense is exercised through self-governing economic subjects required to utilise their conditions of freedom in particular ways. As a form of professional expertise, PM exercises its power through the promise that it will 'empower' subjects to 'know themselves' (Foucault, 1988b) as active, productive and responsible subjects (Miller and Rose, 1995). As we will see below, this liberal governmental rationality can be addressed as a political rationality insofar as it

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concerned matters about the principles to which government ought to be addressed (Rose, 1996). It is to these professional principles and ideals that we now turn.

6.3 Project Managing the Self

> An ethic of how one is governed is also an ethic of how one governs others, of how one governs oneself (Rose, 1999b: 283)

In this section we will explore in more depth the subjectivity and self-knowledge of PO participants as knowledgeable and professional project managers. As the chapter has begun to demonstrate, both permanent staff and freelance consultants working in the PO positioned themselves at the 'business end' of organisational matters and would draw upon professional discourses as constitutive of their practice and self-understanding. In this sense PO participants positioned themselves as those at the forefront of the authority's development strategy and would appear to 'embody' many of the ethical obligations that senior managers sought to encourage in staff. Nevertheless, the status that PO participants held did not mean they were simply governing others according to liberal discourses of responsibilised autonomy. Rather, as both 'the governor' and 'the governed' they were both subjects of power as well as the vehicles through which power would be exercised (Foucault, 1982). In this sense discourses pertaining to 'awareness' would not only be referenced to the conduct of others, but would also correlate with PO participant's own conduct and self-understanding as professionals.

James, for example, speaking as a permanent project manager, constituted himself as a responsible and proactive member of staff, and would reference his previous experience as an ICT manager for a pharmaceutical firm as constitutive of this self-understanding. In this sense James commented that his work at the pharmaceutical firm had involved "considerable pressure there, to get it right" (Interview, 10/5/2011) in being responsible for ICT systems vital for the large-scale manufacture of pharmaceutical goods. James stated that this kind of learned responsibility "feeds into project work here [at the authority], because you are always, sort of, looking to see where, you know, where the plates are dropping off" (Interview, 10/5/2011). James also explained that his peers thought that he "wouldn't be able to handle" (Interview, 10/5/2011) working in the public sector, indicating that he considered these learned modes of responsibility and proactivity to be constitutive of his professionalism. Following this narrative, James

addressed himself as being responsible for changing and developing the organisational culture at the authority. As he stated;

> It's a fairly sort of meaty type of area which I work in [managing transformational ICT projects]. That in itself is interesting and sort of self-generating. . .There are a lot of elements to it, it's not just, sort of, fix or mend, it's development, change the culture, it's, you know, bringing new stuff in. . .and I suppose from when I used to work for private industry it used to be sort of maintaining the competitive edge (James, Permanent Project Manager, Interview, 10/5/2011)

As James describes the nature of his work he expresses optimism at orientating his work towards 'development' and 'change'. James also appears to identify with the authority's corporate discourse of 'proactivity' and 'responsiveness' ('it's not just fix or mend') and links this to the ways in which his work has generated a sense of self ('self-generating'). For James, these principles of self-generation would also translate into principles for appropriate action. This was evident in the ways in which James problematised both himself and others as moral subjects of their own actions (Foucault, 1983). As the following comment illustrates;

> Even this morning it [the culture of the organisation] was frustrating. We had an area where we have to sort out the security for a particular application, and I go and see our good friend [ICT staff member] downstairs and it's just, you know, hands up in horror, you know, 'no no no'! And I'm thinking, oh god, we don't need this. And yet you come upstairs and [after talking to project managers in the PO, they respond with] 'yeah, yeah we've got a problem here, what are the solutions? Let's have a look at them all, let's go through them', you know? Let's find out... You've got your negative 'can't be done, don't want to do it, why are you even suggesting it'. . . And there is sort of the other attitude, 'well yes, we realise that it is a business necessity, how can we help the business without comprising the security?' (James, Permanent Project Manager, Interview, 10/5/2011)

Through the phrase 'how can we help the business' James not only describes a form of reflexive practice but also points to a mode of ethical conduct by which to practice this reflexivity. Proactively problematising tasks according to the needs of the business is considered as the means by which to care for organisational needs as well as oneself as an active professional. A negative attitude in this sense constitutes a refusal to govern oneself responsibly with respect to business, and thus organisational needs. Correspondingly however, James constructs an image of 'the business' as a quasi-

natural body for which the well-being of all depends. Nevertheless, this representation contradicts the discursive strategies of senior management discussed in Chapter 5, emphasising that staff cannot depend on the business for their employment security. 'The business' in this sense does not secure the collective well-being of all of those obliged to respect it. Rather, in order to solidify employment prospects one is obliged to think in more proactive ways in order to align with the ascribed self-managing subject. For example, this may involve enacting appropriate responses and being seen to 'own' business needs through PM knowledge and practice (discussed later in this chapter).

For other PO participants, however, discourses pertaining to responsibilised autonomy would seem to translate into matters of self-actualisation and self-respect. Darren, speaking as a freelance project manager having been contracted to the public sector for the first time, described how his participation with staff and senior management had involved a struggle for a common mode of understanding. Despite sympathising with the plight of staff at the authority, this struggle seemed to encourage Darren to construct an identity in opposition to those working at the authority as a constitutive 'other' (Said, 1978). In this way Darren would call upon discourses of self-reliance and independence, posed in contrasting terms to what he had encountered. For example, Darren expressed puzzlement at principles of action understood as attempts to secure employment at the expense of the sovereign 'customer'. As he commented;

> You've got a culture that is being indoctrinated, to protect your job, protect your pension, protect everything around you. And the customer? It's like 'bloody pain, how dare you phone up and complain that, you know, we haven't picked the rubbish up today'. . .It's not respectful to other people, it's not respectful to the customer. You kind of wonder, well, why are you there to do that job? (Darren, Freelance Project Manager, Interview, 5/8/2011)

As Darren problematises the culture at the authority his interpretation implies that orientating one's actions in relation to the 'customer' provides a sense of purpose. Focussing on protecting one's employment security, however, does not provide this sense of purpose because it detracts attention from customer needs. An individual who does not orientate towards the customer does not sufficiently know him or herself as a worthy productive subject ('why are you there to do that job?'). Through Darren's articulation, the customer and one's sense of professional self are implicated in each

other. Professional self-understanding is not to be found in relations of dependency, but is instead considered to be a matter of self-care as a free and active professional (Rose, 1999b). During my time at the authority Darren would also comment upon the culture as being "difficult to change" and that "if it's not something they [staff] are used to, it causes problems" (Darren, Field Notes, 03/2/11). Furthermore, he also problematised the general management of authority by stating "you cannot continue to waste money", and "people don't question protocol, it's all too easy if you work in the same place for five to ten years" (Darren, Field Notes, 01/2/11). By constructing an identity in relation to that which it was not, these discursive strategies presented Darren as a responsible and proactive professional. Through this narrative, Darren also described his work as a means to actively care for and generate respect for himself. As he stated;

> I don't like to think of it as work, I like to think of it as learning, changing, developing. I'd rather make a difference. The idea of a 9-5 job bores me, even saddens me. I was lucky enough to have great mentors. People who would approach me, get everything out of me and would shape me into a self-respecting guy (Darren, Freelance Project Manager, Field Notes, 8/2/11)

In this account Darren constructs a self-image through a narrative of self-development. He describes his working life as something of a project, articulating a process by which he has come to have respect for himself ('self-respecting guy'). 'Making a difference' is seen to be dependent on investments in capabilities and work experiences ('learning, changing, developing'). Furthermore, activities of work and leisure flow together and complement each other ('The idea of a 9-5 job bores me, even saddens me'). In this example power would seem to be working through Darren's self-knowledge as he comes to recognise himself according to his accumulative and individual potential (Gordon, 1991). Indeed, this was a power that Darren acknowledged, stating that his time working for a multi-national manufacturing firm had shaped his professional conduct. In this sense he emphasised a mode of thought and practice orientated towards the 'sovereign customer' (Du Gay, 1996). This, he stated, had provided an all-encompassing interpretative framework for his working life;

> The customer is king. Get it right first time. . .It's indoctrinated into you. Everything you do you are thinking that the customer is king. Everything you do you remember that you are customer and they are the customer. . . If I am trying to sell you [a product], you are my customer from the point of view [that] you want something from me, but I want something from you. I want your money so

> I can go and make more [products]. And it's, really, it's always, every time you doing something, every meeting you sit in (Darren, Freelance Project Manager, Interview, 5/8/2011)

Through Darren's comment 'every time you do something' he points towards the seeming universality of this logic. Yet additionally, he is pointing towards the meaning that this mode of reasoning has provided in coming to understand himself as an active and independent professional. This self-understanding was emphasised further as Darren identified his work as the primary vehicle for his independence. Notable in this sense were accounts of more intimate personal relationships, articulated as coming second to his working life. As he commented when I asked him about his work-life balance;

> Let's put it this way. I would say from my mid-20s to mid-30s I probably went through more girlfriends saying 'your work is more important than me', bar one, and she liked the freedom. She thought it was great that I was around sometimes and then not around for ages. I don't know what that says about me and what that says about her. . . It wasn't that you consciously thought about it [work being the priority], it's just that you didn't form a relationship that was going to go a long time. You went with fickle, enjoyable relationships (Darren, Freelance Project Manager, Interview, 5/8/2011)

The above account draws on a discourse of autonomy and independence to emphasise Darren's relation to his work as his primary mode of self-understanding ('your work is more important than me'). These themes are emphasised in the way in which Darren is seen to make lifestyle choices ('You went with fickle, enjoyable relationships'). Indeed, discourses of independence and autonomy were called upon by other freelance consultants in the PO. Permanent PO participants at times identified with themes of independence, whilst citing reasons such as a desire for stable work and less travel as motives for moves into the public sector. Nevertheless, for freelance consultants, professional self-understanding would involve notions of freedom and independence, often described in relation to careers as adventurous journeys and as vehicles for continual learning. As John commented;

> There must be certain character traits that make a contractor. I was always left alone to do my own thing, so was everyone I know who was successful that I went to school with. The school I went to was basically at grammar school level, there was no entrance criteria, but it was a wealthy area, and graduates

went to Oxford, UCL, Cambridge. I had a completely different upbringing to the kids I hung around with. Normal kids would play sports or something, but I went around with my dad on the back of his motorbike, always meeting people, always talking to new people, going up to Scotland etc. As a youngster I was introduced to lots of environments and lots of different people (John, Freelance Project Manager, Field Notes, 22/2/11)

In this account John's self-image is constructed around the notion of a norm from which he is seen to differ ('normal kids would play sports or something'). Themes of freedom and independence are articulated as being constitutive of John's self-development. Through this narrative freedom and independence appear synonymous with success ('I was always left alone to do my own thing, so was everyone I know who was successful'). In this sense John's description of a liberal and 'free' existence is exhibited as the conditions for this success. Nevertheless, during periods of time that were seemingly more stressful for those in the PO, and when senior management were thought to be undermining programme and project decisions, freedom came to be defined according to a kind of stoical ethics of disciplined professionalism. At this point Paula, for example, explained how her chosen lifestyle as a freelance consultant meant that other aspects of her life were lacking. Importantly, however, she also described how this lifestyle gave effect to a kind of defensive mode of professional self-understanding. As she stated;

> Everyone is living away from home, working ridiculous hours for one cause, your life is taken away from you, so your relationships [with colleagues] are like a big family, with all sorts going on. It's not like a 9-5. . .You tend not to get thanks or praise [working as a contractor], you are a commodity. . . When someone tells you have done a great job, I am normally really surprised. Part of the defence mechanism is that you always do a good job anyway. . . You have to have a level of professional arrogance [being a contractor], because there is no support mechanism around you such as a line manager, or HR department, or a peer group that has surrounded you for years (Paula, Freelance Programme Manager, Field Notes, 22/2/11)

Paula's account would appear to suggest that her working life has come to shape almost all aspects of her life ('your life is taken away'). She also constructs an image of herself as a commodity, explaining that her professional practice relates directly to her self-understanding as an autonomous productive subject ('When someone tells you have done a great job, I am normally really surprised'). Paula also describes how her work

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involves the formation of social bonds as her work and leisure become intertwined ('like a big family'). Through constructing a self-image as a somewhat isolated yet dedicated professional engaged in practices of control, a particular 'defensive' professional mentality is seen to be made effective. Within this rationality the economic appears to begin to morph the social (Du Gay, 1996) as Paula's relations of self are constructed around self-governing practices of productivity. Indeed, during a more reflective moment, Paula explained how the distinction between her professional and social life had become hazy. As she stated;

> It's hard not to see personal and work relationships in the same light. Conversations are business like, even if they are friendly and informal. It's hard to get out of the mode of 'what can I get out of this? what is at stake here?' I'm so used to having social engagements that are a necessity for my work and not for enjoyment that the lines become blurred sometimes (Paula, Freelance Programme Manager, Field Notes, 17/2/11)

In this example Paula seems to be describing practices of the self that are indicative of both an enterprising mentality ('what can I get out of this?') and also a kind of judicial mentality ('what is at stake here?'). Through the blurring of the social and the professional self-government comprises of practices of calculation whereby both work and social relations are subject to assessments about potential gains and losses. In this sense Paula constructs an image of the 'enterprising self', whereby logics of 'enterprise' and 'defensibility' are seen to become interconnected (Gordon, 1991; Rose, 1999b). Viewed as a mode of self-government, this would indicate that one's own sense of security, whether in social or economic spheres, is intimately tied to one's professional practice. Managing the self in this sense strikes a remarkable correlation with managing projects. The mixture of enterprising and judicial mentalities can be reasonably correlated with PM canons such as 'benefit realisation', 'value creation', 'opportunities', 'efficiency', applicable not only to projects but also to oneself (see Chapter 2). Regarded as relations to self, one becomes accountable less so to established authority (such as senior managers) or to the 'public', but instead to one's constitutive professionalism. Becoming accountable to the self as an autonomous project manager renders one accountable to one's own professional expertise, to specific rules of the game that one 'invests' in. It would thus seem that a discourse of 'awareness', when viewed in terms of practices of the self, points to a need to deploy the rules of game by which one's own professional sense of self is secured.

The more 'personal' nature of this form of accountability would be evidenced further through Paula's narrative as she described her life as a contractor, stating that there was "no appeal in long term work relationships" and that, "I don't suffer fools gladly, I generally find that I lose respect for my bosses" (Field Notes, 22/02/2011). Indeed, together with other freelance project managers, Paula expressed indifference towards permanent employment, stating that her experience with a management consultancy firm had become unfulfilling owing to personality traits of being "extraordinarily independent" and having "a low boredom threshold" (Field Notes, 22/02/2011). These discursive strategies posed an image of Paula as a determined, independent, and intelligent professional. Indeed, in coming to know Paula I would support these identity claims. Nevertheless, project management knowledge and practice, in constituting subjects as individually responsibilised for projects (or contracts), would seem to encourage a particular form of 'accountability' in relation to the self. This appears as a form of accountability that one 'invests' in so as to manage one's sense of security as well as one's professional autonomy. Such 'project management' mentalities were also observed in John's account of his career;

> You are always trying to read the line, plotting the event horizon in risk management terms. If you are feeling a bit low and down, it will make you feel incredibly insecure. If you are feeling great it doesn't affect you. I'd say in reality it's somewhere in between the two (John, Freelance Programme Manager, Field Notes, 22/2/11)

John describes a practice by which he adopts PM know-how ('risk management terms') to problematise his career, describing a mixture of optimistic and insecure feelings associated with this process. As we have discussed in Chapter 2, risk management is defined in PM knowledge not only as the identification of 'uncertainties', but also as the identification of 'opportunities' (OGC, 2009). Applied to one's career this can be understood as an attempt to govern one's own future, effectively constructing one's career as a 'managed' project of the self (Grey, 1994). The insecurity and anxiousness that John describes seems to fuel the demand for a more radical and pervasive means by which to manage and inscribe career interests. In this sense risk management acts as a "mechanism of security" (Gordon, 1991: 20) by which John comes to address himself and his career as a matter of economic government. He becomes 'empowered' by actively governing threats and opportunities in regard to his productive potential. Governmentality in this sense is 'eternally optimistic', characterised by the

identification of failure followed by attempts to 'programme' reality more effectively (Miller and Rose, 1990). The more that John's considers that his career may be threatened, the more 'risks' there are to be identified and 'managed'. The disciplining of one's future according to a logic of risk becomes an active and 'empowering' mode of 'writing' and truth production. One's autonomy in this sense is represented as having the capacity to accept responsibility and take control of one's life (Du Gay, 1996; Rose, 1999b). It is with these thoughts that we now move on to the next section of this chapter, and an exploration of the production of truth through project management expertise.

6.4 Producing the Truth of Project Management Expertise

> The power of strategic calculation lies in its ability to divide, collate and classify. However, it is precisely through this analytic fragmentation that it loses sight of what it claims to represent. In seeking to grasp the 'Real', strategy manages instead to construct a 'reality' (Du Gay, 1996: 90)

The final two sections of this chapter aim to analyse the ways in which participants working in the PO, and in particular freelance consultants, deployed PM expertise in context. We have already discussed a discourse of 'awareness': the obligation to recognise oneself as a responsible and 'empowered' subject within the frame of PM knowledge and practice. In the context of the authority 'awareness' also refers to discourses of responsibilised autonomy and an ethical obligation to address oneself as a consumer and producer of managerial competency. Furthermore, we have also begun to explore the self-knowledge and subjectivity of PO participants as responsibilised and autonomous professionals. This has provided a more nuanced understanding of the discourses that served to render the authority and PO participants knowable and (self-)governable in certain ways. The seemingly individualising character of these discursive strategies are located among discourses of independence and self-reliance. Following this, we will look more closely at PM expertise working through PO participants and the strategies that are involved in the exercise of its expert power.

