International Development and the New Public Management: projects and logframes as discursive technologies of governance.

Dr Ron Kerr, Lancaster University Management School, Lancaster LA1 4YX.
Telephone: 01524 510729
Email r.g.kerr@lancaster.ac.uk

Stream: Development and Globalization – Organizing Rhetoric and Power

Introduction
In this paper I use the critique of instrumental reason as developed by Habermas (1970, 1987) and Critical Discourse Analysis, a social scientific approach that connects history, the social and the textual (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; Fairclough 2003) to look at how control systems and technologies developed in the military sphere migrated to civilian spheres of operation (management, business) and then to the management of international development projects. The particular examples of managerial discourse and practice that I focus on are the project and the logical framework. In this paper, management discourse is seen to work across time and space in two ways. First, we can study how the project has moved through time and across space (diachronically) – and second how it is used to control the actions of distant others through time and across space (synchronically). I therefore trace the migration of this particular technology, what I call a governance technology, from its origins in the planning of science and war in the 1940s to its use in the field of international development in the post Cold War period, where its role is to co-ordinate and control action across time and space. I then present data from a case study of discourse in international development in the New Public Management period (from 1996). But before doing that I want to discuss two aspects of my methodology: (1) critical theory as a critique of instrumental reason; and (2) Critical Discourse Analysis as an approach that combines text and context.

The critique of instrumental reason
Critical Theory in the tradition of the Frankfurt School can be understood as a series of attempts to understand and oppose certain pathologies associated with modernity (Habermas 1987), namely (Ray 1993:12) ‘bureaucratic rationality and commodification’. The first of these processes, bureaucratic rationality, was identified by Weber (1968) as ‘means-ends rationality’ (Zweckrationalität) or ‘instrumental reason’ (Habermas 1987).

This development of Zweckrationalität in the form of instrumental reason is steered by a concern with economic and administrative efficiency. Zweckrationalität involves (in many cases) the disassociation of means and ends and thus sets up a functional division of labour between those responsible for ends and those responsible for means. Translated into organisational terms, this means that we (as employees) abdicate to others responsibility for the ends that we pursue and become in ourselves and to ourselves means (alienated from the ends of the organisation; alienated from our own reflexivity). The organisation then models a Cartesian dualism, with its ‘thinking’ organ responsible for the direction of the subaltern ‘limbs’. This functional differentiation has negative consequences for participative democracy and for communicative reason (Habermas 1987), in that it promotes the rule of
managerial and policy experts, what Bourdieu (1998:90) calls the ‘dominants, technocrats or epistemocrats’ and the promotion of the instrumental over the ethical dimensions of organisational life.

In this paper I want to move from the simple-abstract of instrumental reason to the complex-concrete of historically situated forms of governance (related to neoliberalism and managerialism) that are articulated in historical contexts by the New Public Management and performed by technologies of governance such as the project. In order to do this I employ Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2002) in order to operationalise a critique of instrumental reason.

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical methodology has an empirical moment and a historical moment and in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) this equates to the textual moment and the moment of social or historical context (Fairclough 2002:6). CDA thus answers the empirical deficit of Critical Theory (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000) with the text, and answers the positivism of linguistic analysis by bringing in history. CDA therefore provides a procedure, not a prescriptive methodology, for critical research - in general terms, this is qualitative and utilises empirical data (see Fairclough 2003 for a comprehensive discussion). Thus I agree with Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999:17) who ‘do not support calls for stabilising a method for CDA’, because, as they say, this would ‘compromise the developing capacity of CDA to shed light on the dialectic of the semiotic and the social in a wide variety of social practices by bringing to bear shifting sets of theoretical resources and shifting operationalisations of them.’ So what are discourses?

In my research I take a narrow view of discourses as forms or constellations of language. This approach does not follow the broader interpretation of discourses as epochal historical phenomena as in Foucault. In my view, discourses are not necessarily and always ideological. Discourses can, however, be used ideologically to legitimate power, to represent the world, and to integrate and distinguish social groups. Discourses can be associated with specific fields and powerful discourses from fields such as management can migrate across fields, thus colonising other fields. My approach does not require a concept of ‘false consciousness’ – I do not discount it, but it is not necessary in my model. Fragmented consciousness, specialisation as a result of functional differentiation, and social power are enough to account for the phenomena in my data.

