ASSET CREATION TEAM RATIONALITIES AND STRATEGIC DISCOURSES: EVIDENCE FROM INDIA

Johan Ninan[1], Ashwin Mahalingam[2], Stewart Clegg[3,4]

[1]Department of Civil Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, Assam, India
[2]Department of Civil Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai, India
[3]Business School, University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway
[4]Nova School of Business and Economics, Universidade de Nova Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal

ABSTRACT

External stakeholder management is important for managing an infrastructure asset throughout its lifecycle. There is a dearth of research exploring the asset creation team's rationalities invoking the strategies used for managing external stakeholders. The circuits of power theoretical framework, which consider actors within their social context, is apt for studying the rationale of the asset creation team in carrying out these strategies. Through a systematic in-depth case study of a metro rail asset in India, diverse data was collected from multiple sources, such as semi-structured interviews, articles from news and social media; a set of strategic rationalities used to frame messages to stakeholders were identified. These included pride in the asset, importance of the asset, overemphasis on time, and acceptability of public inconvenience. The asset creation team, as part of the broader asset community, is also influenced by the strategic discourses aimed at managing external stakeholders. We discuss the implications of the strategic discourses used for asset management on project, programme, and portfolio management. The relationship between strategic discourses striving to manage assets and the corresponding asset creation team rationalities affords multiple avenues for future research.

KEYWORDS

Asset management, External stakeholder management, Asset creation team rationalities, Railway systems, marketing & public relations

1. INTRODUCTION

Asset management in the context of infrastructure projects refers to the way an infrastructure asset is managed from the start to the end of its lifecycle, often referred to as a cradle to grave process (Ouertani et al., 2008). Due to their large scale, megaprojects can create environmental, social, and political disruptions in their local area, often affecting external stakeholders on the periphery of the asset (Viitanen et al., 2010), such as stakeholders in lands, existing services, local communities, NGOs, special interest groups, etc. Managing external stakeholders in infrastructure megaprojects is more complex than in small scale assets due to limited cognition on the part of asset creation team dealing with those boundaries that stakeholders create as a result of emergent project processes (Mok et al., 2015). Some of these will turn out to be unknown unknowns in terms of forward planning. In addition, these stakeholders are frequently ungovernable and cannot be held accountable to the asset's scope, budget and timelines through contract (Ninan et al., 2020). Managing external stakeholders is critical for the successful performance of infrastructure assets; negative emotions towards the asset can cause such stakeholders not only initially to oppose the construction but also boycott the services during the operation phase, and even cause a democratic government to withdraw support for fear of the electoral consequences. Thus, we argue that asset management involves both asset creation and asset operation as assets created with the full cooperation of stakeholders are possibly managed far more easily over their operational lifecycle.

Infrastructure asset owners seek novel approaches to meet the challenges they face from different stakeholders in complex and difficult economic and political settings (Parlikad & Jafari, 2016; Datta et al., 2020). Kellick (2014) claims that rather than seeing asset management as a

technical issue, there is a need to explore social issues such as leadership, culture, etc. Existing literature highlights the strategies employed by asset creation teams for managing external stakeholders such as adaptation, compromise, avoidance or dismissal (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009). Other strategies include educating external stakeholders about the putative benefits of the asset (Ng & Loosemore, 2007) and 'branding' the asset (Ninan et al., 2020). Most of these strategies involve attempts at imposing asset requirements on external stakeholders as acceptable rationalities. However, it is unclear as to what rationalities drive such asset creation team actions, specifically, an exploration of the relationship between management strategies and actions surrounding the creation of the megaproject asset. We argue that the seeds for rationalities that influence the asset operation phase are sown in the construction phase. These, in turn, affect the asset creation team itself, leading to a particular kind of asset that will be created and then used. In other words, strategies meant for the future might have an impact today and might therefore change the future.

To explore the actions of the asset creation team when developing these rationalities, we draw on the circuits of power theory (Clegg, 1989), highlighting that agents' actions are dependent on the social contexts in which they are embedded. We seek to address the following research questions using the circuits of power theoretical framework, (1) On what rationales are the asset creation team's actions based? and (2) How do these rationalities come into being and are maintained?