Commentators have illuminated that PM professional expertise engenders a more reflexive form of professional self-discipline (Hodgson, 2002). Nevertheless, it is argued here that this reflexivity also constitutes a form of 'self-government' insofar as it encourages the production of particular truths by which success and failure come to be

defined. During my time in the PO I was struck by the persistency of auditing taking place. For project managers defining one's objective would seem to be equally if not more important than delivering it. Phrases such as 'always get sign off', 'flag waving', 'auditability of the project' and 'the only thing that matters is getting the job done' would constitute fundamental rules of engagement for those in the PO. Professionalism in this sense seemed to be governed by an obligation to document and inscribe every decision and every action taken. As Darren stated in reference to his experience in delivering projects;

> Unless you've got what you are going to do written down very carefully, walls around it, to deliver that, then otherwise you are kind of on a hiding to nothing. . . Because, unless they [the client organisation] know where the boundaries are, what they are to deliver as they go down, it nearly always fails (Darren, Freelance Project Manager, Interview, 5/8/2011)

Through these practices of inscription the PM nostrum of 'completed as defined' would appear to take on a life of its own. PO participants would appear to depend upon calculative practices in order to govern in the name of its expertise, thus becoming empowered as those 'in the know' about their projects. This could be observed as a kind of policing power as PO participants aimed to safeguard the survival and preservation of projects from the moment of definition to the moment of delivery. The phrase 'walls around it' in this sense would carry multiple connotations, referring not only to defining project objectives but also in regard to a sense of professionalism. For example, during my time at the authority weekly departmental project meetings would take place between PO participants and senior managers. These meetings were entitled 'project meetings' and were designed to assess progress and/or lack of progress with respect to the ICT investment programme (see Chapter 5). During one of these meetings, the subject of strike action against cuts in staff, pay, and conditions was raised as a possible 'risk' to project delivery. As the extract below illustrates;

> Giles, Permanent Portfolio Manager: We wondered if we should be putting the risk of strike action as part of our overall risk log. Any thoughts, anybody?
>
> Frank, ICT Head of Service: Is that something that's gossip at this point in time or have we got some fact?
>
> Giles, Permanent Portfolio Manager: The only fact I've got is what was pinned on the wall in the kitchen.

Paula, Freelance Programme Manager: I suppose the question is, is it a risk? So, it may still only be gossip or hearsay, but if it's a risk to the organisation...

Giles, Freelance Project Manager: Or to the programme…

Paula, Permanent Project Manager: Or to the project...

Stephen, ICT Head of Service: Is that a national strike?

Giles, Permanent Project Manager: I don't know. It hasn't been balloted yet.

Frank, ICT Head of Service: That's what I'm saying. It's like, are we going to react if someone comes to me tonight and says 'the world is coming to an end', do we say that is a risk? I just find like a bit at this point in time, really…

John, Freelance Project Manager: I think there's a. . . there's a big potential for it. There is a big potential for fuel strikes as well.

Stephen, ICT Head of Service: Have we not have something in there anyway in place for risk in terms of staff being unsettled because of the restructuring?

Giles, Permanent Project Manager: Yeah.

Stephen, ICT Head of Service: I mean, is it not just an extension of that risk?

Frank, ICT Head of Service: I'd be happier with that than just reacting because somebody pins something on a notice board in some obscure kitchen ('Project Meeting', 15/2/2011)

The example above illustrates a point at which PM professional expertise is subject to scrutiny by senior management. It is important to note that this was a time when relations between senior managers and freelance consultants in the PO had begun to break down. As programme manager Paula had earlier commented that senior managers felt threatened by her professionalism "simply because I have an answer and an audit for everything I do" (Field Notes, 10/2/2011). However, this makes this interaction even more interesting insofar as it illustrates how this struggle was negotiated through competing principles of action about the appropriate application of managerial knowledge. PM expertise is deployed here in an attempt to problematise strike action as a possible 'risk' to project delivery. If it were to be 'successfully' deployed in this instance, those undertaking strike action would be subject to a more prevalent form of surveillance 'at a distance'. By inscribing strike action as a 'risk', PM professional expertise works to constitute those involved in such action as potentially 'risky' individuals (Rose, 1999). In this sense PM is inadvertently serving in the role of relay between the political ambitions of economic government and the ambitions of PO participants (Miller and Rose, 1990). It demarcates interests by constituting its

practitioners as 'proactive' subjects of responsibility, echoing the modes of self-government that senior management aimed to cultivate in staff (see Chapter 5). Proactively identifying threats to projects amounts to securing the performative interests of the ICT investment programme whilst excluding those undertaking strike action as 'the usual suspects' (Rose, 1999). In this sense PM's governmental power constitutes a particular form of individualised responsibility, operating to fragment and hierarchise the organisational world.

Nevertheless, as is illustrated in the meeting example, securitising project delivery is also dependent upon the principles that others (in this case senior managers) attach to PM professional expertise and the appropriate level of 'proactivity' to be applied in rationalising the field. This example, then, also illustrates a complex set of power relations, a negotiation between autonomy and control, eventually resulting in a situation where PM expertise is not entirely corroborated ('if someone comes to me tonight and says 'the world is coming to an end', do we say that is a risk?'). However, ultimately these professional project managers must attempt to persuade others that these processes of rationalisation serve a common interest. In reflecting upon this meeting, Paula later problematised these actions as lacking in professionalism, actions that project managers in the PO considered to be detrimental to programme and project delivery. As she stated;

> I think it [the judgement of senior management] displayed a complete lack of understanding of risk. . .It [PM] has national credibility. So, people use it. And it's not just you as an individual saying, 'This is what we need to do.' (Paula, Focus Group, 16/1/13)

In this example the reasoning for the inscription of risk is depoliticised by reference to PM as an appropriate and credible form of professional expertise. The power/knowledge configuration of PM as a 'professional discipline' (Hodgson, 2002) justifies the manner in which to structure the field of action (Miller and Rose, 1990). The rationale for the identification and inscription of risk is not referenced to the 'risk' itself (striking local government staff), but instead in relation to the governmental rationality that facilitates the deployment of truths designed to secure performance objectives (Hodgson, 2002; Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007). Nevertheless, this leads us to a more noteworthy point about what was considered to be an appropriate professional

response following the meeting example detailed above. Rather than accepting a lower level of risk profiling according to the judgements of senior managers, John described a process whereby the 'awareness' of PM knowledge among senior managers would be considered weak, and that this in itself would be identified and categorised through PM knowledge and practice as a *risk to the projects*. This point relates to Hodgson's observation that the disciplinary character of PM professional expertise means that "the potential for improvement can be represented as limitless" (Hodgson, 2002: 813). Nevertheless, this would also demonstrate the governmental characteristics of PM as a technology of agency and performance (Dean, 1999) in animating a particular mode of professional intervention. The technology of risk profiling is deployed in this sense to secure PM expertise as the form of professional knowledge against which judgements are made measurable and 'accountable'. As John later reflected;

> Using the risk management component of PRINCE2 to highlight the fact that, potentially, that the project board [senior managers] didn't have the correct understanding of PRINCE2 and the roles and responsibilities, right through to an idiot sat in a room who isn't capable of actually doing risk management or, maybe, should go on an awareness course. . . Because the risk, once it's on the register, needs to be mitigated. So, that's the PRINCE2 tool I would use to sort even shortcomings in knowledge, and make people aware of the shortcomings, as it is a threat to delivery of the project (John, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

A perceived failure in the management of risk provides stimulus for the extension of this logic as John appears to problematise a lack of PM knowledge using PM knowledge and practice itself. The cyclical nature of this process would point once again to the 'eternal optimism' of governmentality (Miller and Rose, 1990), insofar as PM expertise is deployed to survey those who have not yet succumbed to its methods of surveillance. Nevertheless, it also illustrates that John, as a diligent PM professional, has taken upon himself the responsibility for the security of projects irrespective of the views of seemingly more powerful organisational actors. The self-managing and individualising effects of PM professional expertise in this sense are mechanised through the technology of risk profiling, a process whereby one becomes 'empowered' to take control over one's professional fate, going as far as to protect the control technology through the logic of the control technology itself. If, as in the meeting example above, sufficient awareness of the 'rules of the game' are lacking, then one must partake in further processes of rationalisation in order to render PM knowledge

and practice as ultimately accountable and 'correct'. Rather than an explicit example of professional discipline, where PM is seen to define ideal paths, models, and developmental steps for its subjects, this would seem to be a matter of security, a case of agential responses to a reality that one seeks to regulate and 'police' (Weiskopf and Munro, 2012). This, in effect, constitutes a more 'technical' and pervasive form of governing through 'awareness'. By persistently (and ostensibly professionally) producing expert truths by which performative truths are measured, lines of 'translation' are continually promoted and securitised by those 'in the know'. These processes are designed to secure not only the delivery of projects, but also the active preservation of a network of accountability to which performative interests become more intimately tied 'at a distance' to the ambitions of government.

6.5 Deploying PM Expertise 'with intelligence'

The production of truth through PM professional expertise would be illustrated further as freelance consultants problematised the use of PRINCE2 in the public sector as 'used simply as a process'. In this sense these project managers described their expertise in terms of 'using PRINCE2 with intelligence' and described a mode of thought and practice for a more innovative application of PM. As John commented;

> It [a particular professional approach] is part of coming from a commercial background. . . We're [consultants] going into a local authority. It's effectively a process [in the public sector], as opposed to PRINCE2 per se. So, as you tick the boxes, and you write something, the quality of what you write and the ownership of the outcome isn't there (John, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

'Ownership of the outcome' in this sense would point to a particular mode of self-government in relation to organisational objectives, where proactively structuring and securing project delivery is achieved through owning the result. For these project managers ownership would extend to proactively identifying strategic targets among organisational actors, with a view to building a community of vested interest. Acting to secure this community was described as form of marketing, whereby one must actively campaign to achieve the PM canon of stakeholder 'buy in' (see Chapter 2). Indeed, from a professional perspective this appears as the legitimate demand for a certain type of engagement, whereby new organisational values and images are constructed and symbolised around the project form (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). Nevertheless,

viewed from a Foucauldian, and more specifically 'technological' point of view, the active construction of a temporary community of interests inadvertently separates out those who are 'proactively' committed to organisational transformation from those who are not. In the context of the authority, for example, those deemed to be 'outside' of such a community may be constituted as those who have succumbed to self-interest and cynicism (Rose, 1999b; Du Gay, 2000). For example, by being perceived as those seeking to protect their jobs, instead of embracing change and affirming entrepreneurial values. Nevertheless, from the vantage point of professional project managers, there is a requirement for the creation of a particular community of interests and a level of engagement that distinguishes between satisfactory behaviour and behaviour that constitutes exclusion (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). This nature of these strategic practices were illustrated as this group of project managers described identifying appropriate individuals in order to build a community of interests. As the following focus group extract illustrates;

> Giles: Permanent Portfolio Manager: You don't want somebody that's going to actually inhibit, or cause trouble, on the project floor.
>
> John: Yeah, you want someone who's going to... immediately, you just want... you don't want someone who's just going to accept everything.
>
> Paula: Freelance Programme Manager: No.
>
> John: Freelance Project Manager: No.
>
> John, Freelance Project Manager: You want someone that's going to fight their corner.
>
> Giles, Permanent Portfolio Manager: Yeah.
>
> Paula, Freelance Programme Manager: Yeah, someone who really believes in the outcomes of your project. So someone who, because of that passion that they hold for what you're trying to deliver, will give appropriate challenge to you as a project manager (Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

'Appropriate challenge' in this sense would point to the alignment of a common mode of reasoning, the active creation of a governmentality through which ethical principles are aligned to project objectives. 'Challenge' in this sense is described as 'appropriate' challenge, and constitutes a process through which governing is about influencing the milieu in which decisions are taken, rather than the specific decisions themselves. However, challenge in this sense does not explicitly point to an active challenge to PM

knowledge and practice. The successful alignment of 'ownership' for these project managers thus provides a more autonomous platform from which to deploy PM's active processes of rationalisation more effectively. 'Using PRINCE2 with intelligence', then, would also be referenced to its 'technical' solicitation. Paula, for example, described the standardised practice of proactively identifying 'risks' to secure project delivery;

> So, you could use risk management as a process, where at the start of a project you come up with the twenty risks, you score them, and then you leave it at that. Or, once a month you update it and don't actually engage with it as a process. But, it's actually a really, really valuable tool, because you can use it to communicate and say, 'Actually, this particular thing is a risk to the project, so I'm going to highlight it using a standard process, and I'm going to get better outcomes as a result of it', because it allows the project board, the project exec, to make the right decisions (Paula, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

Although Paula describes the use of a standard process, she also points to the practice of actively identifying new risks to a project. In this sense using PRINCE2 'with intelligence' would point to the deployment of PM expertise as a means to produce the truths against which project success would be defined ('I'm going to get better outcomes as a result of it'). In following this point, John expanded upon the proactive character of these self-governing 'project managing' practices;

> Is it fair to say, Giles [permanent portfolio manager], that you would use the method [PRINCE2] to actually get the decisions you want? Because that's simply how I base risks, 'cause I've got a desired outcome that I need to achieve, so I know that the project is going to be successful and I need people to make this decision, as opposed to considering a range of decisions (John, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

In John's account PM knowledge and practice is deployed in order to affect the decision-making of others in the interests of delivering a pre-defined result. This is realised by actively defining and rationalising projects according to an expert evaluation of project success ('I know that the project is going to be successful'). These self-governing practices would appear to animate a more intensive deployment of PM expertise in order to generate 'appropriate' decisions in alignment with seemingly more individualised interests ('I've got a desired outcome that I need to achieve'). In this instance, John appears to be actively intervening in order to establish the truths by

which his own professional expertise hold influence. Indeed, the tactical character of these practices was something that Paula and John would identify with in their work as project management professionals;

> Researcher: Okay. So, John, what you're saying is that there's an element to you formulating your interactions so as to make the project more streamlined, is that correct?
>
> John: Freelance Project Manager: I would say it's, sort of, premeditated, almost.
>
> Paula, Freelance Programme Manager: Yeah. It's manipulation (Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

Project delivery in this sense is closely linked to a particular kind of individualised responsibility to personalised project objectives as well as to PM professional expertise itself. For these project managers this would mean that projects would be envisioned as possessions in themselves, as temporary pockets of accumulation, around which it becomes necessary to actively construct new values and shared interests (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). In this sense the ownership of one's projects would be described as 'the core of the passion', indicating a mode of professional responsibility by which a sense of self is realised and affirmed. As John commented, when I asked him to define what he meant by 'the core of the passion';

> Oh, good grief. This is the other side of scientific, isn't it? I think you've got to be passionate about the products that you're delivering, and about the organisation, to a point, that you're delivering them within. And that, really, when you've got that, that makes you quite precious, if you like, about your project. Because, as a project manager you [want your project] to be successful, but, also there's that, sort of, inter-personal feel-good factor about having done it, and also making a few people feel good around you (John, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

For John 'delivering within' depends upon both a knowledge and a belief in the expert power of PM in order to govern in the name of its truths. These processes would not only serve to constitute project success, but would also constitute the subjectivity of participants as professionals, in recognising themselves as those individually responsible for their own successes ('inter-personal feel-good factor about having done it'). In this sense PM's expert power is seen to function through project managing subjects by encouraging their active participation in programming the reality that they

wish to govern. These processes take effect as a mode of self-government by 'empowering' participants with a sense of self-control. The recognition of success through PM professional expertise serves to accentuate a discourse of ownership as one begins to see oneself as positively and more intimately 'embodied' in one's projects. As Paula stated;

> I don't think I could work on something that I didn't believe was the right thing to do. . .I have to feel as though it's the right thing to do, and I also have to give 100% in delivering it, otherwise I don't enjoy my work. You know I can't half-deliver something. I can't have half my energy on something. I have to give all of myself to a project, or a programme (Paula, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

Through the analysis in the section above we can see that PM expertise produces certain modes of autonomy and 'freedom' through practice, whereby active and responsibilised professionals constitute projects as vehicles for self-actualisation. As diligent professionals, 'giving all of oneself' to a project or a programme would pose an image of prudence as these participants addressed themselves as active agents in the provision of change ('I have to feel as though it's the right thing to do'). Nevertheless, a discourse of self-actualisation points to the promise that adventures in PM can also unearth 'who one really is'. For these project managers this gives effect to an ethics of 'proactivity' through which intense work experiences are also emotional investments. As Paula went on to comment;

> So, for me, it's almost as if the end of a project, it's almost like a bereavement, you know? So, it is a form of grieving, because this thing that has taken up your entire life. So, all of your emotional and intellectual energy in the nine hours of every day that you're at work, it just disappears. . . You know? It's all-consuming and then, literally, the next morning, it's gone. So, it's almost like a bereavement (Paula, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

Paula's comment would seem to suggest that her sense of self ('emotional and intellectual energy') is intimately tied to her projects. Problematising the ending of a project as a bereavement points towards her self-understanding in relation to the temporary 'micro-communities' that one, as a professional project manager, actively constructs. Projects in this sense are posed as progressive and self-shaping life experiences. Notions of 'giving all' of oneself to, and then grieving for a project, calls

upon discourses of self-realisation as projects are posed as all-encompassing experiences, so much so one finds it difficult to live without them. These discursive themes would be emphasised further as notions of independence would be referenced to a requirement for continual stimulation and learning in project work. As Paula reflected;

> Oh, it's quite interesting, 'cause I've been doing an operational role for the last 18 months. And we came to a, sort of, a. . . we came to a major milestone. . .I walked into the office, day one, and thought, 'Okay, what do I do now?' Cause I'd delivered my work, you know? My project is now finished, even though I was in an operational role that goes on for the next 30 years, my brain says, 'I've now delivered my project. What do I do now?' So, I resigned (Paula, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

In this comment Paula poses an image of herself as an individual actively seeking fulfilment by shaping and managing her life as an autonomous and proactive project managing professional. Projects are described as engaging experiences that appear as matters of consumption ('I've now delivered my project. What do I do now?'). The enabling effects of PM expertise seem to have accentuated a relationship to working life as a series of personal projects. The value of self-actualisation in this sense is not only economically desirable, but personally meaningful as Paula has come to understand herself as a PM expert: as someone who actively seeks self-fulfilment through projects at work. In this sense PM professional expertise, as a technology of liberal government, operates through its subjects by enhancing powers of self-actualisation (Rose, 1999). In shaping proactive subjects it links them securely to the political programmes at 'the centre' by harnessing their ambitions, hopes and desires for self-fulfilment. The efficacy of this particular technology lies in its ability to produce proactive governmental agents who seek to influence and govern the organisational fields to which they are deployed. As autonomous subjects of responsibility, project management professionals literally 'own' projects on behalf of the powers that produce them, to the point at which they will deploy combative mechanisms by which to secure and protect 'delivery'. In this sense PM professional expertise prospers as a governmental technology by individualising interests according to logics of competition and performance. It provides the tools by which to go to war on behalf of one's enterprising self, whilst simultaneously concealing the wider implications of economic

government through the contracted rewards of project 'delivery' and 'success'. As John humorously reflected, when I pointed to the definitive significance of 'the project'.