For me, discourses are analytically separate from practices. Analytically, the world does not collapse into discourse (as in discursive idealism), but rather discourses represent the world (often in motivated ways) (Fairclough 2003). However, discourses as manipulated in the interests of power/authority can be used performatively to change the social world (Bourdieu 1991). So in this paper management discourse is seen as working in two ways across time and space. First, the project as instrumental discourse and practice moves through time and across space. Appearing in different material forms, it is used is to monitor and control the actions of (often distant) others and so we can follow diachronically a series of horizontal links that shows the genre migrating and developing through time from WWII to 1996. Secondly, we can follow another series of links, this time vertically and synchronically down though the hierarchy of agencies, showing how government (as constituted power) operates to impose the project as a governance genre on those agencies. The vertical trajectory of the technology then is: (1) from the government's policy organs (where ideology has a legitimating function) to the commissioning agency, then (2) from the commissioning agency to the contracting agency, and then (3) from the contracting agency to operations. The two critical issues in this process for me are: (1) the role of power (operating as conditionality) and (2) the role of ideology (operating as accountability). Thus governmental authority (constituted power) can, via its recontextualising agents (Bernstein 1996) and enforced by conditionality, enforce its will downwards through the vertical, whereas accountability is
required to flow back up to the source of the conditional funding. As a consequence, there are different texts that flow in either direction: from ‘above’, there are entextualised (Silverstein and Urban 1996) policies and strategies (directive texts) that flow downwards and from below there are entextualised plans and reports that flow upwards.

Now of course, as I have noted, these discursive ‘links’ have material existence as text-artefacts that entextualise discourses. But that says nothing necessarily about how discourses operate in/as practices. Because it is in the context of practice (re-contextualisation) – and in the context of power – that the text-artefacts become operational within discourse/practice genres: the difference being for example, how I read the project framework document here in the university compared with how I read it in the past as a project manager and was positioned by it, where it embodied and mediated organisational authority (Althusser 1971). What we can be sure of from the project documents is no more than that a project exists at the intertextual level (perhaps primarily or even solely), is self-referential in that texts refer to texts, comment on texts, validate or invalidate them, generate texts. This is a discursive idealism in action - a representation of the world that is divorced from and mediates at best an abstract reduction of the lifeworld (Kallinikos 1995): That operations go on at a level of practice disassociated from the level of texts - that resistance, negotiation of agendas and so on go on at the level of practices we might infer, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to discover.

In the next section I trace the migration of the project, what I call an instrumental governance technology, across space and time from its origins in the planning of science and war to its use in the field of international development.

The project approach: science, planning, and war

In this section I want to look at how certain control systems and technologies that were developed in the military sphere migrated to civilian spheres of operation (management, business) and then to the management of international development projects. This process can be called ‘technicisation’, what the Frankfurt School identified as a ‘growing interdependence of research and technology...whereby questions of moral value and political controversy were converted into managerial, technical or planning processes’ (Ray 1993:51). Planning and managerial control are, according to the project management literature, at the heart of projects, or the project approach (BBC 1988:4), which took form in the military/scientific/technological collaborations of World War II (Thorpe 2004).

The classical nexus of science, industry and the military in World War II is the Manhattan Project, the project to develop the atomic bomb (Meredith and Mantel 1995, Hales 1997, Norris 2002, Thorpe 2004). The Manhattan Project involved the transfer of military organisation to the management of scientific research and was managed by the Corps of Engineers under Major General Groves. Groves took overall control of the Manhattan Project from the scientists in 1942 and organised a ‘clear chain of command’ with an ‘enforceable system of schedules and priorities’ which made the development of the atomic bomb into ‘a social order independent of its original rationale or motivation’ (Thorpe 2004:32).

The project approach thus constituted a methodology for organising time, money, materials and people to produce a piece of military hardware. Its organisation was large-scale, differentiated, structured and rigorously scheduled (Thorpe 2004:37). And it was strictly compartmentalised, so that only a few key managers at the top of the organisation understood the project as a whole (Hales 1997). Workers on the project at lower ‘subaltern’ levels were given a minimum of information and were in some cases deliberately misled as to the real nature of their work. This enforced ‘the hierarchically established mission of the Project’ and prevented ‘the scientists from diverging from the instrumental programme’ (Thorpe 2004:35). Thus the strategic/planning functions and
operations were separated so that workers had to focus on ‘the merely instrumental’, on accomplishing ‘the job at hand’ (Thorpe 2004:35). This can be identified as Zweckrationalität or ‘means-ends rationality’ (Weber 1968; Habermas 1987), which involves the rationalisation of means and ends through the functional differentiation of planning and operations that is typical of the instrumental discourse and practice of project management.

