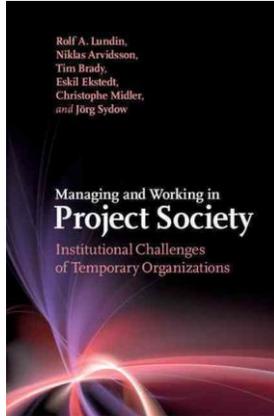

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Managing and Working in Project Society: Institutional Challenges of Temporary Organizations***

Authors: **Rolf A. Lundin, Niklas Arvidsson, Tim Brady, Eskil Ekstedt, Christophe Midler, Jörg Sydow**

Publisher: **Cambridge University Press**

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Reviewer: **David L. Pells** Review Date: March 2016

Introduction to the Book

This is one of the best books about project management that I have read in years. It's also one of the most important. I don't usually review books. We receive so many project management books that normally I forward them to others for review through one of our book review programs. In this case, however, because the topic was one that I have been interested in for many years, namely the projectification of society, I wanted to review it myself. In addition, Professor Lundin and his co-authors are true experts on the topics of temporary organizations, project-based work and project management so I wanted to see what they had to say. I am very happy that I did.

This book clears the air on many important topics, explaining for example why projects and temporary organizations are becoming more common everywhere, how projects and project management apply to such industries as movie production and The Arts, why academic institutions find it so hard to embrace project management as a major topic in business schools, the impact of project-based work on economies, employment and labor trends, and more. These are important aspects of the field that I have thought about for a long time, as someone involved with the project professional field for several decades.

In addition, this book provides both a theoretical and practical description of the context for both projects and project management, an increasingly visible and important aspect of professional project management standards, training and qualifications. This emphasis on context is especially visible in Europe, but increasing worldwide.

As I hope you will understand from my comments below, I think this book belongs on the bookshelf of every leader in the project management profession worldwide, everyone researching some aspect of project management, every student of project management, every

executive of a project-based organization, and every practicing project management professional who plans to stay in the field. The book is that important!

Overview of Book's Structure

The book is organized in only six chapters, each one important and containing significant new information, as follows:

1. **Project organizing and industrial organization – transformation dilemmas:** Chapter One sets the stage, the global context for modern project management. The authors briefly describe the widespread and growing trend towards projectification, the fading era of traditional industrial organizations, and some of the dilemmas of the transition. Chapter one ends with a fuller explanation for the purpose of the book, and summarizes the contents of the remaining chapters.
2. **Projectification trends and organizational archetypes:** Chapter Two “discusses projectification trends and processes in more detail” and introduces (and fully describes) three organizational” archetypes: project-based organizations (PBOs), project-supported organizations (PSOs) and project networks (PNWs).” The context for each of these three organization types is fully explained, including historical trends, environmental factors and practical application considerations.
3. **Managing in Project Society:** Chapter Three discusses project management in each of the three organizational archetypes, and specifically how managing projects (temporary organizations) differs from managing in traditional industrial production-based organizations (bureaucracies). The impact on individual lives, especially during organizational transitions, is discussed. What happens when projects and traditional structures collide? Of particular interest is the discussion of “key management dilemmas” in each of the three organization types, PBOs, PSOs and PNSs.
4. **Work and employment regimes in Project Society:** Chapter Four describes the changing nature of jobs and employment in the modern project-based economy, challenges for individual job seekers and project professionals, and implications for companies, governments and society at large. The authors “describe how the character of work is changing with Project Society.” Major sections discuss ‘use of the working time and space’ and ‘work and employment’ in project-based organizations, project-supported organizations and project networks. Points related to project-related careers are included.
5. **Institutions and projectification:** Chapter Five “focuses on the effects of projectification on institutions..” As the authors state in the first paragraph, “when a strong trend toward projects and other forms of temporary organizations confronts the predominant institutions of the surrounding society, friction and tensions inevitably arise because most of these are still adapted to industrial work in more permanent settings.” The authors then go on to describe the impact of projectification on labor laws and other elements of law and legal institutions, market regulations and regulators, politics and

political institutions, educational institutions, professional societies and less formal institutions (for example, self-employment, temporary and part-time work).

6. **Trends and theory implications:** Chapter Six brings the authors back to their academic and theoretical roots as they discuss projectification trends in relation to current debates among researchers, traditional management and organizational theories, and theories related to change in general, both incremental and disruptive. The authors end with a call for more research, introduce some challenges and suggest some topics.

But before the six chapters, don't miss the "**Preface: Contents in a Nutshell**", where the authors explain that the book is "about the ascendance of projects and temporary organizations in society." The bottom line: "the evolution of Project Society has been alluded to in other contexts, but the movement has accelerated and will continue to do so since it is facilitated by modern information and communication technology and knowledge formation.."

Highlights: What's New in this Book?