> What else is there for us to care about? (John, Freelance Project Manager, Focus Group, 16/1/2013)

6.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has taken participants working the corporate programme office (PO), and more specifically freelance consultants, as exemplary cases of PM professional expertise in the present study. The goal has been to analyse how PM operates as a governmental technology in working through these participants as both 'the governor' and 'the governed' (Foucault, 1982). Through a discourse of 'awareness', PM professionals govern through discursive strategies in which organisational activities are administered for their own sake. Devolved units of management point to responsibilised spaces of freedom that staff members are required to shape as their own. The promise that one will be empowered to 'know oneself' as a responsible and proactive staff member correlates with the promise that PM professionals will come to know and respect themselves as 'proactive' and adventurous professionals. Whereas staff members are obliged to envision themselves as consumers of PM knowledge and practice, PM professionals strive to consume projects in pursuit of continual learning and self-actualisation. In this sense PM knowledge and practice operates to individualise subjects both within and 'outside' public organisations. It operates across a stratum, tying its subjects to forms of self-knowledge that reframe the field of vision according to the demarcated interests of economic government. For those 'empowered' to exercise its expert powers more fervently, the task is a strident one. One must actively seek to rationalise the discursive field. One must also identify, ascribe, control and sell the truths of PM expertise as it works to divide and fragment for its own ends. PM, as a technology of government, 'empowers' proactivity, it empowers according to its truth, and it empowers those who are mobilised to propagate its effects.

Having explored the case of exemplary PM professionals both in conversation and through the enactment of their work, our attention in Chapter 7 turns to a different group of participants, and the case of experienced local government workers as those increasingly involved in PM knowledge and practice.

Chapter 7: Ambivalence, insecurity and the 'tactics of the weak' under a programme of liberal government

7.1 Introduction

Following Chapter 6 and the case of project management (PM) professionals, the following chapter takes a different group of participants as a point of analysis in order to expand on the emerging theoretical themes of this study. Attention turns to the accounts of local government workers who were set apart from the corporate programme office during my time as a participant observer, but who were increasingly involved in PM knowledge and practice as part of the ICT department's move to a more comprehensive project management (PRINCE2) approach (see Chapter 5). These participants had accumulated between seven and twenty four years of work experience at the authority, and were working in a variety of roles ranging from project managers to ICT staff members. Drawing from fieldwork, subsequent interviews, and two focus groups carried out over a year after the initial participant observation phase, analysis turns to the responses of these local government workers in reference to some of the 'project managing' subjectivities and practices exemplified in Chapter 6. As we have seen in Chapter 5, these subjectivities and practices were encouraged amidst a developmental programme for a non-hierarchical project approach, "where responsibility is devolved to individuals who are empowered to be proactive and work in an integrated fashion to deliver value to our customers" (Corporate Plan, December 2010). Staff were being encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal development and the productive performance of both themselves and others. Amidst a context of ongoing budget reductions, organisational restructuring and staff reductions, the contributions analysed here are those located at a greater distance from 'the centre' of the authority's governmental regime. In part, they can be understood as responses to ordinary and routinised 'neo-liberalisations', articulated in reply to discursive fields of power and meaning through which participants were constituted and often felt as though they did not belong.

The chapter begins by analysing discursive strategies that were deployed to accentuate the virtues of the local government worker. These perspectives called upon a discourse circulated by the employee trade union aimed at problematising the procurement of contracted expert labour. The analysis then turns to the ambivalent responses of

participants in negotiating different governmentalities and subject positions in light of a sense of demoralisation and employment insecurity. Amongst these ambivalent responses PM is seen to gain appeal as the form of 'human capital' (Weiskopf and Munro, 2012) that may aid independence beyond the bounds of local government employment. Thereafter, the chapter turns to the accounts of participants in rebuffing governmental subjectivities and practices which delineated particular conceptions and expectations of them. In this section discursive strategies critiquing the contractualisation of objectives, 'accountable' project managing subjectivities, and PM professional accreditation are discussed. Finally, the chapter turns to the analysis of the 'tactics of the weak' in this context (de Certeau, 1984); practices of resistance that were mediated in and through the economic governmental rationality of PM knowledge and practice. This section illuminates the nature of 'empowerment' for staff brought into a new governmental network following the authority's move to a project management approach (see Chapter 5). The contributions discussed in this section illustrate procedures of resistance that seek to evade the auspices of economic government without being outside the field in which it is exercised. The chapter concludes by summarising these findings.

7.2 The virtues of the local government worker

Amidst organisational restructuring, budget and staff reductions, permanent staff working as ICT project managers articulated unease about the influx of contractors as part of the ICT investment programme. These staff members problematised the wisdom of senior management in recruiting highly paid consultants, and related this concern not only to their own employment insecurity, but also to a more general disquiet about the outsourcing of expert labour. These participants placed an emphasis upon the worth, capabilities and skills of local government workers; as those capable of carrying out the work involved in the investment programme themselves, or as those who should be provided with the capabilities to do so. Tina, for example, speaking as a permanent project manager with over nine years of service, questioned the procurement of contracted expertise and related this to her own employment position at the authority;

> We should have the skills in-house to do that work [the ICT investment programme], and if we haven't then why haven't we?. . .I mean, I do think they [contactors] can bring a lot of experience, and they can bring knowledge of what's happened in outside areas, but in terms of council workers looking, well, 'my job is on the line and you are paying how much for a contractor? That is

like three years of my salary!'. . . I was quite concerned when all these contractors came in and everyone got shifted up to the top office [the corporate programme office], and I got left downstairs. And I was thinking, ah, are they trying to tell me something? Should I be looking for a job? That was rather worrying (Tina, Permanent Project Manager, Interview, 05/05/2011)

In Tina's comment she acknowledges the expertise of contractors, but queries the economic rationale for obtaining their services through the tendering of privatised contracts (it's like 'my job is on the line and you are paying how much for a contractor? That is like three years of my salary!'). Tina proposes that ICT staff should have the knowledge and skills to do this work in-house, and brings attention to what she considers to be an oversight regarding the capabilities of local government workers ('We should have the skills in-house to do that work [the investment programme], and why haven't we?'). Through Tina's discursive strategies skills development is not thought to be the individual responsibility of local government workers, but is instead referenced against a wider responsibility for the appropriate development and recognition of the workforce. These problematisations are 'personal' insofar as they are seen to be directly related to Tina's sense of employment insecurity. Yet additionally, Tina is also citing a discourse that serves to problematise the manner in which senior management have sought to achieve their objectives. A lack of 'investment' in the workforce by senior management means that personal development, rather than being about securing 'employability' within a wider liberal economic frame (see Chapter 5), is related to a concern for the appropriate recognition of productive worth in the workforce. Tina's sense of insecurity is thus not directed towards her colleagues, despite a restructuring interview process that placed staff in competition with each other, but instead relates directly to her problematisation of privatised contracts and the procurement of expert labour.

Statements deployed by local government workers pertaining to an oversight of staff capabilities appeared to be encouraged by the discursive strategies of the employee trade union. During my time at the authority the trade union was encouraging its members to question the irrevocability of their situation and to act in order to avert the privatisation of labour and services. A key approach in this sense was its campaign to 'keep services in-house' (see Figure 1 below).

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Figure 4 Example of a Trade Union notice at the authority.

This campaign sought to encourage members to actively propagate the truths of 'insourcing' as a means to achieve value for money and efficiency in alignment with the cost-effective governmental rationality of 'Best Value' (Unison, 2012: also see Chapter 1 for a discussion on Best Value). Trade union documentation argued that staff were "the real experts" (Unison, 2012: 14) and should act to ensure their full involvement in programmes that may otherwise involve over-charging by consultants, resulting in substantial waste and the possibility of substandard service provision. Through this discourse the trade union posed an image of local government workers as a cost-effective experts in their own right, with distinctive capabilities, knowledge and skills that could only be acquired through gaining significant experience of working in local government service provision. For participants such as Tina and Jennifer, as both the 'the governed' and 'the governor' (Foucault, 1982), they would appear to be 'investing' in the truths of this discourse whilst also attempting to locate a professional identity within it. Jennifer, for example, with ten years of service and a recent promotion to a project manager role, explained that she and her colleagues had put themselves forward for the investment programme but had found it to be a frustrating process. As she stated;

They [contractors] are seen as sticking their oar in. . .I mean we've got enough talent here to do everything that they [senior management] have asked us to do in this [ICT investment] programme, absolutely, we have every talent, but they decide to bring contractors in. . .Everybody is quite capable of doing the work, but they bring in and spend lots of money on contractors. . . OK, I can see it from an external perspective, if you've got somebody to kind of look in and make sure you are doing [things right], it's an outsiders perspective. But, certainly from the [ICT investment] programme perspective, lots of people wanted to get involved and nobody did. . .You can see how people get very, touchy is not quite the right word, but, a bit narked, and then you've got people going 'well, we want to put ourselves forward, we tried but nobody actually says come in and do it' (Jennifer, Permanent Project Manager, Interview, 26/4/2011)

In this account Jennifer describes the expertise of contractors as something of a constitutive other (Said, 1978) against which she constructs an image of a capable yet disgruntled workforce. Jennifer appears to be calling upon the discursive strategies of the trade union's 'in-house' campaign insofar as they stress the capabilities of staff at the authority ('we've got enough talent here to do everything that they [senior management] have asked'). The trade union discourse supplies Jennifer with a subject position from which to state a case for 'insourcing'. Through it she is able to point to the inadequate characteristics of the authority's governmental programme by querying the premise that it is "not only directors and managers that can lead, but people at all levels can drive and support change" (Corporate Plan, December 2010: also see Chapter 5). In this sense Jennifer is questioning the meaning and enactment of corporate strategy. In doing so she is distancing herself from the truths of corporate strategy ('nobody actually says come in and do it') while at the same time stating that the workforce wishes to conduct themselves according to such governmental principles ('we want to put ourselves forward, we tried'). This would indicate, as we will expand upon in this chapter, the ambivalent discursive field that local government workers appeared to be operating within, and the difficulties involved in affirming a worthy identity in this governmental context.

7.3 Ambivalence in the production of the project managing subject

Despite a critique of the procurement of expert labour and a discourse pertaining to the distinctive qualities of local government workers, notions of individual 'empowerment' and 'employability' appeared to become more salient as participants responded to organisational restructuring and the threat of redundancy). In this frame PM

professional expertise appeared as a vehicle through which a more encouraging relationship with one's work could be realised, and where career possibilities might extend beyond the perceived constraints of local government employment. The governmental power of PM expertise as a technology of government would become clearer in these instances, as a means by which to negotiate a set of disagreeable organisational conditions and a way in which to envisage an alternative future. As Jennifer stated;

> In my general plan it's [being a project manager] a partial stepping stone to going somewhere else. It might be that I do this for 2 or 3 years, but it isn't what I want to end up doing. . .Getting the experience of doing more project implementation [in a well-known area of ICT project management] will give me a great deal of background and benefit in that. So, I'm going to do a couple of years experience and then go back again and reconsider whether or not it [project management] is something that I want to do, and see if that goes off. . . I've done IT for 10-15 years now, and yeah I enjoy doing IT, problem solving, but there is a point where I don't want to go through this rigmarole of yet more redundancies and things again. I'm getting sick of it, this is number three (Jennifer, Permanent Project Manager, Interview, 26/4/2011)

In this account Jennifer appears to be describing a somewhat calculated investment in PM as a means to gain autonomy and control in her working life. Her rationale for doing so is described in relation to her dissatisfaction in her work as she seeks to distance herself from what are described as demoralising organisational circumstances ('there is a point where I don't want to go through this rigmarole of yet more redundancies. I'm getting sick of it'). From the perspective of liberal governmentality, the manner in which Jennifer is problematising her situation can be read as a kind of 'successful responsibilisation'. In this sense she appears to be taking control of her own personal situation, while at the same time tying herself more intimately to the governmental regime that has contributed to her apparent demoralisation in the first instance. A particular liberal governmental rationality is seen to delineate the field of possibilities along particular lines. It guides the possibilities of conduct and the order of possible outcomes (Foucault, 1978). On the one hand it appears as though Jennifer is 'resisting' the negative effects of her employment relationship. Nevertheless, on the other hand her actions can be understood as a kind of acquiescence, a point at which a liberal governmental rationality is brought into effect as she considers consuming PM professional expertise as a way in which to realise personal autonomy. In effect, Jennifer's sense of discontent appears to encourage a particular relation to self, whereby

one is encouraged to problematise one's abilities as an autonomous productive subject within a wider economic frame, and where PM becomes the form of 'human capital' (Weiskopf and Munro, 2012) that may aid such independence. As she went on to comment;

> Do something independent, go off and do something different, or even take it [PM] somewhere else. . .I think at some point I will [move to another job] because, you know? how many times can you sit there and apply for your own job? It's quite disheartening. . .No doubt in a year's time we will go through the same process again. Well, they've got to make savings, year on year! (Jennifer, Permanent Project Manager, Interview, 26/4/2011)

In this comment Jennifer describes a sense of disheartenment that appears to encourage a particular problematisation of the self as an autonomous productive subject ('do something independent, do something different'). PM is addressed as the means by which to achieve independence ('or even take it [PM] somewhere else'). These discursive strategies indicate that under the conditions of employment insecurity the appeal of PM as a 'liberating' technology of government is enhanced. Jennifer emphasises PM as a means by which to facilitate a certain kind of freedom as she positions herself as an individual in relation to the wider labour market. This process undermines a collective identification with the workforce, but it enables Jennifer to foresee an alternative means of achieving a sense of 'freedom' in her working life. In this instance, the truths of the trade union's 'in-house' discourse, in emphasising the expertise of the experienced local government worker, inadvertently aligns with the authority's corporate strategic aims for individual empowerment. Whereas collective 'empowerment' may aid the long term aims of the workforce in resisting market forces, 'individual empowerment' appears to encourage subjects to turn in on themselves by necessitating a recognition of their own 'human capital' (Weiskopf and Munro, 2012). The supposedly liberating aspects of PM would thus appear to take effect in relatively indirect ways. Problematising the difficulties involved in maintaining one's identity as a worthy contributor gives rise to a responsibility to oneself, and an acquiescence to the 'liberating' aspects of corporate strategy. Jennifer's comments also suggest that for staff under the threat of redundancy, a preoccupation with identity concerns can give rise to narratives that "support the concrete sense they have of their own significance" (Knights and McCabe, 2003: 1615).

These illustrations would suggest that more individualised relation to the self as a productive subject would be stimulated amidst conditions of employment insecurity. This sense of insecurity could be observed, for example, as Jennifer described a confusing mixture of ethical configurations in regard to the restructuring process, and the difficulties she appeared to have in maintaining a 'concrete' sense of her own worth in this context. As she commented;

> It's been going on for about three months [staff restructuring and reductions]. It's ridiculous. . .It's very frustrating because you don't know whether or not the work that you're doing is. . .you don't know if you are just doing it [working as a project manager] because you are doing it, or you are doing it because you are going to benefit from it. So if you do a piece of work, then you think, well, is this going to end up giving me a job at the end of it? Am I going to benefit from it? Or am I just doing this because...it's very frustrating (Jennifer, Permanent Project Manager, Interview, 26/4/2011)

In this statement Jennifer problematises her everyday experiences at work and the different relations to self that a sense of employment insecurity gives rise to ('You don't know if you are just doing it because you are doing it, or you are doing it because you are going to benefit from it'). Jennifer articulates ambivalence as she reflects on different subject positions and seemingly conflicting governmental rationalities. For example, at other times in my discussion with Jennifer, and contrary to the 'mentalities' noted in the previous accounts above, she distanced herself from the exercise of forming an identity primary in relation to her work, stating that "I come here because I need to be paid, because I need to have a life. I only come to work because I have to come to work" (Interview, 26/4/2011). She also stated that "I try not to step work out to home unless it's absolutely essential, because otherwise, well, then my life is just here, and my life isn't this" (Interview, 26/4/2011). In this frame of reasoning the site of employment is not where one's 'true' self is to be realised. Instead, these discursive strategies produce an image of the instrumental worker, where employment is a means to an end and a method by which to meet personal and material needs outside of the workplace (Grint, 1998). In this instance there is an apparent social disconnect between Jennifer and the authority ('my life isn't this'). Work is understood not as a site for self-actualisation, or for key social (or 'family') relations (see Chapter 6), but is instead addressed as a necessity for maintaining that which lies outside. This would explain Jennifer's 'instrumental' relation to PM primarily as a means to secure employment ('a partial stepping stone to going somewhere else. . . it isn't what I want to end up doing').