To address these research questions the next section explores current research on asset creation team decisions and actions as part of asset management, along with an introduction to the circuits of power theoretical framework. Subsequently, we discuss the research methodology,

the case selected, the data collected, and its analysis. Following this, we discuss the asset creation team's rationalities along with the relationship between asset management strategies and asset creation team rationalities. We then conclude with contributions to theory, practice, limitations of the study, and future research directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

We define asset creation team as internal stakeholders who are involved in the creation of the asset including the government, contractors, financers, designers, consultancy, etc. Asset creation is dependent on many factors such as team expertise, available resources, and rationalities. Zuashkiani et al. (2014) note the role of asset creation team expertise, such as business, financial, engineering and operational knowhow in extracting maximum value from an infrastructure asset. Ninan et al. (2019) highlight how the resources available to the asset creation team such as fund discretion, recruitment discretion, and government backing determine project management actions in managing external stakeholders. While the expertise of the asset creation team and the resources available to them are explored in previous works, there has been little discussion of the rationalities that shape these actions in the literature.

In the past, the decisions of the asset creation team and the rationalities that shape them have been influential in megaproject research. For example, strategic misrepresentation involves the asset creation team systematically and repeatedly underestimating the cost of the asset and overestimating its benefits (Wachs, 1989). These forms of accounting are then strategically used to justify the selection of the project (Flyvbjerg, 2008), leading to many megaprojects being critically compromised by cost and schedule overruns. Scholars tend to explain strategic misrepresentation based on optimism bias, technological sublime, or corruption in the decision.

With optimism bias, the asset creation team behaviorally tends to optimism regarding success, downplaying the risks of failure and neglecting past statistics in evaluating current plans (Kahneman & Lovallo, 1993). The technological sublime refers to engineers and designers' interest in creating and designing megaproject technologies and having their name associated with a major achievement. Corruption occurs when illegitimate means are used to further the interests of infrastructure megaprojects (Locatelli et al., 2017). In contrast to explanations such as optimism bias, technological sublime, or corruption, we consider the asset creation team's decisions as embedded in repertoires of socially and organizationally available discursive rationalities. We explore how these rationalities come into being and how they are maintained. For this, we explore organizational power theories, in particular, the circuits of power framework.

Project and asset management have historically largely been limited to engineering sciences and optimization theories with little focus on organizational theories (Söderlund, 2004). All organizations are a design for stabilizing power relations as authoritative forms of domination (Weber, 1978). Organizational power relations constitute actors within particular actor networks and action nets in which they are embedded (Czarniawska, 2004). Characterizing these networks, circuits of power theory considers power as flowing through multiple circuits in these networks. Power is conceptualized as flowing through circuits of episodic power, dispositional power and facilitative power (refer Clegg 1989, p. 214 for an overview). The circuits constitute and maintain obligatory passage points that serve as channels of acceptability, appropriateness and legitimacy of actions (Callon, 1986). These obligatory passage points are instrumental in explaining the rationalities of the asset creation team.

