Book review

Cambridge Handbook of Organizational Project Management
Edited by Sankaran S., Müller R. and Drouin N.
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Introductory comments
There have been several handbooks related to project management (PM) published over recent years, for example *The Oxford Handbook of Project Management* (Morris *et al.*, 2011), which provided a useful update of an earlier handbook for managing project also co-edited by Morris (Morris and Pinto, 2004). There are also several PM handbooks that have been developed as major texts useful for undergraduate and postgraduate students that are updated regularly, for example the fifth edition by Turner (2014) and others stretching back 30 years (Cleland and King, 1988). However, as the entire academic field of project work has been growing significantly over the past decade or so and the issue of what is project work and how is it being theorised indicates, as recently investigated (Artto *et al.*, 2017), that it is a wide field that is continually emerging in new directions. Thus more recent PM handbooks have tended to reflect this diversity and extended scope for example in the expanding field of interest into megaprojects (Flyvbjerg, 2017). This book (Sankaran *et al.*, 2017) falls into the category of providing mainly new and some established concepts and perspectives of project work and how it fits into more general management of business through projects and programmes.

Given that this field is expanding and emerging into previously uncharted territory, practitioners and students of project work need a concise single source with which to access current ideas and reports on empirical work that may have been recently published. Some of the material, concepts and study reports, appearing in this book may have been recently discussed in journals or through conference proceedings but these sources are otherwise unknown to the general readership interested in project work. Therefore, this book provides not only a useful way to access these ideas, concepts and research reports but the references cited in each chapter provide a very useful resource. It becomes and almost fulfils a role of being a research assistant undertaking a literature review. The book is a highly current resource that provides a very valuable service to practitioners and students.

The book structure and content
The book editors are experienced researchers and writers and so they ensure that the book is a coherent "handbook" of logically linked content chapters and these are structured in logical sections (parts) that are well explained by the editors in terms of what the reader may expect to read about in the chapters in each part. For example, Part 1 is introduced by Professor Nathalie Drouin with its theme being strategy. Part 2 is titled "Organisations" and is introduced by Professor Ralf Müller, Part 3 has the theme of "People" and Part 4 "New Directions", both introduced by Professor Shankar Sankaran.

The book's Foreword by Professor Jörg Sydow makes a very pertinent point in saying that "[…] goes beyond capturing the organization as a relevant context tor temporary organizing by investigating PM at the organizational level of analysis.

Thereby, it nicely bridges micro-organizational behaviour and more macro-organizational theory perspectives." The way that the parts (sections) combine provide a window on new and emerging developments in what the editors term "organizational project management" (OPM).

This perspective on project work pushes the field forward from the more traditional view of PM as espoused by the major PM institutions into areas identified in the "rethinking project management' special issue in *The International Journal of Project Management*" (Winter *et al.*, 2006) and revisited in the *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business* in a special issue focussing on ten years on from that seminal 2006 special issue featuring contributions from some researchers engaged in that 2006 network of researchers as well as recent researcher in project work. Readers interested in that special issue should search for Volume 9, Issue 4 of the journal (Walker, 2016).

I now briefly discuss the book to review it from my own perspective as a Researcher, Teacher and Supervisor of doctoral candidates. I provide a person's view and so other readers of this book will obviously take away different insights to me. In my opinion, it is an excellent handbook that is well written and developed, provides genuinely novel contributions and I would recommend it to my students, colleagues and friends.

Part 1 – Strategy
Part 1 comprises five chapters each builds a coherent picture of projects being the means to deliver organisational strategy thus being observed from the organisational rather than the PM perspective. This group of chapters reinforces and supports an increasing interest in programme and portfolio management that has developed to help us understand the link between a project output and the outcome impact that it presents on the organisation. Chapter 1 introduces the book and its aims and focus by explaining the nature of OPM as an integrating mechanism by taking organisational theory as its theoretical lens. It clearly illustrates how effective OPM integrates the project and its outcome on effectiveness through being a cohesive part of programs and portfolios within an organisation.

Chapter 2 has its focus on business decisions over the project's extended lifecycle (pre-project activities, project execution and post-project activities) from both the supplier and customer perspective. Its authors (Martinsuo *et al.*, 2017) provide an integrated linking of these business decisions across the project lifecycle from the organisational perspective of how that affects the supplier as well as client's business interests.