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PM's liberating potential in this sense does not appear to operate through the more intimate rewards of project (or contract) 'success' and 'delivery', but instead through its potential as a standardised and reproducible form of 'human capital' (Clegg and Courpasson, 2004; Weiskopf and Munro, 2012). An instrumental orientation to work for Jennifer thus means that she recognises PM as that which provides 'marketability' as a free agent in the labour market. Within the authority, however, Jennifer also appears to find it difficult to relate to the self in terms of her own 'individual empowerment' ('Am I going to benefit from it? Or am I just doing this....it's very frustrating'). This confusing mixture of relations to self would point to a struggle between different subject positions, and the power effects at play as Jennifer tries to self-write as a responsible project manager. It points to an attempt to produce a stable identity within the discursive limitations of everyday practice (Foucault, 1982).

These discursive themes would be illustrated further during my time at the authority. For example, during a training session provided by Darren (a freelance consultant working in the PO, see Chapter 6) he advised ICT staff attending that there were lots of jobs available in the kind of work in which they were being trained, arguing that the training offered them an opportunity to enhance their careers outside of the authority. An ICT staff member responded by stating "that is a career mentality, but not one you find in the council much", before later sarcastically stating to his fellow trainees, "do I not get a project manager to do the paper work for me? I don't like paper work much" (Field Notes, 8/8/11). This interaction illustrated a distancing from the prescribed professional project managing subject as well as the quintessential 'career professional', while at the same time reinforcing the image of the 'instrumental worker', as one who relates to work primarily in terms of the wage-labour relationship. Moreover, these were also responses to particular conceptions and expectations of local government workers, and the governmental rationalities that constituted them as such.

7.4 Rebuffing 'accountable' games of truth

In the following section the analysis turns to the governmental technologies and subjectivities that delineated particular representations and expectations of staff and their work at the authority. In the accounts below these technologies and subjectivities are those that participants felt detracted from, or ignored, who they were as experienced and knowledgeable staff. For Philip, working as a permanent project manager with over

seven years of experience in local government, his objection would concern the restructuring interview process itself, which he described as a kind of administrative inquisition that sought to determine 'who he is'. As he stated;

> If your whole career is boiled down to saying the right thing in an interview then that is not right! The really depressing thing is that I will have to do the same thing next year. I've been here for 7-8 years and they know me, but I still get scored in interviews (Philip, Permanent Project Manager, Field Notes, 24/03/2011)

In this comment Philip bemoans the calculative character of the restructuring interview process. In doing so he points to techniques that require of him to reproduce performances as an 'accountable' productive subject. Philip is suggesting that these techniques undermine the meaningfulness of his working relationships with others, insofar as they ignore 'who he is' in favour of 'what works' ('I've been here for 7-8 years and they know me, but I still get scored in interviews'). In this sense Philip appears to be struggling against the imposition of a regime of truth by emphasising his own right to recognise himself according to his accumulated professional judgements and principles (Foucault, 1988a). In doing so he articulates a critique of the interview process insofar as it renders him (and others) accountable to governable truths that are not considered to accurately represent his 'true' professional character ('If your whole career is boiled down to saying the right thing in an interview then that is not right!'). Philip's self-knowledge is seen to be antagonistic to these processes, and allows for a vantage point from which to critique the power relations in which he is involved. By critiquing this particular 'game of truth' (Foucault, 1998), he questions the 'realness' and validity of the representations it produces.

Highlighting the dangers in techniques of representation would also extend to the manner in which PM knowledge and practice was deployed at the authority. In this sense an over-reliance on PM's practices of inscription were considered by some to be excessive. As Brad, a business partner and former permanent project manager with seven years of local government experience, argued;

> Cause' obviously when somebody employs somebody as a contractor, you know all this, all the CV and stuff and they've got evidence and they talk themselves up. It could be they provide some documentation, some PIDS [project initiation documents]. . . So [in managing projects] I haven't had a big PID. I haven't had

set communications plans. I haven't had lessons learned at the end of it. None of that. I've just, you know? I've kept track of things, yeah?. . .People are so tied up in wanting to do something, what they see as being taken as being right, i.e. PRINCE2, 'it's the right way to go, because that's the industry standard, and it what we've got to do, and we've got to do all this paperwork, forms'. People get lost in that. Instead of taking about 5 or 6 steps back and saying 'what are we looking to do'? (Brad, Interview, Permanent Business Partner, 5/5/11)

Brad's comments are not so much directed at a particular group of professionals or colleagues in this instance, but instead problematise PM as a technique of governmental power ('I haven't had a big PID [project initiation document]. I haven't had set communications plans. I haven't had lessons learned etc. None of that'). The methods of 'contractualisation' (Du Gay, 1996: 85) deployed to establish accountable project management truths are understood to detract from the tacit self-knowledge of Brad and his colleagues ('and we got to do all this paperwork, forms. . .instead of taking 5 or 6 steps back and saying 'what are we looking to do'?). Brad describes a mode of professional conduct that emphasises the importance of tacit organisational knowledge. He argues that this knowledge is undermined through a "compliance mentality" (Power, 1994: 16) that detracts from a more localised and reflexive problematisation of organisational aims. In this sense both Philip and Brad are struggling against practices that delineate particular subject positions, and the technologies of government through which these subject positions are prescribed. Freedom in this sense is deployed in contestation, a matter of critiquing the constitution of 'freedom' outlined in the performative metrics of economic government (Rose, 1999b; Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007).

For some local government workers the obligation to discuss and inscribe project performances would appear to detract from the use of their own 'understanding' of organisational matters, and of themselves (Foucault, 1991b). Jennifer, for example, bemoaned the need for the evaluation of her projects in meetings and through the requirement to continually update project documentation. As she stated;

There was one morning meeting when someone said 'so what do you think of this morning meeting?' and I said this it's just a complete waste of my time. I've got better things to do than come and sit in and discuss what is right and what is wrong with projects. 'I've got projects to run and you [senior management] are pressurising me into getting documentation done, and I'm

sitting here wasting half my hour faffing on with it' (Jennifer, Permanent Project Manager, Interview, 26/4/2011).

In this comment Jennifer, contrary to her apparent desire to become more involved in 'project managing' (see above), suggests that assessing the potential gains and losses of her projects in meetings and through project documentation prevents her from fulfilling her duties ('I've got better things to do than come and sit in and discuss what is right and what is wrong with projects'). In this frame of reasoning 'investing' in accountable and evaluative practices is not considered to be the means by which to achieve professional autonomy (see Chapter 6), but instead precludes meaningful engagement with one's work ('I've got projects to run and they are pressurising me into getting documentation done'). In part, this position works to subvert the judicial mentalities of the project management professionals discussed in Chapter 6, where professional autonomy is itself constituted by rendering performance 'accountable' through techniques of evaluation and inscription. These discursive strategies point instead to a discourse of anti-professionalism, deployed against governmental practices of evaluation and audit, those that are considered to constrain and undermine the autonomy of the experienced local government worker (Power, 1999). A similar sentiment was also articulated by Simon, an ICT staff member with twelve year of service;

> I think a lot of people sort of think that it [PRINCE2] slows work down as well as makes it more efficient. We're wasting time with meetings. It's an ongoing joke, isn't it? 'I've got another meeting, I've got to go to this meeting. Why do I need to go to this meeting just to talk about something for an hour when I can just go and do it?' You know?. . .I mean, 'I keep going to meetings and meetings', and that's how a lot of people are thinking at the moment (Simon, ICT Staff, Focus Group, 8/01/2013)

In Simon's account he repeats Jennifer's perspective insofar as rendering oneself and one's work accountable and visible in meetings undermines a sense of professional autonomy ('Why do I need to go to this meeting just to talk about something for an hour when I can just go and do it?'). In the frame of the authority's corporate strategy, and in regard to Simon's apparent reluctance to fully recognise himself as an 'accountable' project worker, his 'resistance' can be understood as a kind of 'irresponsibility'. Nevertheless, for Simon being responsible for one's performance is not considered to be synonymous with accounting for oneself along lines of audit and evaluation (Power,

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1999). Rather, the evaluation of his work through PM knowledge and practice is seen to undermine Simon's sense of self as autonomous worker, and reduces the time he argues is necessary to perform. Such accounts not only follow a discourse of work intensification, but they also illustrate that the 'performance of performance' is effective only when what is wanted from staff members matches what they want for themselves. The requirement to account for oneself through measurable outputs and performances detracts from being able to account for oneself according to one's own understanding of work. In this sense such practices of evaluation would seem to be in danger of rendering these participants unrecognisable to themselves as local government workers, as autonomous professionals in their own right. As Simon went on to comment;

> Because there has been a lot of cuts. There are less people to do the work and we've still got work outside of project work, a lot of work, you know? There's still day-to-day troubleshooting, as it were. There's systems that need upgrading, there's new systems coming in. So you've got to sort of like, concentrate on your own work, if you can call it that, and the project work. . . They [project managers], need to be aware, I think, of all the other work that's going on. You feel a lot of resistance when people come in and ask for stuff and you think, 'But I've got all this to do. How can I get involved in more projects?' (Simon, ICT Staff, Focus Group, 8/01/2013)

7.5 Re-writing the professional truths of project management expertise

Maintaining a distance from 'project managing' subjectivities also appeared to relate to a critique of the constitution and representation of PM professional expertise itself. As Hodgson (2005) has observed elsewhere, this would illustrate ambivalence towards the role of the 'project manager' as a legitimate professional category, and would demonstrate a distancing from the professionalisation project more generally. Nevertheless, these accounts would also show the manner in which local government workers sought to re-write the project managing subject as something more meaningful in relation to their local context and intersubjective experience. As Eric, a portfolio manager with over twenty four years of local government experience, stated;

> There is an industry around it, the fact that your qualification expires, and you've got to do the training again, and the manuals cost what they cost, and everything else around it. . . And then...it's full of jargon. Like any other discipline, the jargon is sort of self-perpetuating and creates its own level of experts. . .To get around it is to just start from a more practical basis. We have got all this work to do. How do we manage it? What is the alternative? (Eric, Permanent Portfolio Manager, Interview, 8/1/2013)

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In this account Eric appears to address PM professional expertise as a liberal technology of government and critiques it as such. Rather than addressing PM professional expertise as a means to enhance professional autonomy, an emphasis is placed instead on the practical application of PM knowledge and practice with respect to work intensification ('We have got all this work to do. How do we manage it? What is the alternative?'). In this sense an 'investment' in the truths of professional accreditation is understood to be superfluous in fulfilling one's responsibilities as a local government worker. Eric is instead operating within a frame of reasoning that is determined by context and experience, that which is most comprehensible among collegial relations and local organisational quandaries. The perceived artificiality of PM professional expertise is understood to have created a kind of professionalism that Eric distances himself from ('it's full of jargon. Like any other discipline, the jargon is sort of self-perpetuating and creates its own level of experts'). Instead, while appearing to be ostensibly responsible and 'professional' according to his understanding of his context, he addresses PM as a form of knowledge and practice that may aid the workforce in coping with work pressures. These discursive strategies were corroborated by others, as Jennifer stated;

> I mean, I was asked at the end of it [a PM training programme], and somebody said, 'Well, what are you going to do in five years' time?' [when re-training is recommended], and I said, 'I'm not doing that again!' Why would I need to sit through it? I know the principles. I know the theory. . .Talk to somebody. Communicate. Yes, it's great if you can get a bit of paper that says, 'I've done this', but for me, I don't see why. . . For me, it [recurring PM methodology updates] is just a way for them [the professional associations] to make money. I understand it [PM methodology], but the thing is, I don't need a bit of paper to tell me. I don't need a bit of paper that I can go to somebody and say, 'Look, that proves that I can do this' (Jennifer, Permanent Project Manager, Focus Group, 12/12/2012)

In this account Jennifer expresses cynicism towards educational responsibilities to re-train in PRINCE2 ('I'm not doing that again!' Why would I need to sit through it? I know the principles. I know the theory). A sense of self-worth at work is not thought to depend upon a logic of continuous improvement through training that may enhance the truths of one's professionalism. Rather, in Jennifer's frame of reasoning a distance from the "pedagogy of perpetual training" (Rose, 1999: 160) is maintained, and the

governmental link between retraining in PM and self-transformation makes little sense. In similar fashion to Eric's quote above Jennifer re-articulates the project managing subject according to the truths of her context and experience and the value of collegial relations ('Talk to somebody. Communicate. Yes, it's great if you can get a bit of paper that says, 'I've done this', but for me, I don't see why'). These themes of anti-professionalism served to work against the construction of the local government worker as an autonomous project managing subject, one whose professionalism may be built around technologies such as the portfolio 'career' (I don't need a bit of paper that I can go to somebody and say, 'Look, that proves that I can do this') (Grey, 1994).

In following these points Jennifer went on to joke that "it [PM training] was an excuse to be out of the office for a week!" and that "they [senior management] even gave us lunch in the canteen! That was amazing" (Focus Group, 12/12/2012). Similarly Laura, a business analyst with twenty one years of service, stated that "I just did the three days of hell!" (Focus Group, 12/12/2012). Humour in this sense subverted the self-governing principles of the learned career professional. Nonetheless, these discursive strategies not only displaced liberal technologies for 'continuous improvement' (Rose, 1999). They were also attempts to 'translate' governmental discourses into the ethical space of collegial relations, and ways in which to maintain a distance from representations of the ascribed professional project managing subject. Through questioning the 'how of power' (Foucault, 1982) the power relations in which these local government workers were enfolded would be made more apparent and critiqued. It is only then that these participants were able to 'care for themselves' (Foucault, 1988) by taking a more active role in their self-definition as project managing subjects. As Jennifer suggested, recalling the subjectivity of the 'instrumental worker', while displacing 'the project' as a vehicle for learning and self-realisation;

> You don't really manage. . . You're just handing out bits of paper. You ask somebody to do it and you hope they are going to do it, and they're going to do it when you've asked them to do it. If they don't, you go over and say, 'Why haven't you done it?' (Jennifer, Permanent Project Manager, Focus Group, 12/12/2012)

7.6 Practices of resistance and the 'tactics of the weak'

Following on from the analysis above this section aims to look in more depth at the practice of PM as a point of analysis among those who constituted themselves as local government workers. We now have a better understanding of the discursive strategies deployed by participants emphasising a 'distancing' from governmental discourses and particular modes of 'professionalism'. However, amidst conditions in which the worth of the local government worker was at stake, and in which employment insecurity was amplified, PM was seen at times to be both seductive and necessary for senior managers and local government workers alike. This illustrates that the negotiation of subject positions among the somewhat artificial 'freedoms' of this particular organisational context is both complex and contradictory; power is seen to be productive as well as controlling (Foucault, 1982). The section below aims to deal with the more 'productive' elements of this governmental power in order to ask what 'resistance' may mean within the 'designed' framework of reasoning in which participants were required to operate. Tina, for example, discussed the 'advantages' of PM knowledge and practice in her working life;

> It's important to cover your back, in terms of job security, [you] don't want to give anyone ammunition to get rid of you, a bit negative I know, but that's the way it works. Integrity and evidence is important (Tina, Permanent Project Manager, email communication, 8/12/2012)

Through constituting herself as a project managing subject Tina describes her state of subjection 'out there' ('that's the way it works'), as well as her relations to self 'in here' ('[you] don't want to give anyone ammunition to get rid of you. . . Integrity and evidence is important'). Subjectivity is seen to be a process of becoming insofar as Tina recognises herself and accounts for herself in light of the power relations in which she is involved. Although Tina seems to be 'resisting' the negative effects of job insecurity, these conditions bring into effect self-regulative practices that align her immediate interests with particular modes of self-defence. In this sense Tina's self-understanding at her work is intimately linked to the ways in which she is governed, as her responsibility to accountable truths (and ostensibly her 'professionalism') becomes a matter of 'defensibility' (Rose, 1999) directly related to her understanding of her employment security. Power in this sense is seen to produce a kind of activity that is more akin to a kind of moderated disclosure than the shaping of subjects through

discipline and surveillance. It is not being surveyed so much as it is tactfully exposing oneself in accordance with a dominant governmental paradigm. Writing one's 'integrity' through the PM technology is carried out willingly and actively as a matter of self-care. Nevertheless, in doing so the ethical relationship between self and other is one of calculation, where one's professional integrity is constituted by evidencing one's actions and decisions. This theme became apparent as Harry, an ICT staff member with over twenty years of local government experience, described his hopes in using PM knowledge and practice in his department;

> Well, hopefully they'll [senior management, other departments in the council] see more of what we're doing, you know? Because of the time-recording aspect of it, which there was never in place in the past. Hopefully they'll see. . .In the past, I mean, even some of the smaller projects, you'd get the project, there was no recording of how much time you'd take. Now, with these larger ones where it is all managed, they might see our worth a little bit more (Harry, ICT Staff, Focus Group, 08/01/2013)

Making oneself and one's department visible and accountable through PM is seemingly well thought of in this instance, insofar as it provides a way in which to demonstrate to others that one exists, and is performing ('they might see our worth a little bit more'). Harry's problematisation is framed as a critique of having been left 'outside' of a network of accountability. To be able to partake thus has 'liberating' potential, insofar as it may confirm Harry's and his department's existence and value in the eyes of others ('Hopefully they'll see'). The power of PM knowledge and practice in this instance is once again seen to create a network of 'rule' at a distance by aligning judgements and ambitions (Miller and Rose, 1990). Nevertheless, 'empowerment' in this sense points to a sense of acceptance, to the acknowledgment of one's efforts, and to the possibility that one may achieve recognition where it previously did not exist. In being constituted as project managing subjects it would seem as though disenfranchised members of staff were also being offered a voice, albeit a particular kind of voice. Robert, and ICT staff member with twelve years of service, explained how applying PM provided visibility of future work tasks, and thus worked in his favour;