3. RESEARCH SETTING AND METHOD

To understand the asset creation team's rationalities in managing external stakeholders, we adopted a qualitative research methodology to reveal new phenomena and capture their depth and richness (Ariño et al., 2016). It emphasizes the social construction of reality (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) and hence is apt for understanding the asset creation team's rationalities. Single in-depth cases within qualitative methodologies, provide excellent opportunities to enhance contextual understanding because of their in-depth data collection and analysis techniques. The research methodology followed in this research is depicted in Figure 1.
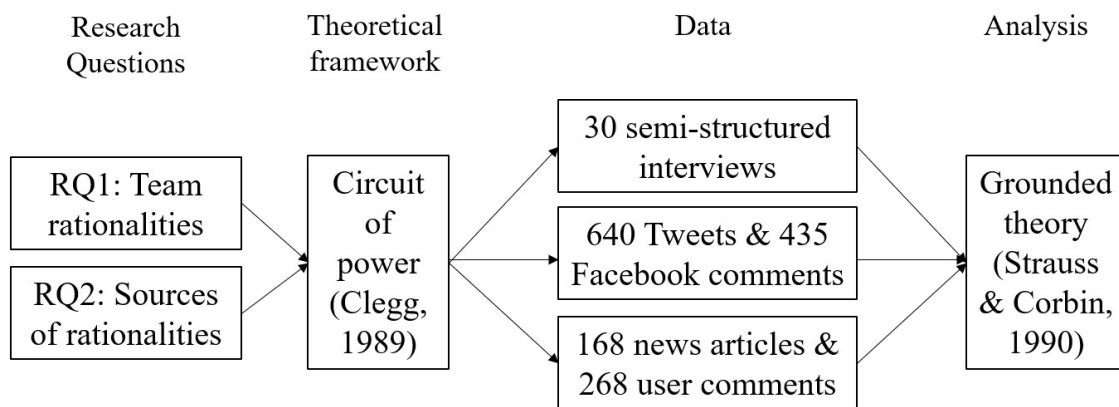

Figure 1: Research methodology

We chose a single in-depth case of a metro rail asset in India, which cost 2.2 billion USD, to explore the asset creation team strategies as part of asset management used to manage external stakeholders. It is built in one of the largest cities in India with an aim to integrate existing public transportation networks and to reduce the number of privatized vehicles used daily for commuting. Along with integrating existing public transportation networks and reducing traffic on roads, the project had other objectives such as to reduce pollution levels in the city and to

boost the economic growth in the region. The construction for the initial phase started in 2008 and the asset became operational in 2015. The case discussed here is only this first phase of the metro rail which already has the second phase in the planning stage along with provisions for other phases. The first phase considered in this case study consisted of 45.1 kilometers, which had elevated and underground sections, with the majority (55%) being underground. The first phase itself was broken down into multiple smaller projects, each allotted to a different contractor for asset delivery. The case was selected because of its ability to answer our research objective, i.e., it used strategic discourses to manage external stakeholders given its presence on social media and news media. We studied the asset creation phase primarily involving the construction of the metro rail as well as the early use and operations phase (from 2015 up until 2017). Stakeholder management is done for different purposes during different stages of asset creation. For example, during pre-construction, the key objective of stakeholder management is to acquire land easily, during construction, it is to reduce opposition to construction, and during operations, stakeholder management is aimed at improving asset usage.

We collected data from multiple sources. Thirty semi-structured face to face interviews were conducted with the asset creation team in 2017, including the client, contractors and project management consultants. We asked about the challenges faced while managing external stakeholders and how these were overcome. The asset creation team recalled several incidents which we analyzed to be able to thematically map the asset creation team rationalities deployed during the external stakeholder management process.

We also studied the discourses employed in the strategic management of the asset. These included discourses used to manage external stakeholders in social media and news articles,

which constitutes a naturalistic form of data (Ninan, 2020). In terms of social media, the megaprojects Twitter and Facebook pages were analyzed to map how the asset creation team communicated strategically to the community and how that community responded. A total of 640 Tweets by the asset team from 2012 to 2017 were recorded and analyzed. Adding to this, 435 user comments were analyzed from Facebook. We also explored news articles dealing with the asset to understand wider discourses circulating around the asset. By carrying out a google news search we studied all the news media articles published by different media houses dealing with the asset from 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2017, capturing 168 news articles and 268 user comments. Within the news articles we analyzed strategic discourses to understand how the infrastructure asset was being portrayed to the wider community.

We used grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to analyze the data collected. Grounded theory can be used to 'generate, identify and trace the phenomenon's major concepts which constitute its theoretical framework' (Jabareen, 2009). We open coded the data to arrive at broad categories of asset creation team rationalities and their source. Rather than automatic coding that creates a barrier to understanding (Kozinets et al., 2014) we used manual coding that does not lose that feeling for the data that computer-generated coding can create. Following open coding, axial coding was carried out to find the relationship between the categories generated. The existing categories are compared with each new data point to refine the theory through a process of constant comparison to generate a refined and validated theoretical model. In the next section we discuss the findings from the in-depth case study of the metro rail asset in India.