Post World War II this kind of scientific/military/technological project became known as ‘Big Science’, where ‘formal hierarchies and organization charts’ replaced what had been the norm of ‘informal collaborations’ between scientists (Thorpe 2004). With the advent of Big Science, government, science, technology, industry and the military then fused into a system, with flows of innovation moving from civilian to military spheres and back again (Habermas 1970:230).

Project management continued to develop in the military sphere in the 1950s and early 1960s, when the development and integration of a body of project management technologies related to production of weapons systems, for example the Polaris and the 688 submarine projects, was driven by the US Department of Defense. In this period (the late 1960s) project management was discussed as a formal methodology at NATO conferences (Thomsett 2003:15-17) - a formal methodology being a necessary prerequisite for the project’s migration to other spheres of activity.

Thus the instrumental project, as terminology and practice originating in the military sphere, acquired more specialised and elaborated denotations as it migrated from the military/scientific/technological sphere into the field of civilian management. We can trace discursively how the project moves into this new context of management discourse by the way it acquires new collocations, for example: project manager, project management; project management cycle; project framework. Thus a project is no longer something thrown into the future (as its Latin derivation would indicate), it is removed or de-naturalised from lifeworld contexts and comes to designate a generic and specialised regulatory technology (Bourdieu 1991:270). The project is also a typical modern concept (Habermas 1987:7), in that change and the old/new ideological schema (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000:3) are central to its operations, indeed ‘(a)ll projects are primarily concerned with change...with knocking down the old and building up the new’ (Baguley 1995:8).

So, although, according to the Project Management Institute (PMI), in the 1950s the expression project management was mostly limited to the engineering and construction industries, literature on the subject of ‘management by projects’ had already begun to emerge, and in 1969 the PMI was formed as part of the constitution of the emerging profession of ‘project manager’, with ‘new actor roles and relationships...being created, such as project managers and team leaders’ (Räisänen and Linde 2004:103). However, ‘project management’ is sometimes represented not as a profession but as a ‘science’ with universal applicability: ‘(i)t is only in the last 30 years that project management has become a recognised science...a refined and practised skill which can be applied to any project irrespective of size or budget’ (Burke 1990:3; see also Räisänen and Linde 2004:107). On this basis various standardised project management models have been created, ‘tied to a variety of technocratic planning, execution and reporting tools to ensure that projects run rationally according to set budgets, goals and time schedules’ (Räisänen and Linde 2004:103). In this way the ‘universal’ project as discourse and practice was prepared to spread and colonise further fields, including the field of international development.

This conception of the project as a universal methodology was particularly suited to management of international development in that the project could (in theory) extend managerial control over space and time. That is, a technology that had been designed for producing military weapons became a technology for producing human ‘products’. This
began to happen, for example educational development, where the ‘project’ was imported as a tool or series of tools for changing people and institutions, replacing what had been a professional, ‘colonial officer’ approach, and promoting modernisation (via ‘technical assistance’) to the Third World as a ‘technocratically neutral’ process, a continuation of ‘formal imperialism’ (Cooke 2004). Then, in the Post Cold War period, the focus of UK-funded and directed international development moved for political reasons away from Third World ‘developing’ countries (as Cold War proxies) to ‘transition’ countries, the post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe and (in an economic sense) China, with the aim of incorporating them into the global capitalist economy.

This migration to the field of international development of the discourses and technologies that had been originally developed to control military and Big Science projects was further facilitated by a variety of factors. These included, in addition to an interest in management at a distance, neoliberal concerns with functional differentiation and a governmental focus on value for money, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability and audit (Power 1997). These became paramount in the U.K. during the period of the New Public Management reforms in the 1990s.