Chapter 3 (Holzmann *et al.*, 2017) helps to explain the perceived importance of OPM in generating organisational success or lack thereof, particularly with the Table 3-2 on page 41 and bullet points on page 42.

Chapter 4 (Jugdev, 2017) provided insights about the connections between the organisational mission and its competitive advantage through critical analysis of a resource based view and limitations in the Project Management Institute's OPM3 framework. This chapter recognises the complex nature of integrating strategy through projects and note that "[…] For much too long, the input-process-output approach to project management has dominated our thinking, as has the perspective that project management is an operational construct. […] Astute senior executives understand that not all deliberate strategies will materialize. They also understand that sometimes, emergent strategies are the ones worth capitalizing on […]" (p. 52).

The last chapter in this section (Part 1, Chapter 5) addresses project portfolio management (Turner and Müller, 2017) also takes a dynamic capabilities perspective but from the portfolio perspective and suggests, based on a survey, that organisations that can reconfigure their resources through the way they undertake OPM may have gain superior competitive advantage as a result.

Part 2 – Organisations
This next section of the book, introduced by Ralf Müller explains how the next five chapters address organisational implications for OPM. This is mainly focussed around governance and how organisations are prepared for managing projects within the strategic demand framework set by the organisation as well as how this intent unfolds iteratively on the ground to cope with reality. It is an important section of the book as it informs our understanding of evolving and emerging forms of project actualisation.

Chapter 6 (Turner and Müller, 2017) draws upon significant and well recognised previous work, including empirical research, to focus the chapter on OPM. For readers not aware of the prior work, or who have poor access to their previous publications, this chapter is a boon. It clearly and with great focus presents core insights into how projects governance is different to corporate governance. It shows how project governance may fit into the overall host's organisational framework and that applies to both project-based and project-oriented organisations where project delivery is either the business of the organisation or the organisation conducts its business through a series of projects with a programme and/or portfolio of projects.

Chapter 7 (Kopmann *et al.*, 2017) takes an organisation-level perspective on strategy and portfolio management with a focus on both intended and emergent strategy and how managing emergency is coped with and may be harmonised from both the top-down as well as bottom-up influences. The authors argue that "emergence is unavoidable in strategy implementation and thus should be considered in 0PM. The question is not whether we need to manage emergence, but rather how to do it: fight it or embrace it" (p. 101). They propose that project portfolio management is the linchpin in harmonising top-down and bottom-up OPM.

Chapter 8 (Patanakul and Pinto, 2017) provides a link between the OPM and programme management concepts and indicates current practice. It highlights issues such as "[…] managing complexity, navigating through political landscapes; program management is Stakeholder management, managing benefits, the role of technology and design for solutions, and process and governance" (p. 117).

Chapter 9 (Aubry and Lavoie-Tremblay, 2017) uses several case studies to discuss the project management office (PMO) from an organisational design perspective. It makes several contributions including a coherent theory of organising for projects as an alternative to the more common transaction cost economics view of the function and design of PMOs.

Chapter 10 (Tywoniak and Bredillet, 2017) connects governance and risk/uncertainty management with opportunity management using design thinking as part of the problem-solving role within OPM. It acknowledges and focusses on the complexity of projects and how governmentality (the way that governance is thought through and interpreted) shapes the way that risk, uncertainty and ambiguity is navigated through. Project governmentality moves away from governance is confined to only that which can be known, identified, measured and monitored to consider the way that uncertainty and ambiguity can be addressed through a design thinking approach. This perspective highlights the role of people and their interpretation of how they see and cope with risk, uncertainty and ambiguity. The chapter leads to the next section quite nicely.

Part 3 – People
This section, introduced by Shankar Sankaran, identifies people as a key factor in OPM. Chapter 11 (Keegan *et al.*, 2017) builds on the author's extensive work on human resource management (HRM) issues in OPM along with citing other well-regarded sources familiar with many readers. They identify and discuss HRM practices and processes linking the project and the project-based organisation in their Table 11.3 (p. 160). They note, and

identify, a useful body of emerging literature in the HRM of OPM that provides a sound basis for interested researchers in this area to build upon.