4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The grounded theory analysis of the data collected from semi-structured interviews, social media data and news article data of the metro rail infrastructure asset enabled us to understand the asset creation team rationalities and the sources of rationalities. These are explained below.

ASSET CREATION TEAM RATIONALITIES

The asset creation team rationalities of pride in the asset, importance of the asset, overemphasis on time, and acceptability of public inconvenience, emerged from the data and are discussed below.

1. *Pride in the* asset:

The asset creation team were inherently proud of being associated with the megaproject as highlighted by a post on social media from an ex-member of the team that was indicative of many similar posts:

> *"Proud to be part of this project from 2009 to 2015."* (Facebook post on 24th Sept 2017).

Pride in megaprojects has been identified in prior literature. Van-Marrewijk (2007) recorded that the employees of the megaproject that he studied felt that they were constructing something unique, something not easy to realize, making them proud to be a part of something special. Such feelings of pride augment feelings of psychological ownership (Kirk et al., 2015) as actors feel proud of their organization and its decision-making. In the case of the metro rail megaproject, the asset creation team was very motivated to take things into their hands so that the asset would not be delayed. The Human Resource manager of the asset remarked:

"People are individually motivated and take responsibilities on their own"

The team talked frequently about the achievements of the megaproject and took pride in their decisions as part of infrastructure asset management. For instance, land acquisition is a challenging process for infrastructure assets. Sometimes the land is owned by the government and allotted for construction to the metro rail organization only for the project organization subsequently to understand that the land is not vacant but is currently occupied by illegitimate landholders. One such instance occurred with a parcel of land near the airport that was critical for connectivity to the airport: after it was formally handed over by the authorities it was found that it was occupied by illegitimate landowners. Due to the proximity of this illegitimate settlement to the airport and concerns about safety, the airport authority in the past had tried to evict the squatters but was unsuccessful. The asset creation team was able to evict illegal landholders and carry out the construction. The section head who was in-charge of the construction remarked during the interview:

> *"The airport couldn't do it (evict illegitimate landholders) for 15 years, but we were able to do it in a short span".*

The asset creation team felt proud not only about the built asset but also about the decisions they took for managing external stakeholders and other constraints the asset faced.

2. *Importance of the* asset:

The asset creation team's view was that the construction of the metro rail was creating a vital piece of infrastructure asset such that work in its service was analogous to service in the interests of the nation. One employee said,

"I resigned a government job [government jobs are very prestigious in the Indian context] to be here ... This is a big project happening in my city ... I want to be part of it."

As seen in the quote, the asset creation team believed that the asset is important for the city and wanted to be a part of it. Given the importance of the asset, they defended the decisions made regarding the asset. In one instance, comparing the progress of this city's metro rail asset with another in India, the construction manager emphasized that their metro had a more innovative strategy that would lead to greater public benefits as compared to other metros. The manager remarked:

"First we [metro rail organization] took works on the inside of the city ... so now work will be faster ... ***[another city] can't connect central bus station ... here airport and central bus station link is already there".

Thus, the decisions of the asset creation team were motivated by their view of the importance of the asset and belief that the asset was the only way to solve the problems that the city faces.

3. *Overemphasis on time*:

Project management is oft described as the management of the 'iron triangle' – management of time, cost and quality (Atkinson, 1999). In the case of the metro rail megaproject, time took the front seat while cost and quality took the back seat. To enable the construction, the asset creation team compromised on costs and quality parameters. The overemphasis on time in relation to cost was seen in the way that the asset creation team sought to make rapid progress and finish the project as quickly as possible because the asset was treated as an urgent infrastructure. As a result, they opted for strategies such as extra work for stakeholders, that increased costs whilst

enabling faster completion of the project. In an instance with the telecommunication utility, the asset team was willing to expend extra money, by installing modern cabling system with inspection chamber in place of conventional cabling system they wanted to shift, to enable faster construction with better support from the utility agency, as remarked by an employee,

> *"We [metro rail organization] were asked [by the telecommunication government agency] to install new and modern cabling system with inspection chambers in place of the conventional cabling systems that we wanted to shift ... We did it for them free of cost even though we were not obliged to do so"*