The New Public Management and the governance of international development

The New Public Management (the NPM) designates a series of neoliberal-inspired innovations or ‘reforms’ in the governance of the public services in the U.K. and a number of other countries in the 1980s and 1990s (Hood 1991, Minogue 2000). The NPM ‘reforms’ that are most relevant to this paper are those that involve a separation of functions between conception (or policy) and execution (or operations), expressed in a separation between funding agencies and contracting agencies. However, although accountability for operations (i.e. decisions about means) is devolved or contracted out, accountability for policy and strategy (i.e. decisions about ends) is centralised (I prefer ‘accountability’ to ‘responsibility’ here, in that one of the paradoxes of this accountability regime is that the attribution of responsibility becomes less and less possible). The question for government was then how to manage the accountability relationship between such functionally separated agencies.

In this NPM model, governance was to be conducted at a distance by means of mediating technologies, including the project, that serve to organise and co-ordinate actions involving people, time, space and money in the interests of efficiency and accountability. And because of this supposed efficiency in organising resources to meet specified ends over space and time, the project has (as noted above) come to play an important part in the field of international development, particularly in the post Cold War period in Britain, where its administration and operations were conducted by two main agencies.

The two main British governmental or quasi-governmental agencies for promoting international development in the post World War II period have been the British Council (BC) and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). The ODA was, before the New Labour victory of 1997, a ‘functional wing’ of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), funded and effectively controlled by the FCO, and headed by a Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Overseas Development. Before 1979 and again after 1997, the ODA had the status of a separate ministry and as recognition of this, in 1997 the ODA was renamed the Department for International Development (DFID).

The British Council is a quasi-independent organisation, but one which relies on the FCO for its core funding. It therefore has to agree its strategic objectives with the FCO, which is also represented on the BC’s governing board. The BC, before and during the period under consideration, administered various kinds of development aid on behalf of the ODA. Much of this aid, in the form of ‘technical assistance’, was designed to promote the use of English in ‘developing’ countries and then later in ‘transition’ (post-communist) countries.
and was targeted at raising the standard of English language teaching (ELT), a process sometimes designated ‘linguistic imperialism’ (Phillipson 1992).

In ELT and education in the mid- to late 1980s (Jacobs 1996:3) the administration or management of development (see Cooke 2001 for a discussion of these terms) involved a move away from the model of the professional, who embodied the values and the practices of the profession, to the NPM model of control and accountability, where the technology itself externalises and mediates the will of the controlling ‘centre.’ This change in governance meant that staff in international development agencies had to adopt new ways of working, epitomised by the project and, by extension, projectisation (British Council 1986:127-128).

This move to projectisation involved importing the paraphernalia of project technologies into the field of international development, thus creating ‘a common methodology which includes the logical framework, project cycle and standard appraisal techniques’ (Jacobs 1996:3). ODA and BC representatives at this time represented such changes in their organisations as being forced on them by ‘pressures’ from the government of the period (British Council 1996). This was done by imposing conditionality (particularly relevant to international development, where the IMF, the World Bank etc. have power and money) and by ideological legitimation (with efficiency, effectiveness and accountability as steering terms) in the spread of the discourse and practice.

In the next section I look in particular at the logical framework (one of the project technologies) and at how this technology of governance was imposed on the field of international development.

Instrumental technologies in international development: the logical framework

The logical framework (one of the project technologies) is a management control system that has the material (or electronic) form of a matrix of boxes. In some cases the framework is based on a problem/solution approach to intervention in the social world and has an if/then model of progression, thus (at least in theory) taking the external (to the project) environment into account. In the project management literature and in the field of operations the logical framework often appears as the neologism (Matthews 1991) or short form of logframe.

Like the project itself, the logical framework originates in ‘work in engineering, military and private business contexts’ (Gasper 2000) and by the 1990s, the project approach and the associated logframe had been increasingly and widely adopted by international development agencies (British Council 1988:131; Gasper 1999, 2000). There have however been three ‘generations’ of logframe (Gasper 2000). The first generation, in the 1970s and 1980s, was based on the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) ‘4x4 matrix’ (this model was adopted by the ODA in 1986). The second generation of logframe was the ‘new wave’ of ‘brand-name models’ in the 1990s, drawing on the ‘ZOPP’ (Ziel Orienterte Projekt Planung or ‘Objectives-oriented Project Planning’) model developed by the German aid agency GTZ (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit). The third generation (in the early and mid-1990s) extended the technology to include computer packages, training and links to other planning methods.