> I think it's easier to show the management what we actually do [by using PRINCE2], because in the past everyone used [the old system]. . . most stuff wasn't visible. . .There used to be a weekly report that went round, or monthly, saying what each team did that month. We'd only have one or two things because it just wasn't visible. Whereas now, we can say, 'Look, we're working

Through Robert's frame of reasoning making work tasks visible to others is understood to enable a form of 'resistance' by bringing attention to the depth of work being undertaken ('Look, we're working on all of this. This is what we're actually doing'.). PM is seen to encourage a particular problematisation of work tasks, bringing into effect new modes of responsibility through practices of self-audit and self-management. By revealing one's work through this governmental rationality one becomes more amenable to intervention and evaluation, while simultaneously becoming more responsible for one's own, or one's department's productive activities. Governing one's work becomes systematically linked to one's freedom at work, insofar as these local government workers must be willing to contribute to the systems that delimit and define them (Knights and Willmott, 1989; Miller and Rose, 1995). As Robert argued;

> I think the culture's changed in the last five years or so, because of the cuts. So we know that there's cuts coming and a lot of the focus is on reducing not only the IT budget as best we can. . .They [senior managers] know that every penny that they save that is basically someone's job within IT. . . We're saving the rest of the business loads of money. And that gives management a lot more clout that the cuts aren't going to come and hit us (Robert, ICT Staff, Focus Group, 8/01/2013)

A prevailing cost-effective economic rationality provides a strong sense of identity in this instance, and with respect to a kind of 'defensive' responsibility to the collective workforce ('every penny that they save that is basically someone's job within IT. . . We're saving the rest of the business loads of money'). Recognising the self as an economically accountable subject produces a sense of purpose as both one's performance and one's security becomes intimately and 'positively' tied to the economic performance of the organisation. The paradoxical character of this particular delimitation of 'freedom' would appear to be encouraged through a PM organisational approach, in supplying ICT staff with new found responsibilities and self-managing subject positions. As Robert went on to comment;

> Because we are more organised we [ICT staff] are aware that there's a lot more work coming. Because in the past, before any of this [staff reductions and the new project management approach], you'd be busy every day, you might know

you've got something to do tomorrow or maybe even next week, but like I say, me and [ICT staff colleague] sit down in the day and say, 'Right, we're doing this and then this and then this', you know? So I know I've got this pile of work, it's huge and most of it isn't until months down the line, but I know it's coming and you're always aware, 'Oh, it's coming.' (Robert, ICT Staff, Focus Group, 8/1/2013)

In Robert's account adopting a PM approach is described in terms of his own 'responsibilisation', insofar as he and his colleagues are made 'aware' of their increased workload, and are required to actively plan ahead and manage their own capabilities. In this way the new PM organisational approach produces new self-managing subject positions, where staff assume ownership of devolved units of management and take on responsibilities that were previously in the hands of superiors. As a governmental technology of agency, PM is seen to animate staff to act on themselves as they also become more 'aware' of their new professional identity within a network of accountability. As noted above, discipline and surveillance would not adequately explain these power effects insofar as work intensification, coupled with the PM technology, would seem to provide staff with a sense of self-control in regard to the pace and management of their work. Surveillance in this sense is "designed in to flows of everyday existence" (Rose, 1999: 234), and it does not take shape as exhaustive regulation. Instead, a devolved governmental framework of reasoning is deployed to frame the ways in which choices and decisions are to be made for the management of one's department's efficiency. Security becomes a personal or departmental matter, so much so that self-managing subjects seek to construct the meaningful and perceptible effects of this governmental rationality by creating a milieu in which others abide by such 'rules of the game'. As Liam, an ICT staff member with fourteen years of local government service, commented;

> So really, everything is recorded. Whereas, before that I was doing a lot of kind of invisible work, if you like. . . otherwise you end up doing a lot of really important work and no-one even knows or is aware that it's even happening. . . but we are basically trying to get through that proper [project management] process, so that I'm always aware of what's going on so I know how to plan the work. There's still, ad hoc work, like, something's gone wrong here, we need to drop tools or reframe this request, or whatever. But generally, it's trying to get everyone going through that same process so that it's not invisible work lists (Liam, ICT Staff, Focus Group, 8/1/2013)

In Liam's account governmental power is seen to animate a particular mode of self-understanding as he addresses himself as an 'accountable' subject. The space in which he is operating is delimited by a governmental rationality that grants Liam seemingly greater powers of agency and discretion. For these ICT staff, then, effective 'resistance' against work intensification would have to be articulated firmly 'within' this framework (see below). To step outside of this rationality would mean that one would not be heard at all ('no-one even knows or is aware that it's even happening'). The effects of PM as a liberal technology of government in this sense can be observed as it serves to both constrain and liberate these ICT staff members. Subjects are able to protest, but only insofar as self-managing subject positions allow, and thus "only in so far as they are free" (Foucault, 1982: 221). This point was further illustrated by Eric as he described a particular form of 'empowerment' through the use of PM knowledge and practice. As he commented;

> I think one of the things we've got to be able to do is to say 'Well, if you do cut us, this is what it means in real terms'. . .You know? 'You can't cut us 'cause we'll be doing less'. So, well, what does that really mean? Well, to be able to say, 'We've got these plans. We've got these methods... we've got these projects going on. This is where the resource [staff labour] goes.' To be able to say, you know? 'If you cut one development officer, that's a percentage of the thing [productive potential]. What do you want us not to do? If our capacity goes down, we can't do all these projects to the timescales that we're committed to. . . What do you want us to slip or what you want to can?'. . .And if the documentation's good enough to say, 'Well, the point of doing this project was that it ends up saving money', well yeah (Eric, Permanent Portfolio Manager, Interview, 8/1/2013)

The instrumental and 'liberating' aspect of this governmental rationality supplies Eric with a platform from which to state his case ('To be able to say. . .what do you want us not to do?'). The truths that Eric produces are thus governed by an ethical obligation to recognise himself and his colleagues as subjects of economic government. As Eric's work intensifies due to staff cuts, he is also responsibilised to actively justify the economic rationale for the continuation of work, and thus the security of his own and his colleague's future employment. 'Resistance' in this sense does not constitute resistance to a particular governmentality. Eric, in effect, is attempting to manage the 'risk' of job losses, while at the same time supplying the knowledge as to how to do this most 'effectively', or indeed 'correctly' or humanely. PM knowledge and practice is seen once again to enable economic government 'at a distance' by supplying the

framework of reasoning through which problems and solutions are posed. Nevertheless, Eric is also 'empowered' to deploy tactics that are delimited but not fully determined by the rational grid of economic government. This, as de Certeau argues, constitutes an "individual mode of appropriation" (de Certeau, 1984: 96): an example of stubborn procedures of resistance that elude economic government without being outside of the field in which it is exercised. Eric is therefore able to defend and also promote the cause of his department in a way in which his superiors had perhaps not intended. As an agent of government he is able to push his argument into the territory of other more powerful actors, while abiding by the 'rules of the game' and technologies that have been 'designed in' to his working life. These effects would again constitute examples of a kind of calculative mode 'defensibility', yet they would also point to a mode of creative resistance, thus illustrating some of the unintended effects of PM as a liberal technology of government.

Such 'tactics' of resistance would be evidenced further despite the ostensible constraints of governmental spaces through a new PM organisational approach. The practice of discretion itself, by revealing what one wishes to reveal within a designated framework, constituted practices of resistance in this sense. Despite the subjugation of local government workers, the possible field of action would be structured in such a way that they would be able to influence superiors. Thus, from within these governmental spaces there is a potential to block and overturn governmental relations of guidance and influence. In this sense constituting project management subjects as those responsible for the disclosure of 'accountable' performances simultaneously opens up spaces for subversion. Accounts of these instances constituted resistance to explicit disciplinary practices, rather than the destabilisation of economic governmental rationalities. Subversion in this sense would depend upon staff recognising such practices as disciplinary devices; as accountable practices that were geared towards constraint. As Eric commented;

> If it's up on a wall [project performance] and your name's against something, and it's gone red, it has quite an emotional effect on the thinking[14]. . . I hadn't any tears, or anything. I just mean people don't like seeing their actions with their name against it in red, like, 'I was green last week'. I've come to the meeting and I've said, 'Yeah, couldn't make any progress with this stuff. 'Ah

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[14] Eric is talking about the shared computer system brought in to make visible all project work electronically in the ICT unit. Also discussed by Stephen, the ICT senior manager, in Chapter 5.

well, that means we're red now.' 'Aww... are we? Aw, can I not be amber?' [Laughter]. . . We did have this Star Chamber idea and the project manager would be hauled up. ICT board met monthly, so we were on a weekly cycle and it would be the report the week before the ICT board met that would determine whether you had to go and explain yourself to them or not. And you would get a pattern of red, red, red, 'Oh, green this week' [Laughter]. 'Right, I'm amber. I'm red again.' [Laughter]. Because, if you were green that week you wouldn't get called up. . .It would be, 'We've made some progress. We've caught up this week. We made progress.' (Eric, Permanent Portfolio Manager, Interview, 8/1/2013)

The collective recognition of a disciplinary gaze and the visibility of one's project performance plays an important role in creative resistance in this sense. The more explicit recognition of disciplinary power/knowledge thus does not render staff ignorant of themselves (McKinlay and Taylor, 1998). A confessional mode of truth production encourages practices of self-regulation that are also indicative of 'defensibility'. Nevertheless, in this instance protecting one's 'integrity' and accountability extends to subverting the process of truth production itself, so as to deprive superiors of an ability to identify deviant project workers. One's actions are determined within a frame of reasoning whereby one's freedom as a project manager is presupposed. Nevertheless, other 'just between us' tactics are inserted into the accepted and sieve-like governmental framework, pointing to a kind of knowledge that remains 'silent' between colleagues. Besides illustrating that technologies of 'accountability' can foster distrust (Du Gay, 2008), this also illustrates that practices of discretion are in themselves practices of resistance in this particular example. A sense of limited freedom is deployed to resist the government power that constitutes one as being responsible for such freedom in the first instance. Nevertheless, as de Certeau (1984) reminds us, space in this sense can become the very blind spot of the powers that delimit it. These 'tactics', then, are the unintended effects of this particular governmental regime. They are, paradoxically, what de Certeau designates as, "local authorities" (1984: 106). As he stated;

It [the governmental paradox] makes room for a void. In that way it opens up clearings; it 'allows' a certain play with a system of defined places. It 'authorizes' the production of an area of free play (Spielraum) on a checkerboard that analyzes and classifies identities. It makes places habitable. On these grounds, I call such discourse a 'local authority' (1984: 106).

7.7 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has taken the perspectives and problematisations of local government workers involved in a new PM organisational approach as a point of analysis. The aim has been to expand upon the theoretical themes that emerged in Chapter 6 in seeking to problematise PM knowledge and practice as a liberal technology of government. A discourse that emphasised the distinctive virtues of the local government worker was deployed in order to problematise the procurement of contracted expert labour and the management of objectives by senior management. The articulation of ambivalence points towards a confusing mixture of governmentalities as one's 'human capital' becomes a necessary matter for consideration in being written as an autonomous productive subject amidst conditions of employment insecurity. A discourse of anti-professionalism is deployed in contestation to professional practices of evaluation and audit: those that are considered to constrain and undermine the autonomy of the experienced and ostensibly stressed local government worker. This discourse extends to problematising the representational truths of PM professional expertise itself, as these truths are considered to be unrelated to localised understandings and experiences in local government employment. Nevertheless, staff 'empowered' within a new network of accountability engage in 'tactics' by revealing what they choose to reveal within the bounds of PM's economic governmental rationality. This 'underside' of economic government thus requires us to rethink the activities of the subjugated in this context, as they are seen to impose themselves on the territories of their superiors. In effect, this illustrates that despite the apparent constraints of PM as a 'liberating' technology of government, the spaces it delineates are also the spaces in which subjects insinuate their differences into dominant economic discourse. Nevertheless, these processes of appropriation (de Certeau, 1984) require that one must firstly 'become a part of it' in order to write oneself back into the frame within which one is encompassed. These 'ways of using' the 'rules of the game' illustrate that PM maintains its efficacy as a technology of government by simultaneously offering a way out, and a way in, to the 'freedoms' that it represents.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

Following on from the empirical focus in the previous chapters this chapter undertakes a discussion of the findings of this study with reference to the themes addressed in the preceding review and methodology chapters. In doing so it seeks to highlight the contributions this research makes to perspectives on the 'New Public Management' (NPM), Project Management (PM), Foucauldian studies and 'Foucauldianism' in Organisational and Management Studies (OMS). We begin by discussing the findings of this research in relation to NPM, and PM's significance in regard to the shifting field of public management today. Thereafter, the chapter outlines the particular perspective on PM that has been advanced in this thesis, how it has been inspired by other broadly 'Foucauldian' work, and how it provides a new perspective on an organisational technology that may otherwise pass as neutral or beneficial in its effects. From here, the chapter turns to Foucauldian studies more generally, and the input that this research makes to the genre of studies of governmentality. In the final section we turn to 'Foucauldianism' in the field of OMS and undertake a more detailed discussion of the contribution that this study makes in relation to Foucauldian OMS studies discussed and reviewed in Chapter 3.

8.2 Contribution to perspectives on 'New Public Management'

The first section of this chapter addresses the contribution that this study makes to the wide-ranging discourse of 'the new public management' (NPM). In the first instance the findings support the view that it is best not to address NPM as a homogenous regime of administration with overriding principles and characteristics, but instead as a persistent yet loosely coupled composition of ideas, re-fashioned designs and new political problematisations that should not pass without critique (Lapsley, 2008; Barratt, 2013). In the history of NPM PM emerges as a technology of power in the 1990s, especially following the reforms of 'New Labour' in 1997, and has become a principle mode of organisation (especially in ICT service provision) since (Roper *et al.*, 2005; Hodgson, 2010a). It neatly aligns, as the participants in the present study have corroborated (see Chapter 5), with 'New Labour' policies for devolved economic responsibilisation in 'Best Value', public-private partnerships, outsourcing and quality management. PM has been shown here as an organisational technology that serves to

produce, rather than reflect, these strategic objectives. Through defining roles, responsibilities and devolving 'management-by-measurement' control to individuals, the organisational field becomes more amenable to intervention and evaluation. PM operates to produce performance orientated frameworks of reasoning and the project managing subjectivities to which they are associated.

Recent studies of the government of the public sector illustrate that the so-called 'neo-liberal' project has been problematised once again to protect and extend the domain of 'enterprise' from the burden of the State (Barratt, 2013). This study has complemented these perspectives by demonstrating that PM is playing a pivotal role in determining new spaces of 'freedom' and accountability following more recent economic and political reforms (HM Treasury, 2010a; HM Treasury, 2010b). Its productive power has been shown to take effect by delimiting forms of autonomy and self-responsibility in a decentralised organisational field. PM in this sense appears as a subtle and effective means by which to depoliticise strategic management reforms by extending the effects of self-management into new areas, and by making visible the performance of individuals to themselves and others. Through transforming the governability of public organisations, public servants and contractors alike, it has the potential to stimulate norms of private management over that of a common ethos of public service. PM operates as an effective form of government 'at a distance' by aligning the ambitions of subjects with its enabling potential, and by transforming public service professionals into those responsible for circulating its effects.

NPM may be understood as a pervasive and normalising discourse through the recurrent promotion of managerial subjectivities. Nevertheless, the governmental motifs of 'more for less', enterprise and individual empowerment (Du Gay, 2000) were open to a variety of interpretations and contestations in this study. The perspective advanced here has not painted a deterministic account of NPM changes by portraying subjects as passive recipients of them, but instead has charted NPM as that which is shifting and contingent, involving struggles to create, appropriate, and exploit ambiguities within and between dominant discourses (Thomas and Davies, 2005). We have seen a prevalence of 'end product' organisational perspectives, those that emphasise 'clients' and 'consumers' of service as opposed to the well-being of the local government workers and consultants who are providing them (Du Gay, 2000). Nevertheless, at the same time, rather than observing an increasing divide between 'strategists' and welfare professionals (Webb,

1999), PM appears to be 'responsibilising' those working in local authorities at lower levels of organisation. In a relatively 'indirect' fashion PM produces requirements of 'responsiveness' and 'enthusiasm' by encouraging a more intimate involvement in organisational affairs. In this study PM appeared to be empowering those who were evidently estranged under previous organisational structures, by supplying a sense of recognition, worth and cohesion in a new organisational network (see Chapters 5 and 7). The fostering of 'personalised government' through project management points to new delimitations of 'freedom' in local authorities. PM in this sense can be considered as that which increasingly constitutes public sector workers as upholders of their own demarcated interests and responsibilities within the frame of NPM today.

Amidst conditions in which commentators argue that the 'constraints' of 'New Labour's' centralised monitoring administration have waned (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2011; Barratt, 2013), the role that PM may play in new configurations of public management could be, for example, to further embolden the truths of enterprise beyond that of 'results' and 'delivery', and towards a 'purer' form of professional autonomy in project working. PM in this sense can link the activity of governing to the government of the self in more intimate and subtle ways than would be the case in more explicit centralised monitoring regimes. Indeed, as this study has shown, the problematisation of public sector employment and the associated responsibilisation of citizens ('customers') and communities, produced the requirement for a more pervasive PM organisational approach, and for the individual empowerment of local government workers (see Chapter 5). PM in this sense can be observed as that which is designed to enhance the 'responsiveness' and 'flexibility' of an increasingly liberalised and decentralised public sector. It constitutes public servants as autonomous 'entrepreneurs' responsible for their own projects (Weiskopf and Munro, 2012), and 'offers' them the chance to participate in action that is closer aligned with the strategies that aim to define them (Knights and Morgan, 1991).

