

Conclusion: organising project cultures for achieving cooperation The case studies suggest that managerial rationalities are limited in understanding their own complex project realities which are themselves bound by limits imposed by overall governance structures and strategies. We would agree and contend that instead of seeing the budget overruns, inflated forecasts, costs and public benefit as occurring by malevolent design, we should see them as the result of normal practice of professionals operating with limited knowledge, but influenced dramatically by a range of ambiguous and uncertain external and internal forces. Flyvbjerg et al.'s [2] view is essentially one that takes a functional, external view on the projects, identifying a paradox of the increasing, yet counterintuitive, popularity of these projects even though their record is poor on performance, budget and on-time delivery. He accuses the megaprojects of lacking in accountability, yet acknowledges that 'rarely is there a simple truth about such projects' and that 'what is presented as a reality by one set of experts is often a social construct that can be reconstructed and deconstructed by another set of experts' [2]. In Enron the inability to do this led to a break down in cultural and political relations the upshot of which was that self-interest never became defined in terms of any overarching good but became an organising device for regression to the norm of highly-conflictual project relations. By considering long-established traditions in organisation and management theory, including the nature of practical rationality, plus differing organisational interests, values and project orientations or cultures, we obtain a real, rather than an idealised view, of what takes place. Internally, the NSTP solved the problems that Flyvbjerg and his colleagues [2] attribute to malfeasance through the marriage of internal democracy among the partners with a strict regime of accountability that was both non-zero sum and served the self-interest of the players. Due to its tight connection with parents and partners, the environment became an inverse mirror of the project team's successful self-image and when foreign elements in that environment, who came from outside the project reality as it was being co-constructed, mobilised around the venting issue, they caught the team off guard because its members were so strongly committed to the rhetoric of their culture. It was fundamental aspects of organisational and project design and the politics of decision-making rather than a conspiracy between project partners, government and financial institutions that produced a less than optimal result and one that differed markedly from that projected at the outset. In this way, megaprojects with their complexity can be seen as the norm, rather than being condemned because they do not match an ideal where project objectives are achieved faultlessly and effortlessly. That is the key message of our research.