Similar spending of resources is discussed in the work of Ninan et al. (2019) where they highlight fund discretion as an important resource to enable the speedy construction of the megaproject. Along with cost parameters, quality also suffered. The asset creation team operated to a strict timeline in the midst of constant political threats and opportunism. Politically, much of the time, infrastructure assets are used strategically by political parties as objects with which to boost their appeal or, alternately, as objects of critique by oppositions. In one instance, the team had to cut through the curing period (the time it takes for concrete to 'set' after being poured) in order to inaugurate the asset on the pre-committed date. To reduce the impact on structural strength, the asset was subsequently cured to quality standards before commissioning. The construction manager of a site said the reason was clear:

> *"We had to cut the curing period for opening (by politician) of a stretch on the committed date".*

Thus, the decisions taken by the megaproject were often determined by an over-emphasis on time in completion terms.

4. *Acceptability of public inconvenience:*

The asset creation team justified the social costs that inconvenienced the public during the construction and operation phases. They justified creating traffic diversions and disruptions in some services by saying that the people needed to adjust. The Public Relations Officer argued,

> *"We have never had such a large-scale project, so people have to adjust".*

The asset creation team often relied on the acceptance and adjustments of the public. A project manager remarked,

> *"When we create traffic diversions for work ... There is no agitation from the public ... They (community) have accepted us."*

Cases of communities accepting the inconvenience caused during the construction of infrastructure asset is acknowledged in research by Yeo (1995): he emphasized that the public are able to understand long-term benefits of an asset and can even tolerate the inconvenience caused during construction phases. In the case of the metro rail, the asset creation team took for granted that there would be public inconvenience and their decisions were based on this rationale.

These four rationalities shaped the decisions taken by the megaproject. They created obligatory passage points through which the strategic action of the asset creation team in managing the external stakeholder was exercised. These shared rationalities enabled them to

work together with common understanding and internal motivation allowing work teams to execute tasks with little monitoring or supervision (Levitt, 2011). The next section explores how these rationalities came into being and are maintained.

SOURCE OF RATIONALITIES

Four sources of rationalities were observed in the megaproject that emerged from the data. These sources of rationalities were instilling pride, shaping identity, creating urgency, and working through hardships. We discuss each of them below.

1. *Instilling pride*

The asset creation team promoted strategic discourses to manage external stakeholders through social media posts and news articles. The metro rail was planned as an environmentally friendly transportation alternative and hence relied on electricity for its operation. However, the city which hosts the metro rail is an energy deficient city with frequent electric outages, which the community feared the operation of metro rail would exacerbate. To address the concerns of the community about the asset drawing electricity from the common pool and thus increasing disruptions due to power outages, the asset creation team agreed to install solar panels on all metro stations and in other locations accessible to the asset. In the news articles, the metro rail promoted itself as having the largest on-site solar projects in India. They did not publicize the constraints that forced them to adopt solar panels instead of the conventional electric energy. A news article quoting the success associated read,

> *"The total capacity will be six MW, which will make it one of the largest on-site solar projects in India"* (Quoted from a news article of 23rd June 2017).

Similar to this instance, constraints forced the metro rail to opt for many decisions which were promoted and marketed in social media and news articles as the metro rail's vision to achieve something great. These included the use of sliding doors in the metro stations and shorter lengths of the platform. Since the asset is colossal, the community did not know the full story behind these decisions other than what they read from news articles or social media posts. These marketing promotions by the metro rail were often quite well received by the community as seen in the Facebook comment:

"Kudos. That should become trend-setter for other metro rails as well as for IR (Indian Railways) itself" (Quoted from the comments of a news article of 13th February 2017)

Another community member responded, "*I feel proud. Thanks to *** (metro rail organization).*" The asset creation team reciprocated this sense of pride in the achievements of the metro rail megaproject and defended the decisions of the megaproject. Similarly, Dixon (2017) noted that compelling stories that interpret the iconic achievements of assets are instrumental in creating a unique selling point of the asset to the leadership team. Thus, we highlight that the strategy of instilling pride in the community by portraying the asset as 'biggest,' 'largest,' or 'trendsetter' can also result in creation of a 'pride in the asset' rationality on the asset creation team.