I would highlight the following new contributions in this book:

- A clear and concise explanation of the global trends driving more projects and temporary organizations (projectification) across all industries and societies.
- Explanation of the role and purpose for all projects in the modern context.
- Introduction and explanation of "Project Networks", providing the organizational context and process associated with projects created by networks of organizations and individuals in such industries as The Arts, Movie and TV production, business and economic development 'incubators', academic collaborations, and many others.
- Full explanation of the context of projects and project management for each of the three types of project-related organizations – PBOs, PSOs and PNWs. (Discussed in other books and papers, but best explained here in the historic and environmental context, in my opinion. See chapter 2).
- Discussion of "key management dilemmas" in each of the three organization types, and the some personal issues for both executives and professionals working in these organizations and industries. (chapter 3)
- Explanation of the changing nature of employment and jobs in the modern project-based economy, challenges for individual job seekers and careers-related issues, and implications for companies, government policy makers and society at large. (chapter 4)
- Description of the impact and implications of projectification on major institutions such as labor laws, politics and political institutions, educational institutions, market regulators, professions, and informal institutions, and actions needed as a result. (chapter 5)

- Institutional entrepreneurship – the use of projects to establish, influence or change institutions. (chapter 5)
- The creation of a truly global theoretical (contextual) framework for projects, programs, program/project management, temporary organizations and the projectification of industries and society – a very big accomplishment

Highlights: What I liked!

I liked the entire book, but the following had the most meaning for me personally:

- The introduction and explanation of the role of “innovation” in the global context of projectification trends – that is, the combination of the globalization of information exchanges, industries and markets with the now almost universal drive to innovate that is permeating economies globally.
- The introduction to “Project Networks” as an organizational context for more temporary projects set in more fluid and social environments (many small projects, but not all are; blockbuster movies can cost hundreds of millions of dollars to produce.)
- The discussion of the impact of projectification on labor and employment everywhere, and on established institutions in advanced economies. (I say advanced because I think institutions in Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America may now be leapfrogging “The West” by introducing project management education in major universities, project-based legislation and project-oriented governmental bodies.)
- A good explanation for the resistance to project management education in American universities, in particular.
- The impact and implications of projectification on many aspects of modern society that are not widely recognized or understood by most people, and especially by politicians, government executives and industry leaders.

Who might benefit from the Book?

As mentioned above, this book belongs on the bookshelf of every leader in the project management profession worldwide, everyone researching some aspect of project management, every student of project management, every executive of a project-based organization (and PSOs and PNWs), and every practicing professional who plans a career in project management. It certainly belongs in any serious library related to the management of projects, and probably in the libraries of those teaching business, organization theory, general management, construction, engineering and many other fields.

They all need to understand the growing role and importance of projects and temporary organizations; how the increasing projectification of society is impacting industries, organizations, work and careers; how these changes are introducing new challenges, risks and

opportunities; and where they fit into these trends. This book provides answers to those and many other questions.

Most importantly, this book clearly explains the modern context for the increasing use of projects in society and therefore of project management. This context should be better understood by those steering the project management profession, both locally and globally.

Conclusion

This really is a great and important book! As a powerful follow up to the 2014 book *Advancing Research on Projects and Temporary Organizations* edited by Professors Rolf Lundin and Marcus Hällgren (Copenhagen Business School Press), it offers answers and explanations.

For experienced project managers and professional leaders who think they already know everything about project management, it will open eyes (and minds) to broad global trends, impacts and meaning. Everyone reading this book will learn something, often on every page. I know that I did. It was exhilarating!

Congratulations to the authors (and the publisher)!

For more about this book, go to

<http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/management/organisation-studies/managing-and-working-project-society-institutional-challenges-temporary-organizations?format=HB>

About the Reviewer



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David L. Pells is Managing Editor of the *PM World Journal*, an open source digital Journal for sharing knowledge in program and project management, and Executive Director of the PM World Library. He has been an active professional leader in the United States since the 1980s, serving on the board of directors of the Project Management Institute (PMI®) twice. He was founder and chair of the Global Project Management Forum (1995-2000), an annual meeting of leaders of PM associations from around the world. David was awarded PMI's Person of the Year award in 1998 and Fellow Award, PMI's highest honor, in 1999. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Association for Project Management (APM) in the UK; Project Management Associates (PMA - India); and Russian Project Management Association. He was previously managing editor of the globally acclaimed *PM World Today* eJournal.

David has more than 35 years of project management related experience on a variety of programs and projects, including engineering, construction, defense, energy, transit, high technology and nuclear security, and project sizes ranging from several thousand to ten billion dollars. His experience has been in both government and private sectors. He occasionally provides high level advisory support for major programs and global organizations. David has published widely, spoken at conferences and events worldwide, and can be contacted at editor@pmworldjournal.net.

To view other works by David Pells, visit his author showcase in the PM World Library at <http://pmworldlibrary.net/authors/david-l-pells/>.