Chapter 12 (Eskerod, 2017) uses a Danish case study to explore stakeholder engagement in OPM and identifies and discusses seven challenges faced by the project regarding stakeholder influence and engagement. Eskerod's contrasting a project-centric approach with a stakeholder-centric approach provides readers with useful insights. It places the stakeholder's value proposition as a central part of OPM and she outlines challenges that may me glossed over in the past as being of minor importance.

Chapter 13 (Packendorff *et al.*, 2017) develop the concept and term "balanced leadership" in OPM. The balance stems from thinking about how leadership action shifts from the hierarchical top-down vertical style to a shared leadership style when team members with the expertise or capabilities to best lead decision-making and action. This interplay between the vertical and horizontal is explored and explained. It reminded me somewhat of the Cynefin framework and leadership styles being changed depending on the level of situational order and disorder (Snowden and Boone, 2007).

Chapter 14 (Drouin and Sankaran, 2017) discusses what a team is and how it effectively operated with the OPM context. Using five experts for interviews revealed the importance of teams in integrating team effort required to deliver projects. Their review of literature on themes on project teams yields a useful source of references for students of this topic. This chapter stresses integrated project delivery through the integration required of a whole range of teams through the supply chain that need to contribute to and be harmonised to deliver projects.

Chapter 15 (Hoffman and Boyle, 2017) provides a case study of OPM from a knowledge services perspective. Case studies from NASA always seem to be interesting. NASA has always had a keen interest in organisational learning and knowledge management within a programme and project context. The chapter discusses the Rapid Engagement for Accelerated Learning (REAL) initiative. It provides some useful insights into what tools NASA uses and how they are used in an OPM context. The REAL KM model appears to be to be an advance building on the Kolb (Boyatzis and Kolb, 1995; Kolb, 1984) action learning and SECI (Nonaka *et al.*, 2001) models applied with a programme of projects context.

Chapter 16 (Pollack, 2017) starts with a discussion about the differences between change management and PM that I found enlightening. It also stressed the integration role of OPM and how change management aspects link to this as well as project and programme stakeholder engagement. In explaining the literature heritages of both the change management and PM disciplines, Pollack provides interesting sources that students of both disciplines may access and the chapter also demonstrates how the two discipline mindsets can be integrated in OPM.

Chapter 17 (Braun, 2017) reports on a literature search on PM collaborative behaviour competences for OPM. After screening ten journals concerned with PM topic, he focused on 25 papers for analysis. He isolated three clear themes: sharing behaviour, improvising behaviour and what he describes as extra-productive behaviour. These themes are illustrated well in Table 17.2 (pp. 254-255) for sharing behaviour and in Table 17.3 (pp. 257-258) for extra-productive behaviours and improvising behaviour. He also discusses consequences of these behaviours under team flexibility and within project and beyond project performance. I found this an interesting complimentary chapter for my own research into integrated project delivery and alliancing. I am sure that many readers will find the focus on cross team collaboration useful for their own work.

Chapter 18 (Algeo and Connell, 2017) investigates OPM and project portfolio management from the people competencies by exploring roles and their required skills. Their Figure 18.1 (p. 270) details 11 competencies that provides a useful checklist for many

readers and it was good to see that the chapter also links these with the framework that Cicmil (2003, 2006) developed building a OPM perspective based on earlier work by Dreyfus (2004). This chapter expands the discussion in this competencies area.

Part 4 – New directions
This final section is introduced by Shankar Sankaran with the first chapter, Chapter 19 (Kvalnes, 2017) discussing a much neglected topic in OPM, ethics. Kvalnes introduces well-established ethical theories to frame the chapter then uses a tool he developed which is illustrated in Figure 19.1 (p. 288). The tool, the navigation wheel, identifies six important ethical dimensions to consider when making decisions and taking action in project work. This topic in OPM has been underexplored but given that trust is so closely linked to people feeling that their treatment meets their ethical expectation standards (Mayer *et al.*, 1995), it is important from a collaboration and stakeholder engagement perspective. One question that is often raised in OPM is what does an ethical decision and action look like? This chapter provides some useful guidance on that score.