2. *Shaping identity*

The metro rail organization celebrated national and regional festivals and propagated them in the social media posts and news articles. A tweet reporting this read,

"*** (Metro rail) celebrates *** (name of the festival) festival at *** (name of the station) Metro Station on 7th & 8th Jan 2017" (Tweet by official page on 6 January 2017)

Along with festivals, there were also reports on the celebrations of national days, visits by eminent personalities to the metro rail sites, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities carried out by the metro rail organization, etc. Such cultural celebration aimed to make a brand iconic by associating it with significant events and festivals (Holt, 2004). Many members of the community saw the metro rail asset as something that, through these celebrations, resonated with them and as representing their identity. This can be seen in the social media comment:

"Suggestion - *** [name of metro rail organization] celebrate *** [regional festival] festival in a grand manner and become one of the identities to the great *** [Name of city] ..." (Facebook post on 12th October 2017).

Given that the asset became tantamount to the identity of the city, the asset creation team treated the asset as being of national importance and claimed their work on the metro rail asset as a kind of 'national service'. Thus, the strategy of shaping the identity of the asset for the wider community resulted in the 'importance of the asset' becoming a key rationality for the asset creation team.

3. *Creating urgency*

The team rationalized its decision in selecting and constructing the asset through strategic discourses. The city that hosts the metro rail has the largest public transport usage in the whole of India, with multiple transporting networks, such as suburban trains, mass rapid transit systems,

buses, etc. The rationale for constructing the metro rail was to interconnect these networks and provide a seamless transportation experience for the community. The metro rail constantly propagated this message in its social media posts and news articles.

"Cities that have created integrated, multi-modal infrastructure have effectively tackled pollution and congestion" (Quoted from a news article of 14th May 2017).

Through these discourses the asset identified itself with urgent goals in Indian public life such as reducing pollution and congestion. Thus, the asset became perceived by the community as urgent, essential and to be completed at all costs, something evident in this community comment on Facebook:

"The sooner this stretch is declared open, it will be better for the general public" (Quoted from the comments of a news article of 17th January 2017).

The sense of urgency promoted to the community through strategic messaging was similar to the asset creation team's 'overemphasis on time' rationale. Both the community and the asset creation team believed that the asset was urgently required and so the team's decisions were made and justified according to this rationale.

4. *Working through hardships*

The hardships incurred during the process of construction of the metro rail were communicated by the asset through news articles and social media pages such as in the tweet that accompanied a photograph of construction works during the nighttime:

"Metro staff toil as the city sleeps" (Tweet on 18th April 2012).

The story was a little more complicated. The metro rail was planned to run alongside the highway because of constraints related to land acquisition and in order to provide better connectivity to end-users using other public transport, such as buses. Due to the close proximity to major urban highways which, in India, presents a degree of chaos, complexity and confusion in traffic movements that is endemic to the country, the construction activities of the asset were restricted to the night hours during which time vehicular traffic would be minimal. The fact that the asset was constructed during the night hours was communicated through strategic discourses as 'toiling when the city sleeps.' The community reciprocated these discourses and acknowledged the hardships of the asset creation team as seen in the Facebook comment:

> *"In so many hurdles, *** (Name of metro rail organization) workers completing projects ... May God bless them to live long with safety and happiness."* (Facebook comment on 19 Oct 2017)

Acknowledgment by the community of the hardships of constructing a metro rail asset can be related to the 'acceptability of public inconvenience' rationale of the asset creation team. Similar to the community, the team also believed that the asset was being completed in the midst of many constraints for the benefit of the community and hence the community had to adjust to the inconvenience caused.