8.3 Contribution to Studies of Project Management – A New Perspective

This thesis has in part sought to supplement the work of Hodgson (2002; 2004; 2005) and others (Clegg and Courpasson, 2004; Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006; Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007) who have foregrounded Foucauldian work investigating the corporate professionalisation and proliferation of PM across a range of contemporary

organisational settings (see Chapters 2 and 3). These perspectives have been advanced with a view to reframing orthodox views on PM knowledge and practice as a standardised and depoliticised approach to organisation (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007). Scholars drawing on Foucauldian themes have successfully reframed the neutrality of standard PM texts and procedures, developing a viewpoint from which to problematise the issues associated with PM's modalities of control in the organisation of work (Clegg *et al.*, 2002; Hodgson, 2002; Clegg and Courpasson, 2004). Key to these endeavours has been a concern with the abstract and technical nature of PM's universal application, as well as a concern with the particular forms of conduct and modes of professionalism that PM produces among different actors working within and between organisations (Hodgson, 2002; Clegg and Courpasson, 2004; Hodgson, 2005; Cicmil *et al.*, 2009).

The present study has sought to contribute to these efforts by further problematising the power and politics involved in an organisational technology that may otherwise pass as unproblematic, neutral and advantageous in its effects. Sharing the concerns of other broadly Foucauldian perspectives (Hodgson, 2002; Raisanen and Linde, 2004; Hodgson, 2005; Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006), this study has been motivated by the apparent lack of 'critical' attention PM has received, despite its widespread promotion and proliferation in the present political economy (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Cicmil *et al.*, 2009). The aim has been to develop a further perspective on PM as a prevalent organisational technique, while at the same time attempting to make sense of a technology that does not sit easily with more centralised conceptions of managerial or professional power. As Hodgson (2005) notes in regard to the legacy of so-called 'Foucauldianism' in OMS (see Chapter 3), there has been a requirement to consider the complexity of power relations with respect to PM's circulation, and the variety of responses to its professionalisation in different organisational contexts. By addressing PM and the rationalities to which is connected in a UK local authority, a territory largely unexplored in studies of PM thus far, this thesis has advanced a fresh perspective.

The preceding chapters have problematised PM as an 'indirect' governmental technology of agency and performance (Dean, 1999), one that enables economic government 'at a distance' (Miller and Rose, 1990). The perspective of governmentality has provided a platform from which to address organisational actors in regard to the liberal rationalities of government through which they are constituted, and

PM's subtle role in the deployment of rationalities in line with strategic aims (Dean, 1999; Power, 1999; Rose, 1999b). The ways in which subjects appeared to discipline themselves through PM pointed at the same time to the ways in which they appeared to secure a sense of professional autonomy and freedom (Hodgson, 2002). Nevertheless, the perspective that this study has advanced points to a more intimate and 'economical' form of power than the genealogy of 'discipline' can account for, by illustrating not only the disciplinary appeal of professionalism (Fournier, 1999), but also how the knowledge and practice of PM corresponds with particular entrepreneurial and practical relations to self. These procedures, as we have observed, were seen to take effect among liberal rationalities of 'contractualisation', 'accountability' and 'enterprise' (Du Gay, 1996; Rose, 1999b); those that were constitutive of project managing subjectivities and the animation of a calculative professional agency.

On one level, then, the perspective that has been developed here has enhanced the problematisation of PM by 'loosening' the connection between subjectification and subjection, and by taking account of the ways in which 'government' power presupposes the desires and capacities of agents (Burchell, 1996; Rose, 1999b). Power was seen to modify the potential outcomes of action at a more general level, by addressing subjects of government through their ability to make appropriate investments and decisions as professionals and as newly responsibilised local government workers. PM offers a means by which to act relatively 'freely' in accordance with strategic delimitations, but in doing so it animates a particular kind of ownership and professionalism by empowering subjects with more 'personalised' methods of prediction and performance management (Grey, 1994; Du Gay, 1996). In this sense power did not explicitly dominate subjects, but instead presupposed the freedoms of agents in aligning them with particular practical and ethical possibilities. Through this perspective it has been possible to problematise the politics of standardisation as an ethico-political issue, that which remains "an enduring blind spot in our understanding of technologies of control in the contemporary workplace" (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007: 445).

8.4 Contribution to Foucauldian Studies

> To study processes of governmentalisation requires us to attend not just to the programmes of the powerful but to their operation and to the manifold ways that individuals, groups and populations absorb, comply and resist these projects (McKinlay and Pezet, 2010: 494)

Without wishing to reify any particular rationality of government *per se*, this study has attempted to disentangle them and query their salience in the 'everyday' accounts and actions of those who are constituted through them (Fournier and Grey, 1999; McKinlay *et al.*, 2012). In doing so there is the potential to understand the relationship between individuals and wider regulative governmental rationalities by taking account of 'what matters to them'. It would be unreasonable to claim that this study has made a significant contribution to studies of governmentality at the level of political rationalities, or in relation to the theoretical object of 'mentalities of rule' following a case study in one particular local authority. Nevertheless, one of the principle contributions of this study has been to demonstrate that the perspective of governmentality can be adapted to address strategic programmes on the one hand, and 'real' organisational actors on the other; those who are inventive and thinking people with capacities of their own (Barratt, 2003; 2008; McKinlay *et al.*, 2012).

In Chapter 6 and 7 we have observed that the link between acts of inscription and the formation of subjective dispositions requires a more precise analysis than the genre of studies of governmentality has allowed for thus far (O'Malley *et al.*, 1997; McKinlay *et al.*, 2012). Organisational actors are not merely bearers of so-called 'neo-liberal' discourses, but have significant discretion for criticism and 'pro-active' interventions in the organisational networks in which they are placed. This study has answered a call to problematise liberal government by taking account of perspectives 'on the ground' (McKinlay *et al.*, 2012), forming an analysis that adds to our understanding of social heterogeneity and process. Addressing power relations among local frameworks of reasoning has illustrated that it can be dangerous to attach our analysis to dominant discourses for too long, those discourses against which the contradictory logics of power, control and resistance may be conceptualised. Many of the expressions of ambiguity in this study were related to struggles over what particular fields of judgement were in play, given that all responsibilities should, in an ideal world, be attended to. 'Government' power in this sense did not cultivate its subjects

categorically, but instead operated as a form of action upon the action of others (Foucault, 1982). Due to the context and scope of the study, as well as the explorative the manner in which it has been designed (see Chapter 5), we have witnessed a variety of interpretations of PM's governmental and disciplinary practices among subjects who invested in and responded to it in their own ways. Thus, the perspective of governmentality takes us beyond 'discipline' not by querying how PM places restraint on the freedom of individuals (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006), but instead by querying the frameworks of reasoning within which particular freedoms can be exercised (Munro, 2012).

To some extent, then, as we have seen, it is left to the subjects of government to re-write representative truths in their own ways. The concept of the 'conduct of conduct' should always be addressed, as McKinlay *et al* note (2012: 10), with a certain "lightness of touch" in this sense. Organisational ethnography, as an explorative and practical activity (Rosen, 1991), has been shown here to enable a form of analysis that can assess the complexities involved in how strategic programmes 'translate' into practices on the ground. PM has been addressed not simply as a *'sine qua non'* liberal technology of government, but instead as that which produces divergent effects and responses amongst the 'messy actualities' of everyday working life (McKinlay *et al.*, 2012). Such a perspective does not construct its theoretical object as political rationalities or technologies *per se*, but instead problematises the effects of these objects and considers their potential costs in relation to the contexts in which they take place (O'Malley *et al.*, 1997). 'Governmentality' has not been used as a coherent political theory, but has instead been deployed as a comparatively open approach to situated research (McKinlay, 2010a). Contestation and resistance has not amounted to programmatic failure alone (cf: Clegg *et al.*, 2002) but instead has been found to be that which takes place both within and outside of constitutive discourses, and in regard to the ways in which organisational actors both identify with and distance themselves from prevailing rationalities.

In addressing the acknowledged limitations in the genre of studies of governmentality (cf: O'Malley *et al.*, 1997; McKinlay *et al.*, 2010) this study has not reduced organisational life to the effects of governmental programmes, those emanating from a decentralised yet coherent concentration of authority. Rather, governmentality 'on the ground' problematises the politics of the workplace by investigating not only how

people are made vehicles for power through liberal programmes, rationalities and technologies, but by asking how people respond to and transform what are delimited as their 'natural' dispositions and capabilities. This kind of analysis works on the premise that every rationality through which power is exercised necessarily produces some kind of equivalent mode of resistance (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). The implication for potential future 'governmentality on the ground' studies, then, is that a more modest influence is ascribed to 'political rationalities' in shaping pathways for change, by asking instead how people problematise their everyday circumstances at work. In keeping with a genealogical ethos this study has demonstrated that it is possible to investigate not just how governmental programmes take form through history in an abstract sense, but also their effects in social relations, and how the organisational world may 'governmentalise itself' (McKinlay and Pezet, 2010: 494).

Following this, and while being careful not to overstate the case (Fournier and Grey, 1999), there is a need to consider the findings of the study in reference to the political rationalities that are pertinent to the context at hand. Much of what has been discussed in this study appears to support the premise that PM derives little appeal by reference to a contribution to a 'common good' (Morris *et al.*, 2006; Cicmil *et al.*, 2009). It has been shown instead to be indicative of economic responsibilisation and performance logics; themes that are characteristic of the ongoing 'marketisation' of the public sector (Du Gay, 1996; Grimshaw and Hebson, 2005; Du Gay, 2008; Muzio *et al.*, 2011a). PM's mechanisms of predictability and performance management have been shown as the means by which to determine what is being 'produced' as accurately and precisely as possible (Power, 1999). 'Management-by-measurement' at the level of distinct units of management can animate relations to self that render subjects less accountable to superiors, or to the 'public', but instead to the constitutive 'rules of the game' outlined in corporate styles of professionalism (Muzio *et al.*, 2011a). Nevertheless, it is important to note that 'self-accountability' does not emerge through the promotion of unconstrained 'self-interest', but instead by making the exercise of 'performance' tricky and problematic amidst intensified personal responsibilities and ethical obligations. With respect to public management more generally, this point is worthy of consideration given that 'personal accountability' is increasingly providing the means by which to assess performance in respect of the wants and needs of citizens ('customers')(Du Gay, 2000). 'Private' norms of performance and calculation provided the means by which to govern increasingly 'at a distance' in this case (Rose, 1999b), but

in doing so it would seem that these norms dangerously overvalued the arbitrary measurements by which security and autonomy are to be accomplished. In Chapter 6, the potential uncertainties that performance and contract logics gave rise to in turn fuelled a demand to intensify the inscriptions by which project delivery (and thus performance) would be measured (Knights and McCabe, 1999; Hodgson, 2002).

A potential danger is that such subtle forms of rationalisation, those that can be considered as modes of 'personalised government', become normalised and pass without query, not just among those constituted as professionals but among 'ordinary' local government workers too. In Chapter 7 local government workers 'distanced' themselves from the 'performance of performance', but at the same time PM was also addressed as a vehicle for employment security and career progression (see also Clegg and Courpasson, 2004; Hodgson, 2005). A point of note here, and in regard to the 'marketisation' of the social state, is that it is not only local authorities that are constituted as consumers of managerial know-hows (Rose, 1996), but increasingly the 'ordinary' workers within them. Nevertheless, at the same time, particular delineations of success and failure offer clear benefits, both materially and symbolically, as old hierarchies are disrupted in place of new PM regimes that provide avenues for new possibilities, identities and freedoms. This point relates to Hodgson's (2002) observation that the ideals of the PM discipline can provide a powerful incentive by supplying material and security rewards. Nevertheless, in this study there was also a recognition that faith in PM's abstractions, like faith in 'the market', were not always built on the 'effectiveness' of PM doing what it claims ('value creation', 'business benefit'), but instead were referenced against the particular freedoms that may be fulfilled through it ('delivery', 'success', 'completed as defined', 'worthy contributors'). At the same time the spaces that PM produced appeared to extend 'government' power, but in doing so it also limited, to an extent, the capacity for authorities to be 'in the know' about the precise activities of individuals (de Certeau, 1984).

Despite PM's self-governing practices being observed as somewhat artificial for some, it appeared to hold as a technology of agency and performance due to its liberating potential (Dean, 1999). It is thus the governmental context of a more competitive and contractualised public sector that provides the framework of reasoning for its consumption and deployment. This explains, in part, why practices of resistance were observed more saliently when framed firmly within PM's accountable frameworks of

reasoning. PM in this sense worked in the favour of ICT workers, by facilitating the visualisation of their work and thus enabling subjects to identify their own productive output in cases of contestation. This corresponds with the findings of Clegg and Courpasson (2004) and Hodgson (2002) insofar as PM serves as a rule binding context for decision making, and a representative technology in cases of contestation. Nevertheless, it also illustrates that PM's particular 'regime of truth' is not only composed of formal rules and self-disciplinary professional ideals, but that it also inscribes mechanisms by which to address the self in a manner through which a project of the self can be realised, both within organisations and in working life (also see the OMS section below).

Following these illustrations, it is reasonable to suggest that such a 'rational' way of organising could mean that 'government' will increasingly confront local authority organisations as those that maintain their own inherent means of self-regulation (Dean, 1999). The more general political rationality that contextualised the government of the authority was that of economic responsibilisation, actively promoted by the authority's senior management, and evidenced in a wider 'liberal' governmental programme to responsibilise not only staff, but also citizens ('customers') and 'communities' (see Chapter 5). This not only points towards the 'clientisation' of the population more generally (Gleadle *et al.*, 2008), but also indicates that the programming of economic government is continuing at yet a further distance from the political 'centre' (Rose and Miller, 2010). Within the frame of public service provision at least, PM appears as an influential means of 'translation' that is facilitating this process. PM, in this sense, appears as an exemplary manifestation of so-called 'neo-liberal' political reasoning. It may succeed in generating greater economy, amenableness and efficiency in the workforce, but in the process it changes what constitutes legitimate knowledge by emphasising particularly managerial conceptualisations of what it means to be 'accountable'.

8.5 Contribution to 'Foucauldianism' in OMS

> The reconfiguring of the subject of government confers obligations and duties at
> the same time as it opens new spaces of decision and action (Rose, 1996: 58)

Turning now to 'Foucauldianism' in the field OMS the findings of this study open up a
number of points that are worthy of discussion. In a number of ways, as we will discuss
below, this study contributes to the field of OMS by moving beyond the
power/knowledge couple of 'discipline' in adopting a more constitutive and expansive
view on power in organisational analysis. Whereas 'discipline' intervenes to correct
deviations from a norm, it was observed in this study as that which coexisted with
diffuse configurations of 'government' power. In part, this relates to the empirical
context and scope of the study, taking place among a culturally contested site
characterised by corporate strategic change and a programme for entrepreneurial
empowerment (see Chapter 5). Through governmental notions such as 'communities of
practice' and 'commitment to reflection' government power could be observed as that
which was intended to influence the 'milieu' in which decisions were being taken,
rather than the decisions themselves (Munro, 2012). Within this frame it would not
have been suitable to reduce PM to the practice of labour 'control', or to depictions of
power that envisage subjects as those complicit in their own subjugation (cf: Sewell and
Wilkinson, 1992b; Barker, 1993). Adopting such a view on power would have
overemphasised the docility of the manner in which participants were encouraged to
develop practical relations to themselves, and would have overlooked the role of
organisational actors in reproducing, rejecting and appropriating PM and its associated
rationalities.

In reference to 'Foucauldianism' in OMS more generally this illustrates that it is
unhelpful to address subjects as 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1977), as mere transmitters
of discourse, but as people with particular histories and subject positions in the 'play' of
a particular context and location. Conceptualising PM as something which is 'done to'
subjects did not supply a sufficient conceptual framework for the variety of ways in
which participants actively invested in its truths, distanced themselves from its
accountable logics, and became acquiescent in relation to its enabling effects. PM in
this sense both limited and facilitated the needs and wants of individuals and groups in
different ways, which was characterised by a particular governmental context rather

than a particular local of power. Practices of resistance were identified among those who were not always deprived of influence, or of identity, but who were to a certain extent 'empowered' through trade union economic discourses and through PM itself: the technology that afforded the discretion by which to produce 'resistant' truths relative to dominant economic rationalities. The notion of 'expertise', far from being a unitary concept (Fournier and Grey, 1999), appeared in this sense to give creditability to moral claims about the specificity of public services. Through this discourse the image of the local government worker was seen to 'add value' to the cost-effectiveness of public service, by harnessing a unique set of localised capabilities, experience and skills.