This segues well into Chapter 20 (Ang and Biesenthal, 2017) which takes a broad view of value from the perspective of the project, how that fits in with and aligns with programs and onto portfolios. Often the concept of value at the project level can distort actual value achieved at the organisational level. Many examples of how optimising value generation at the project level is seen to impede optimisation of programmes of work or portfolios so that the expected benefit fails to be delivered due to excessive focus at the project level at the expense of the organisational or indeed at the end-customer level. This chapter aims to fill that gap through reporting on a live case study. This chapter introduces and lays groundwork for further future studies in this important area.

Chapter 21 (Remington, 2017) builds on the previous work by Remington's extensive studies into project complexity and leadership of complex projects (Remington, 2011; Remington and Pollack, 2007) by discussing two case studies. The case studies have a focus on how to collaborate across team disciplines and this is highly relevant to OPM. This chapter provides additional insights into OPM in complex project environments to complement those offered by other writers (but not mentioned in this chapter) in this domain such as Snowden (Kurtz and Snowden, 2003; Snowden, 2002; Snowden and Boone, 2007).

Chapter 22 (Keeys and Hueman, 2017) discusses an important element of ethical OPM, sustainable development. This chapter adds a further dimension to the ethics and stakeholder value perspectives of OPM. The chapter addresses the issue of shared sustainable value which has been more recently been discussed by Porter as an element of competitive advantage (Porter and Kramer, 2011). This focus is gaining interest in OPM as it seeks to explore how projects can be structured and strategised to derive benefit and value far in excess of the business-as-usual narrow focus on each organisation or person involved in projects pursuing self-interest. The chapter makes a valuable contribution to OPM.

Chapter 23 (Turner and Lecoeuvre, 2017) provides an interesting twist on the idea of marketing and OPM. Instead of it being mainly about the marketing efforts of a project orientated organisation seeking to gain project work, it uses marketing theory to discuss how internal marketing within the project envelope of cross-discipline teams and other relevant stakeholder to ensure that their value propositions are considered and through what these authors describe as "marketing" ensure that all are engaged in the project. It provides, I believe, a useful perspective to take when thinking about stakeholder engagement, ethics and other value-related aspects of OPM.

Chapter 24 (Van Oorschot, 2017) takes its focus on the link between shared physical and mental spaces of teams delivering projects and innovation. It takes, in my view, a very novel approach in discussing the key concepts. It uses the analogy of evolving trends in transport

where motor, bicycle and pedestrian traffic share a pathway and how that can force innovations and improved optimisation of traffic and applies this to OPM. I found it a nice and quirky way to make the point and the argument was I find, compelling. The key to triggering innovation is to find the enablers and accentuate these within systems. By thinking in shared-space terms, there are greater opportunities for diversity and divergent thinking to unearth innovative approaches. This is a far cry from the command and control OPM mindset.

The final chapter, Chapter 25 (Delerue and Cronje, 2017), examines the reason for and current application of trends in social media which is a cutting-edge tool in OPM today. While the use of e-mail and other forms of shared information tools have been in use on projects for many years now (Tucker *et al.*, 1999), the impact of other social media tools and applications is under-reported upon within the OPM context. This chapter also investigates the use of social media from a symbolic perspective which sheds new light on this trend for those of us interested in OPM.

Conclusions

Finally, the book has a brief conclusion couple of pages from all three editorial authors that wraps the book up nicely. In general, I would argue that this book makes a valuable contribution with new materials for those interested in OPM and project work. It takes an organisational-level perspective in the main and fills a number of gaps in the current book-level literature. One criticism that can be made about handbooks is that they frequently contain chapters that have a lot of content discussed by chapter authors in journal articles published perhaps several years prior to the book's assembly. This may be true. However, we should consider that many readers are students or practitioners who simply do not have access to the many thousands of journal publications that academics at most universities do regularly access. This less privileged readership will find most of the handbook chapters an eye-opener. Those of us academics, who are lucky to have access to so many journals, may read a chapter and find much of the content somewhat familiar but we can gain value from the authored chapters presenting fresh perspectives and current citations. One hidden value for those of us who are academics with books such as this one is that it does a lot of research literature searching for us. If we focus on the citations and references, we can find a lot to follow up on.

I would recommend that this book be considered as a serious reference book and that for many students and practitioners that this would be a highly valuable resource.

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