The strategic communication for stakeholders in pre-construction, construction, and operation phases are intended to garner support for the asset – for acquiring resources from stakeholders for construction, or to reduce opposition to construction, or to ensure that the asset is used meaningfully during operation. These communications are evident in news media articles and social media posts. Our anecdotes also show that the strategic discourses used to manage

external stakeholders percolated or trickled down to and influenced the asset creation team rationalities as shown in Figure 2.
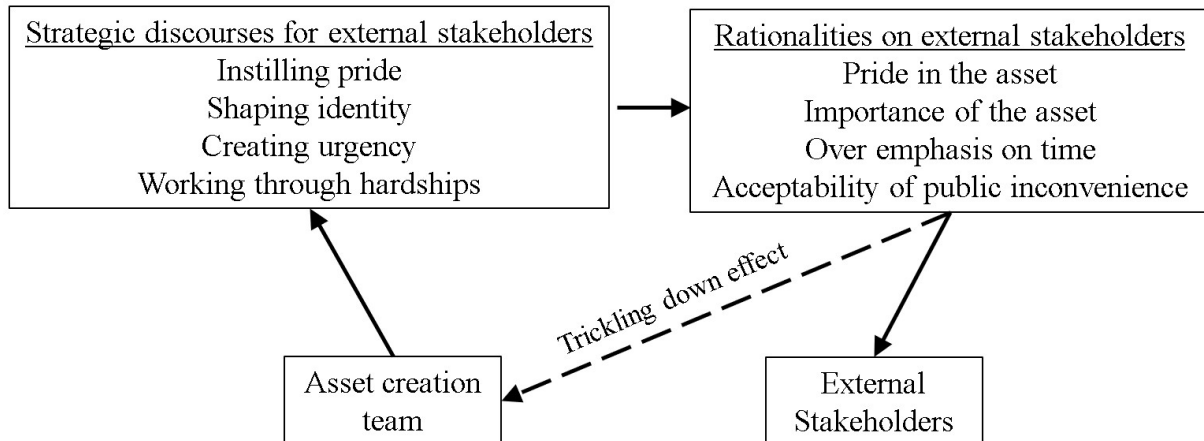

Figure 2: Trickle-down effect of strategies on the asset creation team

The trickling down of strategic discourse for external stakeholders to the asset creation team decisions shows the relationship between asset management and project management. The use of strategic discourses to manage external stakeholders also resulted in programme and portfolio management implications. In an instance, the funding agency remarked that they are willing to look at phase 2 of the project as part of the metro rail programme of the city,

> *"Mr. *** [name of representative from the funding foreign country] termed the project "very important" and replied, "I hope to see early completion of the project ... On that basis, we are ready to look into the project [phase 2 of the metro rail project] in a very serious manner"* (Quoted from a news article of 15th July 2017)

Similarly, asset management through strategic discourses resulted in multiple other metro rail projects in the country as part of a portfolio of metro rail projects (Ashokan, 2015). Thus, this

research highlights the relationship between asset management and Portfolio, Programme and Project Management from the case of strategic discourses in a metro rail project.

Asset creation team rationalities were picked up from strategic discourses aimed at 'cooling out' the community stakeholders. These were not messages that were initially intended to build asset creation team cohesion but were oriented to minimizing the resistance and maximizing acceptance by the community in which the works were being undertaken and were part of strategic asset management. Through messaging oriented towards the community, obligatory passage points were created that not only helped the reception that the asset received in the broader community but also built cohesion amongst the asset creation team. The former, aimed at building facilitative power and systems integration also served the purpose of creating dispositional power and social integration amongst the asset creation team. In the case of the metro rail megaproject, the asset creation team also became part of the stakeholder environment as they were positively framed by the strategies employed to manage the external stakeholders. All the asset participants were also members of the community and they were equally influenced through the news articles and social media posts, even when they knew that there were sometimes more complex stories behind and beneath the news. Adding to this, the asset creation team, being recruited from the community and continuing to live among the community during the duration of the project, had a dual identity as a part of the asset and a part of the community. Therefore, the team was part of the social fabric of the asset and was not immune to its messaging. They are thus, both the actor and the subject of these strategies. This broadens the definition of asset community from NGOs and community groups (Gellert & Lynch, 2003) to all stakeholders of the asset such as the asset creation team, financiers, government, etc., as all these stakeholders are part of the community and are influenced by the news articles and social media

posts. While the importance of customer engagement for infrastructure asset management is recorded in Blom & Guthrie (2015), this work extends the literature by exploring the relationship between customer engagement and asset creation team rationalities.