As noted above, the ODA was one of the agencies that adopted the ‘project approach’ in the mid-1980s. The ODA then imposed the project approach on its partner agency the British Council as a condition when funding projects (British Council 1987). This was despite the fact that using project frameworks had not always been the ODA’s preferred way of working. Indeed, there is evidence that the logframe approach was contested by the ODA as being an attack on the autonomy and professionalism of the locally-based manager. So in 1984 an ODA spokesperson justified this resistance to the ‘full rigour’ of the ‘Logical Framework Approach’, because ‘(o)ur experience has been that a good project manager is someone who is all the time reviewing his objectives and if necessary making adjustments to the project if circumstances call for it’ (British Council 1984:25).
However, this kind of resistance to the framework approach disappeared as accountability became an increasingly dominant steering concept for governments (Neave 1988, Power 1997). In 1986 (two years later) another senior BC manager employs a discourse of compulsion (‘a grid which obliges’) to recommends the adoption of the project framework to the BC (British Council 1986:127):

‘The project framework is a grid which obliges the originator of a project to look at all the various interlocking parts of a project and state precisely what it should achieve, how that is to be brought about, what measures for monitoring are to be taken, and how “success” is to be evaluated. The Framework measures not only the inputs, or in other words the various items that are contributed by the donor and the effectiveness and efficiency by which are put in, but also the outputs…It is a valuable intellectual discipline’

There is in this extract a concern with instrumental measurement and an attribution of devolved agency to the Framework (capitalised in the original text), as in the clause ‘(t)he Framework measures. The framework is now part of the ODA’s management and accountability system, and ‘measures’ the managerialist concepts of ‘effectiveness and efficiency’. It is not clear in this text who the ‘originator’ of the framework is or where the originator is—in London or elsewhere—but that person’s professional judgement is considerably constrained compared with the 1984 account quoted above.

Then in the 1990s the ODA adopted the ‘new generation’ ‘TeamUP’ model and in particular its 16-box matrix (framework) for projects. According to the TeamUP handbook (dated 1991-1994), ‘TeamUP PMC’ (‘project management cycle’) is produced by international consultancy firm and software development house Team Technologies, Inc., a company based in Middleburg, Virginia. TeamUP is based on the logical framework method, proposed as universal standard. According to the TeamUP manual ‘Teamware PC/TeamUP 2.0™ is ‘(a) set of integrated tools to implement and operationalise your designed projects using your people, time and money’, designed by Team Technologies Inc. in collaboration with the World Bank, a major lending agency in the development field, and therefore in a position to impose its required practices (projects, logframes) on executive agencies by means of conditionality.

In TeamUP (one of the commodified ‘brand name’ models: Gasper 2000), ‘good projects’ (according to the TeamUP handbook) have a ‘clearly defined project objective, necessarily and sufficiently linked to an achievable solution to a problem which obstructs progress’. This ‘problem based’ approach is criticised by Gasper (2000) on the grounds that ‘problem’ may not be a universally culturally acceptable way of analysing social life, where ‘progress’ is an unquestioned good in itself. There is also the question of who gets to define ‘the problem’ for which the project is designed to provide a technically efficient solution. The TeamUP model presupposes a world of predictability and controllability. It is a problem -> solution system and follows an if -> then path. That is, it deals with diverse situations in a variety of very different local contexts as problems that can be solved by applying technical solutions. Thus the project designer starts with a problem, to which the problem is a technical/instrumental solution. It does not start with ontology or with ethics (although an ontology is presupposed).

As already noted, in some examples of ODA discourse the framework has certain quasi-agentive powers. This can be seen in the clausal processes that are associated with logframe. In my data (as explained below) these are verbs of compulsion, wordings of to force. This class of clausal Process (Halliday 1994) represents the logframe as an entity with quasi-agentive powers to enforce practices. Gasper (1999:76) notes that frameworks are often associated with external compulsion, in that ‘(l)ogframes are often used only when demanded by an external authority’ and these examples of the language associated with the logframe would seem to bear this out. I now turn to a further discussion of the framework as
a technology of governance, drawing on data that I collected while working for the BC in China in 1996. The data and its analysis come from a case study of the discourse/power vertical (Kerr 2003).

