EXPLORING THE LIMITS OF DIVERSITY FOR C2 AGILITY

Erik Bjurström, PhD, Mälardalen University, Sweden
WHY DIVERSITY?

- C2 agility – response to limits of predictability
  - Complexity
  - Dynamics
  - Responsiveness rather than speed alone in decision loops
  - Open ended outcomes
  - Uncertainty
  - Ambiguity
  - *Understanding* the environment in the evolving logic in through the eyes of a broad range of actors
  - *Classification* of actors – and of ourselves
TUNNEL VISION?

- A general human trait
- Unfreeze established knowledge
- Learn to learn over and over again
- Naming and framing
- Make environments fit the professional terms
- Seeing and blindness of aspect
- Academic tribes
- Relevance?
- Ontology and epistemology - a Peter Pan syndrome?
- Intersubjectivity
DISCIPLINE OR TOPIC ORIENTATION?

- Discipline orientation
  - Theoretical orthodoxy
  - Methodological conformity

- Topic orientation
  - Practical problem solving
  - Diversity of perspectives
THREE TRADITIONS

- I. Biases and heuristics
- II. Situated cognition
- III. Classical organization theory
I. BIASES AND HEURISTICS

- Individual decision makers
- Cognitive psychology
- Experimental methods

- Criticizing "economic man" rationality
- Bounded rationality
- OODA-loops?
- Human shortcomings in decision making or efficient adaptation to ill-structured problems?
WHAT RATIONALITY?

- 60 Biases
  - Anchoring
  - Status-quo
  - Sunk cost
  - Framing
  - Overconfidence
  - Prudence
  - Recallability

- Bounded rationality
  - 1. As-if (they were optimizing)
  - 2. Cognitive illusions
  - 3. Ecological rationality
II. SITUATED (& DISTRIBUTED) COGNITION

- Cognition through social context and artifacts
- Collective cognition
- Ethnographic methods
- Collective sensemaking
- Relevant level/unit of analysis?
- How science is *made*
- Constructionist
COGNITION IN THE WILD

- Navigation as computation
  - Western tradition vs. Micronesian techniques
  - Western: direction, position and distance via angular measurement and universal time standard
    - Precalculations: layers of calculations and artifacts
  - Micronesian: the *star path*
    - Linear constellations – a representational artifice
    - Projection of an externa structure (the stars) and internal structure (the patterns) onto a *single spatial image*
III. CLASSICAL ORGANIZATION THEORY

- Decision-making in organizations
- Bounded rationality
- Qualitative methods – *understanding* rather than explaining and predicting

- Academic or popular management books?
- Perspectives on organizations
- Divergent results: optimization, power, rituals
THE PRACTICE TURN

- Decisions: separate events or a continuation of unfolding social practices?
- Business-as-usual and rules-of-thumb
- Rational in its own sense, in its own context
- *How* decision-makers *do* strategy, decisions etc
- What a thing *is* depends on what it *does*
CONTRIBUTIONS

- I. Notions of rationality – as-if, cognitive illusions or ecological rationality?
  - Might as well trust gut-feelings?
- II. Organizing - division of cognitive labor; diversity abounds
  - A matter of organizing so that differences are exposed to each other
- III. Practice – what we do is what we see
  - Understanding human intelligibility; narrative modes of cognition
DIVERSITY – MORE TOPIC ORIENTATION?

- Talking more to each other
- Improving C2 agility?
- Improving research on C2 agility?
- More topic-oriented and less discipline-oriented research?
- A moral imperative?