5. CONCLUSION

Asset management is critical for infrastructure megaprojects especially during its construction and operation phases where many of the decision consequences from earlier phases have full implications. Our study contributes to an understanding of what constitutes the asset creation team's rationalities during the construction and operation phases of asset management and how these rationalities are created and maintained. By adopting the circuits of power theoretical framework (Clegg, 1989), we explain how the asset creation team was also part of the stakeholder environment and was framed by the strategic discourses aimed at the community. We therefore posit a relationship between asset management through strategic discourses aimed at external stakeholders and project management in the form of project team rationalities. We highlight four team rationalities: pride in the asset, importance of the asset, overemphasis on time, and acceptability of public inconvenience. The sources of these rationalities were identified from the strategic discourses aimed at the external stakeholders for asset management as instilling pride, shaping identity, creating urgency, and working through hardships.

The study makes multiple contributions to our understanding of asset management. First, it provides the link between asset management through strategic discourses and asset creation team rationalities, i.e., strategic discourses in different media can affect the asset creation team and shape their rationalities thereby affecting their asset management decisions. For example, discourses creating urgency propagated to the community resulted in the overemphasis of time

rationality, which led the actors involved in the creation of the asset themselves to compensate telecom agency with new cabling system in order to finish the construction quickly. Second, the strategic discourses used for asset management had project, programme, and portfolio implications. The strategic discourses resulted in the funding agency looking at phase 2 of the project as part of the city's metro rail programme. Similarly, the asset management through strategic discourses resulted in multiple other metro rail projects in the country as part of a portfolio of metro rail projects. Third, it broadens the definition of the community to include all stakeholders of the infrastructure asset and not just the external stakeholders highlighted in the current literature (Gellert & Lynch, 2003). Fourth, the stakeholder management in the pre-construction, construction, and operations phases are targeted at different stakeholders and attempt to achieve different goals. For example, we have highlighted the strategic discourses during pre-construction of creating integrated infrastructure to effectively tackle congestion, which can be instrumental for easy land acquisition. We have also highlighted the strategic discourse during construction of workers toiling as city sleeps, which can reduce opposition during construction. Additionally, the strategic discourses during operation of celebrating national and regional festivals at metro stations, can improve asset usage. Thus, our study highlights that strategic discourses are effective with stakeholders in all these phases. Practically, we highlight how social media and news articles were effective in changing narratives and discourses around the asset both amongst the community, but also within the team creating the asset. It is our contention that these considerations should drive the social media strategies adopted by infrastructure organizations. Since infrastructure assets are colossal, media needs to be instrumental in effective stakeholder engagement: megaprojects require a media strategy as much as an engineering strategy. As a contribution to governance of the infrastructure asset, we

highlighted the role of rationalities in shaping the identity of the asset creation team and enabling them to work together with collective understanding (Adetola & Goulding, 2016) towards a common goal.

The work has some limitations. The single in-depth case study was carried out to optimize understanding of asset creation team rationalities and strategic discourses within the case rather than to generalize beyond it. The four rationalities are not comprehensive and other assets in different contexts can have more rationalities. However, it was not our intention to provide a comprehensive list of asset creation team rationalities and discourses in infrastructure assets, rather it was to highlight the relationship between them, i.e., asset creation team rationalities which guide action are shaped by strategic discourses meant for asset management. Also, the research only considered strategic discourses aimed at external stakeholder management and did not consider the role of internal communications, asset documents, etc. on the asset rationalities created. An interesting avenue for future research opens up, as all asset have internal mailing lists and newsletters, which can be analyzed to understand their influence on asset creation team rationalities shaping the identity of the asset creation team. In addition, the relationship between the rationalities is not explored in this study, such as the relationship between 'importance of the asset and 'overemphasis on time,' which can be explored in future studies. Future research can also explore the role of circuit of power framework in dealing with the stakeholder base shift between the construction and operation phase.

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