At one level, then, this thesis has advanced a new perspective upon the complex power relations that characterise PM as a liberal organisational regime, one that produces a diverse range of effects in a decentralised organisational field. Less a case of 'controlling' its subjects it was seen to animate them, opening up spaces for resistance as well as providing indicators and platforms by which to demonstrate commitment and success (Rose, 1996). PM in this sense is comparable to other workplace technologies such as teamworking (Knights and McCabe, 2000b; 2003) and peer review (McKinlay and Taylor, 1998). Responses to PM's principles of self-management did not often constitute outright rejection, and indeed through these principles practices of resistance emerged. The analysis of the 'tactics of the weak' in Chapter 7, for example, indicated that PM was well received after it appeared to enable staff to "think for themselves" (Knights and McCabe, 2003: 1613) in a new organisational network. This somewhat 'liberating' process gave rise to a form of resistance that did not emerge through a lack of enthusiasm for PM itself, but instead in regard to existing identity issues as estranged ICT staff. The positive effect of PM in this sense produced a degree of self-control and a positive sense of responsibility for ICT staff. As Knights and McCabe (2003) state, correspondingly, in reference to a new teamworking regime in a call centre;

> Employees welcome a sense of self-organization; for when individuals organize their (our) own work it becomes more meaningful and therefore its intensification may be ignored or even denied (2003: 1588)

In the case of this study however, it appeared that work intensification remained a point of contention for ICT staff. Nevertheless, PM provided the means by which to engage in a form of resistance by demonstrating to superiors the scope and nature of the work

that was being undertaken. PM techniques for planning, inscribing and visualising work were addressed as a way in which to facilitate this 'defensive' conversation (see Chapter 7). Thus, with respect to Knights and McCabe (2003), it is indeed perhaps dangerous to be overly critical of the devolved autonomy that PM (or indeed teamworking) affords. Rather, what is at issue is the nature of the autonomy itself and the effects that it may have in producing particular governmental aims. A case in point here is that the effects of work intensification may not appear clear-cut among those who have been newly introduced to project working, given that it involves becoming simultaneously more empowered and responsible at the same time (Knights and McCabe, 2003). As senior managers were seen to devolve control through 'governing less' (see Chapter 5), PM's 'liberating' effect would appear to facilitate a form of recognition, responsibility and engagement. Nevertheless, on the other hand it appeared as a way in which to wage battles of performance and productivity, both for PM professionals and local government worker alike (Clegg and Courpasson, 2004). This would correlate the findings in Chapter 6 with those in Chapter 7, insofar as PM's 'dividing practices' (Foucault, 1977) constituted the 'rules of the game' across a more general organisational stratum, and among both 'public' and 'private' workers.

In the context of this study, however, PM was at times considered to be excessive, both in terms of a perceived over-reliance in its abstract 'accountable' inscriptions, and also with respect to the perceived worth of its professional certification (Muzio *et al.*, 2011a: see Chapter 7). Nevertheless, for both contractors and local government workers, PM facilitated a certain kind of engagement with work, insofar as it provided the means by which to attain security and meaning as well as envision possibilities of freedom (within and beyond the authority). This would indicate that PM points not necessarily to the progressive rationalisation of action (Cicmil *et al.*, 2009), but instead to the circular nature of power that 'governing less' encourages (Munro, 2012), as subjects are equipped with rights and choices as to how much or how little PM's 'performance of performance' may align with their ambitions. In the authority in question, and indeed in other areas of the public sector, the question then becomes framed according to a division between those who are adequately responsible and those who lack the capacities to (project) manage themselves responsibly, across departments, and in relation to public-private interactions. In this frame PM is referenced not explicitly against a disciplinary ideal of professionalism (although this was observed in Chapter 6) (Hodgson, 2002), but instead through the ways in which subjects are expected to

enhance their 'employability' through learning, competency and in the management of the productive self. This to some extent perhaps explains why there were ambivalent responses to PM among local government workers (see Chapter 7), a phenomenon also characteristic of its professionalisation in organisations (Hodgson, 2005). PM in this sense is recognised as that which outlines a kind of 'artificial' freedom. It does not always point to career enhancement, but more often appears to point to 'what works' amidst more intensive working conditions and in public-private interactions.

Nevertheless, the preceding chapters have also shed light on the particular nature of what Hodgson has described as the "subjective security" (2002: 818) that PM can provide. An insight of this study, then, has been to identify different subjective securities and how they relate to particular problematisations of freedom in this context. In particular, we have observed how power is sustained through the practical accomplishment of work through reflexive practices (Knights, 2002). The case of 'risk management', for example (see Chapter 6), was described as a benevolent aid for the management of projects as well as one's career. Correlating with Grey's (1994) analysis of 'the career' as a technology of performance that links various 'moves in the game', practices associated with PM also appeared as the means by which to address the self through particular governmental controls. This would align with Grey's (1994) assessment that 'enterprise' is not a 'spirit' per se but instead that which is inscribed into mechanisms of performance and self-management. This makes PM particularly interesting insofar there is nothing, in principle, that is 'unknowable' through its mechanisms of security *and* opportunity. The potential application for PM's processes of rationalisation do indeed appear to be limitless (and thus enabling) in this sense (Hodgson, 2002). Furthermore, as Clegg and Courpasson (2004) note, this points to the more general observation that PM can become governmentally 'neo-liberal' in its design when it harnesses the desires of individuals to govern their performance, not just within organisations but also in relation to their working life. Thus, a contribution of this study has been to illustrate that projects (and contracts) do not only have a self-disciplinary character (Hodgson, 2002), but also operate as self-governing technologies of the self. In this sense they are vehicles for the self to 'become' in notions such as success, learning, delivery, and through the maintenance of professional and organisational autonomy. Subjects are not so much 'controlled' as they are 'made-up' through the practical accomplishment of managing projects (Rose, 1999). These illustrations are indicative of 'bio-power' and 'government' power, insofar as it is life

itself which becomes a focus, where projects extend beyond the workplace and become matters of consumption, learning and renewal (Grey, 1994).

The previous chapters have also shed light on what Rose (1999) observes as the increasing demand on subjects to operate according to a 'litigious mentality' in order to justify their existence in economic networks. These moral codes would not appear to be entirely geared towards constraint, however. At one level this can be construed as the "internalisation" (Hodgson, 2002: 813) of PM's self-disciplinary structures, and the disciplinary appeal to professionalism that it engenders. Nevertheless, the analysis in this study would appear to suggest such disciplinary norms are made effective through particular investments in the potential freedoms that PM affords, those that are accentuated amidst particular conditions of possibility. As Starkey and McKinlay (1998) argue, technologies of the self are more enabling and effective when they are expressed in more superficial understandings, and in regard to the ways in which we are encouraged to manage our existence through them. Thus, the technicalities of 'the project' and delimitation of 'ownership' at the level of a distinct units of management affirm a sense of self that is essentially entrepreneurial in character. What may be considered as the construction of a "valued identity" (Hodgson, 2002: 817) in this sense relates to the maximisation of efficiency and effectiveness at the individual level, that which is defined in relation to an empowered and mobilised 'client' or 'customer' (citizen) (Du Gay, 2000). These insights illustrate that the securities and interests of the actors in this study cannot be addressed separately from the discourses through which they are constituted (Foucault, 1982). Addressing organisational actors as historical beings thus provides a perspective from which to develop an understanding of the constitutive nature of discourse (Brown, 1998). The strategic discourse that PM depends upon rationalises project successes and failures while negating alternative perspectives (Knights and Morgan, 1991).

The findings in this study answer a call for Foucauldian work to go beyond common sense depictions of organisations with clear cut boundaries (Knights, 2002), and towards a more encompassing perspective upon how the productive subject is instantiated in rationalities of government. Foucauldian organisational analysis does not have to take resistance as the antithesis of governmental programmes, professionalisation strategies, or managerial technologies, but instead as something that takes form in and through specific conditions of possibility emerging out of localised

circumstances and events (Knights, 2002; Hodgson, 2005). This study necessitated a decentring of the idea of a resistant subject acting out of a heroism or bravery. It also required a decentring of a pre-conceived struggle between capital and labour (Rose, 1999b; Barratt, 2003). Re-producing such a struggle would have envisaged resistance primarily within a negative paradigm: as a 'kick back' against PM as a form of managerial and professional control. The findings in Chapter 7, for example, may not have been made, and would not have allowed for an investigation of how practices of resistance took shape in unexpected ways (de Certeau, 1984; Fournier and Grey, 1999). PM's powers of 'liberalisation' provided the means by which to turn around relations of power (Gordon, 1991). 'Resistance' in this sense is observed as that which is a perpetual feature of organisational and social existence under the patronage of economic government (Patton, 1998; Barratt, 2003).

A contribution to Foucauldianism in OMS, then, relates to the call from Hodgson (2005: 65) to "mobilize the work of Foucault" in order to "gain some purchase on what might be read as 'oppositional practice'". 'Oppositional practice' in this study could be construed in a number of different ways, such as in exemplary styles of PM professionalism, a distancing from PM's practices of accountability, and in the ways through which PM provided ICT staff with an sense of self respectability and control in their work. Due in part to the context of this study, the perspective of governmentality was adopted to account for particular connections between liberal strategies and policies, and the responses and acts of individuals in 'translating' them into a 'reality'. This indicates that there is potential to give particular attention to how actors are governed and are governing in everyday working life, as those who are both in receipt of strategies and policies while at the same time actively establishing and resisting them in relation to a range of different subject positions. Organisational analysis in this sense focuses upon the mundane everyday occurrences and practices that delimit and define us. 'The project', in this sense, remains a prevalent technology insofar as it turns the gaze of 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency' in on the subjects of government themselves (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007).

This study also demonstrates that a broadly 'Foucauldian' perspective on the workplace can offer a means by which to explore how agency relates to power, and how agency is played out in local situations (Newton, 1998). This study has observed how the standards of PM knowledge and practice (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007) were deployed as

a matter of active truth production, both by PM professionals and local government workers, and in regard to their associated performance objectives. In Chapter 6 PM knowledge and practice (risk management) was deployed to protect against a lack of awareness in PM knowledge itself. In these cases, agency is observed as that which is represented in liberal rationalities, the evaluative concepts, methods and forms of knowing through which 'rule' comes to be enacted (Dean and Hindess, 1998). This illustrates that organisational actors are not only influenced by their historical contexts, but that they can also adopt beliefs for reasons of their own and act to change the contexts that define them (Bevir, 2010). In Chapter 7, for example, 'the tactics of the weak' were observed among local authority workers who were constituted as governmental agents yet simultaneously acted to transform the manner in which they would be recognised by others. Both agency and resistance in this sense are constituted through governmental rationalities and discourses. The modes of truth production undertaken by contractors and local government workers alike can be understood as more or less intentional attempts at deploying the means by which to govern the self more securely in this governmental context. A fluid and generative view of discourse and power thus points us towards that which 'produces' particular forms of agency in definite social actors. Thus, the perspective of governmentality has been shown here to warrant a more lucid comprehension of agency by connecting issues of liberal government to organisation, and selves at work (Rose, 1999a).

Contrary to Newton (1998), then, the analysis in this thesis illustrates that a broadly Foucauldian theoretical frame can be deployed to increase our understanding of how governmental rationalities determine how agents may be constituted, and constitute themselves as socially situated actors. This highlights a form of Foucauldian analysis that does not ignore how agency "affects both the establishment and deployment of discursive practices" (1998: 426). Rather, agency in this case can be understood as that which gives rise to the resourceful deployment of particular governmental truths. The delineation of individual and departmental needs and desires encouraged the participants in this study to become active in programming and manipulating the reality that they wished to govern. By 'playing' with discourse and practice (Newton, 1998) in accordance with appropriate liberal rationalities a variety of possibilities for agency emerged, both for PM professionals and local government workers alike. Agency in this sense does not depend so much on a fragility of self (Knights and Willmott, 1989) as it depends on the animation of particular relations to self through structures of

recognition (Foucault, 1982). Security comes to be represented not necessarily as a matter of belonging but as a matter of aligning with representative truths, those that may solidify particular modes of self-understanding that enable ethical, material and symbolic possibilities. Subjects of government in this sense are not necessarily 'done to' (Newton, 1998), but are also significantly involved in 'doing' by actively rationalising and contesting the discursive fields in which they operate.

8.7 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has sought to debate and discuss the findings of this study in relation to the literature themes of NPM, PM, Foucauldian studies, and 'Foucauldianism' in OMS. In doing so it has discussed the complexity of this study's findings and has sought to frame them in relation to existing perspectives. This study contributes to perspectives on NPM by illustrating that NPM is not a top-down normalised regime of administration, but instead that which is 'made up' and contested amidst localised relations of power and meaning (Rose, 1999). This study has also developed a new perspective on PM by addressing it as a technology of agency and performance in a UK local authority, that which 'produces' strategic reforms as well as facilitates their implementation through real agents and actors (McKinlay *et al.*, 2010). In attempting to complement broadly genealogical perspectives (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b) this study has demonstrated that it is possible to examine not just how programmes take form conceptually, but also their effects in social relations: how the organisational world may 'governmentalise itself' (McKinlay and Pezet, 2010: 494). This study has answered a call to consider the standardisation of management practice as an ethical issue (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007; Barratt, 2008). Finally, and with respect to 'Foucauldianism' in the field of OMS, this study has argued that a circulatory and historically constitutive view on modern power can enhance Foucauldian perspectives. Moving beyond 'discipline' enables the theorisation of particular connections between 'government' power and the technologies of the self that serve to produce particular project managing subjectivities. This perspective can enable a more historical take on agency as that which is represented in rationalities of government, and an appreciation of resistance as that which is a constant feature of organised human existence. Crucially, this allows us to query the representative truths that are given to us, in order to enhance the possibilities for contestation in the present moment.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Against the contemporary background of NPM reform (HM Treasury, 2010a; HM Treasury, 2010b) this thesis has investigated PM as an organisational mechanism for shaping work organisation in a UK local authority. By adopting a principally explorative approach involving participant observation, interviews and focus groups, the theoretical perspective was directed towards the theoretical perspective of liberal governmentality. This study has sought to complement genealogical perspectives on liberal government (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b) by adopting 'governmentality on the ground' as a novel approach to organisational analysis (McKinlay *et al.*, 2012).

Framed in relation to a programme for a more 'lean' and 'responsive' local authority organisation, together with cuts in public spending and staff, PM was found to be that which facilitates economic government 'at a distance' by subtly aligning the demarcated performance ambitions of individuals and groups with centralised strategic aims. The encouragement of PM as a technology of government in this context, however, was complex, and was closely related to constitutive identities and subject positions amidst a contested organisational context. By asking what lies in the space between PM's rationalities and representations and the subjectivities which makes them possible, this thesis had sought to shed light on the dynamics of a particular organisational time and location. In doing so it has served to enhance our understanding of the government of local authorities in respect to ICT service provision, and PM as a mechanism by which to rationalise a particular strategic 'reality' (Du Gay, 1996).

9.1 Summary of the project

In Chapter 1 we discussed the frame of this research with respect to three decades of 'NPM' reform. Through a variety of historical problematisations aimed at improving production, efficiency and accountability, NPM points to the variety of ways in which a decentralised political and administrative field has aimed to produce 'accountable' and 'enterprising' agents. The NPM project is not only a matter of organisational restructuring and transformation, but also constitutes an 'identity' project as subjects of government are 'made up' through these reforms (Du Gay, 1996; Du Gay, 2000; Thomas and Davies, 2005). Framed in relation to a history of policy drives for

performance, competitivity and accountability in local government, PM aligns with standardisation, benchmarking, a reliance on contract-relations, public-private partnerships and a reduction in direct managerial authority. Risk in this frame, as we have seen in Chapter 6, comes to be defined in relation to the performative concerns of each party. PM operates as a form of predictive managerial knowledge that challenges old hierarchies while aligning with planning and control logics. At the same time it is designed to embolden client-orientated frameworks of reasoning, inter-disciplinarily and integrated organising, and the 'empowerment' of public servants through strategic programmes for 'responsiveness' (Du Gay, 2008).

In Chapter 2 the historical emergence of PM was shown to be understood primarily from a practitioner's perspective (Söderlund and Lenfle, 2011). PM emerges through 'systems management' thinking (Cleland and King, 1968) in the US industrial/military complex and in the rapid production of sophisticated weaponry and aerospace technology (Maylor, 2010; Garel, 2013). The study of 'critical success factors' in projects (Söderlund, 2011b) and contingency theories in organisation theory (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967b; Kolodny, 1979) points to the different ways in which projects and project organising have been problematised in 'functional' and systematic terms. Chapter 2 also discussed the 1990s as the context for a new paradigm for PM, spurred on by developments in ICT, 'lean' strategic restructuring and shortened product lifespans. The 'projectification of society' (Lundin and Soderholm, 1998) correlates with a rise in business and management studies centred on 'the project' as temporary pocket of accumulation, characteristic of a 'new spirit of capitalism' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). Through the 1990s PM techniques are seen to shift in emphasis from project execution to more optimistic terms such as 'value creation', 'opportunities', 'benefit realisation', 'learning' and 'communities of practice'. Phenomenological and sociological perspectives began to address projects not as tangible entities, but as emergent social processes. New perspectives on PM also sought to critique an inherent belief the merits of rational scientific management, while re-focussing perspectives on social complexity, tacit knowledge and reflexivity in the 'lived experience' of project work. Critical perspectives have highlight the dangers of PM's technical rationality and PM's role in the capitalist labour process, drawing on radical Weberianism, Frankfurt School and Labour process perspective illustrates these exploitive processes.

In Chapter 3 'Foucauldianism' in OMS was discussed and the concepts of 'government' and 'governmentality' were introduced. Conceptual foundations advanced by Michel Foucault were outlined in 'archaeology' and 'genealogy', before discussing his genealogies of 'discipline' and 'bio-power'. A review of Foucauldianism in OMS illustrated that studies of the workplace have tended to emphasise oppressive forms of disciplinary power while discounting the active subject in contesting or subverting organisational regimes (Barker, 1993; Sewell, 1998). Other perspectives, however, illustrate that resistance can emerge in novel ways and that technologies of the self are more effective when they are referenced against more superficial understandings (McKinlay and Taylor, 1998). The work of Knights, Willmott and McCabe (Knights and Willmott, 1989; Knights and McCabe, 1999; Knights, 2002) illustrates that a constitutive perspective on subjectivity can illuminate a more complex picture on power relations at work. The chapter discussed Foucauldian studies of PM in the field of OMS that draw on the discipline power/knowledge couple, and PM as a 'professional discipline' in delineating appropriate modes of professional conduct (Hodgson, 2002). In following the work of Hodgson (2005) who has called for a constitutive view on power in OMS, the chapter turned to Foucault's 'later' concepts in 'government' and 'governmentality'. Foucault's genealogy of governmentality was discussed in regard to the early modern state, reason of state, polizewissenschaft, liberalism, neo-liberalism and Rose's (1999) own diagram in advanced liberalism. Studies of governmentality in the field of OMS were discussed before moving on to outline PM as a particular 'problematising' technology of agency and performance in the frame of NPM today.