The logical framework: accountability across time and space
Between 1988 and 1998, the British Council, the U.K. government’s Overseas Development Administration and the State Education Commission (SEdC) of the People’s Republic of China organised on a biennial basis a series of conferences for workers on a programme of jointly-sponsored educational development projects in China. It was at one of these conferences (Wuhan, 1996) that I collected the data on which the following sections of this paper are based. I draw in particular on a policy speech given by an ODA Educational Adviser (hereafter ‘the Adviser’) to an audience of 23 U.K. education ‘specialists’ (of whom I was one) and 45 Chinese academics who were working on the (at that time) 22 educational development projects in China. ODA Educational Advisers are policy specialists (civil servants) with high status within the organisational hierarchy. In my field notes, I describe how, while delivering his speech, the Adviser is positioned in space in a lecture theatre, standing on the podium at a lectern, speaking through a microphone, wearing a suit and tie. This self-presentation is important semiotically: Bourdieu (1979:552) draws attention to hexis, as a kind of physionomie social, and its link to valeur social; and Rosen (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000:142) also notes the significance of the suit in certain contexts: ‘(f)or those in higher positions, the norm system dictates very narrowly what is desirable…strict, formal, rather expensive suits’.

The speech itself includes representations of temporality, locating the present in relation to the past and of locality of physical space, indexed by in this position in a university lecture hall. According to Bourdieu et al. (1994:10-11): ‘(s)pace is a source of pedagogical distance…It is all the particularities in which the academic institution locates the teacher – the rostrum, the chair from which a French professor holds forth, his position at the point where all attention converges – that he finds the material conditions to keep his students at a distance, to require and enforce respect’. So while making the speech, the Adviser is distanced in space from the seated audience in the auditorium, making use of the lecturer’s pedagogical distance, which requires and enforces respect. The Adviser’s speech includes representations from which we can reconstruct the systems of governance within and external to the ODA at that time, with a focus on accountability, a concept central to the NPM (line references in this section are to Kerr 2003, Appendix 1).

Accountability in the ODA at the time of the NPM is articulated in and performed by, the technologies of the project as a system of monitoring and evaluation. Projects are seen in ODA discourse as managerial (or as administrative) tasks: matters of technical control and surveillance with no space for lived experience. This is what I take from the following representations of the project by the Adviser:

- there is a long sequence you identify . what . you want to do . you appraise . to see if it is . worth doing . to see if you can do it . in a cost effective . way . you design the project er . to do that . you monitor it . you evaluate it . you measure . the impact . of it ... a much tighter . process . of project . design (lines 119-122)
- there’s going to be much more . ODA involvement . at every step . of the . project .. we need very careful design . thorough appraisal . implementation under . close . scrutiny . objective evaluation .. and we shall participate . ourselves .. in this .. (155-157)

In these representations, there is a preoccupation with project management as instrumental technology and an absence of the educational - or affective - dimension of the work or of the lifeworld of the project. I know from my own experience that during this period, the ODA insisted on objective evaluation and defined the kind of data that were acceptable for evaluation. This approach translates into practice as the ‘box-checking approach’, where the
boxes of the logframe can be ticked as 'achieved' and reporting is by exception (ODA’s preferred method in the mid 1990s). That is, only failure to achieve objectives need be explained in accounting to the hierarchy and therefore no local voices need be heard, unless in justifying ‘failure to achieve’.

Another part of the Adviser’s purpose in his speech is to impose the ‘new generation’ ‘TeamUp’ logframe - although ‘TeamUp’ could not be mentioned by name as the ODA did not at that time possess a software licence. The framework (as noted above) is a piece of project technology that allows (in theory) the administrators in London to manage operations at a distance. This process is represented by the following extract from my data where an ODA officer explains that the logframe is:

- a sixteen box matrix …the completed form . you will see that it has . goals . purposes . inputs . outputs . activities .. assumptions ... it all sounds quite easy

This new framework replaces the ‘old’ framework and involves a change in the categories that constitute the project matrix, that is in the titles of the boxes that construct the project as a representation of social processes. It is imposed as a technology of governance by means of which the bureaucracy can manage, monitor and account for operations that are geographically dispersed. The project can now be represented by the ODA Adviser as a simple linear progression:

- we shall . go through . a much . tighter . process . of . project identification and design .. there is a long sequence . you identify . what . you want to do . you appraise . to see if it is . worth doing . to see if you can do it . in a cost effective . way . you design the project er . to do that . you monitor it . you evaluate it . you measure . the impact . of it ... a much tighter . process . of project . design .. (117-122)