In Chapter 4 the study's methodological implications situated in the field of OMS were discussed. By critiquing prominent perspectives from which criticism of 'Foucauldianism' has emerged in positivism and critical realism, a platform from which to undertake a search for method in line with this study's 'Foucauldian' outlook was advanced. A review of genealogical studies of governmentality and their empirical applications demonstrates nominalism, the contingent nature of history, the constitutive character of subjectivity and the study of 'problematisations' in bringing subjects and objects into being. Limitations in the genre were highlighted in regard to an over reliance on formal texts and programmes, a curious absence of organisational actors, and a tendency towards excessive generalisation. The methical focus of this study was outlined in response to these concerns and as a means to 'complement' historical variants in studies of governmentality (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999b). The chapter outlined

the conventions of ethnographic research and sought to explore how 'governmentalism' can be combined with an ethnographic approach.

Chapter 5 introduced the field, the data collected and the iterative work between theory and data through which empirical and theoretical themes emerged. The context of the study was outlined in an ICT investment programme and a business transformation agenda for a 'lean' and 'responsive' authority, that which would empower communities and customers to "lead their own service delivery" (Corporate Plan, December 2010). Authority staff would be required to be proactive and empowered to work in an integrated fashion. The chapter addressed the manner in which PM knowledge and practice (PRINCE2) had been encouraged through 'New Labour's' Best Value programme and also in regard to a new learning and development programme. The authority's competency programme outlined the obligation of 'managing self' through positive behaviour indicators that linked corporate aims, the 'customer' and a commitment to personal development in one mode of ethical conduct. Finally, Chapter 5 addressed the manner in which senior managers and the deputy chief executive sought to construct the productive subject, as one who learns from others (contractors), is proactive, and is committed to managing their own personal development and employability in the frame of a wider labour market.

In Chapter 6 the thesis turned to the case of PM professionals working in the corporate programme office (PO) as both 'the governors' and 'the governed' (Foucault, 1982). Governing through 'awareness' points to the encouragement of a low level understanding PM's interpretative schema. 'Awareness' in this sense points to a set of discursive conditions by which a common mode of representation is achieved: conditions in which codified interests can be successfully 'translated' into the judgements of others. The chapter analysed the self-knowledge and subjectivity of PO participants as knowledgeable and experienced PM professionals, and the manner in which discourses of self-reliance and independence were called upon in relation to discourses of professionalism. The analysis examined how a certain defensive mentality is made effective through recognising the self as an autonomous productive subject, and how certain project management subjectivities (such as in the 'risk management' of one's career) are made effective. The chapter also examined the production of truth through PM professional expertise and how it engenders modes of 'self-government' by delineating the truths by which success and failure come to be

defined. Categorising other organisational actors as 'risky' individuals is justified by reference to PM's credibility and appeal for the delivery of pre-defined objectives. A lack of awareness of PM knowledge and practice in other more powerful organisational actors comes to be defined as a risk to project delivery, illustrating the cyclical nature of governmentality in programming the reality that one wishes to govern (Miller and Rose, 1990). Projects were addressed as matters for consumption, as all-encompassing and self-actualising personal investments.

Chapter 7 addressed the accounts of local government workers increasingly involved in PM working at the authority and drew from the accounts of both permanent project managers and ICT staff. Participants emphasised the virtues of the local government worker through discursive strategies that drew from the trade union's 'in-house' discourse. PM was addressed as a form of 'human capital' that could aid professional independence beyond the constraints of local government employment. Techniques of representation, related to the restructuring interview process and also PM's governmental inscriptions, were considered to detract from the professional judgement and autonomy of staff. Cynicism towards re-training and certification in PM corresponded with an emphasis on collegial relations and PM as a means to manage and cope with work pressures. Following this, the chapter turned to the 'tactics of the weak' among ICT staff as they appeared to tactfully disclose their performance through PM knowledge and practice in order to illustrate their productive worth to superiors. A PM (PRINCE2) organisational approach is seen to create new self-managing identities and responsibilities for ICT staff amidst conditions of work intensification. This illustrated that PM can provide the means to insinuate differences into dominant economic discourse through processes of appropriation, and by creating 'local authorities' within which discretion itself becomes a practice of resistance (de Certeau, 1984).

Chapter 8 sought to discuss the findings of this thesis in relation to the preceding literature review and methodology chapters. First, the thesis makes a contribution to perspectives on NPM by illustrating that NPM is not an overarching set of principles, but instead a complex and loosely coupled set of shifting ideas and problematisations. Subjects of government are not passive recipients of NPM changes but are involved struggles to create governmental contexts, as well as appropriating and exploiting ambiguities within and between dominant discourses. Nevertheless, in a relatively 'indirect' fashion PM appears to be producing requirements for 'enthusiasm' and

'responsiveness' (Du Gay, 2008) by encouraging a more entrepreneurial involvement in organisational affairs, and by constituting subjects as upholders of their own demarcated interests through a more intimate form of performance management. A contribution has also been made to studies of PM by addressing PM as a technology of agency and performance in a UK local authority, and by illustrating how PM encourages particular practical and ethical relations to self in this context. The study has also contributed to Foucauldian studies by addressing wider regulative governmental rationalities with reference to the accounts and action of those who are constituted through them. This illustrates that there is great potential for addressing strategic governmental programmes on the one hand, and 'real agents' of government on the other, as subjects who respond, reject, transform and reproduce them in their own ways. Finally, this study has contributed towards 'Foucauldianism' in OMS by illustrating the potential for a more constitutive and encompassing view on modern power in organisational analysis. Moving beyond the discipline power/knowledge couple has enabled the problematisation of 'freedom' in this context, to which PM, in a variety of ways, is seen to both constrain and enable possibilities for organisational actors. Furthermore, moving beyond the discipline power/knowledge couple allows for a form of analysis that takes account of the particular technologies of the self (such as projects, risks and contracts) that connect personal securities and ambitions with wider governmental programmes in more intimate ways. This study has thus illustrated that there is a need to look beyond organisational systems of control in isolation, in order to ask what animates subjects of government, and how particularly 'personalised' interests are delineated and made meaningful under the auspices of liberal governmental programmes today.

9.2 The limitations of this study

There are of course clear limitations to this research. The participants were important actors with respect to the organisational context at hand, and spoke from a variety of different subject positions. Nevertheless, the study may have benefitted from a larger cohort of participants which could have allowed for the further triangulation and sampling of data in order to reinforce the validity of the findings. The theoretical focus of this study was, however, concerned with the self-knowledge and subjectivity of participants in this context, and in this case a more explorative approach necessitated in part a 'close in' ethnographic design. Inevitably however, limits to time, finance and

access were factors that determined the design and depth of this research project, the scope of which, ideally, would have been more expansive.

A further limitation of this study concerns the manner in which its theoretical focus emerged. In some respects the analytical focus may have been enhanced if the principle theoretical position had been developed in advance of the empirical research taking place. This could have allowed for a more 'direct' problematisation of the governmental rationalities and discourses that were found to characterise the study. At the same time, however, such an approach may have accentuated socio-theoretical themes to the detriment of close-in participation in the 'life-world' of participants (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009), especially with respect to the themes that were discussed in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suggest that the outcome of this study would have been different if the perspective of governmentality had been adopted at an earlier stage.

In relation to the point above, and with respect to manner in which 'the field' was problematised, it can be also be argued that the initial research frame of the contemporary field of project management could have been adapted to fit emerging empirical themes more readily. In part, this relates to my pre-understanding of the research scene (Van Maanen, 1988), and the ways in which I considered that the research project would be framed within the contemporary field of studies of project management. On reflection however, this points to one of the main 'lessons learned' of this particular 'project'. A willingness to reformulate research problems and questions is a principle feature of inductive ethnographic modes of research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Nevertheless, on reflection this process could have been managed more effectively with a more mature theoretical position, one that would have allowed for a more active decentring of pre-defined research categories and objectives, and a greater degree of flexibility.

With respect to the participant observation phase of research it could have been advantageous if I had been able to spend more time on site with the freelance consultants discussed in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, the ways in which the empirical themes emerged were related to a period of contestation, and the manner in which particular struggles over organisational frameworks of reasoning took shape. PM's role in governing 'at a distance' was seen to take effect through this struggle. Particular

insights into the professional self-knowledge of these participants may not have been afforded if this period of change and uncertainty had not emerged. In part, this illustrates the contingent nature of ethnographic research, insofar as it is often determined by unexpected events and situations (Van Maanen, 1988). Nevertheless, an extended period of participant observation with these participants could have expanded the themes discussed in Chapter 6, and furthered the links explored between the enactment of professional practice and 'identity'.

Following on from the above, it could have also been favourable if an supplementary period of participant observation was undertaken with local authority ICT staff. Due to the manner in which the research focus developed, however, as well as constraints on time and access, a supplementary focus group approach was considered to be the most pragmatic approach for the development of theory in reference to the intersubjective dynamics of different social groups at the authority (Silverman, 2012). Nevertheless, such an approach could have allowed for the further expansion of theoretical themes, and could have provided a richer form of data and enquiry with respect to the analytical themes discussed in Chapter 7.

9.3 Opportunities for further study

Following the findings of this study, however, there would also appear to be opportunities for expansion. In particular, there is the potential to expand the investigation of liberal governmentality with respect PM in the public sector more generally, given that there is an increasing reliance on project organising in regard to integrated working, public-private partnerships, fixed-term contracts and planning logics. The study of the role that PM and project organising may be playing in the fostering of entrepreneurial subjectivities appears of importance in this sense, especially given the contested nature of public management today (Du Gay, 2008; Hall, 2011). The investigation of alternative settings, such as in the transformation of other local authorities, or in the restructuring of the National Health Service (NHS), would enable the further development of socio-theoretical themes relating to PM's particular "cultures of objectivity" (Power, 2004: 767) and the manner in which 'best management practice' begins to conflate (or not) with common sense. In particular, this would facilitate the investigation of the variety of ways in which PM appears to 'produce' positive experiences and identities for subjects of economic government amidst conditions in

which public organisations are being restructured and streamlined. Such an investigation would also allow of the analysis of the production of particular professional subjectivities in these contexts, and the maintenance of reputations, know-hows, and risks as organisations are represented through performance metrics that may or may not impinge on localised and autonomous domains of professional judgement.

A further fruitful area of investigation would be to undertake a genealogical history of PM and its emergence in our present. Although others have undertaken significant studies of PM's history from practitioner perspectives (Johnson, 1997; Morris, 1997; Johnson, 2002; Morris, 2011) there remains an opportunity to undertake a genealogy of PM and the governmental problematisations through which it has gained value and appeal. 'The project', for one, is commonly addressed in standardised knowledge and practice as an organisational form that is 'without history': as something that has always been with us (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2006; Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007; Cicmil *et al.*, 2009). Thus, a genealogical critique can serve to denaturalise projects in their managerial form, enabling the investigation of the problematisations and knowledge formations that has given rise to PM's proliferation in today's political economy. This would involve an examination of the contingent discursive pathways through which PM's coherence, value and relevance has emerged, and how is has come to take the 'natural' form that it has in contemporary organisation (Foucault, 1971). More importantly perhaps, this exercise can increase the case for contestation in regard to PM as a technology of government, as that which reshapes subjectivity and new forms of trust and distrust in regard to the government of organisations, professionals and workers. With relevance to the public sector in the UK, and in regard to the legacy of NPM, this would be a fruitful 'history of the present' in connecting problematisations of economy and liberty to PM as that which can enable a particular form of devolved government at the level of the individual.

> The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state and from the state's institutions but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries (Foucault 'The Subject and Power', afterword in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 216)

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Appendix I

Example of QSR NVivo coding and analysis

Nodes

Name
Awareness
Career - human capital
Cooperation with PRINCE2
'Embodiment'
Governing through PM
Internal views on contract culture
Managing others
Measurement fever
Organisational positioning
Ownership
Perceived undermining of PMs
PMs as Sales People
PRINCE2 as cumbersome 'bureaucratic'
PRINCE2 implementation
Professional Identity
Project Absraction
Resistance
Responsibilisation-empowerment
Standardisation
Technologies of self
The Government of PMs
'Us' and 'Them'
Views on the public sector
Visibility

○ Managing others ✕ ○ Internal views on contract cult   ○ Organisational positioning   ○ Professional Ident

<Internals\interviews\JU Interview Transcription> - § 3 references coded [6.68% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.90% Coverage

It's something that we talk about at the management team. I think it's, it's partly building on what we've got here, because there is a lot of strength here, and ***** is a great place, and **** is a great place to work for, and it has real strengths, that come from emm, kind of, where it is in the country, and real strong sense of **** that people feel very attached to. So there is all of that the is really good, and then it's about talking about the culture that we want about openness, and about respect and about people taking responsibility for things. Emm, about not being risk averse, about you know, wanting to encourage people to take initiative, and to you know suggest things and to go out and do stuff not just do things because that's the way we always did them. Flexible, responsive, customer focused, absolutely key,

Reference 2 - 1.94% Coverage

What's really important to us, my management team, is helping people see that what they do contributes to what is happening out there. Cause that's what that kind of public sector ethos is all about. But sometimes it's not easy for people to see that what they do on a day to day basis actually is helping quality of life in the ****, helping job creation, or you know keep kids safe or whatever it is, they won't see a direct connection, and sometimes you have to help people understand how it builds up so that they are a vital part of that contribution.

Reference 3 - 1.85% Coverage

Appendix II

Topic 1 – PRINCE2 as 'Best Practice'

1. PRINCE2 is described by the Cabinet Office as de facto 'best practice' for managing projects, can you tell me what this means from your own position within the organisation?

2. How is the PRINCE2 methodology encouraged in the authority by central government? What auditing mechanisms are in place for this? How does this work systematically?

3. What is your own role and responsibilities in encouraging best practice? What techniques are used in this regard?

4. How does PRINCE2 competency relate to the overall performance of the organisation?

5. Why is PRINCE2 important for this organisation?

6. Why is PRINCE2 important for this department?

7. Why is PRINCE2 important for staff members?

8. How do you feel about the language and terminology used in the PRINCE2 methodology?

Topic 2 – Key Agencies and Actors

1. What interactions take place between PM professional bodies (such as the APM) and the authority? Can you provide examples?

2. What are the levels of certification and competency that are recommended? Who sets these benchmarks? Why are they set as such?

3. How is training organised, i.e. is it out-sourced to a third-party organisation or a university or held in-house? If so, what prompts this action?

4. What do the training courses consist of? What are the key themes and aims? What do staff members seek to get out of this? What does the authority gain?

5. What role do consultants play in the propagation of PM and PRINCE2 methodology in the authority? Do you have any examples?

6. What partnerships or inter-organisational collaborations have developed PRINCE2 competency in the authority?

7. What role do organisations such as the local government association (LGA, formally IDeA) play in PRINCE2 propagation and diffusion? If so, how does this work?

8. Are there any other professional or private organisations involved in implementing PM, directly or indirectly?

9. What benefits and/or hindrances have been highlighted with regards to inter-organisational aspects of PRINCE2 education and adoption?

Topic 3 – Implementing PRINCE2?

1. Can you tell me what senior managers have done to implement the use of PRINCE2? For example, are there any particular programmes or initiatives designed to encourage adoption? If so, what management techniques were used in this implementation?

2. Are there any examples of staff appraisals or performance assessment in which PRINCE2 has been on the agenda? Why was this the case? How is this actioned/systematised?

3. At what stage of a staff member's development does PRINCE2 become a requirement? Do you have any examples? How are these developments evaluated?

4. Are there particular members of staff who are designated with the role of encouraging and developing the use of PRINCE2 methodology in the authority? If so, how do they do this, and to whom do they report?

5. What are the main barriers to the implementation of PRINCE2 and PM? Are there any systematic problems?

Topic 3 – Appraisal and Self-Assessment

6. How is the progress of departments or individual staff members monitored and developed with regards to PRINCE2 competency? What systems are in place to do this?

7. What is the relationship between PRINCE2 and performance appraisals?

8. Exactly how are staff encouraged to develop their PRINCE2 skills in terms of their self-development?

9. Are there any logs, diaries or self-assessments mechanisms set-up in this regard?

10. How does the appraisal system work?

11. Are there informal ways in which PRINCE2 is introduced into the performance management of staff members?

12. How does PRINCE2 competency relate to earnings and salary?

13. How does PRINCE2 competency relate to hierarchal positions within the authority?

14. Do professional bodies and the authority interrelate with respect to ongoing staff development in PRINCE2?

15. How has PRINCE2 become more diffuse within the IT department? How did this happen?

Appendix III

<u>Outline focus group schedule for permanent project managers and ICT staff</u>

1. What are your experiences with PRINCE2 and organising through project work?
2. What do you think of the language of PRINCE2?
3. Does it help or hinder in your everyday work? Can you provide examples?
4. From your position, how does PRINCE2 relate to changes in the council, in relation to budget and staff cuts, restructuring, and a cost-effective local authority?
5. Does it make relations with colleagues, contractors or superiors easier, more difficult, or different in any way?
6. What kind of responsibilities does it involve? How do you feel about these responsibilities in your everyday work? What is different from the way in which you worked previously?
7. How has PRINCE2 been encouraged in your everyday work?
8. How do you feel about the documentation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?
9. How does PRINCE2 relate to your experience of working with contractors and private businesses?
10. How do you feel about the qualifications? Are you interested in gaining qualifications? What are the benefits and/or issues with this?
11. Is PRINCE2 something that could help in terms of your employment or career aspirations? What are your views on this?
12. Does PRINCE2 allow for you to work on your own more readily? What are the benefits and hindrances in managing your own workflow?
13. How do you manage your own work through PRINCE2?
14. Has your workload increased, and if so, does PRINCE2 help or hinder with an increased workload?