In this representation, the project appears as a series of bureaucratic tasks, in which ‘project implementation becomes an object in its own right’ (Hauge and Gariba 2001). This is also the Zweckrational model of projects in which policy generation is separated from implementation and the two are connected by technologies of governance that perform monitoring and accountability. These technologies are represented as having universal applicability (through the use of generic you and the use of the Present with universal force):

- and I do commend . our present . log frame . to you . precisely because . it forces you . to be specific . about what you are going to achieve . it forces you to work out . how you are going to . know . if you’ve achieved it .. and then . from there . you work out . how .. you’re going to do it .. (133-135)

The new logical framework or logframe is represented by the Adviser as an entity with certain quasi-agentive powers, predicated with verbs of compulsion, expressed as Material processes (as defined by Halliday 1994). These include: requires, forces, by forcing, obliges, compels. The project framework (and other project documentation, including financial spreadsheets) as governance technologies can then be seen to take the place of the manager in the hierarchy:

- the new log frame . requires you to think . much more carefully . much more systematically . about what you . can do . (124-125)
- it forces you to be realistic . (125)
- and it does all this .I think . by forcing you to start . not with inputs . but with outputs (125-126)
- I do commend . our present . log frame . to you . precisely because . it forces you . to be specific . about what you are going to achieve . (133-134)
- it forces you to work out . how you are going to . know . if you’ve achieved it .. (136)
So in the Adviser’s speech, which represents the Adviser’s view of the ODA in the context of NPM reforms, the role of manager is delegated to the logframe, which then becomes the organiser and monitor of the work. So in this model the project disappears the local manager, who is replaced by regulation and accountability systems, thus operating to concentrate power in the hands of the bureaucratic policy-makers and performing the division of labour between the thinkers and the doers. We can see how this is represented by the Adviser by further analysing his speech using Halliday’s (1994) types of clausal process.

There are a number of clauses with I (36) or we (85) in theme position, and of these 30 of the first person singulars and 27 of the first person plurals are followed by Mental or Verbal processes. There are 61 Verbal and 55 Mental processes in the Adviser’s speech. The first person singular is followed by verbs such as want, think, hope, was very pleased, disagree, am aware, say, commend. Halliday (1994:129-130) characterises Verbal processes as ‘external-processing’ (exocentric) and Mental processes as ‘internal-processing’ (endocentric). He also states that Verbal processes ‘might more appropriately be called “symbolic processes”.’ But the Adviser’s use of Mental processes is not internal to himself, what he thinks and wants rather represent the thought and volition of the ODA’s corporate agents. The Adviser as a bureaucrat thinks the thoughts of others. These Mental/Verbal processes however represent grammatically the thinking and speaking part of the organisation. Thus there is a thinking organ that makes policy (and is responsible for ends), that speaks about and reifies policy and strategy, and there are executive limbs that perform the operations (and are responsible for means), on the model ‘I think therefore you act’. There is, therefore, in the text, a representation of social hierarchy. High in the social hierarchy there is the grammatical agent as Senser and Speaker, who performs mental and verbal bureaucratic labour (the construction of policy, accountability, etc.). I would have expected the ‘lower’ subaltern functions to be represented in the text by Material processes, but in fact Material processes are more often associated with systems of accountability and measurement. Material process is sometimes represented as mediated through Mental process, for example we think things should be done, where Material process is an obligation (should), that emerges from the thinking of the organisation (we as corporate agency). Note, however, that the (subaltern) agent of should be done is elided (done by whom?). But there are very few examples of Material processes that represent operations performed by people. The subaltern operational functions are present in the text as Material process only in the following, to work, sharing and establish:

- how . valuable it is . for you at universities . to work together .. (190)
- the number of times you referred to . replicability . you were . er . sharing materials .(191)
- I think over the past fifteen years . the co-operation has helped to establish a lot of models . a lot of materials . a lot of systems . that you can now share with each other (193-194)

Subaltern Material processes are more often nominalised or subsumed in abstractions and institutions, as in the wording or ‘texturing’ (Fairclough 2003) of education by the Adviser (remember that the Adviser is Principal Education Adviser). The wordings that texture education in the Adviser’s speech include: universities, nursery schools, postgraduate study, literacy, doctoral theses, curriculum development, education management [i.e. managerialism], teacher appraisal [i.e. accountability], your university departments, your schools, your expertise. There is very little sense in this reified worldview of active human beings as agents, pursuing their interests and agendas. This is what Halliday (1993) calls a world of abstract entities and reifications, a bureaucratic world that can be measured and manipulated by the policy-maker and the strategist. Bourdieu (1998:38) calls this sort of person le penseur fonctionnaire, whose thought ‘is pervaded by the official representation of the official’.
Jessop (2002:23) describes three modalities of governance: exchange, command and dialogue. Applying these modalities to the Adviser’s representation of the ODA in my data brings out the command nature of governance in the ODA in 1996. The possibilities of proposing local initiatives and of negotiating agendas locally are removed from the operational level. The local voice is silenced. Dialogue and negotiated consent are restricted to the inter-governmental and policy levels and to the strategic level of the ODA hierarchy: ‘the organization shifts the “policing” power of project managers and local line managers to a higher level of the organizational hierarchy’ (Räisänen and Linde 2004:102).

I am not claiming that projects and frameworks as represented in this text are typical of all uses of projects and frameworks. However, I do think that this representation of the project can be taken as a kind of ideal type of the instrumental project, the most abstract and distant from the processes and chaos of the lifeworld. But whatever the abstraction and reductiveness of the representation, the discursively excluded are still able to reassert themselves through the subversion and humour of the carnivalesque.

**The carnivalesque: what escapes the instrumental?**

What escapes the instrumental? On this occasion (in Wuhan in 1996), the excluded of the event re-enters and is expressed in the carnivalesque happenings outside the formal conference agenda. Bakhtin (1984:4-5) defines carnivalesque as: ‘folk festivities of the carnival type, the comic rites and cults, the clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs, and jugglers, the vast and manifold literature of parody - all these forms have one style in common: they belong to one culture of folk carnival humour’ and identifies the importance in the carnivalesque of ‘comic verbal compositions, parodies both written and verbal’. And in fact outside the formal conference events, there were carnivalesque parodies of managerial discourse, performed at the conference dinner and in the bar.

This included a parodic song (written by one or more of the Specialists), based on ‘Little Boxes’ (written by Malvina Reynolds, although the best-known version is by Pete Seeger) and mocking the ‘sixteen box logframe’. The carnivalesque is evoked by the following excerpt: All the goals have got a purpose/ And what was yours for coming here?/ Mine was drinking, his was thinking/ After drinking they’re all the same. The song also refers to the ‘learning experience’ of the TeamUP workshops during the course of the conference, where ODA and BC officers tried to explain the operation of the ‘new’ logframe: So form your groups up/ Have a team up/ Trying to fill up little boxes is enough to drain the brain.

The parodic words of the song intertextually rearticulate the Reynolds song, evoking its critique of 1950s America, with its conformist thinking and behaviour, but like most carnivalesque events this song as performed (it was performed twice) is anti- not counter-hegemonic. Included in the performances at the official banquet, it performs the role of ‘licensed’ jester – celebrating:

‘temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalised and completed’ (Bakhtin 1984:8-11).

‘Becoming, change, and renewal’ are what projects are supposed to be about, but they have been devised as technologies, as articulations of instrumental reason – devised by the Centre, the policy-makers and strategists, the established order’, those with ‘hierarchical rank, privileges’ – projects are constructed as systems of constraint on agency (‘norms, prohibitions’), not as what they might be, celebrations or adventures.
Conclusion
In this paper I have tried to show how instrumental discourse migrates across time and space. Taking the example of the project and the logical framework, I traced the migration of what I call a governance technology, from its origins in the planning of science and war in the 1940s to its use in the field of international development in the post Cold War period. I used data from a case study from an international development conference to show how the instrumental technology was imposed by United Kingdom government agencies on practitioners in the field. Finally, I showed how this discourse was subverted and parodied in the carnivalesque events of the conference. Here the discourse of the logframe at the end of its long journey to China ‘speaks’ but in this carnivalesque time and space it is ‘turned around’, subverted – parodied – sent back to the masters of discourse to remind them that we are not ‘mere’ instruments, that what is represented by power is not the final word on representation.

REFERENCES


